

LWSO CURRICULUM REVIEW PUBLIC REPORT

Executive Summary

Law and Society undertook its recent curriculum review in the Winter and Spring semesters of 2023. The curriculum review lead is Ted McCoy and was supported by the other member of our faculty, Qian Liu. We used a simple handwritten curriculum mapping tool. This suited the small size of our core offerings in Law and Society and the fact that both faculty members have taught every course between them. It also allowed us to complete the mapping as a collaborative exercise in which we discussed each step of the curriculum review process, from guiding questions through to mapping analysis and our action items.

The curriculum review indicates that our program is successfully meeting most program learning outcomes, but there are notable exceptions that should be addressed in the years to come. First, the program must undertake more rigorous efforts to communicate our program learning outcomes with students at every stage of their Law and Society degree. This should include communication about the goals of the Law and Society curriculum and what students can expect as learning outcomes in each year of their degree. This is important so that student expectations about the content of the Law and Society curriculum are better aligned with their future career aspirations and students clearly understand the value of our core learning outcomes to their future goals. A second important component of this outreach is to more successfully connect our faculty to students so that they feel they are enrolled in a program with actively engaged faculty. Our student engagement survey data suggests that this connection is lacking, perhaps due to the rapid growth of the program and certainly due to the lack of in-person instruction for our current cohort who were enrolled throughout the years 2020-2022.

A second hinderance to meeting our Program Learning Outcomes is paradoxically connected to the growth and success of the program. Our mapping data does not necessarily illustrate this, but a simple review of recent course outlines in the program indicates that achieving the outcomes of written and oral communication for our students is increasingly difficult due to rising class sizes. In some cases, these outcomes are totally absent from courses at the 300-and-400-level where they should be central.

Law and Society will also take direction to align our action items with the new Strategic Plan, *Ahead of Tomorrow*. As we move through our action plan we will keep the priorities of the four key strategies in this plan in mind, particularly regarding teaching strategy, research integration, and governance of the program within the Department of Sociology.

Our Action Plan will contain four key items. First, to change the governance structure of the Law and Society Program. The Program Coordinator will be made an Undergraduate Studies Director and then create a parallel committee to Undergraduate Studies. Second, to re-evaluate our commitment to writing and oral communication in the program and ensure that it is

integrated at all levels of the degree. Third, to renew our commitment to principles of EDIA and to integrate this as a Program Learning Outcome across the curriculum. Finally, to design greater outreach and communication to our majors to build the cohesion and community of the program as a way to enhance our undergraduate experience.

LWSO Action Plan

Recommendation 1 – Program Level				
Recommendation	Action Item	Timeline to Implement.	Lead Responsibility	Evaluation
Assess the governance structure of the Law and Society Program within the Sociology Department	Complete the process of changing the LWSO Program Coordinator into an Undergraduate Program Director	2 years	Program Coordinator, Department Head, Director of Undergraduate Studies	
	Strike a committee dedicated specifically to the Law and Society program to address this action plan and to rationalize and assess our curriculum goals over the next five years.			
	Explore possibilities for the most appropriate form of oversight for program level changes for LWSO. Recommend that the committee include the LWSO Undergraduate Program Director, one board-			

	appointed faculty member who teaches at least one course in the LWSO Program, one LWSO sessional instructor (voluntary) and two student representatives majoring in LWSO			
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Recommendation 2 – Program Level				
Recommendation	Action Item	Timeline to Implement	Lead Responsibility	Evaluation
Evaluate required LWSO courses for learning outcomes associated with oral and written communication.	<p>1. Introduce this item in follow-up to the Curriculum Review for all LWSO faculty and sessional instructors.</p> <p>2. Communicate objective to all incoming LWSO sessional instructors in advance of each semester.</p>	1 year	Program Coordinator	

Recommendation 3 – Program Level				
Recommendation	Action Item	Timeline to Implement	Lead Responsibility	Evaluation
Begin to implement Program Learning Outcome regarding EDIA	Assess in practical terms how to define EDIA curricular commitments. Research progress made	1 year	Program Coordinator	

	towards this goal at other institutions or departments at the University of Calgary.			
	Communicate our objectives to sessional instructors currently teaching or being assessed for future sessional work in our program	2 years		
Explore possibility of a required Indigenous-focused course in the LWSO degree requirements or creating a new LWSO courses focused on Indigenous issues.	Collaboration with other departments to investigate the enrollment implications of LWSO taking such courses	2 years		

Recommendation 4 – Program Level				
Recommendation	Action Item	Timeline to Implement	Lead Responsibility	Evaluation
Implement additional outreach to connect with our majors. These could be additional annual orientation events, open-houses, “meet your professors” events or digital communications	Put this before the newly struck LWSO committee	2 years	Program Coordinator	

Recommendation 5 – Program Level				
Recommendation	Action Item	Timeline to Implement	Lead Responsibility	Evaluation
Curriculum Change to allow any LWSO 400-level topics or LWSO 429 to serve as a “Course with a Focus in Law and Society”	Bring change to Sociology Undergraduate Studies Committee to move curriculum change forward to CARC in December 2023.	2 years	Program Coordinator, Sociology Undergraduate Studies Director	