Two Year Progress Report
Peace and Conflict Studies (BA)
November 2015

Overview of Peace and Conflict Studies

The PACS program at Waterloo has always been intentionally interdisciplinary and aims to teach a uniquely holistic vision of peace that is in relationship with the broader university community.

What we have been seeing in recent years is that PACS undergraduate enrollment remains strong despite the drop in the number of students in the Arts Faculty, with PACS courses having 1,223 enrollments in the 2014-15 academic year. Classroom based PACS 100 to 300-level courses ran at approximately 93% capacity in 2014-15 and over the past six year period PACS courses have had an average enrollment of 1,216. This past year, there were 198 students enrolled in the following academic plans.

- Honours Peace and Conflict Studies – 30
- Honours Arts and Business & Peace and Conflict Studies – 31
- Joint Honours Peace and Conflict Studies & another discipline – 29
- Four-Year General Peace and Conflict Studies – 38
- Three-Year General Peace and Conflict Studies – 10
- Minor in Peace and Conflict Studies – 60

Over the years PACS has set a table that is welcoming to a widely diverse set of students and interests. In this way PACS truly represents the notion that multiple disciplines contribute to understanding peace even if they are not enrolled in a formal academic plan. PACS aims to cultivate an environment where this interdependency and connection is prominent and celebrated within our academic program. PACS began this way, and will continue to nurture relationships between faculties and build strong connections between diverse subject matter and peace. Through this approach, we hope to continue increasing visibility and promoting the idea, now more than ever, that peace is everybody’s business.
Progress Report and Response to Recommendations

The External Reviewers' Report of the Undergraduate Program in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Waterloo was submitted in January of 2013. The Report contained a high degree of affirmation for the PACS program, and made 10 recommendations. In the progress report that follows, these 10 recommendations will be addressed and the progress that has been achieved on each will be described.

**Recommendation 1:** Introduce a PACS core course in the first year of the university curriculum.

The PACS External Review in 2013 pointed out that there were no PACS core courses offered at the first year level, and recommended that PACS add a first year course to the curriculum. In response to this recommendation, in Winter 2015, PACS 101 “Peace is Everybody’s Business” was offered for the first time. The course ran with 48 students (in a course capped at 50), and most of these students were not PACS students nor were they first year students. The course was added to the curriculum after the course-selection process was completed for first year students, which we believe explains the lack of uptake from first year students.

What we are seeing now in Fall 2015 for PACS 101 is that there are 49 students enrolled and the majority of these are first year students. It is also noteworthy that in the pre-enrolment demand, there were 64 students requesting the course. Although still early in the course's history, this suggests that the idea that a 100-level course would increase exposure of PACS to first year students is starting to bear fruit. The PACS 101 course will also now be advertised to students during recruitment and in their first year when they are selecting courses up front, so we expect first year enrollment to grow in response to this visibility. It remains to be seen how many of these students will pursue a PACS Major or Minor in the future, but we will continue to monitor these trends in the coming years as these students move through their studies at Waterloo.

**Recommendation 2:** Re-organize 200-level and 300-level courses to provide more deliberate sequencing of material, meaningful prerequisites, and required content at the 300-level.

The PACS program seriously considered this issue in developing the revised program requirements for the new standardized plans and has developed streams to facilitate meaningful sequencing of students within PACS courses. At the 200-level, the three existing PACS courses are logically organized sequentially and hence PACS did not feel that any change was needed to respond to the Reviewers recommendation. PACS 201, “Roots of Conflict, Violence and Peace”, helps students understand the nature of conflict, its origin, and provides an analysis of a framework of how to grow peace within the context of conflict and violence. PACS 202, “Conflict Resolution”, provides an overview of the core values on which conflict resolution systems are built, comparing five different methods of conflict management, resolution and transformation. PACS 203, “History of Peace Movements”, completes this sequence through the study of historical examples where visionary leaders have fostered successful
nonviolent movements addressing root causes of conflict and violence, resulting in positive social change.

At the 300-level, PACS agrees that the wide diversity of courses offered can lead to an impression that program coherence is lacking. To respond to this concern, PACS has modified academic plans to now require that each student pursuing a Major complete at least three of a group of 12 PACS 300-level courses that collectively are at the core of our Peace Studies program. These dozen courses best represent the vision, mission, values, and central identity of the program. This requirement helps ensure that all graduates have a more consistent educational experience, and solidifies the “branding” of PACS while maintaining flexibility. Students must now complete any three of the following core seminar courses.

