

## Final Assessment Report for the 2018-2019 Cyclical Program Review of Criminology

### 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 Criminology Program prepared by the Quality Assurance Office, along with an identification of strengths of the program(s) under review authored by the Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences (FHSS). All recommendations made by the external review committee are listed in order, followed by a summary of the Program's response, and the Dean's response. 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 Associate Vice-President: 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

This was the second cyclical review for the Criminology program, which admitted its first cohort of students in 2004. The unit offers an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Criminology program, as well as a Master of Arts in Criminology. The Self-Study was authored by the Department Chair, Dr. Stacey Hannem; Graduate Program Coordinator, Dr. Carrie Sanders; and Academic Program Assistant, Ms. Nicole Zarazua, with feedback from participating program faculty. In addition to the Self-Study (Volume I), the Program also submitted a copy of faculty curricula vita (Volume II), a volume of course syllabi, and a list of proposed external reviewers (Volume III). A draft of the Self-Study was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Office and Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences 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 29, 2018, and the site visit was scheduled by the Quality Assurance Office for March 21-22, 2019.

The review committee consisted of Dr. Shoshana Pollack from the Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier, Dr. Kevin Haggerty from the Sociology Department at the University of Alberta, and Dr. Neil Boyd from the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University. During the two-day site visit, the review committee met with the following individuals and groups:

- Dr. Kathryn Carter, Associate Vice-President, Teaching and Learning
- Dr. Lauren Eisler, Dean, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences
- Dr. Andrew Welsh, Associate Dean, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences
- Dr. Stacey Hannem, Program Chair
- Dr. Douglas Deutschman, Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
- Dr. Jennifer Lavoie, Graduate Program Coordinator
- Ms. Charlotte Innerd, Head of Collections and Ms. Michelle Goodridge, Liaison Librarian
- Ms. Nicole Zarazua, Academic Program Assistant
- Criminology Faculty
- Undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled in the Criminology programs

The review committee submitted their completed report on April 16, 2019. The executive summary from the report is provided below.

### **External Reviewers' Report Executive Summary**

The Department of Criminology at Wilfrid Laurier University has grown within the span of 15 years to house both an excellent undergraduate program and a stimulating MA program with a thesis option. The metrics of success are well established, both in terms of student reviews and increasing applications for both the undergraduate and graduate programs.

Additionally, alumni of the graduate program express positive views regarding their experience within the Department of Criminology. The program of learning is current at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, with respect to both theory and methods, though we note a greater emphasis on qualitative methodology.

The program appears to be understaffed in relation to both faculty complement and support staff. A high percentage of courses is taught by sessional instructors, and only a single individual is employed to provide administrative support to the department and the faculty. There are also some striking differences across faculty, both in terms of research productivity and graduate supervision. While these differences cannot be easily

changed, it is important that there be mechanisms in place to reward those who are making more substantial contributions.

Following receipt of the External Reviewers' Report, the Chair of the Department submitted the Unit Response on behalf of the Department, which was submitted on June 26, 2019.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

The External Reviewers' Report included seven recommendations, which have been listed verbatim below, followed by the department's response, and responses from the deans of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, as appropriate to the recommendation.

**Recommendation #1:** We do not recommend that the Department of Criminology pursue a Ph.D. program. There are neither sufficient resources in place to support such an undertaking, nor is there a market that could comfortably support these graduates.

**Response:** While some faculty in the department remain interested in the possibility of future doctoral supervision as a means of expanding their own pedagogical and mentoring experiences, the department as a whole concurs with the reviewers' conclusion that we do not have the resources to support a PhD program. We also agree that the current academic job market for PhDs is such that it seems irresponsible create more capacity for PhD training while their job prospects are increasingly few. The Department of Criminology will not be pursuing the development of a PhD program at any point in the foreseeable future.

**FHSS Decanal Response:** The dean agrees with this recommendation. There are not enough resources in terms of both faculty and staff at this time to support a PhD. Program.

**FGPS Decanal Response:** FGPS agrees with the reviewers. There are insufficient resources to support a PhD program at this time. As there is consensus on this, and the recommendation is to not pursue a doctoral program, this recommendation has been excluded from the Implementation Plan.

