



**Animal Ethics and Sustainability Leadership  
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan  
September 2023**

<b>Faculty / Affiliated University College</b>	Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Huron University College	
<b>Degrees Offered</b>	B.A.	
<b>Date of Introduction</b>	September 1, 2024	
<b>New Module</b>	Major and Minor in Animal Ethics and Sustainability Leadership (AESL)	
<b>External Reviewers</b>	Dr. Michael Gilmour, Distinguished Professor of New Testament & English Literature, Providence University College	Dr. Alice J. Hovorka, Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change, York University
<b>Internal Reviewer</b>	Dr. John Mitchell, Associate Academic Dean Brescia University College	
<b>Date of Site Visit</b>	August 15 & 16, 2023	
<b>Date Review Report Received</b>	August 30, 2023	
<b>Date Program/Faculty Response Received</b>	Program: September 15, 2023 Faculty: September 15, 2023	
<b>Evaluation</b>	Approved to Commence	
<b>Approval Dates</b>	SUPR-U: October 11, 2023 ACA: October 25, 2023 Senate: November 10, 2023	
<b>Year of First Review</b>	2031-2032	
<b>Progress Report</b>	June 2027	

### **Overview of Western's Program Proposal and Approval Process**

In accordance with Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the new program proposal, report prepared by external reviewers, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of Animal Ethics and Sustainability Leadership to be delivered by the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Huron University College.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program's proposal brief;
- the external reviewers' report;
- the response from the academic unit; and
- the response from the Academic Dean, Huron University College

This FAR identifies the strengths of the proposed program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Senate Undergraduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-U), ACA and Senate. Following institutional approval, it is then submitted for approval to the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance.

## **Executive Summary**

The proposed Animal Ethics and Sustainability Leadership (AESL) Program (Major and Minor modules) is an interdisciplinary arts and social sciences learning pathway that will build the capacities of students to thoughtfully understand and respond to contemporary socioeconomic challenges for the benefit of diverse people, animals, and our shared environment. The proposed module combines topical knowledge on animal ethics and sustainability with the development of organizational leadership skills.

The module assembles already existing courses in different disciplines that are topically connected in combination with a small number of new courses to add focused expertise. The module thus provides a multi-faceted but coherent learning pathway that concentrates on how other species are conceptualized and used by our own, and how to cultivate more humane and sustainable workplaces and societies. Structurally, the program requires 2.0 credits (0.5 from each of Management and Organizational Studies; Governance, Leadership and Ethics; Global Great Books; and Philosophy) to ensure depth of specialized knowledge through an interdisciplinary framework. Students also select from three clusters of electives that a) provide foundational learning in preparation for subsequent courses, b) deliver breadth of knowledge on animal issues and sustainability with topical courses, and c) build core management knowledge and skills of value for meaningfully leading and contributing to the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The enrolment target goal for five years after creation is 20 domestic students and five international students.

No undergraduate program in Canada focuses on animals through the arts and social sciences or on how human-animal questions intersect with the theory and practice of sustainability. This larger context and scholarly lacunae offer a unique opportunity to develop a distinct, innovative, and rigorous program that attracts diverse students compelled to tackle today's multispecies challenges and equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to make meaningful impacts.

## **Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program**

- This Program reflects the best of interdisciplinary collaboration with a noteworthy number of departments contributing offerings that serve as core courses or electives for the modules.
  - This interdisciplinary learning pathway provides an opportunity to further 1) diversify the student body in MOS classrooms; 2) broaden the sustainability focused options available to MOS students; 3) enhance students' legal and policy knowledge and skills especially in Governance, Leadership, and Ethics; 4) boost enrolment numbers in Global Great Books and Philosophy.
- Significant experiential learning opportunities, student internships and career pathways focused on animal wellbeing in the non-profit, private, and public sectors will be part of this program.

