

Social/Cultural Studies Program Review Action Plan Grenfell Campus March 2011

Since the completion of the program review and the submission of the Unit's response (11/28/2010) the Social/Cultural Studies unit has been actively working towards, has implemented, and/ or is conscious of locating ways and means of implementing the recommended changes to our program. As stated in the Unit's program review response, it is in enthusiastic agreement with all of the reviewer's recommendations and feels that the incorporation of their suggested changes would enhance the degree program. In order to most succinctly lay out the action plan, each of the recommendations from the review is listed below followed by a description of the Unit's ongoing efforts to execute them.

The review outlined two of the program's most urgent needs as:

1) an additional tenure-track appointment to ensure continuity and development

The Unit has already secured the tenure-track position in Folklore which replaced the position once held by the late Dr. John Ashton.

2) dedicated space where students and faculty can maintain a cohesive program identity and exchange ideas

The Unit has appealed to the administration on numerous occasions for this space. It is in complete agreement with our reviewers that this space is critical for the cohesiveness and expansion of the program. Students need to be able to identify with other S/CS students in order to build program spirit and identity and to exchange ideas. Dedicated space for students is also a powerful recruitment tool. While separate from the need for student social/study space, Dr John Bodner, while acting as S/CS Chair in 2009-10, began discussions with Business and Psychology to secure a cooperative, dedicated research/work space for students from these three academic units. A formal proposal was submitted to the social sciences division in August, 2010. While the money allotted to this project fell well below that needed, the Unit is optimistic that with the opening of a new building, now under construction, this need will be addressed in some satisfactory way.

In addition, the review panel identified 14 areas of enhancement for the Social/Cultural studies Program. Each is named and addressed below with descriptions of responses, either in place or intended, to the suggested enhancements.

Enhancements:

1) Wider choice of electives

The ability to offer special topics courses has very much depended upon establishing a stable core of permanent S/C S faculty. However, the granting of a tenure track position in Folklore will go a long way towards stabilizing offerings and allowing ASMs the flexibility to occasionally offer courses over and above the required curriculum. The Unit is willing to offer more elective courses, has the expertise to do so, and thinks that it would be beneficial for retaining students and for recruiting them to the program. While this may mean tightening up the program in terms of the core or existing electives, it is seen to be extremely worthwhile and now achievable. The Unit is in the process of developing a 3-4 year cycle of courses that will balance and rationalize core offerings with increased electives. This "cycle of courses" is nearly complete. The intent is to add two new courses to the offerings for the Fall of 2011.

2) More international content and issues

Such a broadening of perspectives would potentially assist the development of an international profile and establishment of links, collaborations, and exchanges.

Again, the granting of a tenure track position in Folklore has helped enormously to both stabilize and expand upon course offerings. In addition, while it may not have been expressed specifically at the time of the review, there are several courses taught on an ongoing basis which incorporate comparative international theoretical and practical perspectives, including Anth 2412 (Endangered Peoples); Anth 3083 (Cultural Crisis and the Environment); Anth 2410 (Classics in Anthropology); Anth/Soci 3314 (Gender and Society); Anth/Soci 2210 (Culture and Communication); Soci 2120 (Society and Technology); various folklore courses; and Hist 1100/1101.

In addition to these offerings and the development of additional ones as the Unit settles into a more stable roster of academic staff members, individual faculty members have conducted and disseminated research in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Belize, Mexico, Turkey, Ireland, and the United States. Since the program review was conducted, faculty members have promoted this program in Central America and Turkey, while campus recruiters have also done so nationally and internationally. Admittedly, more formal links, collaborations, and exchanges should yet be established, and the unit continues to explore possibilities.

3) A practicum component in the program

The benefits to the program of a practicum component were recognized during interviews, although there would be added responsibility for supervision. The practicum might take the form of a work term/placement with a local organization, a summer job, an exchange, or possibly a term at the Harlow Campus. Several of the recent graduates of the S/CS program have already studied at Harlow. Most recently the S/CS program chair has been engaged in articulation agreement talks with CNA and specifically the CNA Community Studies Program faculty. A two way agreement that would allow Community Studies diploma students to complete a S/CS degree and visa versa is being considered. This would open up further opportunities for practicums. In addition, the S/CS program faculty have been collectively engaged in ongoing talks with members of the Labrador Institute. The Unit is unanimously interested in developing an articulation agreement between the S/CS program and their campus offerings. One of the many great benefits of this agreement to the program would be the research facility they are currently building in Labrador that could be utilized by both their students and Grenfell students for the purposes of practicums.

4) Improved archives

The S/CS Unit has recently been informed that there is a small dedicated space for archives in Grenfell's new building. Dr. John Bodner of the S/CS's Unit has been actively advocating for such a space and endeavouring to establish a formal archives committee involving, among others, community members. While the Unit is grateful for this new dedicated space there is a pressing need for funding. The Unit is agreed that an expanded archives system would afford opportunities to students for valuable research experience as well as benefiting both the academic community and local communities at large. Possible funding (several grants have been identified) and staffing (several sources of qualified workers have been identified) will then be actively sought. A digital archive might also provide something of a solution to this ongoing need and its development is under consideration. Finally, the archive, when it is in operation will provide practical jobs for students and may be integrated into a form of practicum. The archive will also be a base for seeking funding for a number of collections projects which could form the basis for a practicum element to the program.