**Recommendation #2:** We also recommend against a two-tier undergraduate program, with one stream emphasizing research and theory, and the other community placements. There are significant difficulties in obtaining a sufficient number of appropriate placements in the Brantford area, and it is also not clear that this would be the best use of the current and limited faculty resources.

**Response:** We agree that the limited availability of local placement spaces makes the development of a community placement stream impractical, given the limitations of our current resources. However, the department realizes that there is great student demand for "practical" work experience opportunities and that community placements can be a significant selling feature to draw applications and enrolment, allowing us to strengthen our pool of undergraduate applicants. Were resources available to have a dedicated placement officer who could liaise and connect with community organizations in Brantford and the surrounding area, we

may revisit this possibility in the future. At this time, we agree with the reviewers that it does not appear feasible.

**FHSS Decanal Response:** The Dean agrees that there are significant challenges with creating a stream in the program that emphasizes community placements and that the department does not currently have the resources to undertake this task. However, there are opportunities to develop experiential learning options within courses that will allow students to gain the more ‘practical’ experience students demand. While the creation of a two-tiered undergraduate program is not a priority, we will focus on further developing these experiential learning opportunities within course in the program.

**Recommendation #3:** A high school math pre-requisite seems an unnecessary addition at this time, in part because of the limited or speculative impact that such a requirement might have over time, and in part because it was not clear to us that this deficit is undermining the faculty’s ability to deliver its programming.

**Response:** The Department appreciated the reviewer’s perspective on this issue; we had not considered the implications of the significant time lapse between the completion of high school math requirements and the required statistics course in third year (CC327) which seems to have a high rate of failure and third-attempt requests. Associate Dean Andrew Welsh is currently investigating attrition and failure rates across the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences and he will be looking specifically at this course to ascertain the nature of the problem. The Department of Criminology will also investigate pedagogical and curriculum solutions to address the failure rate for CC327. Options include revising the pedagogical approach to CC327, lowering the class size, and better integrating CC327 into our curriculum and preparing students for the material. We are also considering the possibility of creating a criminology-specific second year introduction to research methods that would replace the current cross-listed Introduction to Social Science Research Methods (CC/HS/OL 233). This new second year research methods course would allow the Department to retain control over the curriculum and preparatory material provided to students in order to better prepare them for success in CC327 (and later in the fourth year qualitative and quantitative methods courses). This kind of revision would likely be a necessary step toward building a coherent research-focused stream (See response to recommendation #2).

**FHSS Decanal Response:** The dean supports this recommendation and is confident the department will address the concerns expressed around the high rate of failure in CC327, Introduction to Statistics. The department is currently exploring potential steps to improve the student success rate of the course and any changes will be made through established university processes. The addition of a high school math pre-requisite is not a priority.

**FGPS Decanal Response:** Although this falls outside FGPS’s domain, the dean of FGPS has taught statistics to undergraduate and graduate students for 25 years. The dean of FGPS agrees that revising entrance requirements is not an appropriate way to address the large number of students who struggle to understand statistics. Students struggle with statistics in nearly every discipline. Addressing this universal problem is not program-specific and should not be addressed within the Implementation Plan of any single program.

**Recommendation #4:** We strongly recommend that the Department be provided with a greater amount of administrative support, given the substantial number of undergraduate majors and the growing size and popularity of the M.A. program.

**Response:** The Department of Criminology agrees strongly with this recommendation and recognizes the heavy workload placed on our academic program assistant in the administration of both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Enhanced Criminology department-specific administrative support has become vital to the continued existence of our exceptionally large program. Notably, the success that many faculty in the Department have had in securing external grants has created an additional administrative burden—the university’s financial compliance processes are complicated and often labour-intensive, which takes faculty time away from other primary responsibilities (i.e., research, supervision, and teaching). We request that additional dedicated administrative support be made available *in the department* to assist in making better use of faculty resources and meeting the growing administrative demands of the undergraduate and graduate programs, including new online offerings.

**FHSS Decanal Response:** While recommendations for increased resources is beyond the purview of the cyclical review committee, the dean is in complete agreement that there is a strong and urgent need for increased administrative support for the department. The dean supports the hiring of an additional program assistant to work with both the undergraduate and graduate programs in Criminology. This is a high priority for the dean who is currently working with the Provost and Vice-President: Academic to find a solution in the 2019-2020 academic year.

