

**Senate Committee on University Planning
Academic Unit Review Summary:
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

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| Site Visit | 18 March 2014 |
| Informal Response to Planning | 23 June 2014 |
| Formal Response to Planning | 17 October 2014 |
| Implementation Update | 15 April 2016 |
| Midterm Review | 2017-18 (8-year cycle) |

Summary of Departmental Self-Study: The Department of Sociology is a small department in Mount Allison University's Faculty of Social Sciences. Offering major, honours, and minor programs, the department places a strong emphasis on fostering critical engagement with societal issues, and providing students with a solid foundation in the theories and methods of the discipline, as well as practical knowledge that can be applied in a variety of domains.

The Sociology department enjoys strong enrolments (the shift from 3 to 4 full-time faculty had a noticeable impact on enrolments). Students benefit from a student-focused curricula and pedagogy. The department has made efforts to ensure variety in courses that are offered in a systematic rotation over a number of years. This helps to satisfy the interests of students while ensuring a balanced approach to faculty workloads and course preparation. The department has sought to integrate experiential and community-based learning in its programs. Sociology courses are required or recommended electives in other programs including Canadian Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, International Relations, and American Studies.

Faculty members in the department have been recognized for their teaching excellence, and have received research grants from SSHRC and the university's internal grants program. Students, particularly though not exclusively in the honours program, have been given opportunities to participate in research and research dissemination. Graduates of the Sociology program have pursued advanced degrees in some of the best master's and doctoral programs in Canada, and have received fellowships from SSHRC and other significant awards.

Summary of Program Review Report: The reviewers offered strong praise for the department. In particular, they point out that the department offers students a solid foundation for learning the principles of the discipline, and does so by "creating a stimulating, thoughtful and mutually respectful educational experience." They noted some concerns from students about mechanisms for student feedback.

The review team made recommendations in four areas: (1) that curriculum can be expanded through cross-disciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration, and refreshed

through the introduction of selected new courses that align with interests articulated by students (e.g., aboriginal and indigenous studies) and that reflect current trends within the discipline; (2) that, to the extent possible, TA resources be enhanced serving the dual purpose of freeing faculty from some marking while affording senior students a valuable learning experience; (3) that space be made available to both part-time instructors and to students, to the extent that this is possible; and (4) that the department consider ways of creating mechanisms for the formal exchange of feedback between students and the members of the department.

Summary of Departmental Response: The department reflected on each of the areas of the review report, and expressed its commitment to review its practices in each of the areas identified by the reviewers. The department has identified a number of actions that it plans to take that relate to curriculum, including: (1) changing the degree requirements for honours students to permit them to take 12 credit hours in a complementary discipline (a proposal has been submitted to the Senate Academic Matters Committee); (2) the department plans to develop a proposal to introduce a course in Criminology (an area identified as being of interest to students during the review); and (3) the department plans to continue offering courses that incorporate both the theory and practice of applied sociology. In response to other recommendations of the review team, the department proposes that solutions may be found through the allocation of additional resources from within the Faculty of Social Sciences or the central administration.

Planning Committee and Provost Response:

The Planning Committee and the Provost regarded the review of the Department of Sociology in positive terms. The strengths of the department were acknowledged throughout the Planning Committee's discussions. There was a feeling that the department could and should more actively pursue interdepartmental collaboration to the benefit of students and faculty. In the absence of significant new financial resources, the department will need to find ways to continue to offer its students the exceptional experience for which it is known.