



Social Justice and Peace Studies Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

Faculty / Affiliated University College	King's University College
Degrees Offered	BA
Modules Reviewed	Major in Social Justice and Peace Studies
External Consultants	Dr. Heather Eaton, Professor, Saint Paul University (University of Ottawa) Dr. Lowell Ewert, JD. LL.M. Associate Professor, Conrad Grebel University College (University of Waterloo)
Internal Reviewer	Dr. Laretta Frederking, Vice-Principal and Academic Dean, Brescia University College
Date of Site Visit	March 12-13, 2019
Evaluation	Good Quality with Report in Two Years
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: June 10, 2019 SCAPA: October 2, 2019 Senate:
Year of Next Review	2026-27

In accordance with Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses and assessment and evaluation of the undergraduate modules in Social Justice and Peace Studies Program delivered by the Department of Interdisciplinary Programs. This report considers the following documents: the program's self-study, the external consultants' report and the responses from the Department and Affiliated University College. The Final Assessment Report identifies the strengths of the program, opportunities for program enhancement and improvement and details and prioritizes the recommendations of the external consultants and prioritizes those recommendations that are selected for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the Final Assessment Report that are selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, any action or follow-up that is required and the timeline for completion.

The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan is sent for approval through SUPR-U, SCAPA, Senate and the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance and is made

available on a publicly accessible location on Western's IQAP website. The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan is the only document resulting from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public, all other documents are confidential to the Program/Affiliated University College and SUPR-U.

Executive Summary

The site visit for the Social Justice and Peace Program (SJPS) took place on March 12-13, 2019 and consisted of meetings with the Vice-Provost of Academic Programs, Academic Dean, Chair, and other administrative support staff. The visit included sessions with current undergraduate students, faculty (both full-time and contract), and a visit of the library to understand the campus context.

The external consultants' report highly affirms the SJPS program and "commend it for its program structure, delivery, quality of students and instruction, and the level of support it has received from King's University College". They did not identify any critical issues to raise concerns about the quality of the academic program and praised that it contributes to the mission of both King's campus as well as Western.

They recognized that the program has matured since its creation in 2002 and its evolution maintains an activist orientation but within a stronger, more robust academic program with significant academic rigour and accomplishment. The reviewers commended its multidisciplinary approach and suggested that its success could be measured by the ways others programs incorporate social justice themes into their own specialized areas.

The review included an extensive self-study report that identified more tensions and resource challenges than acknowledged by the external reviewers' report. As the department response to the external report reiterated, "in lieu of any overall strategy, a culture of (interdepartmental/program) competition is fostered". While accepting this feedback during the site visit particularly about concerns that other departments may be encroaching in terms of subject matter and courses, the external reviewers maintained that this was an opportunity for deeper collaboration rather than perceived competition or program encroachment.

The SJPS program external reviewers' report also acknowledged the stress on faculty to provide the excellent experiential learning components which are a core part of the program. The department response stated that they had secured funding for a 3-year Community Based Learning coordinator for \$20,000 per year which should alleviate some of the stress identified by the external reviewers.

Significant Strengths of the Program

1. The SJPS Program aligns clearly with Western University's Mission and International Plan that graduates become *global citizens whose education and leadership will serve the public good* and also that students become *globally aware and internationally relevant*.
2. The SJPS Program also aligns with the mission of King's to promote social justice.
3. The SJPS Program has strong support from students who praise the faculty, curriculum, integration of theory and practice, and unique opportunities for experiential learning.

4. The SJPS Program has strong experiential learning opportunities that are both local and global with financial support for students.
5. The SJPS Program is very multi-disciplinary and draws from faculty expertise in political science, philosophy, international studies, religion, critical race theory, peace and gender studies.
6. The SJPS aligns with Western learning outcomes and provides students with skills that enhance many occupations. In this way, the Program is well situated for students interested in SJPS as part of a double major concentration.

Summary of the Reviewers' Key Recommendations and Department/Faculty Responses

1. Limit the number of changes in the program at least for the next few years.

The department concurred that the program has reached a level of curriculum development, faculty resources, and support for students so that no new changes are expected for the next few years.

2. Situate and market the SJPS program more intentionally as a double academic concentration.

The SJPS confirms that it is appealing for students to double major and this multi-disciplinary program supports this type of planning. At the same time, they affirm the importance of "remaining a distinct, independent program" especially "since the SJPS program is unique in that it is one of the only ones in Canada and it is a field of study, itself".

3. Enhance the staffing for the experiential learning part of the program, as it is so core to the success of the student experience and achievement of program objectives.

SJPS reiterated the importance of increased staffing to support the excellent quality and choice of international opportunities for students. Short term funding has come from the Dean of Students and recently, \$20,000 was secured for the 3-year Community Based Learning Coordinator, but they request even more reliable, robust funding in the future. Further, sessional instructors have guided some of these sessions over full-time faculty which may not be ideal for long-run stability of this experiential programming.

4. Initiate a strategic planning process to better position SJPS to grow and expand once the current economic and political climate may change.

The SJPS response agrees fully with this recommendation. After years of significant change and disrupted programming, they welcome the new Principal as an opportunity to involve community stakeholders and relevant departments in a “fruitful planning process”. They commit to a strategic planning process in Fall of 2019 with a strategic plan report by Spring 2020.

5. Celebrate the successes of the SJPS and continue to affirm the mission and purpose of the program in terms of how it fits within the ethos of King’s and Western.

The department response affirmed the strategic plan as an opportunity to inform the broader campus community about the uniqueness of the program. A strategic plan may reinforce its relevance both in terms of King’s Catholic identity but also as a program for centralized engagement of “unique, creative and cutting edge application of peace and justice theory to other disciplines within the academy (department response quoting the external reviewers’ report)”.

Other Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

Curriculum development

The reviewers noted that the program was an obvious department to expand opportunities for Indigenous Studies. They also observed the absence of courses in the area of gender studies and also in the area of the environment, climate change in particular, and recommended a consideration of these areas as a regular part of the curriculum.

Faculty research

The reviewers noted and celebrated the “fundamental change from an activist oriented and perhaps ideologically narrow program to one that has a greater emphasis on academic accomplishment”. They reinforced that enhanced resources could allow faculty to engage in even more cutting-edge research to support its program as a leading program across Canada.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. The Department Chair, in consultation with the Affiliated University College Principal will be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans' Annual Report and filed in the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic).

Recommendation	Responsibility
Initiate a strategic planning process to better position SJPS to grow and expand	Department