

Final Assessment Report for the 2020-2021 Cyclical Program Review of the Social and Environmental Justice (BA) and Social Justice and Community Engagement (MA) Programs

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Laurier's Institutional Quality Assurance Procedures ([Policy 2.1](#)), this Final Assessment Report provides a summary of the review process for the undergraduate Social and Environmental Justice (SEJ) program and Social Justice and Community Engagement (SJCE) Master's program, prepared by the Quality Assurance Office, along with an identification of strengths of the program(s) under review authored by the Dean of Liberal Arts and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. All recommendations made by the external review committee are listed in order, followed by a summary of the programs' response, and the relevant decanal responses. Recommendations not approved for implementation have been identified, and those that have been prioritized are listed in the Implementation Plan.

The Final Assessment Report is reviewed and approved by the Vice-Provost: Teaching and Learning and the Provost and Vice-President: Academic. Following completion of the Final Assessment Report, it is approved by the Program Review Sub-Committee and Senate Academic Planning Committee. Approval dates are listed at the end of this report. Final Assessment Reports are submitted to Senate as part of an annual report on cyclical reviews, and to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance for information. Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Reports are posted on the public-facing page of the [Quality Assurance Office](#) website.

The Implementation Plan for the recommendations prioritized in the Final Assessment Report can be found at the end of this report. Units will submit their first Implementation Report two years following approval of the Final Assessment Report at Senate. The Implementation Report will include comments from the unit on actions taken toward the completion of recommendations, comments from the relevant Dean(s) related to the progress made, and comments from the Program Review Sub-Committee, which is responsible for approving the Implementation Report and deciding if further reports are required. The Senate Academic Planning Committee will also approve the Implementation Report.

SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS

The SEJ and SJCE programs were reviewed in a single Self-Study because of their shared faculty and administrative resources, as well as their disciplinary relationship. The SEJ undergraduate program (formerly Contemporary Studies) was last reviewed in 2012-2013, and this was the first cyclical review of the SJCE program, a new program which began in 2013.

The Self-Study was authored by Dr. Brenda Murphy and Dr. Robert Kristofferson, SEJ and SJCE Program Coordinators, with substantive input and collaboration from faculty in the programs. In addition to the Self-Study (Volume I), the programs also submitted a copy of faculty curricula vita (Volume II), a volume of course syllabi for each program, and a list of proposed external reviewers (Volume III). A draft of the Self-Study was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Office, the Dean of Liberal Arts, and the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies prior to submission of the final version.

As per Laurier's IQAP, the external review committee for the review consisted of two external reviewers from outside the university, and one internal reviewer from Laurier but outside of the department. The review committee was selected by the Program Review Sub-Committee on November 13, 2020, and a virtual external review was scheduled by the Quality Assurance Office for the week of March 15-19, 2021.

The review committee consisted of Dr. Dana Sawchuk from the Department of Sociology at Wilfrid Laurier, Dr. Ann Braithwaite from the Diversity and Social Justice Studies program at the University of Prince Edward Island, and Dr. Simon Lambert from the Department of Indigenous Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. During the virtual external review, the review committee met with the following individuals and groups:

- Dr. Anthony Vannelli, Provost and Vice-President: Academic and Dr. Mary Wilson, Vice-Provost: Teaching and Learning
- Dr. Kathryn Carter, Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts
- Dr. Douglas Deutschman, Associate Vice-President and Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
- Dr. Brenda Murphy and Dr. Rob Kristofferson, Program Coordinators
- Full-time Faculty in the Social and Environmental Justice program
- Full-time Faculty in the Social Justice and Community Engagement program
- Contract Teaching Faculty in the Department of Sociology
- Undergraduate students in the Social and Environmental Justice program
- Graduate Students in the Social Justice and Community Engagement program
- Ms. Alicia Schiassi and Ms. Nicole Morgan, program administrative staff
- Mr. Matt Thomas, Acting Head of Collections and Acquisitions and Ms. Irene Tencinger, Liaison Librarian

The review committee submitted their completed report on May 4, 2021. The executive summary from the report is provided below.

External Reviewers' Report Executive Summary

The review team was impressed with the amount of work done to prepare for the quality assurance review process, and commends the faculty of both the SEJ and the SJCE programs for the comprehensive Self-Study

Report, which amply prepared us to engage in this remote site visit. Overall, we found a dedicated and passionate faculty complement whose work in both the undergraduate and graduate programs (in addition, no doubt, to their other program affiliations at Brantford) are to be much commended; they do a lot! In addition to their active scholarly and research profiles (evidenced through publishing, grants, conferences and talks, and community scholarly service of all kinds), they are engaged and enthusiastic teachers, whose successful work in the classroom is evidenced by student evaluations and written feedback. They are a credit to the programs, and to WLU.