**FGPS Decanal Response:** FGPS supports the idea of increased administrative support for growing programs. Ideally, that support would be prioritized to programs with research-active faculty supervising graduate students. FGPS is a shared service unit and thus is not part of the resource allocation process within Faculties. Although we have no formal role in decisions about specific resource requests, we support the FHSS dean in her attempts to find a way to increase administrative support for Criminology.

**Recommendation #5:** We recommend increases to the faculty complement, given the large number of courses that require sessional instructors, the growing number of both undergraduate majors and graduate students, the 44 to 1 student to faculty ratio, and the often-expressed view that Criminology is the “flagship” program of the Brantford campus.

**Response:** The Department of Criminology agrees strongly with this recommendation. Although our student enrolment has grown exponentially over the past seven years, and we have launched the graduate program in this span of time, we have seen *no new investment in faculty resources to meet these demands*. With faculty moves to administration and to other programs, our FTE faculty complement remains *virtually the same as it was in 2012*. Further, the university’s relatively newer emphasis on increased research productivity and graduate studies, and the move to become a comprehensive institution (as compared to the undergraduate teaching institution it was) has placed increased pressure and expectations on faculty members. In addition to being the single largest program on the Brantford campus, the high rate of service teaching that the Criminology Department provides to the campus places an unfair burden on the department’s faculty members relative to other programs on this campus— particularly given these increased expectations around research productivity. The demands of maintaining a 44:1 student to faculty ratio impairs faculty from engaging in productive research activities as directed, restricts faculty ability to supervise in the graduate program, has eroded department morale, and is contributing directly to faculty burnout. Moreover, the hiring of dozens of CAS every year to fill positions is unduly burdensome, particularly in light of the paucity of administrative assistance the department receives. We are now at a point where we cannot continue to maintain the quality of the undergraduate and MA

programs at this level of resourcing, let alone grow the program in any meaningful way. The Department would like to emphasize that a “flagship” program that is under-resourced will quickly erode in quality and will cease to be worthy of flagship status. We urge serious consideration of this matter at the level of the Dean and the VP Academic to address this chronic issue. Specifically, we are requesting an increased number of FTF to meet the current demands of the program.

**FHSS Decanal Response:** While recommendations for increased resources is beyond the purview of the cyclical review committee, the dean is in complete agreement that there is a strong and urgent need for increased faculty support for the department. The dean will work with the VPA to explore potential solutions, while recognizing the final decision rests in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President.

**FGPS Decanal Response:** FGPS supports the idea of increasing the number of tenure-stream faculty in a growing program. FGPS will advocate for the hiring of net-new tenure-track faculty positions based on the quality and size of the criminology graduate program. As mentioned above, FGPS is a shared service unit and thus we have no role in the evaluation or decision-making about specific requests for faculty. That question is the joint responsibility of the line dean (faculty dean) and the Provost / VPA Academic with input from VPAC.

**Recommendation #6:** In concert with the recognition that Criminology is the “flagship” program of the Brantford campus, we recommend that serious consideration be given to housing the program in a part of the planned renovation of the Market Square building.

**Response:** The Department of Criminology would appreciate serious consideration to move the Department and faculty to a space that would allow us a front-facing office and that would highlight our presence on campus. Importantly, however, the Department wishes to remain placed collectively; we would not support any proposed moves that would separate faculty members and/or administrators into different buildings. Spatial proximity is important for the health of collegial relationships and the support of our graduate students.

**FHSS Decanal Response:** The dean supports this recommendation and is currently exploring the possibility of finding a donor to fund renovations needed to move the department into One Market. The final decision will rest with the Executive Leadership Team who approve all requests for One Market. If the Executive Leadership Team approves the request, the dean will work with the Advancement and External Relations to find a donor to fund renovations to One Market. The dean will also work with Facility Space Management to ensure space is developed.

**FGPS Decanal Response:** FGPS supports the idea of coherent space with a visible presence on campus. Ideally, all programs have space that is appropriately sized and placed to support programs. As a former associate dean in charge of a large portfolio of space and money, space is often the most difficult resource to increase, reconfigure, or re-allocate. Changes in space also require the approval and input from many stakeholders (e.g. students, faculty, departments). Those discussions need to be resolved within the Provost/VPA’s office. I support the FHSS dean’s plan of working with the Executive Leadership Team and the VP for Advancement and External Relations to find a positive solution. At the same time, FGPS understands that this sort of change usually happens at a fairly slow rate.

