

Two-Year Progress Report

Legal Studies (BA)

September 2016¹

Background

A review of the undergraduate and graduate programs in Legal Studies was conducted on November 18, 2014. At the time of the 2014 Self-Study, the Sociology and Legal Studies faculty complement consisted of twenty-one regular faculty members, with seventeen in the UW Department and four in the SJU Department. Over two days, two consultants met with administrators, faculty, and staff at both the University of Waterloo (UW) and St. Jerome's University (SJU). Meetings included four senior administrators, the Department Chairs from UW and SJU, the Associate Chair of Legal Studies, core legal studies faculty members at both institutions, three members of the Legal Studies Student Society Executive, and Administrative Assistants from UW and SJU.

The External Reviewers identified several strengths of the Legal Studies UG program. They consider the program to be “highly innovative” in the way that the “multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to legal subjects ... brings new questions, new analyses, and new responses to the study of law, regulation, and legal issues.” They also recognized the Legal Studies program’s explicit and implicit fit with the experiential learning priorities of UW. Additionally, the reviewers made fourteen recommendations to improve the Legal Studies UG program. This report outlines the progress made to date in implementing the recommendations as discussed in the External Reviewers’ Report. The joint UW/SJU Legal Studies Committee is responsible for overseeing implementation of changes to the Legal Studies Undergraduate Program, per the *2014 Terms of Reference for the Legal Studies Program*.

Responses to the Reviewers’ Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: The enhancement of experiential learning opportunities for LS students

Enhance the experiential learning opportunities for LS students through the expansion of LS focused co-op opportunities, community-based learning opportunities, and exchange opportunities

The External Reviewers noted the synchronicity between the Legal Studies program and UW’s emphasis on experiential learning and innovation. To further this alignment, they recommended broadening experiential learning opportunities through the provision of more dynamic and law-related Co-op opportunities, opportunities to engage with the community, and study abroad programs. One specific difficulty to the expansion of Co-op opportunities relates to limited LS-focused co-op opportunities in the Arts & Business double major.

¹ Draft report prepared by Rashmee Singh (Acting Assoc. Chair Legal Studies) and Jennifer Schulenberg (Assoc. Chair Legal Studies).

In the past two years, UW and SJU have implemented the following changes to the Legal Studies program. The new Legal Studies plans facilitate access to Co-op opportunities for double majors in Sociology/Legal Studies in addition to existing Legal Studies/ARBUS opportunities. The UW Department has created a Departmental Co-op Officer to liaise with Cooperative Education and Career Action to promote expansion of LS-focused experiential learning opportunities. The UW Department added an experiential learning component to LS 434 (The Sociology of At-Risk Youth), and is in the process of developing experiential learning components in other SOC/LS cross-listed courses. All three of these changes directly address recommendations to broaden experiential learning opportunities for LS majors. In addition, UW is currently in negotiations with Warwick University in the United Kingdom to establish student exchange opportunities. SJU also implemented a co-curricular program entitled "Beyond Borders," which allows Legal Studies students to pursue study abroad. St Jerome's University established the Beyond Borders international volunteer experience in 2005 - and since then has placed over 100 UW students in countries such as Ukraine, Peru, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Uganda and Kenya. Both UW and SJU will continue to explore avenues for developing relationships with community-based organizations to create internship or co-op opportunities.

Status: Completed.

Recommendation 2: Specify course and learning outcomes to improve their resonance with the field of Legal Studies.

In the revision plan and course outcomes, attention should be paid to the articulation and inclusion of components that are specific to the field of Legal Studies.

In response to the External Reviewers' recommendations to tailor the learning outcomes in a way that is more specific and relevant to the field of Legal Studies, the Legal Studies Committee comprised of faculty from both UW and SJU created a sub-committee to review learning outcomes and to consult with faculty members providing Legal Studies courses. This is an extensive and ongoing task, which began in the summer of 2016, and will continue until completed. The curriculum sub-committee drafted benchmark learning objectives and LS competencies recommendations which were submitted for intensive review by working groups at the Legal Studies Retreat (January 20, 2017). The results of this review are in the process of being collated. They will be returned to the curriculum subcommittee for further review, and then forwarded through the Legal Studies process for approval.

Status: Completed/Ongoing (expect learning objectives completion Fall 2017).

Recommendation 3: Review, expand, and update Legal Studies course offerings to ensure that courses are consistently offered and include sufficient legal content.

Institute a mechanism for regular and formal review of all Legal Studies course offerings with the aim of deleting courses that have no expectation of being offered in the next three years. Consult further with partner departments to ensure that Legal Studies cross-listed courses have sufficient legal content and that sufficient places in courses are available and guaranteed for Legal Studies students. Make some Legal Studies courses, especially required courses, available during the summer term.