SJCE is a thriving graduate program that, we suggest, needs little change; it is successfully drawing top applicants who are accepting their offers and choosing WLU for their Masters degrees. Students complete their programs in a timely manner, and go on to successful careers or further schooling afterwards. While we make a few suggestions about the future of this program throughout, overall we counsel letting it continue to do what it is doing so well, and avoiding the pressure of 'growth'--unless there are many more resources made available.

We are more worried about the future of the SEJ undergraduate program, especially given the very different narratives we heard about possibilities for this program. We want to stress here the argument we have outlined in the above: that SEJ is a vibrant and important curriculum, offering the kinds of interdisciplinary content and theory that is so necessary and central to our current world. Given full administrative support, and the time necessary to do so, SEJ has the possibility of being the kind of flagship program that attracts students to WLU Brantford specifically for that program's education. What is clear to us, though, is that a decision must be made in the very short-term future about the program, and that the current faculty cannot continue without strong and consistent backing in word and resources from all of the WLU administration. This is a program WLU should want to see succeed. We highly recommend it be allowed to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

The External Reviewers' Report included 17 recommendations, which have been listed verbatim below, followed by a summary of the programs' response, and the decanal responses.

Recommendation #1: We recommend -- in the strongest terms -- that the WLU senior administration both continue to fully support the SJCE graduate program and recommit to a robust support for the SEJ undergraduate program, as an expression of University values and as a necessary training platform for future leaders and engaged participants in the world we all inhabit together.

Unit Response: The SJCE program agrees with this recommendation. The SEJ program agrees with this recommendation and echoes the reviewers' comments that SEJ has great potential to contribute to Laurier's mission and Strategic Action Plan. The program is also well aligned with the principles of the Ashoka Changemaker Campus and the Ontario 2020-2025 Strategic Mandate Agreement, offering a program designed to foster social and environmental justice and experiential learning. SEJ looks forward to working with senior administration in developing a plan that would allow it to succeed and more fully contribute to excellence and leadership at Laurier. The program would like to work with senior administration to review the core program structure and objectives, to: 1) articulate how SEJ could further contribute to Laurier's goals and mandates, and 2) develop and implement an action plan that is broadly supported by senior administration. In particular, it would

be worth exploring how SEJ could contribute concretely to the work of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office as well as both university and student-oriented sustainability efforts (including the Sustainability Office).

FLA Decanal Response: The unit and the reviewers are correct in their assessment of the strength of the graduate program and the potential of the undergraduate program. The unit response is correct that the goals and ethos of each program aligns with larger institutional strategies. However, the undergraduate program has struggled with finding its place even before the collapse of the ConEd program in 2014. Therefore, the time is more than ripe for creative thinking and focussed interventions that must be evaluated and measured. The undergraduate program has done a great deal of introspection and creative thinking over the past several years, and it is time to try some targeted solutions and changes. Whatever these supports looks like from senior administration, there must be a clear method of measuring the effectiveness. In addition, the next dean of FLA must work hand in hand with the SEO of the Brantford campus to make sure that the undergraduate program finds a significant role in future campus developments, whether that be the continued growth of the International College, new alliances with the EDI office, or new attempts at developing a consecutive or concurrent education program. I agree that a program with a focus on social justice is not only academically relevant and vigorous, but it should/ could be attractive as well to incoming students if properly articulated and positioned.

FGPS Decanal Response: The unit indicates that they agree with this recommendation regarding the SJCE program. I encourage the unit to develop ideas on how senior WLU administration can best support the program, and FGPS can then serve to facilitate.

Recommendation #2: We recommend that the SEJ program work closely with the recruitment office to develop and promote materials about this program specifically, and target them especially to similar high school programs (see above).

Unit Response: Once robust support for SEJ is in place, the program agrees that it should work closely with the Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions office to develop and promote materials that would target both high school and mature learners. Especially in an era dominated by concerns related to pandemic-related injustices, equity-seeking groups and environmental crises including climate change, the program agrees with the reviewers that there is demand and need for its courses and degrees. As we had begun prior to the suspension of the Major, we agree that there are targeted efforts that should be undertaken to promote the program, such as connecting with high schools where social and environmental justice issues are emphasized. However, questions remain. How do we identify and efficiently target high school students with these related interests and orient the SEJ program to align with their preferences and those of their parents? Who are the mostly likely mature learners with social/environmental justice related interests and how could we tailor recruitment materials and strategies for these potential students? SEJ would like to work with recruitment to undertake market research to understand these questions and then develop a comprehensive, multi-year approach aimed at building SEJ Majors to a sustainable level.

FLA Decanal Response: As the unit response makes clear, we are about a year away from having the clarity needed to act on this recommendation. Once the clarity of purpose and supports emerges in the coming year, then the message for recruitment will be more clear. Because there are a variety of configurations that may take

shape over the coming year, it is impossible right now for the unit to act on this. Acting too quickly will only muddy any future communications, so it is important for the program to wait a bit.