**Recommendation #7:** We recommend that the Department and the University explore mechanisms that would provide an improved system of merit increases for those faculty who are most productive, in terms of their research productivity and publication records, and in terms of their records of graduate supervision.

**Response:** Faculty discussion about this recommendation highlighted that faculty members in the Department of Criminology feel very strongly about the problem of workload inequity – both within the department and across the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences and Brantford Campus. The Department is concerned that there is very little recognition of the fact that criminology courses are, on average, much larger than courses in *all* other Brantford programs. This reality is reflected when faculty from other programs who teach cross-listed courses (like CC/HS/OL 233) complain about the relative size of the class, as compared to the numbers of students enrolled in their other courses at the same year-level. Yet the fact that we teach much larger courses than our colleagues in other programs (and consequently deal with exponentially more student issues, accommodations, mental health concerns, marking, administration, etc.) does not get taken into consideration in assessments of productivity. The availability of teaching assistants via our MA program is often cited as a mitigating resource, with little or no recognition that TAs vary widely in quality and capability, and many instructors put a great deal of additional time and effort into mentoring, training, and supervising their TAs.

The MA program also requires a significant amount of labour from faculty. MA supervision is, in most respects, more difficult and time consuming than PhD supervision. MA students have less experience and less training than PhD students, and have not developed the more advanced skills in writing that they need to complete the thesis. MA supervisors spend *more* time assisting with the development of research projects, training for data collection, and revising and commenting on student work and drafts of theses. Faculty in the Department of Criminology point out that some members of the department choose to put additional effort into supervising MA students, which is uncompensated labour, while others choose to teach additional undergraduate courses on overload, which is compensated through additional pay. It is clear that we need more faculty to *both* teach undergraduate courses *and* to supervise and act as second readers for MA students. However, the fact that one form of labour is compensated while the other is not causes a sense of inequity and low morale among faculty.

Compensation for MA supervision and overload teaching is, of course, an issue that falls under the collective bargaining processes of the university. The Department urges serious consideration of this matter by WLUGA, the Deans, and the VP Academic. This is a systemic issue that is having a profound effect on faculty morale and investment in both the undergraduate and graduate programs.

**FHSS Decanal Response:** The dean strongly supports this recommendation. However, workload, compensation for MA supervision, merit, and overload teaching are issues defined by the Collective Agreement. **I would strongly urge the Faculty Association to consider ways to better support faculty negatively impacted by members who do not fully contribute in the areas of teaching, research, and service. I would also strongly encourage faculty to discuss their concerns with the Association representatives. Since this issue falls under the scope of the Collective Agreement it has not been added to the implementation plan.**

**FGPS Decanal Response:** FGPS supports this idea wholeheartedly. Workload is a combination of things that are easy to measure (e.g. number of course taught, number of students). Scholarship and service are harder to evaluate, but they can be measured by a suite of discipline-appropriate quantitative and qualitative benchmarks. I urge the faculty to continue to champion this idea within our administrative structure. I also suggest that the faculty communicate their concerns with their union leadership. It will take both a joint effort on the part of the university and the union to develop a fair and transparent way to gauge workload and to rebalance assigned work

and/or reward highly-productive faculty. Since this issue spans all academic units in the university, it is not appropriate to include in the Implementation Plan for any single program.

## **STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM(S)**

**FHSS Dean:** The undergraduate program in Criminology continues to attract students and enrolls more than two-hundred students each year. The program offers a wide variety of courses that are pertinent and of interest to students – including students in other programs at both the Brantford and Waterloo campus. The Criminology Student Association provides support and opportunity for extracurricular student experiences. Many of the faculty members offer students opportunities to engage in experiential learning and encourage undergraduate students to participate in research projects.

The graduate program provides students with a strong theoretical exploration of causes and responses to issues of crime and criminality. The full-year research and professionalization course guides students through the grant proposal process and provides each student the opportunity to engage in research, writing for peer-reviewed academic journals, and working on a community-based project. The faculty associated with the program provide strong supervision and mentoring to students.

