

Program Progress Report

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Department of Sociology

Date of Site Visit: October 2023

Progress Report Prepared by: Christine Marits, ADM & Tina Fetner, Department Chair

Please outline below how recommendations from the initial program review have been addressed. [Please fill in one table for each recommendation from the original Final Assessment Report]

Recommendation:

Improving and increasing communication with students, staff, and Faculty.

Proposed follow-up:

1. UG Committee members hold advising office hours
2. Increase Faculty understanding of program options
3. Revise course names and descriptions
4. Invest in connections with Student Society
5. Incorporate more discussion of career pathways in to ProSem course
6. Improve communication of news and announcements into departmental communications/social media

Responsibility for Follow-up & Implementation – UG Chair & Dept Chair:

1. Undergraduate Chair will review responsibilities for UG Committee
2. UG Admin will craft one-page overview of programs for Faculty to reference
3. Undergraduate Chair will lead this process
4. Already underway, the UG Admin works with the ADM and UG Chair to work with Student Society
5. Already underway, the Graduate Chair will lead this process.
6. Communications Committee

Anticipated Timeline for Completion:

1. Summer 2023
2. Summer 2023
3. May-Oct 2023
4. Ongoing
5. Ongoing
6. September 2023

Additional Notes/Commentary:

1. Faculty members have scheduled office hours (communicated & posted), FSS UG Advising team also available.
2. Updated one-pager brochure 2024; available with UG admin & 6th floor waiting area.
3. In progress – updating two course names for 2026-2027 year for UAPPC approval in October 2025. Will continue to review course names/descriptions during curriculum review process (ongoing item).
4. UG Admin has intentionally connected with student society, provided guidance on engagement, recruitment activities, social media presence, budgeting, etc.
5. Completed in 2024. Invited guest speakers to talk about non-academic career paths. Worked with Assoc. Dean, Grad Studies' office to have something at the Faculty level, where guests were invited to talk more about non-academic career paths in Social Sciences, generally. Several alumni from our program participated. Attendance was made mandatory for Pro-Sem students.
6. -we now have regular updates to external website, led by ADM.
-Faculty meeting agendas include updates/announcements, and a tracker of works in progress.
-we liaise with FSS Communications team to feature accomplishments of Faculty, Grad and UG students in newsletter and Instagram posts.
-we have Faculty-specific Sharepoint site where internal news stories are shared.

Progress (check one)

☒ Completed

☐ In Progress (#3)

☐ Other (please explain)

Department's Comments:

Most items have been completed with acknowledgement for ongoing action.

Dean's Comments:

Dept has responded to all recommendations. Curriculum review is on-going in all depts. Sociology has engaged well in this work.

QAC Comments (to be filled in by Quality Assurance Committee):

QAC reviewed this report and had no further comments or concerns

Recommendation:

Continue to work on an equitable distribution of labour and a participatory departmental culture.

Proposed follow-up:

1. Discuss commitments to community and culture at retreat
2. Run a collaborative exercise on the principles, considerations, and constraints that we should keep in mind when assigning work
3. Consider work distribution process; make effort to assign work once per year, rather than continuously over the academic year

Responsibility for Follow-up & Implementation:

1. Department Chair
2. Department Chair and Executive Committee
3. Department Chair has requested list of service commitments across university from FSS; Exec Committee will incorporate into Committee assignments

Anticipated Timeline for Completion:

1. May 2024
2. May 2024, now TBD
3. June 2023

Additional Notes/Commentary:

1. Discussion at retreat was fulsome, respectful, and thoughtful. While discussions must be ongoing, this was an important step in the process.
2. Have finalized *Statement of Principles for Service Responsibilities*; previously discussed at the retreat plus various Faculty meetings. Was on hold for 25-26 year; has been recently accepted at October 2025 Faculty meeting.
3. Will be ongoing. Exec takes into account a list of service expectations, elected roles in time for annual assignment of Committee responsibilities. Some roles continue to be ad hoc, or require filling in when someone steps down mid-term. No concerns were raised at most recent Committee assignments.

Progress (check one)

☒ Completed

☐ In Progress

☐ Other (please explain)

Department's Comments:

Dean's Comments:

Department has worked hard to ensure an equitable distribution of labour for both educational responsibilities, and especially supervision responsibilities, and administrative responsibilities. The Statement of Principles is an important component of this work.

QAC Comments (to be filled in by Quality Assurance Committee): See above
Recommendation: Considering the balance of online versus in-person offerings and work to promote a stronger departmental culture. Proposed follow-up: 1. Beginning at the retreat, we will hold ongoing discussions about the role of online courses in our curriculum and how they are distributed across instructors. 2. Develop core hours for Faculty and student office time. 3. Hold enjoyable, in-person events.
Responsibility for Implementation: 1. Undergraduate Chair and UG Committee 2. Department Chair and Academic Department Manager 3. Communications Committee, ADM, Department Chair
Anticipated Timeline for Completion: 1. May 2024 – discussion, Sept/Oct - proposals for changes 2. After timetabling for courses each year 3. At May 2024 retreat, ADM will lead calendaring process that will set stage for events
Additional Notes/Commentary: 1. Discussed at retreat, voted on <i>Statement of Principles: Teaching Assignments</i> in February 2024 with online course distribution noted. 2. We have an annual process to establish and communicate core hours so that students and Faculty can focus their in-person time to match with colleagues. 3. Have ensured fun activity at Faculty retreats 2023 and 2024. Hosted Department-wide events including holiday party with trivia, treat swap day, board game events and year-end party. ADM has also organized staff-only team build events (including hikes, visit to Mac Museum of Art, tour of Mac Greenhouse with pot painting/planting activity).
Progress (check one) ☒ Completed ☐ In Progress ☐ Other (please explain)
Department's Comments:
Dean's Comments:

In addition to its efforts at the department-level, Sociology has initiated discussions at the Faculty-level regarding on-line teaching and learning, the balance of on-line and in-person offerings, and challenges associated with on-line courses.