Recommendation #3: We reiterate our recommendation for strong and unequivocal commitment to building the SEJ major (all of what follows depends on this as its starting point).

Unit Response: SEJ agrees that all efforts going forward must start with a strong and unequivocal commitment to building the SEJ Major. SEJ faculty remain committed to the program and we look forward to substantive buy-in from Laurier's administration as well as material support from Laurier's staff to assist in the reinvigoration of the program.

FLA Decanal Response: Because I will not be dean after July 1, these comments are meant to provide fodder for future discussion. SEJ cannot continue as a standalone UG program without some significant supports and cohesive internal structure. Currently, the program rests on the back of four faculty members with disparate disciplinary interests. Many original faculty members moved their affiliations to other programs once the program stopped admitting majors. Step one in any potential rebuilding would be to engage a focus group of students and guidance counsellors to see how to frame the program and its obvious strengths. Secondly, the cost structure of the program can be discerned from analysis by the financial analyst, and it shows that the current program is not costing the Faculty a lot of money to run as is. Any financial analysis needs to consider not just the number of potential majors, but the possible number of enrolments if SEJ can act as a service to other programs, perhaps including those in Milton. Third, it needs an infusion of experiential learning (properly resourced) to integrate students into CSL placements, and then a consideration of options such as a fast track into the MA in SJCE, or the creation of embedded certificates or micro credentials that will be of obvious value and interest to students who complete the UG degree. This coming year is a period of discussion and consolidation in which there must emerge unambiguous steps forward for financial sustainability and long term enrolment growth.

Recommendation #4: We recommend that the faculty, in discussion with senior administration, come up with an appropriate time frame to enable the program to regain visibility; we recommend at least five years, with active recruiting and the fulsome engagement of the university recruiting office being mobilized.

Unit Response: Building on the first three recommendations, SEJ agrees that it will take at least a five year timeline, perhaps longer, to develop and implement a strategy to regain visibility and reinvigorate the program. Although within Laurier the program has been viewed as a continuation of the previous Contemporary Studies and Society, Culture and Environment programs, for potential students this program appears brand new and should be supported as such as it builds over several years. It will take time to undertake the necessary consultations within Laurier and understand the program's market potential. In addition, since any program changes must be completed within Senate calendar timelines there are often significant delays before curriculum or other changes come into effect. SEJ suggests the following timeline: 2021-22 – consultations with, and commitment from, senior management; initial market research; development of any needed changes to the SEJ program and all recruiting approaches and materials. 2022-23 – consolidation of all changes in alignment with Senate timeframes; initial piloting and review of recruitment strategies; support for initial recruitment efforts and new student cohort. 2023-24 – full scale deployment of recruiting efforts along with ongoing monitoring of effectiveness; continued support for incoming and continuing cohorts; assessment of emerging strengths,

challenges, opportunities and threats (SWOT). 2024-26 (and beyond) – ongoing support, recruitment efforts and evaluations.

FLA Decanal Response: Although five years is a reasonable length of time, I would suggest that FLA does not have the luxury of a five year on ramp for the development of this program because it will be overtaken by program developments occurring within FLA and elsewhere in the university. What I would suggest instead is that there are clear markers of success and growth mapped out over the five year period, like a series of gates. The timeline mapped above is a good one, but it needs to have embedded within it some other markers and milestones (embedded certificates and micro-credentials are a good one because they allow the program to gauge interest in the core skill set offered by SEJ), and I would suggest that the program is already in a position to map out what some others would be. The new dean will need to have some clear indicators before the five year mark about the possible future success of the program, and it is worth emphasizing that the fortunes of this program (like a heroine in an eighteenth-century novel) can turn on a dime if there is some unexpected development at the Brantford or Milton campus. The program cannot rest in the hope of future windfalls, however, and must do the work to articulate its internal cohesiveness and its own set of success markers.

Recommendation #5: We recommend that exploration of cross-listing opportunities continue, along with efforts to structure, clarify, and promote cross-campus enrolments.

Unit Response: The program agrees with this recommendation. The program has undergone tremendous upheaval since 2014 and has worked continuously to adapt and adjust to each change including reorienting the curriculum, and developing new minors, specializations and college pathways. Efficiency and sustainability have also been at the forefront with ongoing efforts to streamline the curriculum, cross-list courses and align our offerings with other FLA programs. Even since the review occurred in late winter 2021, the SEJ program has been working to cross-list courses and seek out opportunities to increase enrolment, reduce barriers to taking SEJ courses and contribute to the Faculty of Liberal Arts and beyond through service teaching. For instance, we are currently cross-listing an SEJ elective into Law and Society (LY), thereby giving the overly-stretched LY program an additional third year offering. Cognizant of the need for additional electives during the pandemic, especially in the spring term, SEJ removed campus and year restrictions to allow more students access to one of its electives. Given that both core and elective SEJ courses focus on the substantive issues that underpin many current societal problems such as those facing BIPOC communities, gender-based violence, and colonization, the program's offerings can serve to enrich and deepen the specific program/departmental focuses of other Laurier academic units as well as support broader strategic university initiatives (such as EDI). A number of ideas could be explored including the greater use of technology allowing a cross-campus teaching model, online learning, certificates and micro-credentials.