5) More intensive examination of local culture

As noted above, the program could extend its existing commitment to archival activity related to local culture(s). Unit members have also been developing a proposal for a minor in Aboriginal Studies. The development of this minor has been strongly encouraged by Memorial's senior administration as it is a part of the University's strategic plan and has

piqued the interest of members of the Labrador Institute as an offering that could potentially draw their students.

It should be also pointed out that several faculty members are already conducting local/regional research. As well, Hist/Folk 4480 has served on a number of occasions as a vehicle for student research projects involving local/regional aural and textual history; and this course, to be taught in winter 2011, will involve close collaboration with the nearby Benoit's Cove museum. An extensive study of Wood's Island, spearheaded by our cross-listed member Dr. Rainer Baehre, has engaged students, alumni, and local museum personnel, among others. As well, most folklore courses involve local research projects. This semester, Dr. Bodner developed links between his folklore course (Occupational Folklore) and our local fire department. This was deemed highly successful by both the students and the fire department and future interaction seems promising. Similarly Dr. Marie Croll brought the Site Coordinator from Corner Brook's Safe Works Access Program, AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador, into the classroom in a step towards developing closer research and collaboration links for our S/CS students. The potential for collaboration here is rich and was deemed valuable by students and the site coordinator.

Dr. Angela Robinson, in collaboration with Charlotte Jones of the Grenfell Campus Art Gallery, has hosted two forums at the Grenfell Campus that encourage discussions on creative expression and Aboriginal identity. A third forum is being planned for September 2012. These forums include student presentations, representative works of local and national artists, and involve community leaders and Elders from Newfoundland and Labrador. The potential for collaboration in the above contexts is extensive and was deemed valuable by students, the site coordinators, and community representatives.

6) Courses on appealing topics such as pop culture, gender, etc. with recruitment benefits

Unit members are actively considering ways of expanding course offerings of popular and appealing topics to promote the program and recruit more broadly. For example Dr. Bodner has joined with the department of English to design a course cross-listed between S/CS and English entitled The Graphic Novel. In addition efforts are made to place the most popular courses, such as Gender and Society and Folklore & the Supernatural, on a regular rotation. The course rotation schema that has recently been developed will aid in the careful scheduling of courses over a 3-4 year timeline.

7) More courses on history, religion, ethnomusicology

Since the program review, Anthropology 3053 (Anthropology of Religion) has been put into rotation as part of the regular course offerings. In addition there are plans to introduce a

new course, Music 2014, Introduction to World Music, in the fall of 2011. S/CS students are required to take Introduction to History 1100 and 1101, Anth/Hist 3520 (Early Ethnohistory of North American Peoples) and students are encouraged to avail of Hist/Folk 4480 (Oral History). There is existing expertise in the program in the areas of history, religion and ethnomusicology so that the potential for offering additional courses in these identified areas exists.

8) A methods course for Social/Cultural Studies

Program members and some students noted that the program needs a methods course at an early stage of the program. The unit believes that a core interdisciplinary course would provide an overview of the theory and methodology of all disciplines represented in S/C studies. As there are already several methodology courses in the course offerings, the Unit feels that the development of another methods course should be considered one of the longer term program development objectives.

9) A 2000 level course in Social/Cultural Studies and a 4000 level advanced course

A required introductory/intermediate Social/Cultural Studies course would benefit the integrity of the program. This course is now being designed and will be added to the course rotation schema. Such a course will enhance program development and cohesiveness and complement the already existing 4000 level course.

10) More extensive use of Special Topics courses

It is agreed that special topics courses can provide flexibility and variety and draw on program members' expertise. See # 1 above.

11) Support for Contemporary Theory

Some students and faculty feel that an upper level course in Contemporary Theory should be part of the core curriculum and scheduled on a regular basis. Such a course is now regularly scheduled but is not yet part of the core curriculum. The matter remains under discussion. There has also been inter-unit discussion of implementing an upper level anthropological theory course into the curriculum on a rotating basis.

12) Support for Aboriginal Studies programming

There are several faculty members with extensive experience and engagement with Aboriginal communities both inside and outside the unit. Aboriginal Studies courses, including some already taught, and possibly an Aboriginal Studies Minor, would be valuable addition to the program, especially attracting students with Aboriginal status, including potentially students from Labrador. This component of S/C Studies is in keeping with the University's Strategic Plan. (Please see Aboriginal Studies minor #5 above.)

13) Better promotion of the program

A recurrent theme during interviews was the need for better promotion of the program both internally and externally. In response, we increased our community participation and have kept in close contact with university recruitment opportunities. We have worked to diversify our programming (see #5. above) and continue to work towards developing articulation agreements with CONA and the Labrador Institute. Efforts are ongoing to update and improve our website and encourage student participation in a S/C Studies student society, and to collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines. Grenfell campus has recently appointed a Marketing Manager and the Unit will actively seek her support and advice in promotion of the program.

14) Support for research

Despite the constraints that some colleagues have noted concerning research funding and internal research supports others have managed to successfully carry out their research and publish it with major academic presses and/or journals and disseminate it at national and international conferences. We continue to seek internal and external funding and work closely with the research office to further inroads in this direction.

Submitted by:

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