



The IARC urges the Department to explore equity considerations, as was outlined in the reviewers' reports, to eliminate perceived barriers and recognize and celebrate diversity within the Department.

The Department of Political Studies is committed to enhancing teaching quality in the graduate program and the IARC would agree with the reviewers' recommendation that the Department work in collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies and Research to conduct a systematic review of graduate course offerings to introduce consistency and to broaden course offerings. The IARC fully supports the Department's effort, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and Science and the SGSR, to explore new ways to address the recommendations outlined in the Review Team Report.

The IARC agrees with the External Consultant Report which suggests the Canadian Studies Program cannot continue to exist in its present state. The IARC supports the Faculty of Arts and Science as it explores alternatives for the future of the Canadian Studies Program.

**Outcomes of the Internal Academic Review of the  
Department of Political Studies**

*Joint response submitted by the  
Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and the  
Head of the Department of Political Studies*

The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Head of the Department of Political Studies welcome the positive assessment of the Department of Political Studies by the IARC, and provide the following responses to specific recommendations.

*Strategic Plan:*

The Department has set in place a procedure for developing a Strategic Plan to determine the Department's vision and identify goals for the future. A new position has been

work, ensure a prudent balance is struck between teaching resources for graduate and undergraduate courses, and to develop a

**Internal Academic Review**  
**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL STUDIES**  
**February 22, 2008**

**OVERVIEW**

This report starts with the overview of the recommendations of the IAR committee and then discusses the undergraduate program, the graduate program and the research contributions of the faculty. This overview sets the cont

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The Department is encouraged to continue its commitment to teaching and research, both within the Department and within the wider University.

### **Strategic Plan**

A Strategic Plan to provide a future vision for the undergraduate program is lacking. The Strategic Plan presented in the self-study document provides detail of present program strategies and some future strategies but it is inadequate. Department standards, educational goals and learning objectives have to be revisited frequently. *This on-going process needs to include the opportunity for faculty to voice their collective views and visions and for faculty to work together with administration to advance program revisions as needed.*

In our meetings with the external consultants and with several faculty members, it became clear that there is a need to reinstate the Undergraduate Committee. The following should now be considered:

- *The Undergraduate Committee should be reinstated.*
- *The tasks of the Undergraduate Chair should be reassessed to determine if two positions are needed: one to deal with academic and programmatic issues, and, one for the day-to-day maintenance of the undergraduate program;*
- *The Chairs should be selected through a transparent consensus seeking process;*
- *A strategic plan should be developed through a process involving all interested faculty.*

### **Admission Requirements**

Queen's Admissions Services handles all admissions to the Department of Political Studies. While this is satisfactory overall, the pre-registration lottery syst

Majors (MAJ) take 10.0 credits of the 19.0 credits required for the BAH in Political Studies;

Medials (MED) combine Political Studies with another discipline, taking 7.0 credits in their two disciplines (i.e. double major or joint honours);

Major/Minor (MJM): students take Political Studies either as a Major (10.0 credits) or a Minor (5.0 credits) combined with another discipline.

(See <http://www.queensu.ca/politics/prospective-students/undr-studies.php>)

These four variations are available in all four sub-fields: Canadian politics, comparative politics, political theory, international relations, and gender and politics.

The Calendar and web site offer an impressive listing of courses for the four sub-fields. The year-to-year progression of courses is well thought out. The offerings are comprehensive and appear to serve the four sub-fields well. There is a fairly consistent pattern to staffing and offerings from year to year.

Faculty expressed a desire to review the undergraduate program vision, courses, and planning. Faculty involvement and input in matters of the undergraduate program would help ensure an equitable distribution of course offerings and workload across the four sub-fields. The increase in student numbers in international relations creates workload equity issues for faculty in this sub-field. *The undergraduate program as well as its relationship with the graduate courses should be re-examined by the new Undergraduate Committee.*

Concerns noted in the previous IAR regarding low enrolment of Faculty of Arts and Science students in Political Studies courses have been addressed. The Department has had an increase in student enrolment since the last review and now serves the wider student population to a greater degree. This brings with it resource concerns. *The increase in student numbers in international relations creates workload equity issues for faculty in this sub-field.*

At this time, there is no cap to student intake in the first and second years of the program. However, difficulties with registration in upper years have occurred and students indicated that they could not always register for courses they wanted.