- Intellectual foundation for people committed to making political and organizational changes, driven to lead, innovate, and significantly improve how economic and political activities are undertaken in the social, cultural, political, and legal dimensions of human-animal relations in the context of the climate emergency, economic polarization, and calls for racial and gender justice.
- The prospective program coordinator is a highly regarded scholar, recognized by the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars and by being named a Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics.

### **Proposal Preparation and Review Process**

Following an analysis of the global availability of programs foregrounding animal issues and of the Ontario and Canadian academic landscape of program offerings, the following key stakeholders were consulted in the development of the proposed program.

- President, Huron University College
- Provost/Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Huron University College
- Interim Vice-President Academic Dean, King's University College
- Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Huron University College
- Associate Academic Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Western
- Associate Dean (Undergraduate Studies) Faculty of Social Science, Western
- Director, Indigenous Studies Program, Western
- Chair, Department of Geography, Western
- Department Chairs: Philosophy, MOS, History, Political Science – Huron University College
- Coordinators: Global Great Books Program and Governance, Leadership and Ethics Program – Huron University College
- Co-Directors, Centre for Global Studies, Huron University College
- Faculty members from Philosophy, Theology, Political Science, History, Geography and MOS – Huron University College

Following the approval to proceed with an external review, a review committee was struck up comprising two external reviewers, and one internal reviewer. Reviewers were provided with the program proposal brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met virtually over two days with the:

- Provost and FASS Dean, Huron University College
- Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- Chair of Management and Organizational Studies (MOS) Program – Huron
- Unit Leaders and Faculty Members from MOS; Philosophy; Governance, Leadership, and Ethics; Global Great Books – Huron
- Registrar – Huron

- Director of Library and Learning Services
- Coordinator of Teaching and Research
- Program Assistants

Following the virtual site visit, the external reviews produced a comprehensive review report with recommendations which was sent to the academic unit and the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science at Huron University College for review and response. These formative documents, including the new program proposal brief, the external reviewer report, and the Program and Faculty responses, have formed the basis of this summative assessment report of the proposed Major and Minor in Animal Ethics and Sustainability Leadership.

### **Summative Assessment – External Reviewers’ Report**

*External reviewers shared that they are “very supportive of the AESL program given that it brings the topic of animals to the fore, encourages sustainability leadership, and highlights interdisciplinarity and intersectionality through core and elective courses. We anticipate student interest to be high, and the program has potential to be a great resource for organizations/employers working with animals and in sustainability. Ultimately, it reflects the aspirational vision of HUC and MOS as ‘leading with ‘heart’ ”.*

### **Strengths and/or Unique Aspects of the Program**

- The AESL initiative is both a bold and exciting effort to meet a need and fill an educational gap.
- The proposed program demonstrates a clear awareness of the academic contexts of animal studies and cognate subject areas.
- The aspirational aspect of AESL aligns well with Western’s aim to produce graduates who explore complex problems from a variety of perspectives, recognizing bias, and identifying missing or underrepresented voices.
- Seven electives taught in five additional departments are taught regularly and largely by full-time faculty members, which bodes well for students’ access to a robust range of course offerings in the field of animal studies.
  - The program makes full use of existing HUC courses, bundling them into this novel offering is a sound approach to resourcing.
- The “experiential learning opportunities” are an attractive feature with potential to appeal to students.
- The program is well supported by faculty members, administrative staff, and library resources to ensure effective course delivery and continuity.
- Small class size (less than 30 students) and the sense of community building and skills training.