FLA Decanal Response: I fully support this recommendation as it lends itself to the goal of identifying the skills offered to students who take courses from this program, and how those skills are beneficial no matter what the originating program of study. The courses identified in the minor are the obvious place to start.

Recommendation #6: We recommend that the option of presenting SEJ as an opportune double major--especially with programs with which it already crosslists courses--be further explored and developed.

Unit Response: SEJ agrees with Recommendation #6 in that its current status, offering only the Minor, puts it at a disadvantage. At Laurier it is virtually impossible to promote a Minor or track students. It is also not possible to promote the program to potential incoming students. Considering that SEJ is the only Laurier Brantford program offering environmental courses and has been approached by recruiting to highlight environmental-oriented faculty research, the program suggests that it could more robustly contribute to Laurier if, at minimum, the Double Major option was re-instated. The progression through that route is already in place and could be revisited to assure optimum positioning and efficiency, especially where courses are already cross-listed. In the past, the Double Major route was important to students in Indigenous Studies (who do not have a single Major option). With due consultation and consideration of decolonial strategies, SEJ would be delighted to resume this relationship with Indigenous Studies. Additionally, the Double Major option is already an easy fit with such programs as English, History and Human Rights and Human Diversity. Further consultations could be undertaken to explore alignment with Law and Society, User Experience Design and other units both within and beyond the Faculty of Liberal Arts (e.g. Community Health).

FLA Decanal Response: As proposed, the double major option would seem to suggest that the program can be collapsed into/ merged with another program. If this is the case, the program needs to consider which of the FLA programs is the best partner. The question to answer here is whether or not SEJ offers a cohesive academic area of study/research or whether it offers a significant and important set of tools and skills, or both, and what does it want to emphasize, and what can the current faculty complement deliver?

Recommendation #7: We recommend that the program work within existing networks to further community placement opportunities for students in SEJ.

Unit Response: SEJ agrees with the recommendation that the program should further community placement opportunities. Anecdotal conversations in previous years with prospective students suggested that an orientation towards real-world experience might help students and their parents understand how the SEJ program leads to a plethora of employment opportunities. Currently, SEJ offers SOJE204 as a core course providing students with an in-class underpinning regarding what is involved with undertaking community-oriented work. Also offered is SOJE421 which is a full-credit unpaid internship course. Further, targeted opportunities for experiential learning are offered through such electives as SOJE401 Food Justice. Following on the success of the internship in the SJCE graduate program and based on feedback from the proposed recruitment market research, SEJ proposes to revisit and upgrade its placement and experiential learning opportunities. Just prior to the Major being suspended, SEJ faculty had been in discussion with Laurier's Co-Op Office regarding the possibility of co-ops for its students. SEJ would like to resume that consultation and explore what might be possible. Further, rather than having only one longer 4th year internship course, SEJ would like to investigate the potential of mounting shorter unpaid internships through each of the second, third and fourth years of study thereby scaffolding experiential learning across the program and diversifying student experiences, contacts and learning.

FLA Decanal Response: I agree with this recommendation, and I would urge the program to also consider micro-internships and other flexible models of integrating students into areas of need within the communities we serve.

Recommendation #8: In line with consideration of consolidation as a key strategy, we recommend that opportunities to ‘twin’ relevant upper level undergraduate courses as also graduate courses would expand student options.

Unit Response: SEJ supports the recommendation to ‘twin’ upper level undergraduate courses with graduate courses. This approach was piloted in each of the last two years and is also scheduled for winter 2022. In this twinned curriculum, the syllabus is adjusted to be appropriate for each cohort, in line with both the undergraduate and graduate learning expectations. Feedback suggests that undergraduates gain additional skills and knowledge from working with Masters students, while graduate students have the opportunity to practice their mentorship and leadership skills.