Against strong headwinds among faculty, the department is making a considerable effort to create more and better interactions to foster a stronger culture. Some of its practices have been picked up by other depts.

QAC Comments (to be filled in by Quality Assurance Committee):

See above

Recommendation:

Consider the number of undergraduate programs offered and specialization in the graduate program.

Proposed follow-up:

1. Review the UG programs and consider reducing options
2. Consider creating a capstone experience for Specialist students
3. Review the Grad stream in Soc Psych and consider eliminating

Responsibility for Implementation:

1. UG: Undergraduate Chair and UG Committee
2. UG: Undergraduate Chair and UG Committee
3. Grad: Graduate Chair and Grad Committee

Anticipated Timeline for Completion:

1. 2023-2024 academic year, with decisions to be implemented Oct 2024
2. Sept/Oct 2023 – develop proposal for capstone experience
3. 2023-2024 academic year, with decisions to be implemented as they are made

Additional Notes/Commentary:

1. Bumped to 2025-26 year – course offerings and enrolment under review including those courses ‘at-risk’ of being removed; considered removal or reinstatement with two courses being removed at the agreement of UG and Faculty Committees in fall 2025. The review of offerings, enrolment and requirements of programs will be a consideration each year during Teaching Resources process.
2. CapStone experience created (Soc 4RE3); first year went well, monitor continuing enrolment/feedback.
3. Removed grad stream in SocPsych.

Progress (check one)

☒ Completed

☐ In Progress

☐ Other (please explain)

Department's Comments:

Dean's Comments: As noted above, the Faculty is working with programs to strengthen curriculum review throughout the calendar year, a process in which Sociology is fully engaged.
QAC Comments (to be filled in by Quality Assurance Committee): See above
Recommendation: Work to increase program assessment and ongoing relations with alumni. Proposed follow-up: 1. Work with FSS and MacPherson to enhance alumni contacts and set benchmarks for program assessment 2. Work with FSS Manager of Recruitment and Marketing on exit survey 3. Submit a request to IRA to resume exit surveys, incorporate NSSE and CGPSS data for future self-study reports 4. Enhance social media presence, hire work-study student
Responsibility for Implementation: 1. Department Chair and ADM 2. Department Chair and ADM 3. Department Chair and ADM 4. ADM and Communications Committee
Anticipated Timeline for Completion: 1. Summer 2023 2. Pilot underway 3. Summer 2023 4. September 2023
Additional Notes/Commentary: 1. ADM met with Nina Cammalleri from Alumni office to review ways of communicating with alumni, engaging with department. Alumni office/FSS currently working on mentorship program and can include Soc too. Alumni office joined ADM meeting in spring 2025 to share data on 'careers beyond graduation' - have just received the data for review at Exec Sept 2025. No further action from FSS/Alumni office. 2. ADM connected with Meghan Johnston from Recruitment office for survey information - survey done with graduates from both Sociology and Religious Studies to get a sense of some key graduate feedback (pain points, where they were headed, how many of them were interested in graduate schools,

and opportunities to engage with them if they were). Was only done last year (2024) as pilot - not annual among all faculties yet. 3. Surveys are completed every year, results available as needed; have obtained log in/information on how to pull results (currently online, will be made available in a new Power BI dashboard). 4. Student Society has an active social media presence. ADM/staff also regularly connect with FSS Comms to post on instagram page for promotional/recruiting/marketing items. New staff member (UG Admin) and Student Society co-President both have interest in this area as well. No need to hire a student for this sole purpose.
Progress (check one) ☒ Completed ☐ In Progress ☐ Other (please explain)
Department's Comments:
Dean's Comments: As pects of alumni relations were disrupted by the temporary secondment of the alumni liison (Nina) to another role, but Nina is back in the role and supporting departments on alumni relations, with a focus on supporting career-related activities.
QAC Comments (to be filled in by Quality Assurance Committee): See above

Recommendation: Work with the Faculty and university on graduate student support, and consider the right balance in terms of the size of the graduate program.
Proposed follow-up: 1. We are moving toward caps newly announced by Assoc. Dean, Grad Studies 2. A review of graduate funding levels is underway at the University and FSS levels 3. Initiate conference funding program for graduate students
Responsibility for Implementation: 1. Graduate Chair and Grad Admissions Committee 2. Graduate Chair and Department Chair will continue working with FSS Assoc Dean Grad 3. Graduate Chair, Grad Admin and ADM

Anticipated Timeline for Completion: 1. Ongoing; next Admissions season Jan 2024 2. Ongoing 3. Initiated April 2023
Additional Notes/Commentary: 1. We have not received quotas, but have aimed to keep our cohorts of reasonable size. We have had fewer MA students than in prior years. Usually 5 PhD and 15 MA are ideal for our budget, and to ensure graduate classes do not have too few students. 2. Task force for Graduate Funding https://provost.mcmaster.ca/office-of-the-provost-2/task-force-on-graduate-funding/. Consistent FSS adjustment policy for students who have won external awards. New adjustment policy taking effect 2026-2027. 3. Have held travel-funding competitions for grad students; successful candidates attending conferences return with positive experience/feedback.
Progress (check one) ☒ Completed ☐ In Progress ☐ Other (please explain)
Department's Comments:
Dean's Comments: The department has made excellent progress on this, supported in part by support provided by the FSS to assist in making graduate-student funding decisions.
QAC Comments (to be filled in by Quality Assurance Committee): See above