### **Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement**

- Consider ways of engaging 1) first-year students, as there are no first-year courses in the proposed program; 2) students interested in pursuing graduate studies. (*Embedded in Recommendation 1*)
- Integration of an opportunity for more advanced research at the undergraduate level (e.g., capstone course and/or thesis opportunity). (*Embedded in Recommendation 2*)
- Addition of a dedicated first-year core course to either draw students into the AESL module or to make explicit to students how the module is structured. (*Embedded in Recommendation 2*)
- “Animal Ethics” Curriculum can be strengthened by 1) adding a course on animal literature or equivalent in future; 2) further aligning GGB 3001F/G Nature and Technology, a core course, with the program’s objectives; 3) exploring ways that theological and pastoral studies may be integrated into AESL; 4) ensuring that core courses incorporate diverse worldviews and approaches that unpack the normalized animal studies canon. (*Embedded in recommendation 3*)
- Further articulating how knowledge, skills, and values of ‘sustainability leadership’ will be incorporated into the “Sustainability Leadership” Curriculum. (*Embedded in Recommendation 4*)

**Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses**

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers. Recommendations requiring implementation have been marked with an asterisk (\*).

Reviewers’ Recommendation	Program/Faculty Response
<p><b>Recommendation #1*</b> RECRUITMENT Incorporate methods for 1) engaging first-year students; 2) preparation for graduate studies for those students aspiring to postgraduate programs in this area.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The program plans to incorporate methods for engaging first-year students and those interested in postgraduate studies into its recruitment plan. The aim is to recruit from students already on campus and devise targeted recruitment, so students choose Huron specifically for the AESL major. Huron’s exceptional recruitment staff and sector-leading application trends are indicators that recruiting students through this unique and timely degree pathway will be achievable.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s office fully supports the reviewers’ suggestions and the ideas put forward by the department.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #2*</b> CURRICULAR STRUCTURE As the program gets its footing, consider integrating 1) a capstone project or thesis; 2) a first-year introductory course.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> At this time, a general first-year program of study is suitable preparation for the AESL major and minor, and MOS 2185 serves as the foundational topical course, as noted by the reviewers. Curricular learning will be supplemented by co-curricular community building and educational opportunities overseen and led by the coordinator in concert with the students in the program, including those in first year (such as speakers on campus, volunteer opportunities). The 4000-level MOS independent study is also included in the module as an option for students seeking an in-depth, independent research- based learning opportunity.</p> <p>Preliminary discussions have begun about an interdisciplinary first year course on sustainability that could feed into AESL (among other programs) and the MOS department chair has committed to developing and scheduling an AESL capstone.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office supports the department’s response to these suggestions.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #3*</b> 'ANIMAL ETHICS' CURRICULUM a) Consider adding a course on animal literature or equivalent; and, add an English course listed in the Foundational Knowledge Group would enhance the curriculum.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The required Global Great Books course exposes students in AESL to global, historical, and contemporary literature to recognize its crucial role in human and multispecies thought and action. Huron’s English department has offered a selected topics course on animals and culture and preliminary discussion with the department chair revealed that the department will consider creating a new, permanent course of this kind in the medium term.</p> <p>The program does not think it necessary to re-write GGB 3001F/G Nature and Technology course description. Nature is part of sustainability considerations and with three of the four required courses centering animals, the themes and topics explored in GGB 3001F/G will add value and breadth to students’ education.</p>