The SJCE program supports this recommendation. The creation of a roster of ‘twinned’ courses will give graduate students more elective choice to suit their interests (where there is no choice at present) and will enable wider active teaching participation in the program by program members than exists at present. The SJCE program has ‘piloted’ the twinning proposal in the 2020-21 academic year by admitting seven students into SOJE630 (Directed Readings) and having them join a 4th year SOJE course taught by Ellen Russell. The same is scheduled to happen again in 2021-22. Based on feedback from both Dr. Russell and SJCE students, the program supports the continuation and elaboration of this practice. Broadening the array of twinned seminars to those taught by program members in other undergraduate programs in both the Faculty of Liberal Arts and the Faculty of Human & Social Sciences (particularly Community Health) is recommended by program members, but with some controls advised. This includes devising mechanism for participating undergraduate programs to determine the number of SJCE students to be admitted to a course so as to preserve its pedagogical integrity. The Graduate Coordinator will need develop of clear consultation process with participating undergraduate Program Coordinators and Registration Services to functionalize these offerings.

FLA Decanal Response: This should be acted on as soon as possible.

FGPS Decanal Response: This approach has many benefits, as articulated by the unit, but it is important to ensure that the Masters components of the courses are appropriate to the learning objectives at the graduate level. From a graduate perspective, there can be risk of ‘diluting’ content for lack of a better term, so I would continue to encourage careful consideration and scrutiny of course syllabi and course delivery approaches.

Recommendation #9: We see the ‘Legacy Project’ as an admirable attempt to ground graduate experiential learning but recommend this option be ended. Given our rationale above, we do not advocate the idea of an arbitrary 50/50 split between coursework and MRP pathways to be a desirable goal to be pursued.

Unit Response: The SJCE program agrees with both aspects of this recommendation. The program plans to revisit the delivery of SOJE690 to look for alternative ways to enhance professionalization experience. The ‘new status quo’ since the introduction of the course completion route of 20-30% of students choosing to write the Major Research Project better fits with the program’s present supervisory capacities. We have also noted an increase in the quality of completed MRPs over the same period.

FLA Decanal Response: I agree with the reviewers and the program.

FGPS Decanal Response: I encourage the unit to seek support from other units on campus in the delivery of SOJÉ690, if this is not already the case. For instance, staff from the Career Development Centre can offer support for preparing for a community placement and staff from Writing Services and the Library can contribute instruction to guide development of the MRP proposal.

Recommendation #10: We see online delivery of the graduate program for international students as admirable but question whether the necessary resources can be dedicated to success and would advise against this until such time as an appropriately resourced strategy can be deployed. Again, we recommend that consolidation is needed instead of a drive for nonstop growth, and that WLU seeks to sustain what is a highly successful and thriving program.

Unit Response: The SJCE program agrees with the reviewers that putting considerations of online delivery on hold to enable a period of consolidation is advisable.

FLA Decanal Response: Agreed.

FGPS Decanal Response: This would seem to be a wise course of action.

Recommendation #11: We recommend--most strongly--that the administration make a positive decision about their commitment to SEJ, in addition to continuing their clear support of SJCE. Such a decision must be followed up with support to sort out faculty complement for both programs, ensuring that those who want to be affiliated are, and those whose interests might lie elsewhere are supported in moving.

Unit Response: SEJ agrees with the recommendation that there is a need to sort out its faculty complement. While it might appear that there are more than enough faculty in the program, since the review was submitted, it has lost another 1.5 full-time members and many faculty with a commitment to the program have been seconded to teach or do administrative duties elsewhere. Especially while only the Minor and therefore very few courses are being offered, it has sometimes been difficult to find a fit between available faculty and courses that need to be taught. In many cases contract faculty have been needed to bridge the gap. A more systemic problem is that the precarious status of the program has led to ongoing uncertainty and loss of morale in the program. SEJ would like to work with the Dean and other administrators to develop a plan to best align faculty with courses that need to be taught and consolidate its faculty affiliations. Part of these efforts will also need to involve discussions regarding teaching and administration within the SJCE program, as SEJ faculty have been undertaking the bulk of these SJCE responsibilities. Since SEJ founded the SJCE program and the foci and strengths overlap, the continued alignment between the two programs is both optimal and efficient; what SEJ seeks is more clarity and transparency around affiliations and workload.

FLA Decanal Response: I strongly believe there is a right place and right size for this program in FLA, but I leave it to the next Dean to sort out how best to appoint faculty resources.

FGPS Decanal Response: I agree with the FLA Decanal Response. This issue is best addressed by the FLA Dean in consultation with faculty of the programs.

Recommendation #12: We recommend that administration work with faculty to streamline and simplify the way in which teaching assignments occur in cases of multiple cross appointments. We were struck with what seemed to be an ongoing issue of having to negotiate to teach in either program--and stress the importance of more stability and less effort in maintaining faculty connection.

Unit Response: Building on Recommendation #11, SEJ agrees with the recommendation that teaching assignments involving across cross-appointments, both within the Faculty of Liberal Arts and where there is more than one faculty involved, should be streamlined and simplified. Once the program status has been solidified, curriculum adjustments made and recruitment strategies outlined, SEJ would then be in a position to work with administration to maximize workload efficiencies and develop strategies that are fair and equitable.