## Teaching

First year student enrolment is divided into two large lecture hall sections. The 100 level lecture courses are supported with numerous tutorial sections taught by teaching assistants. Tutorial size is usually kept to 25 students. A similar pattern exists for 200 level courses. Faculty are satisfied with the structure of the first and second year courses and their associated pedagogy.

The third year 300 level courses are capped at 55 and there were no signs of concern here. The fourth year 400 level courses are in seminar format and presently have enrolment capped at 16. Department materials, printed and electronic, highlight seminars with low student enrolment as a feature of the fourth year of the undergraduate program. Administration plans to increase fourth year seminar enrolment to 25. Faculty are committed to the seminar format and they have voiced



concern about the projected increase in class size, especially in view of their commitment to teaching through essay-based seminars.

The growing popularity of political studies after 9/11 has resulted in an increase in student numbers. The Department is to be commended on its response to the increase in demand. It is now at a crossroad – it has responded to one of the recommendations in the last IAR report and, as a result, has new problems. Faculty want to keep the present teaching format but the pressure for increasing class size threatens to erode the quality of the program. In addition, increasing class size has meant that faculty are not able to correct student work as they may have done when enrolment was lower. Faculty indicated that the faculty/student ratio in the Department of Political Studies is higher than in the other “big six” departments within Queen’s University and that the seminar format and quality of learning that comes with this format is important in political studies. Finally, as the program grows, there is an increased reliance on adjuncts to staff courses. *These concerns points to a growing resource problem.*

### **Evaluation of Student Progress and Level of Achievement**

Concerns were not raised by students or faculty about the methods used to evaluate student progress. Faculty are committed to the current methods used and see them as being appropriate. The external consultants found the writing-intensive pedagogy, at all levels from 100 to 400, gave students excellent writing skills but at the expense of other verbal related skills. Increasing class sizes contributes to the problem.

The low grade levels in the Department were recognized as a problem in the previous IAR. Grades have, on average, been raised but the level is still seen as being too low by students, some faculty and the external consultants. The lower averages in the Department disadvantage the Queen’s students who compete for entry into Graduate Schools, for Ontario Graduate Scholarships and for SSHRC funding. The lower than average grades can disadvantage students applying to programs outside Canada, and to programs outside of political studies. Faculty have indicated there are inconsistencies between the grading practice of established and newer faculty members. *We recommend that the faculty revisit the grading issue and consider increasing grade levels to the average for Queen’s University regardless of the prevailing culture in the Political Science Departments of other Canadian Universities.*



seminars provide an environment for discourse, the development of critical skills, and the opportunity for honing skills in writing research papers. The program is not overly structured so students can opt to participate in international exchange opportunities, gaining valuable experience. Exit poll data are difficult to interpret as a whole because results are variable. As such, the above statements are derived from sessions with external consultants, administrators, and faculty.

### **Graduate/Department atmosphere and collegiality**

The previous IAR review suggested that faculty and administration initiate Department activities such as a visiting speaker series or a brown bag lunch series whereby Queen's faculty and graduate students can publicly share their research. There is still no such series or initiative. *Faculty, graduate students and administration can benefit by organizing a speakers' series that showcases their own research and that of visiting scholars.* The Department might ask the Office of Advancement to help establish an endowed fund for bringing speakers to Queen's.

### **Financial resources, information, human resources**

Graduate students recognize and appreciate their access to generous financial and infrastructural resources. On average, two PhD students share an office. The Department funds social events, student barbeques, and holiday parties.

### **Equity**

No equity issues were raised by the graduate students. In general, there has been an excellent gender balance in graduate positions in the Department. A few years ago the position of Graduate Chair was shared by two faculty members, one of whom was a woman. The current head of graduate admissions is a woman.

### **Program components**

Information distributed to prospective student gives the impression that they will have a choice between completing a Master's research project or a more extensive thesis. However, Master's students are often actively discouraged from choosing the thesis option. This is not an occasional problem; students encounter this situation yearly and systematically. Some students find this realization troubling and deceptive as they choose Queen's with the distinct understanding that the choice between a research paper and a thesis was theirs to make.

*Recruitment material for the Department must be explicit and clear about the 'research project/thesis' options and honour representations made to prospective students.* The Department should make it known to prospective students and supervisors that they must engage in frank discussion before the student is asked to accept their offer of admission.