**FGPS Dean:** Both the undergraduate program and the MA program with a thesis option are excellent. They received praise from the review team and positive feedback from alumni.

The MA program receives 30-50 applications per year and typically has a cohort size of ~10. They have a completion rate of ~90% and more than 60% of students graduating in their 6th term. These are all very strong indicators of a well-managed and successful program.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT**

**FHSS Dean:**

There are a number of ways to improve and enhance the Criminology programs.

First, there needs to be a significant increase in the number of tenure-track faculty for the department to ensure that the student experience remains consistent and positive. An increase in FTF will also allow the current members who are doing far more than their share of the service, research, and graduate student supervision to 'lighten their load'. It will be important to work with the ORS to ensure any new hires come into the university with a strong research agenda. The department can also ensure that new hires are willing and ready to engage in all three areas of the position – teaching, research, and service. New hires will contribute to a change in culture that embraces all elements of the role.

Second, there needs to be an increase in staff to support the programs housed within the Department of Criminology. The program cannot continue to operate effectively without increased support.



Third, the department needs to find suitable space to accommodate faculty, staff, and students. Housing the largest program on the Brantford campus in the basement of a residence building does not allow for adequate office space for FTF, LTAs, staff, or graduate students.

**FGPS Dean:**

There are three significant areas which currently constrain (or at least impact) the program.

1. **Space:** The review team and the program identified space as a challenge to the program. A coherent and visible space for the program would be beneficial.
2. **Staffing:** The review team concluded that the program is thinly staffed, both in terms of administrative assistants and tenure-stream faculty. These are very important issues that need to be addressed. Given the recently mandated 10% tuition cut, growing faculty and staff will be difficult. Even so, it should be discussed in an ongoing dialog between the administration and the program.
3. **Faculty Workload:** The review team called out inequities in workload as an important issue. Differences among individual faculty members exist in every program and every university in North America. It does seem that these differences are more extreme in Criminology where a subgroup of faculty are carrying the graduate program while others are doing little to no graduate supervision.

**SIGNATURES**

Dr. Lauren Eisler	September 17, 2019	
Dr. Douglas Deutschman	October 4, 2019	
Dr. Kristiina Montero	October 31, 2019	
Dr. Maureen Mancuso	November 5, 2019	

**Approved by Program Review Sub-Committee:** February 3, 2020

**Approved by Senate Academic Planning Committee:** February 27, 2020

Submitted to Senate (for information):

March 11, 2020

Implementation Report Due Date:

March 11, 2022

## RECOMMENDATIONS PRIORITIZED FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

*Note: Reviewers' recommendations related to new staff or faculty members are not typically prioritized in the implementation plan as they are outside the scope of the review. In this case, the number of recommendations made by the review committee was quite small, and there are several that were not determined to be priorities by either the department or the deans and were thus excluded. Since the plans for the staff and faculty positions referenced in recommendations #4 and #5 are already underway, after much discussion, these recommendations have been included so that the department can document the progress and completion of them in subsequent reporting.*

Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Anticipated Completion Date	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Additional Notes
<b>Recommendation #4:</b> We strongly recommend that the Department be provided with a greater amount of administrative support, given the substantial number of undergraduate majors and the growing size and popularity of the M.A. program.	Department, FHSS Dean, Provost and Vice-President: Academic	2020	Faculty of Human and Social Sciences	Final approval for this recommendation is with the Provost and Vice-President: Academic
<b>Recommendation #5:</b> We recommend increases to the faculty complement, given the large number of courses that require sessional instructors, the growing number of both undergraduate majors and graduate students, the 44 to 1 student to faculty ratio, and the often-expressed view that Criminology is the “flagship” program of the Brantford campus.	Department, FHSS Dean, Provost and Vice-President: Academic	2020	Faculty of Human and Social Sciences	Final approval for this recommendation is with the Provost and Vice-President: Academic
<b>Recommendation #6:</b> In concert with the recognition that Criminology is the “flagship” program of the Brantford campus, we recommend that serious consideration be	Dean			This recommendation must be approved by the Executive Leadership

given to housing the program in a part of the planned renovation of the Market Square building.				Team (ELT)
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