FLA Decanal Response: Faculty wide principles would be helpful here as this confusion is not limited to SEJ. Perhaps revisiting the way in which we do course build each spring would be a place to start, and in this regard, some sage advice from Melissa Huszczo and Sara Neziol would be crucial.

Recommendation #13: We further recommend that the administration implement a way for faculty to be appointed to graduate programs--ensuring availability for teaching and increased visibility of a program. While SJCE is clearly successful already, it can build on its offerings by bringing more faculty in, faculty who know they 'belong' to the program.

Unit Response: Clarity around program appointments and workload allocations would aid in rationalizing program planning for both SEJ and other programs from which SJCE gains its faculty. While faculty already appointed in the SEJ/SJCE have been carrying a majority of the teaching responsibilities in the graduate program in recent years, a hoped-for reinvestment in the undergraduate program would likely mean that finding ways to allow SJCE faculty homed in other undergraduate programs to pick up some of the graduate teaching as these program members take more courses in SEJ will be important and necessary. Finding an appropriate balance of graduate and undergraduate teaching is recommended for members in both SEJ and SJCE. While the majority of our program faculty come from programs in Liberal Arts, we also urge ways to be found to enable program faculty from the Faculty of Human & Social Science, Social Work and elsewhere to more actively engage in the program, particularly teaching.

FLA Decanal Response: Again, this recommendation seems to call for the improvement of processes outside of FLA alone.

FGPS Decanal Response: Contributions by faculty from other units would certainly benefit and enrich the program. But I agree with the FLA Decanal Response. It would seem to require some creative and flexible solutions regarding assignment of faculty teaching loads, which is outside the purview of FGPS.

Recommendation #14: We recommend that the SJCE graduate coordinator be appointed for a three-year term, rather than the current one-year, bringing it in line with common WLU practice.

Unit Response: The SJCE program agrees with this recommendation. The program was not aware of this discrepancy, but did identify the limitations imposed by a one-year appointment in terms of initial learning curve and organizational memory.

FLA Decanal Response: Agreed.

FGPS Decanal Response: Agreed. The continuity provided to graduate students and the SJCE program over a standard three-year time period is important.

Recommendation #15: It is unusual to offer a recommendation in a section that is more focused on assuring quality metrics as outlined here. However, we want to stress here, again, the need for a more planned and developed process to ensure ongoing teaching stability to both programs, and that graduate supervision be appropriately recognized--ensuring that faculty not teaching will nonetheless agree to supervise MRPs.

Unit Response: On program stability, the SJCE program refers readers back to our response to Recommendation #13. The SJCE program believes that now that Laurier has committed itself to be a comprehensive university, we need to find ways of systematizing the recognition of graduate supervision and readership as components of workload. Embarking on the design and implementation of such a system on a university-wide basis is highly recommended, especially as a large number of SJCE members are also performing supervision and readership functions for (sometimes multiple) other graduate programs.

FLA Decanal Response: I would like to leave it to FGPS to discuss best steps forward here.

FGPS Decanal Response: In general, I agree with the notion of Laurier moving towards more formal and systematic recognition of graduate supervision as a component of workload. The unit response and description of faculty contributions to the graduate student enterprise is similar to other research-oriented units on campus. This would be a matter to be brought to the upper administration by the AVP/Dean of FGPS. In the interim, faculty may consider applying for research course releases if they have substantial graduate supervisory responsibilities.

Recommendation #16: We recommend that the administration undertake a comparative review of financial packages offered at other universities, to ensure that its offers are staying competitive and enabling the program to continue to attract the best students for the program.

Unit Response: The SJCE program would be very supportive of finding ways to increase graduate student funding and would be happy to work with FLA and FGPS to investigate what possibilities might exist to do so. The move to a comprehensive university and the invigoration presently coming from the Office of Research Services bolster this recommendation. The program finds that the minimum funding package still requires many/most students to take on additional paid work over and above their Teaching Assistantships and scholarships. The program notes that the need for extra paid work is expressed most acutely by our students for the spring and summer months.

FLA Decanal Response: This is also best left in the hands of FGPS.

