



History and Political Science, Brescia University College Final Assessment Report

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Brescia University College
Degrees Offered	B.A.
Modules Reviewed	Honors Specialization in History; Specialization in History; Major in History; Major in Political Science
External Consultants	Dr Catherine Carstairs, University of Guelph Dr Ian Roberge, Glendon College, York University, Toronto
Internal Reviewers	Dr James E. Crimmins, Acting Dean of Arts and Social Science, Huron University College
Date of Site Visit	March 14-15, 2018
Evaluation	Good Quality with Report in Two Years
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: June 6, 2018 SCAPA: September 12, 2018 Senate: September 21, 2018

Executive Summary

The Internal Reviewer and the External Consultants, Dr. Catherine Carstairs of the University of Guelph and Dr. Ian Roberge of Glendon College at York University, spent two days on the Brescia campus, March 14-15, 2018, interviewing History and Political Science faculty and students, College staff, and Brescia and Western administrators. They received the History and Political Science self-study well in advance of their visit and came prepared to explore questions they had previously identified as necessary to compile a complete and helpful report. The Consultants conducted their research thoroughly, sympathetic to the nature of a liberal arts college within a larger research-intensive university. They have provided a balanced assessment which recognizes the considerable contributions of the faculty in each program in creating a beneficial learning environment for their students and offer numerous helpful suggestions for improving the programs and enriching the students' learning experience. The Consultants' Report is encumbered to some extent by the need to review two programs that possess no substantive relation to each other beyond students possibly enrolling in combined Majors, and does so by alternating comments on each program under the several headings requiring comment. Consideration may be given to assessing these programs separately in the next cyclical review, though it should be noted that a new joint module was recently approved on Power in History and Politics.

The Consultants offer positive remarks on the exemplary dedication of the History and Political Science faculty to the students in their programs, the tenured members of which are all active researchers, the consistency between the learning outcomes of the programs and the broad expectations in these disciplines, and the strong student responses to the value of the education they receive. Where they see room for improvement they have specified recommendations encompassing modest programmatic changes, teaching a greater variety of courses, broadening the student learning experience beyond the classroom into inquiry-based experiential and study abroad opportunities, filling gaps in course offerings by hiring new faculty, and encouraging collaboration with the other affiliated Colleges to broaden student choice. However, the main challenge confronting the History and Political Science programs is not discussed in any detail by the Consultants—the relatively low program enrolments detailed in the History and Political Science self-study, which seriously jeopardizes the likelihood that their key recommendation to hire additional faculty will be fulfilled.

Significant Strengths of the Program

- All tenured faculty are active researchers and dedicated teachers, highly committed to their students and passionate about student learning and success.
- Learning outcomes are consistent with the Brescia competencies as well as with broad expectations in the respective disciplines.
- Innovative teaching and assessment strategies in History.
- Strong student responses to the value of their education.

Suggestions for Improvement & Enhancement

- The faculty complement of both programs is small—two full-time tenured faculty in History and one in Political Science, supported by a number of contract faculty—which makes it extremely difficult to offer a full range or sufficient diversity of courses. It is recommended that additional full-time faculty be hired. Unfortunately, the Consultants do not clearly state the desirable number of additional faculty needed in each program, save the recommendation that Political Science would benefit from hiring a female member of faculty to increase diversity of perspectives.
- In History the curriculum is focused on Canada and Europe and needs greater global breadth and more attention to offerings in women's and gender history; in Political Science there are no courses offered in two important areas of the discipline—Political Theory and Comparative Politics. New hires could address these gaps. It is also recommended that faculty rotate courses to increase options and that students be encouraged to enroll in courses at other affiliated Colleges where needed.
- Collaboration across the affiliated Colleges to enhance the curriculum, including cross-listing senior courses and offering joint courses which could be helpful in increasing the enrolments in some senior courses at Brescia which are presently very low.
- Explore further ways to employ technology in the classroom.
- The Political Science Major has a new capstone course on Women in Politics that involves a workplace experience and extensive mentorship. History offers experiential learning opportunities in several of its courses, but none involving workplace engagement. While the new module on Power in History and Politics will include a capstone course with an experiential learning component, it is recommended that independent research-based study courses be developed that would require a workplace learning experience.
- Low enrolments in the Minor in Public Administration suggests that resources might be better devoted to the Political Science Major and the new module on Power in History and Politics.
- More attention to promoting student exchanges to overcome a perceived lack of student interest in the opportunities and benefits of an international experience.

Both History and Political Science jointly and the Academic Dean at Brescia have written helpful responses to the Consultants' Report which underscores the determination to improve these programs in manageable ways, including the possibility of offering a course in Political Science in political management, expanding experiential learning opportunities, further collaboration with King's University College to enhance course selection, and promoting student exchanges as part of the broader College internationalization initiative. However, the faculty in neither program supports offering additional courses beyond their present expertise and current student demand, and Political Science resists the suggestion of eliminating the Minor in Public Administration, which has few students, on the grounds that this module is effectively part of the Major in Political Science and is offered at no additional cost. Further, while both History and Political Science would welcome the addition of new fulltime faculty, neither the tenured faculty in these programs nor the Academic Dean offer much hope that this recommendation will be fulfilled. Nevertheless, the sustainability of the programs would seem to require that some action be taken to bolster the core faculty in order to expand and diversify course offerings and to reduce the very considerable weight that rests on the current small cohort of full-time faculty.

Recommendations Required for Program Sustainability

Recommendation	Responsibility
Evaluate the modules, particularly those with low enrollments, to rationalize them with the teaching and learning resources available. Look to leverage related courses at other campuses to supplement potential deficits in learning.	Department
Expand the number of experiential learning experiences and study abroad opportunities in these modules	Department