- PACS 311 “Doing Development: Issues of Justice and Peace”
- PACS 313 “Community Conflict Resolution”
- PACS 316 “Violence, Nonviolence and War”
- PACS 318 “Peacebuilding, Human Rights and Civil Society”
- PACS 321 “Gender in War and Peace”
- PACS 323 “Negotiation in Theory and Practice”
- PACS 324 “Human Rights, Peace and Business”
- PACS 326 “Religion and Peacebuilding”
- PACS 327 “Cultural Approaches to Conflict Resolution”
- PACS 329 “Restorative Justice”
- PACS 331 “Trauma, Healing and Conflict Resolution”
- PACS 332 “Ethics of Peacebuilding”

Secondly, to emphasize program coherence and to assist students in developing a deeper understanding of a particular peace focus within their studies, PACS has organized 20 of our 300-level courses into four informal “streams” within the program in a way that assists students to better understand how these courses reinforce key themes and key strengths in the program. For example, students who are interested in human rights and peace, or conflict resolution, can easily identify which collection of courses reinforce their interest. This will assist students in more easily seeing the connections between the various diverse PACS courses. Because this is not a formally instituted categorization, the listing can be changed from time-to-time as our courses change, and topical emphases is modified.

The courses identified below were chosen because firstly, they have had consistent enrollment, demonstrating that PACS students are interested in these topics and see them as valuable to their studies. Second, they cover key material in the field of peace and conflict studies. Additionally, they strongly represent many (if not all) categories in the University of Waterloo’s undergraduate degree-level expectations (UDLEs). And finally, these changes would help to address the questions about a consistency in our graduates and the “branding” of PACS and what we teach while maintaining flexibility.
All 12 of the 300-level courses identified above are included in the categorization below as we see them anchoring the program streams. Encouraging students to emphasize courses from these streams will increase the sequencing of our program, and promote a more focused course of study. The streams of study within PACS are as follows.

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<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
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<td>PACS 318 – Peacebuilding, Human Rights and Civil Society</td>
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<td>PACS 321 – Gender in War and Peace</td>
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<td>PACS 324 – Human Rights, Peace and Business</td>
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<td>PACS 328 – Fair Trade</td>
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<td>PACS 332 – Ethics of Peacebuilding</td>
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<td>Applied Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>PACS 313 – Community Conflict Resolution</td>
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<td>PACS 314 – Conflict Resolution in the Schools</td>
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<td>PACS 333 – Advanced Mediation Practice</td>
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<td>PACS 391 – Conflict Resolution Skills Training Workshops</td>
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<td>PACS 390 – Field Study</td>
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<td>Violence and Non-Violence</td>
<td>PACS 316 – Violence, Nonviolence and War</td>
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<td>PACS 320 – Christian Approaches to Peacemaking</td>
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<td>PACS 321 – Gender in War and Peace</td>
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<td>PACS 330 – War and Peace in Christian Theology</td>
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<td>Religion and Culture</td>
<td>PACS 312 – Quest for Peace in Literature and Film</td>
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Furthermore, PACS was initially conceptualized as an interdisciplinary program, an approach that remains at its organizational core. This perspective recognizes that all faculties have a perspective that can meaningfully contribute to peace. Peace is everyone’s responsibility and business and we therefore highly value the interaction with students from each of the University of Waterloo’s six faculties. Our courses are structured so that each can be a stand-alone course, complementing other courses offered, but not required to be completed sequentially. Imposing prerequisites at the 300-level would essentially preclude students from faculties that offer few electives from enrolling in PACS courses, and we think this absence of interdisciplinarity would harm the overall approach from which PACS is taught.