FGPS Decanal Response: I appreciate the request to identify means of increasing graduate student funding. Beyond TAs and internal scholarships, I would encourage the unit and its faculty to promote external scholarship opportunities (e.g., OGS, SSHRC) to its graduate students. Cherie Mongeon in our office can help to facilitate. Also, if this is not already taking place, I would encourage faculty to allocate budget for research studentships and assistantships in their grant applications so that graduate students do not need to seek external employment during the spring and summer months. Laurier's Internal Grants Program offers a Research Grant (Category A

\$15,000) that can be used to support salaries and benefits. See: <https://lauriercloud.sharepoint.com/sites/office-of-research-services/internal-grants/Pages/default.aspx>

Recommendation #17: While outside the scope of the review report process, we nonetheless also recommend that the WLU administration work to find ways to support international student applications and admissions to this program (and others). In an increasingly globalized world, where the emphases of social and environmental justice work are transnational (as evinced, for instance, in the global uptake of movements like Black Lives Matter, the attention to decolonizing work almost everywhere, and the central recognition of sexual and gender-based violence worldwide), a student cohort reflective of a larger geography than Ontario or even Canada is both desired and needed.

Unit Response: The program agrees with this recommendation and believes that both the program and the administration need to work towards either finding clear ways to either include international students in our program, or to make the decision to discontinue holding that out as a possibility. If a way to better functionalize admissions of international students can be found in collaboration with the administration, the program also recognizes that it will need to deliberate internally about any reshaping that might need to be done to curriculum and other program components to best enable to success of these students.

FLA Decanal Response: Agreed, and we must find a way to integrate course offerings into the WLIC.

FGPS Decanal Response: Increasing the international cohort is a desirable goal for most units. FGPS offers a small number of funding packages for international students, but these are best enhanced by contributions from research grants held by faculty.

STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM(S)

Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts: The UG program has the benefit of cultural relevance; it tackles timely issues that are of increasing interest to wide audiences and indeed germane to the trickiest questions currently facing society. Communicating this relevance to high school graduates has been difficult. During the time of the review, we spoke about the necessity of focussing on the skills development that students will engage in, and having the program develop strong focussed language around the set of skills that they impart through the courses in the minor. We also discussed the possible development of a third year course focusing on the “toolkit” provided by SEJ. The graduate program has proven its success, and its strengths are therefore becoming more clear each year. This means we need to reinforce message about the programme and continue to resource its operations.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The strength of the SJCE program is underlined by its multifaceted focus on coursework, a community placement, and a major research project, which collectively provide a broad scope of theoretical and experiential learning opportunities for MA students. I note these strengths are also very nicely captured by the ‘What Graduates are Saying’ page on the program’s website, and there are additional comments highlighting the supportive faculty. Those are awesome (and I would strongly encourage the unit to keep that page current)!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

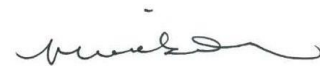
Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts: I support the notion of developing a focus group of students, recruiters, and guidance counsellors to help find language that focuses and names the skill sets developed by students who take the UG minor. Many of the specific ways in which to achieve this are named below.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Based on my read of the recommendations and comments below, a key challenge is the allocation of faculty and resources to sustain both the undergraduate and graduate programs. With regard to the graduate program, there appears strong desire to seek greater involvement of faculty from other units. Given the inter-disciplinarity nature of the program, this would seem to be a highly desirable goal that would be of strong benefit to the graduate students, and I hope can be achieved with some creative workload planning.

SIGNATURES

Dr. Mary Wilson

December 22, 2021



Dr. Anthony Vannelli

January 4, 2022



Approved by Program Review Sub-Committee:

January 13, 2022

Approved by Senate Academic Planning Committee:

March 22, 2022

Submitted to Senate (for information):

April 11, 2022

Implementation Report Due Date:

April 11, 2024

RECOMMENDATIONS PRIORITIZED FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

The following Implementation Plan was created by the Dean of Liberal Arts and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies as part of the Decanal Response.

Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
1. We recommend -- in the strongest terms -- that the WLU senior administration both continue to fully support the SJCE graduate program and recommit to a robust support for the SEJ undergraduate program, as an expression of University values and as a necessary training platform for future leaders and engaged participants in the world we all inhabit together.	Dean FLA	FLA, VPA, SEO Brantford	2024	This will be the item subject to intense discussion over the coming years.
2. We recommend that the SEJ program work closely with the recruitment office to develop and promote materials about this program specifically, and target them especially to similar high school programs (see above).	SEJ program, Recruitment	FLA, Recruitment	Spring 2022	Any changes to recruitment materials should be prepared in advance of the 2023 recruitment season.
3. We reiterate our recommendation for strong and unequivocal commitment to building the SEJ major (all of what follows depends on this as its starting point).	Dean, FLA			This will be at the discretion of the incoming dean in conversation with the program. Dean