The LS Curriculum Committee was struck in the February of 2015 and is currently in the process of conducting these responsibilities. In addition to reviewing learning outcomes and engaging in faculty consultations, the curriculum sub-committee will review the Legal Studies curriculum and course offerings and provide an annual report to the Legal Studies Committee. In the winter of 2016, the Legal Studies Committee began consultations with Legal Studies undergraduate students to identify program strengths and weaknesses, opportunities for growth, and program challenges. The Associate Chair is consulting with partner departments to coordinate offerings in the spring terms. The new UW Legal Studies Lecturer position is scheduled to teach two LS courses in the Spring 2017 term.

Status: Completed/Ongoing (expected curriculum review completion Fall 2017).

Recommendation 4: Both UW and SJU should further develop the identity of the Legal Studies program and discuss the direction of the program.

Plan a Legal Studies faculty retreat devoted to discussing the focus and direction of the program.

The External Review recommended further developing the future and direction of the Legal Studies program with the aims of: examining content gaps, deficiencies, and the program's focus; incorporating more courses that ensure critical perspectives on race, class, gender, sexual identity, and disability; differentiating the program from existing Legal Studies programs; and examining the content of first and fourth year courses to ensure they provide students with the knowledge and skills that constitute the essentials of a Legal Studies degree.

The Legal Studies Retreat of January 20, 2017 produced several key outcomes that serve to identify and differentiate the UW Legal Studies program from other similar programs as well to establish longer-term objectives pertaining to graduates of the Legal Studies program. These retreat outcomes will form the basis of a Legal Studies Mission Statement, executive summary, and related promotional documents. The Legal Studies Committee will be responsible for developing the mission statement and related documents. The results of this process will be forwarded through the Legal Studies approval process.

Status: Completed.

Recommendation 5: Re-consider the methods requirements for the Legal Studies program and consider making Statistics optional, rather than a mandatory program requirement.

Consider removal of the statistical methods course as a program requirement and make it an optional course in the program.

Social Statistics (LS 280) is no longer a requirement for LS majors. Instead, LS majors are required to take Research Methods (LS 221), which introduces students to both quantitative and qualitative methods, and they have the option of either Social Statistics (LS 280) or Field Research Methods (LS 322) to fulfill the methodology requirements for the UG Legal Studies degree (2015 degree plans). LS 280 is removed from plans 2016 and onward. UW has expanded the number of sections of LS 322 to ensure that LS students can avail themselves of this option and has hired a field research specialist to ensure high quality methods training for LS students. These changes are effective Fall 2016 for all LS academic plans.

Status: Completed.

Recommendation 6: Ensure the provision of adequately qualified and trained TA's particularly for courses where undergraduate students currently provide TA support to instructors.

Develop a plan to ensure that TAs who are adequately qualified and trained to grade a full range of types of assessments are available as needed to the Legal Studies program.

The Chairs of UW and SJU have developed a TA coordination plan to ensure Legal Studies 101 receives sufficient TA resources for large enrollment courses provided by SJU. The implementation of this plan will require expansion of the UW graduate program to ensure the availability of highly qualified graduate-level TAs with expertise in the field of Legal Studies. The UW Department has established a new socio-legal studies thematic area (Crime, Law, and Security) at the graduate level (MA and PhD) to provide legal studies training opportunities and expand the range of highly qualified TAs to support the LS UG program.

Status: Completed.

Recommendation 7: Develop a plan for the consistency of content when multiple faculty members develop and administer different sections of the same course, specifically LS 101, LS 401 and LS 402.

The Legal Studies program faculty members should develop a policy on the issue of consistency among the different sections of Legal Studies 101 and of Legal Studies 401 and Legal Studies 402 and guidance as to basic course expectations.

SJU faculty examined the course content from all sections of LS 401 and LS 402. These are now coordinated as of 2016. Starting in September 2016, SJU faculty are examining LS 101 to better ensure consistency.

Status: Completed/Ongoing (expected completion Fall 2017).

Recommendation 8: Expand the number of permanent faculty members with expertise in Legal Studies at SJU

New tenure track positions in Legal Studies should be made a funding priority for SJU. Every effort should be made to create two new tenure track positions in Legal Studies over the next two years.

SJU hired two new tenure track faculty members in Legal Studies (2015 and 2016) and one definite term Assistant Professor position in Legal Studies (2016).

Status: Completed.

Recommendation 9: Expand the number of permanent faculty members with expertise in Legal Studies at UW.

To the extent possible, make Legal Studies as an area of expertise a priority in filling any new tenure track positions in the Sociology Department at UW, with a goal of at least two new hires with expertise in Legal Studies in the near future. Ensure that all future faculty

advertisements for positions in Sociology note that scholars with expertise in Legal Studies are encouraged to apply.

UW has recruited an external candidate for a Canada Research Chair position in Law and Society (2016) and has added a (renewable) Lecturer position in Legal Studies (2016). New faculty will expand the options available for LS students. The UW hires will also contribute to the Crime, Law, and Security thematic area and will increase the overall number of graduate students with requisite experience to TA for the Legal Studies UG program. The UW Department has prioritized Legal Studies as an area of expertise for new hires at UW. In this regard, the Department is currently hiring a tenure line faculty position in *Contemporary Social Theory and Law*. This position will contribute expertise to the Legal Studies UG program.

Status: Completed.

