

Medieval Studies Undergraduate Program – 2-year progress report to Senate, 16
September 2015

The Medieval Studies program underwent its assessment in 2010-11, with the final report in response to the external assessors' recommendations being submitted to Senate in May 2013. This progress report examines the work we have undertaken since that time to respond to the twelve recommendations submitted to us by the external assessors.

The program has been largely dependent on sessional instructors for teaching in the past 3 years since the two co-Directors have spent this time seconded to their respective Faculty Association presidencies. The terms of both presidencies end June 30.

Recommendation 1. That the list of courses available for the program be pruned to remove courses that have not been offered for several years or no longer have sufficient medieval content.

Status: Done

Details: We have pruned the list to remove courses that are no longer offered, and modified the program to align with Faculty of Arts plan standardization. The revised program documents are in queue for approval at the June 2015 meeting of the Arts Undergraduate Affairs Group.

Recommendation 2. That a required capstone course at the 400-level be developed.

Status: Done

Details: As a result of the History plan standardization initiative that has recently been completed, the HIST 402A/B courses have been eliminated and replaced by a 1.5-credit HIST 450 project-based course. The co-Directors plan to submit a request to UGAG this Fall to require that all Medieval Studies Honours and 4-year General majors take HIST 450 on a Medieval topic.

Recommendation 3. That "Topics in Medieval Studies" at the various levels (MEDVL 29X, MEDVL 39X, and MEDVL 49X) be created.

Status: Under discussion

Details: The Co-Directors are presently exploring whether it is desirable, as the reviewers suggested, to create "Topics in Medieval Studies" courses at the various levels, or whether there may be pre-existing course codes available in the faculty of Arts that might serve the same purpose. Discussions are currently under way and the Co-Directors plan to implement a recommendation by the end of 2015 – 2016.

Recommendation 4. That both co-directors be given some course release, commensurate with the administrative work this program involves, e.g. the remission of a course every third year.

Status: Done

Details: At UW, course remission is not available to the co-Director, however he receives annually a research expense account equivalent to 1/3 of a course release. At SJU, Article 26.5 of the Collective Agreement requires that the co-Director receive, per three-year term of appointment, one course release plus one half sessional stipend.

Recommendation 5. That Medieval Studies be provided with two or three sessional stipends annually for program courses.

Status: Done

Details: The SJU co-Director receives in his annual program budget two sessional stipends. He hires two sessional instructors per academic year to teach in the program.

Recommendation 6. That a space be assigned for the use of Medieval Studies students at St. Jerome's University.

Status: Under construction

Details: The site redevelopment plan at SJU is well underway and the skeletons for all new buildings are now erected. Medieval Studies students will benefit from dedicated space in the newly extended academic buildings.

Recommendation 7. That Medieval Studies be assigned administrative support at St. Jerome's University.

Status: Done

Details: Administrative support on UW campus is handled ably by the administrative assistant in Classical Studies. At SJU, Article 27 of the Collective Agreement requires that dedicated administrative assistance is available to all academic programs. In addition, the SJU Vice-President Academic and Dean (VPAD) is currently hiring a new faculty-dedicated administrative assistant to work with programs such as Medieval Studies.

Recommendation 8. That the student data management system be amended so that Medieval Studies students can be tracked.

Status: Not done

Details: What the reviewers were attempting to capture with this recommendations is that it is impossible for MEDVL students to search the schedule of classes for courses from the Medieval Studies list that are offered in any given term. Currently, the co-Directors must comb the registrar's office database manually to compile and distribute a list to students each term.

Recommendation 9. That the broader expertise within the University in web design be tapped to work with the co-directors to redevelop the website.

Status: Done

Details: The Medieval Studies website is kept up-to-date in terms of program requirement information by the Administrative Assistant in Classical Studies.

Recommendation 10. That efforts be made by the Faculty of Arts and St. Jerome's to enhance scholarships and awards available to students in Medieval Studies through the respective Advancement offices.

Status: Not viable under current financial conditions

Details: At SJU, the restructuring of the Advancement Office and the accompanying launch of a major capital campaign to support Site Redevelopment have limited opportunities to develop targeted scholarships outside of that framework. At UW, in Classical Studies, the departmental Travel Bursary for students has been eliminated.

Recommendation 11. That a Medieval Studies Advisory Committee be formed, made up of members of relevant departments (e.g., Classics, History, English, Philosophy, Études Françaises) with a strong interest in medieval studies.

Status: In discussion

Details: In light of the restructuring of Women's Studies, SJU and UW are in discussion to consider advanced best governance structures for small interdisciplinary programs. The co-Directors hope to have a revised governance framework, possibly involving an Advisory Board in place by the end of the 2015-16 academic year.

Recommendation 12. That the Medieval Studies program have a seat on the St. Jerome's University Academic Committee.

Status: Not done

Details: Despite having responsibility for a full honours program, dedicated majors, a large departmental budget, and all the administrative oversight of a small department (e.g., responsibility for program reviews, plan modifications, development of new courses and programs, coordination of an international student exchange program, etc.),

the SJU co-Director is not a member of the SJU Academic Committee since he is not a Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

-Steven Bednarski and David Porreca
co-Directors, Medieval Studies Undergraduate Program