<p>4. We recommend that the faculty, in discussion with senior administration, come up with an appropriate time frame to enable the program to regain visibility; we recommend at least five years, with active recruiting and the fulsome engagement of the university recruiting office being mobilized.</p>	<p>Dean, FLA, and program members</p>			<p>Develop a plan with stages and steps in it, and outline the clear outcomes that must be met on the way to this 5 year goal which will determine whether the overall goal is appropriate.</p>
<p>5. We recommend that exploration of cross-listing opportunities continue, along with efforts to structure, clarify, and promote cross-campus enrolments.</p>	<p>SEJ</p>		<p>Spring 2022</p>	
<p>6. We recommend that the option of presenting SEJ as an opportune double major--especially with programs with which it already crosslists courses--be further explored and developed.</p>	<p>SEJ</p>		<p>Spring 2022</p>	
<p>7. We recommend that the program work within existing networks to further community placement opportunities for students in SEJ.</p>	<p>SEJ, Experiential Learning</p>		<p>Spring 2022</p>	
<p>8. In line with consideration of consolidation as a key strategy, we recommend that opportunities to 'twin' relevant upper level undergraduate courses as also graduate courses would expand student options.</p>	<p>SEJ, SJCE</p>		<p>Spring 2022</p>	

<p>9. We see the ‘Legacy Project’ as an admirable attempt to ground graduate experiential learning but recommend this option be ended. Given our rationale above, we do not advocate the idea of an arbitrary 50/50 split between coursework and MRP pathways to be a desirable goal to be pursued.</p>	<p>SJCE</p>		<p>Fall 2021</p>	
<p>10. We see online delivery of the graduate program for international students as admirable but question whether the necessary resources can be dedicated to success and would advise against this until such time as an appropriately resourced strategy can be deployed. Again, we recommend that consolidation is needed instead of a drive for nonstop growth, and that WLU seeks to sustain what is a highly successful and thriving program.</p>	<p>SJCE, Dean FLA</p>		<p>Fall 2023</p>	<p>Unit-level review with Dean of FLA in two years</p>
<p>11. We recommend--most strongly--that the administration make a positive decision about their commitment to SEJ, in addition to continuing their clear support of SJCE. Such a decision must be followed up with support to sort out faculty complement for both programs, ensuring that those who want to be affiliated are, and those whose interests might lie elsewhere are supported in moving.</p>	<p>SEJ, SJCE, Dean FLA, Dean FGPS</p>		<p>No date</p>	<p>Subject to priorities for the Faculty as determined by the incoming new Dean of the FLA</p>
<p>12. We recommend that administration work with faculty to streamline and simplify the way</p>	<p>Dean of FLA, Dean</p>		<p>February 2022</p>	

<p>in which teaching assignments occur in cases of multiple cross appointments. We were struck with what seemed to be an ongoing issue of having to negotiate to teach in either program--and stress the importance of more stability and less effort in maintaining faculty connection.</p>	<p>FGPS, and SJCE</p>			
<p>13. We further recommend that the administration implement a way for faculty to be appointed to graduate programs--ensuring availability for teaching and increased visibility of a program. While SJCE is clearly successful already, it can build on its offerings by bringing more faculty in, faculty who know they 'belong' to the program.</p>	<p>Dean FGPS, Senior Admin</p>		<p>Fall 2022</p>	<p>Within university discussion of membership on the Graduate Faculty policy renewal</p>
<p>14. We recommend that the SJCE graduate coordinator be appointed for a three-year term, rather than the current one-year, bringing it in line with common WLU practice.</p>	<p>Dean FLA, SJCE</p>		<p>Fall 2021</p>	
<p>15. It is unusual to offer a recommendation in a section that is more focused on assuring quality metrics as outlined here. However, we want to stress here, again, the need for a more planned and developed process to ensure ongoing teaching stability to both programs, and that graduate supervision be appropriately recognized--ensuring that faculty not teaching will nonetheless agree to supervise MRPs.</p>	<p>Dean FLA</p>		<p>No date</p>	<p>Subject to priorities for the Faculty as determined by the incoming new Dean of the FLA</p>

<p>16. We recommend that the administration undertake a comparative review of financial packages offered at other universities, to ensure that its offers are staying competitive and enabling the program to continue to attract the best students for the program.</p>	<p>SJCE</p>		<p>Fall 2022</p>	<p>Based on environmental scan of comparable and/or competitor programs, best undertaken by the program faculty via disciplinary contacts</p>
<p>17. While outside the scope of the review report process, we nonetheless also recommend that the WLU administration work to find ways to support international student applications and admissions to this program (and others). In an increasingly globalized world, where the emphases of social and environmental justice work are transnational (as evinced, for instance, in the global uptake of movements like Black Lives Matter, the attention to decolonizing work almost everywhere, and the central recognition of sexual and gender-based violence worldwide), a student cohort reflective of a larger geography than Ontario or even Canada is both desired and needed.</p>	<p>SJCE, Dean FGPS</p>		<p>Fall 2022 and ongoing</p>	<p>Based upon strategic outreach initiatives and recruitment efforts of the program, priorities of the Faculty, and availability of financial support (particularly for international students who may experience financial exigencies if not adequately prepared for the cost of a year of study in Canada).</p>