Additionally, we have not found that students are disadvantaged by not completing a 200-level PACS course before taking a 300-level PACS course. In Fall 2014, Winter 2015, and Fall 2015, 258 students took a PACS 300-level course. Of these 258 students, approximately 90% had already completed a PACS 200-level course, and only 26 had not. What we found when comparing the grade these 26 students earned in the PACS 300-level courses compared to their overall average, is that they were not
disadvantaged and performed similarly to their other courses and consistent with their overall average. This suggests that students without another PACS course do not do worse in PACS 300-level courses and that most students (232 of 258 in this case) have taken a 200-level PACS course anyway. We also are not aware of any pedagogical harm caused to PACS by the absence of prerequisites at the 300-level. Adding the requirement noted above that all Majors must complete a grouping of three courses from among our most central core courses, adequately addresses the concerns we understood the reviewers to have.

**Recommendation 3: Add student representation to the program governance structures.**

The PACS External Review commented that it is a common practice in Canada for students to participate in program governance structures, but PACS does not do so. The PACS program has since taken steps to bring in a student representative to the PACS Administrative Group (PACS AG). A proposal for this representative has been agreed on by PACS AG and now the proposal is going through the governance structures of Conrad Grebel University College. It is expected that this student representative will be on PACS AG in the near future, once all appropriate approvals have been obtained.

**Recommendation 4: Immediately hire at least one additional faculty member to reduce the number of courses taught by sessional instructors.**

In April 2015, after a lengthy and thorough search process, the Conrad Grebel Board of Governors announced that Dr. Jennifer Ball would join the PACS Faculty. Ball comes with significant experience in the field with research in Africa and has worked in rural Ontario dealing with municipal dispute resolution on conflicts pertaining to natural resource management, such as land use, water quality and wind turbine installations. She is also a trainer in Peacemaking Circle Processes within the Certificate Program in Conflict Management at Conrad Grebel, and is a prominent member of the Restorative Justice Circles in Waterloo Region. Jennifer Ball has expressed her enthusiasm for working with the PACS department in a faculty position saying “After over 20 years of affiliation with Grebel - as a student, an alumna, a sessional instructor, and Certificate workshop facilitator - I am thrilled to now join the PACS faculty. This is an incredibly dynamic community to be a part of and I look forward to becoming even more involved and to contributing more significantly to bridging the intersection of peace and conflict with other disciplines at the university and sectors in society at large.” In the Fall 2015 she is teaching two undergraduate courses, and in Winter 2016 will teach an undergraduate course as well as a graduate course for the Master of Peace and Conflict Studies program.

**Recommendation 5: Consideration should be given to encouraging more students to complete the field studies course, as well as to identifying and either recommending or requiring a set of Approved courses that foster skills (in addition to conflict resolution) that typically are valued in the workplace.**

The PACS Reviewers found that students were also looking to develop the skills to obtain and succeed at employment, and recommended that we more strongly encourage students to complete the Field Study
course and either identify, recommend or require a set of courses that foster skills that are valued in the workplace. PACS has responded to these recommendations in a number of ways.

First, PACS has a full-time staff person who has coordination of the undergraduate Field Study program as part of their role. This staff person oversees the entire process for a student interested in a Field Study from first indication of interest, through to their return from a placement. Promotion of this option is a priority for the PACS department as increasing travel and experiential learning is a key aspect of recruitment of new students and for UWaterloo as a whole. Promotion of this option to students has increased as the Field Study Coordinator has prioritized going to international experience events at UWaterloo, as well as visiting PACS classes to talk about Field Studies. There has been consistent interest and participation in the PACS Field Study with over 200 students completing this option, including 7 last year (2014-15) and 10 so far this year (2015-16).

Furthermore, any student in a PACS plan can now receive academic credit through PACS 391-001 (0.25 units) and PACS 391-002 (0.25 units) for completing workshops within the Certificate Program in Conflict Management that is offered by Conrad Grebel. These are professional skills training workshops that run for 2-4 days on topics such as “Facilitation Skills”, “Organizational Approaches to Conflict” and “Mediating Groups in Dispute”. The workshops have been offered since 1999, however it wasn’t until December 2011 that they were approved for undergraduate academic credit. Due to the timeline of approval, this addition to the PACS curriculum likely was not recognized by students participating in the review, nor by the reviewers, which is why we feel it relevant to mention here. Since PACS 391 was first brought in, it has grown in popularity and is now a highly developed option for students wishing to build and practice these conflict management skills. There is also financial support in place for students wishing to pursue this option and more easily facilitate their participation.