<p>b) Align GGB 3001F/G Nature and Technology, a core course, with the program's objectives, either by adjusting the title or description, or replacing this offering with a new animal-focused course.</p> <p>c) Explore ways that theological and pastoral studies may be integrated into AESL.</p> <p>d) Further ensure that core courses incorporate diverse worldviews and approaches.</p>	<p>The Dean, Faculty of Theology supports for the AESL proposal and is open to collaborative discussions about new opportunities.</p> <p>Equity, diversity, and inclusion, and a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation are key planks in Huron's new strategic plan, as well as part of MOS' value and mission statement. 1) Both MOS 2185 and GLE 3011 have intersectional and diverse thinkers and examples interwoven throughout the course content. GGB 3001 is, by design, global and cross-cultural. 2) PHIL 3725 will integrate diverse worldviews and approaches to animals and multispecies relations, including from Indigenous and ecofeminist thought.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean's office agrees with a) [and can confirm] the English Department considering cross listing a new course in this area; b) the department's response regarding GGB 3001F/G and is happy that Global Great Books is part of the required courses for the modules; c) the addition of some Theology or Religious Studies courses to the modules in the near future; d) further integrating Indigenous and EDI texts and perspectives into the program, in alignment with Huron's academic plan regarding the integration of Indigenous and global perspectives.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #4*</b> 'SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP' CURRICULUM Articulate how knowledge, skills, and values of 'sustainability leadership' will be incorporated into the curriculum.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The AESL major/minor emphasizes animal ethics leadership, sustainability leadership, and the intersections between the two. Both areas of concentration reflect the foundational structure of the degree: topical knowledge + leadership skills. Students will gain sustainability leadership knowledge and skills in research, critical thinking, argumentation, and written and verbal communication skills in 1) both of the required MOS 2185A/B Animal Welfare and Sustainability Leadership and GLE 3011F/G Animals in Law and Policy; 2) GLE 2004 F/G Environmental Stewardship, PHIL 3850F/G Climate Justice, CGS 3527 F/G Global Energy Regimes, and POL 3379E Global Environmental Politics; 3) GLE 2003F/G Introduction to Leadership provides foundational leadership theory and skills; 4) the "Organizational Leadership and Success" pick list (1.5 credits), which ensures that students have heightened leadership and management skills along with knowledge of the details of organizations.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> As the department's response outlines, sustainability leadership is deeply embedded in several of the required and elective courses although it was fair of the reviewers to point out that this was not previously explicitly outlined.</p>

### Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Program Coordinator, and the Dean of the Faculty is responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan.

All recommendations presented by the external reviewers have been prioritized for implementation, as indicated below. However, one sub-recommendation (#3b) has been excluded as the Academic Unit and Faculty have respectfully indicated that it will not be actioned, as per the response in the summary table above.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p><b>Recommendation #1</b> RECRUITMENT Incorporate methods for 1) engaging first-year students; 2) preparation for graduate studies for those students aspiring to postgraduate programs in this area.</p>	<p>Collaborate with the MOS department chair and pertinent Huron service departments, to develop and implement recruitment programs and communications targeting in-house and future students.</p>	<p>Program Coordinator</p>	<p>By September 2024</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #2</b> CURRICULAR STRUCTURE As the program gets its footing, consider integrating 1) a capstone project or thesis, 2) a first-year introductory course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plan, develop and schedule an interdisciplinary first year course on sustainability that could feed into AESL (among other programs).</li> <li>- Develop and schedule an AESL capstone opportunity.</li> </ul>	<p>Program Coordinator  With support from the MOS Dept Chair, Registrar and Dean/Provost</p>	<p>Phased in between September 2024 and September 2028</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #3</b> 'ANIMAL ETHICS' CURRICULUM a) Consider adding a course on animal literature or equivalent; and, add an English course listed in the Foundational Knowledge Group would enhance the curriculum. c) Explore ways that theological and pastoral studies may be integrated into AESL.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) In collaboration with the Chair of the English Department, create a new permanent course on animals and culture in the medium term.</li> <li>c) Collaborate with the Dean, Faculty of Theology to determine ways of incorporating pastoral and religious studies in the AESL program.</li> <li>d) Work with AESL instructors to further highlight the inclusion of EDID in courses across the curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p>Program Coordinator</p>	<p>By June 2025</p>

<p>d) Further ensure that core courses incorporate diverse worldviews and approaches.</p>			
<p><b>Recommendation #4</b> 'SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP' CURRICULUM Articulate how knowledge, skills, and values of 'sustainability leadership' will be incorporated into the curriculum.</p>	<p>Explore the addition of courses to the "pick list" that will provide opportunities for students and further strengthen their leadership knowledge and skills in service of sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Program Coordinator</li> <li>- Chair, MOS Department</li> </ul>	<p>By June 2025</p>