Recommendation 10: Build a stronger Legal Studies research community to enhance communication between the SJU and UW faculty.

Take steps to build a stronger Legal Studies research community and to enhance communication between the SJU and UW faculty who teach and research in the field of Legal Studies. This communication would ensure that the curriculum is coordinated. It would also importantly enhance a sense of research community, which is particularly crucial for the smaller number of Legal Studies faculty at SJU, in order that they not feel isolated.

The development of a stronger Legal Studies research community is a central objective of both UW and SJU Departments, and will occur organically as new faculty join the Legal Studies program. The Legal Studies Committee and the Departments will facilitate the process of community building by promoting Legal Studies scholarship through the Speaker Series and brown bag workshops. The Department of Sociology and Legal Studies Speaker Series hosted two high-profile Law professors examining the timely issues of statelessness and legal discourse (Jan. 2017) and counter-terrorism under Trump (Feb. 2017). The Legal Studies Retreat (January 2017) also provided a forum for LS faculty to come together to examine additional ideas for building a LS research community.

Status: Ongoing (Retreat completed Jan 2017).

Recommendation 11: Develop a marketing strategy to both attract new Legal Studies students.

Develop and implement a marketing strategy for the Legal Studies program.

In response to this recommendation, the LS faculty and advisors at both UW and SJU have engaged in several activities and university events to recruit new majors and advertise the Legal Studies program and benefits of a Legal Studies degree. LS advisors and faculty members regularly participate in the March Break open house and the University's "Declare your Major Event." The LS advisors also developed a LEARN site to develop and communicate information, opportunities, and events to LS students. Instructors in LS 202 (Criminal Law) implemented an in-class speaker series to promote "real world" engagement with course content, and the LS Associate Chair is promoting Co-op opportunities through joint-majors with sociology and other programs. With support from the Department, the Legal Studies Student Society launched the *Legal Studies Undergraduate Journal* to showcase the scholarly contributions of Legal Studies students and to promote the field of Legal Studies (Vol. 1, 2016 available

at: <http://openjournals.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/LSUJ/index>).

Status: Completed.

Recommendation 12: Examine strategies for retaining Legal Studies students in the program through the implementation of a survey to obtain information on program strengths and challenges.

Conduct a comprehensive survey of Legal Studies students, with one of the goals being to improve retention rates.

A comprehensive consultation survey of Legal Studies students to determine program strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges has been completed. The online survey and focus group discussions with Legal Studies UG students were the result of collaboration with the Centre for Teaching Excellence. Survey and focus group outcomes were presented at the Legal Studies Retreat on January 20, 2017. These outcomes are used to inform the development learning outcomes and program direction (see Recommendation 2).

Status: Completed.

Recommendation 13: Improve the tracking system of recent Legal Studies graduates

The Legal Studies program should work with the Alumni Office to develop a better tracking system for its graduates and work with the Development office to develop fund raising opportunities.

In the Spring of 2015, the UW Department Chair initiated several improvements to the tracking of and collection of information on recent Legal Studies graduates. The Department established an Alumni Officer to liaise with the Development Office to communicate with alumni and recruit them for events, such as Career Days.

Status: Completed.

Recommendation 14: Develop program and degree options for graduate students with a clear interest in Legal Studies, which will ideally be a stand-alone Legal Studies degree with different requirements.

Develop a graduate program for Legal Studies students, which would attract students and ensure retention of Legal Studies faculty. Consider a graduate program or stream that does not require them to complete all the Sociology requirements.

The UW Department is enthusiastic about the prospect of developing a stand-alone degree option for students who apply to the Department to pursue a graduate degree in Sociology & Legal Studies. There are several steps in the completion of this objective. The addition of a potential Canada Research Chair in Law and Society (2016-17) and the addition of a tenure line faculty in social theory and law (2017) builds key capacities that are foundational to developing a Legal Studies MA. The UW Department has also identified, resourced, and determined the course cluster for a *Crime, Law, and Security* thematic area in the SOC MA and PhD programs (Fall 2016). Identifying and resourcing the thematic area is an important step in building capacity for a future stand-alone Legal Studies MA. The next step is to develop the crime, law, and security area into a specialization under the SOC MA. This SOC MA

specialization will offer students a Major Research Paper (MRP) with departmental co-op option in support of experiential learning. The proposed specialization is currently under development in the Department. The timeline for completing the SOC MA specialization (MRP with departmental co-op) in Crime, Law, and Security is F18. Building on the SOC MA specialization (co-op) and the success of the LS UG program, the ideal stand-alone Legal Studies MA will be based on a distributed teaching model with interdisciplinary objectives. This will require a feasibility study and involve the co-operation of several UW departments/programs. The Legal Studies MA will require further negotiations, resource allocation, and additional capacity building in contributing departments/programs. The timeline for the stand-alone LS MA is Fall 2019.

Status: Partial completion/Ongoing (expect completion Fall 2019).

Date of next program review

Date

Signatures of Approval:

Chair/Director

Date

Faculty or Administrative Dean

Date

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

Date

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

Date