**Recommendation 6: Structure PACS as a department.**

The External Review Team noted the current capacity of the PACS Faculty Committee seemed to be lacking, and encouraged this to be strengthened. It was also recommended that PACS should move to structure itself as a department, while maintaining interdisciplinary ties. In response to the first part of this recommendation, PACS sees much value in having a PACS Faculty Committee because PACS draws heavily on Approved courses from other departments and their involvement in the governance of PACS is key to maintaining a successful program. The involvement of the Faculty Committee strengthens the interdisciplinary character of PACS, and we will work to improve how it can function more effectively.

In terms of the structure of the PACS program, in practical terms PACS functions as a department and is thought of as a department both at Grebel and with partner programs at the University of Waterloo. We recognize that there are institutional complexities involved in moving forward with formalizing the shift from a program to a department and are open to conversations concerning how to accomplish this change. This is an area that needs continued thought and reflection and advice concerning how to process this change.
Recommendation 7: Offer additional 400-level courses.

The recommendation to add more 400-level courses to PACS plans is based on the assertion that PACS students are disadvantaged when applying to some graduate programs. We are currently not aware of any student who was disadvantaged because of this. Additionally, there are currently 18 courses on the list of PACS Approved courses that are at the 400-level, which provide students with many opportunities to pursue this level of study within their requirements.

Recommendation 8: Include a research methods requirement for the 4-year BA plans.

The recommendation to add a research methods course to PACS plans is based on the assertion that PACS students are disadvantaged when applying to graduate programs. We are currently not aware of any student who was disadvantaged because of this. Currently, PACS 401, "Senior Research Seminar" covers research methods content. In this course students are exposed to some relevant research methods for the field as they work through their projects and through the seminar. Students with particular interest in a 400-level research based course are also able to enrol in PACS 402, "Senior Research Seminar" to build on research from PACS 401 and enhance their research and writing abilities. Additionally, there are many research methods courses available to students at UWaterloo if they saw this as a requirement for a future program of interest.

Recommendation 9: Include more content on peace and justice issues related to Indigenous peoples in Canada.

In response to the review, recommendation suggesting that PACS offer more Indigenous content, PACS will work to collectively integrate Indigenous issues and related content into our existing courses as appropriate, but will not at this time seek to offer a stand-alone course on this topic. In Fall 2013 PACS offered a Special Topics course entitled “Aboriginal and State Relations,” and our experience with this course was that there are other University of Waterloo programs that can offer a dedicated course on this topic better than we can at this time.

PACS faculty understood this recommendation to be not just about teaching indigenous-focused courses, but also about ‘de-colonizing’ their teaching through discussions in seminars and course content. This is a task we will work at the next few years. We additionally noted that there are currently 4 courses on the list of PACS Approved courses that give significant attention to peace and justice issues related to Indigenous groups And an additional 8 courses at UWaterloo that address topics related to Indigenous peoples in Canada. This means that there are already at least 12 courses on these issues that students could choose from if they have interest in deepening their awareness of Indigenous concerns. The 4 courses noted above are already available to students pursuing a PACS Plan, and the additional 8 can be applied to their Plan if students so petition. Students are aware of this petition option and could conceivably petition any of these additional courses to be counted towards their PACS Plan if they had a desire to do so.
**Recommendation 10:** Consider developing a course that focuses specifically on intra-personal conflict and peace.

While the External Review Team suggested that the PACS program consider developing a course on intra-personal conflict, there is ongoing discussion within the program about what this would look like and how it would fit into the PACS mission and vision. The PACS program has intentionally focused on interpersonal, intergroup, and international conflict, as well as international development and sees this as its focus and mandate. Elements of the intrapersonal level of peace is often integrated within other courses by many of the PACS faculty members. One way that this is often incorporated is through the concept of being a reflective practitioner which is part of the intrapersonal level of practice. PACS sees this integrative approach more important than stand-alone courses on this subject.
Date of next program review: July 1, 2019

Signatures of Approval:

Chair/Director

Jan. 11, 2016

Date

Faculty or Administrative Dean

Jan. 27, 2016

Date

Associate Vice-President, Academic
(For undergraduate and augmented programs)

Jan. 27, 2016

Date

Associate Provost, Graduate Studies
(For Graduate and augment programs)

Date