As the Department faces increasing competition for graduate students, it may want to introduce a "fast track" option to the PhD for outstanding students.

## **FACULTY RESEARCH**



## **Financial Resources**

At this time the Department does not have internal nor external sources of funding to attract additional established researchers in the field. Such hires can stimulate the research environment in a unit, especially if there are a sizeable number of new scholars as in this Department.

## **Recommendations**

- *Develop a more detailed Strategic Plan which clarifies the relationships between teaching and research. This plan should develop procedures for enhancing the research environment in the Department.*
- *Revisit the possibility of approaching the Office of Advancement to raise external funds for an endowed chair to attract additional top, established researchers to the Department.*
- *Establish a Departmental Seminar Series in which speakers from outside the university are invited to present their research.*

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The Department that has undergone many changes in the last decade and has re-established a solid basis on for further growth and development. The Department is in the process of changing its governance structure and redistributing the policy forming tasks. This creates new opportunities for faculty, particularly the junior faculty, for “community service” within the Department.

Several members of the senior faculty have been awarded Chairs from a variety of sources indicating their high level of contribution and service but also reducing their teaching loads. This is a mixed blessing when teaching by senior faculty members is not replaced by new tenure stream faculty. The Department has to bring in a large number of adjunct and sessional teachers.

The School of Policy Studies appears to be the primary home for the most eminent cross-appointed faculty and this, to an extent, casts a shadow on the Department of Political Studies. The Department, however, gains from the School of Policy Study’s connection to the broader community. The academic environment benefits through the speakers routinely brought in by the School of Public Policy.

The state of the Department at the time of the last IAR required the appointment of a Director from outside the Department and it appears to us that the Department was in need of a firm centralized administration during its transition period. This administration style allowed junior faculty the opportunity to proceed with their research and professional development, and seemed to be well accepted in the years following the transition. However, views of faculty changed over

time for various reasons. The highly centralized Departmental administration offered little opportunity for junior faculty to participate. Junior faculty members have expressed a desire to be more fully involved in setting policy and sharing administrative burdens. This is being changed now that the Department has had a chance to re-establish stability and profile.

**The Internal Academic Review:  
CANADIAN STUDIES PROGRAM  
February 22, 2008**

**Introduction**

This report presents an overview of the current state of the Canadian Studies program, the potential of an expanded program and the IAR Team's recommendations to senior administration of this University. Overall, we echo the sentiments conveyed in the previous IAR report and see that the difficulties are not inherent in the current program but are due to the lack of support this potentially valuable and viable program receives.

**The Current Situation**

The external consultants' ten-page report on the state of this small Canadian Studies program begins with the following observation that is consistent with the views of this IAR committee:

“It is frankly hard to comprehend (let alone imagine) how an interdepartmental and interdisciplinary program established thirty-five years at a university with the reputation of Queen's could be so glaringly underdeveloped and immature.” (C. Kirkey and L. Young, January 2008)

The program is seen by its coordinators and students alike as having the potential to offer exceptional value. The students in the program are very enthusiastic and agree that their small number is due to the program's lack of prof





## **The Recommendations**

In developing our recommendations we recognize that there is an unmet demand for Canadian Studies at Queen's and that the current low enrolment is due to the lack of course offerings and program scale and visibility. With adequate start up funding, we believe that the program can become a financially viable institute or school. Other much smaller and less prestigious universities in Canada and even in the USA have much larger Canadian Studies programs with demonstrated student interest.

The core issue appears to be commitment at the senior administrative level. Without administrative focus on this program, the IAR committee believes, the program's current state will be maintained until the few collaborating faculty either leave or refuse to coordinate the program. We recommend the following:

1. That senior administration recognizes the potential contribution that a Canadian Studies program can make to this University and insist that the Office of Advancement prioritize the securing of funds for the program.
2. That funding be sought to secure a chair for the program. The person would develop courses and advance the program's visibility within the University.
3. That the senior person hired to lead the program be encouraged to develop a viable graduate program in Canadian Studies.
4. That the Dean of Arts and Science assume the responsibility of gaining the cooperation of related departments to cross-list relevant courses and cross-appoint faculty for the new program.
5. That a sunset provision should be established to close the Canadian Studies program in four years if funding is not made available and a senior person is not hired to direct the program.