

Sir Wilfred Grenfell College
Social/Cultural Studies Program
Academic Program Review
Report of Review Panel
May 2009

Summary Findings

The panel commends the impressive faculty on their commitment to offering a vital and attractive interdisciplinary program with which students have indicated a good degree of satisfaction; on continuing to seek ways to develop and enrich the program; and on sustaining a good balance between teaching and research. As a result of its meetings with faculty and students, the panel identifies the most pressing needs of this program as:

- an additional tenure-track appointment to ensure continuity and development;
- dedicated space where students and faculty can maintain a cohesive program identity and exchange ideas;
- better promotion of the program;
- expanded offerings of appealing elective courses.

The panel also recommends a more intensive look at local culture in the program as well as expanded international perspectives. It also recommends that archives should be enhanced and that the viability of a praktikum component for the program be studied.

Operations of the Review Panel

The Site Visit of the Review Panel took place from March 25 – March 28, 2009.

The Panel members were:

- Dr. Richard MacKinnon, Director, Centre for Cape Breton Studies, Cape Breton University
- Dr. Ruth Stone, Associate Vice Provost for Research, Carmichael Centre
- Dr. Sonya Corbin-Dwyer, Psychology Program, SWGC
- Dr. Lois Sherlow, English Program, SWGC (Panel Chair)

Meetings with Individuals

- Dr. William Iams, Acting Vice-Principal (Academic)
- Dr. Ivan Emke, Head, Division of Social Science, and faculty, Social/Cultural Studies
- Dr. Doreen Klassen, Chair, Social/Cultural Studies Program
- Ms. Louise McGillis, University Academic Librarian
- Dr. Wade Bowers, Vice-Principal (Research)

- Dr. Marie Croll, faculty, Social/Cultural Studies
- Ms. Christine Abbott, faculty, Social/Cultural Studies
- Dr. Angela Robinson, faculty, Social/Cultural Studies
- Dr. John Bodner, faculty, Social/Cultural Studies
- Dr. Rainer Baehre, faculty, Historical Studies and Social/Cultural Studies (cross appointed)

Group Meetings

- Two meetings with Social/Cultural Studies students (present at one or both meetings: Andrew Bowers, Amanda Hillyard, Leah Hiscock, Andrew Marks, Robin Messenger, Melissa Squarey, Deanna Strickland, Tara Whelan)
- Two open meetings with Social/Cultural Studies faculty
- Exit meeting with Division Head, Program Chair, faculty and students

INTRODUCTION: Program History and Strategic Objectives

History

Given official program status in 1999, the Social/Cultural Studies (S/CS) program was formulated to solidify and strengthen offerings in three disciplinary areas – anthropology, folklore, and sociology – which already had substantial enrolments at the College. Further interdisciplinary breadth was provided by two upper-level courses in Social/Cultural Studies created specifically for the Program, a fourth-year independent project, and selected courses in History. This new major offered students a wide-ranging social/cultural perspective, in the wake of Grenfell's move from a two-year junior college to a four-year degree-granting institution. The interdisciplinary focus offered a program unique to the Grenfell campus, one that differed significantly from the single-discipline majors in the areas at the St. John's campus.

The proposal for the Social/Cultural Studies program, dated February 1998, was prepared by Dr. John Ashton (deceased 2008), Dennis Bartels (retired 2006), Anna Leslie (deceased 2006), and Ivan Emke (current Associate Vice-Principal (Research)), and it provided the following conceptual definition of the program:

“Social/Cultural Studies provides a critical analysis of social and cultural phenomena, including the description of cultural forms, the explanation of the historical roots of forms and practices, and plausible predictions of the future based upon current forces and influences.”

From its inception, the Social/Cultural Studies Program offered a 26-course (78 credit hour) interdisciplinary major around its core disciplines: Anthropology, Folklore, and Sociology. Owing to its disciplinary breadth, the S/CS major does not require an additional minor. By comparison, students in single discipline programs take only a major (36 hours) plus a minor (24 hours), for a total of 60 hours.

Strategic Objectives of the Program

The 1998 proposal identified four objectives for graduates of this new major, stating: “the object of the program [was] to produce graduates who:

- possess a broadly based understanding of the concepts of society and culture, including the ability to conduct qualitative and quantitative research from both field-generated and documentary resources;
- understand the interrelatedness of knowledge in social and cultural analysis including the fact that there is no single discipline or academic tradition that adequately encompasses the knowledge of how society and culture work;
- comprehend the formation of socially and culturally-based values, attitudes, and beliefs and their articulation in a variety of expressive media via traditional, elite, and normative or mass-mediated cultures;
- acknowledge the adaptability and applicability of social/cultural studies training in problem-solving and policy development at the local and global levels.”

Undergraduate program

The Social/Cultural Studies program offers a Major and a Minor.

The program description for the Major that appears in the Memorial Calendar 2009-2010 (9.3, page 423) is the following:

“The Major consists of 78 credit hours as follows:
 Anthropology 1031, 2210, 3140, 3083, 3520
 Folklore 1000, 2100, 3140, 3083, 3520
 History 1100, 1101
 Social/Cultural Studies 4000, 4100, 4950
 Sociology 2000, 2120, 3040, 3150, 3314
 Eighteen additional credit hours from Anthropology, Folklore, and Sociology.”

The description of the Minor (24 credit hours) is as follows (Memorial Calendar 9.7, 7., page 428):

- a. Anthropology 1031, Sociology 2000, Folklore 1000
- b. Anthropology 2410 or Sociology 3150
- c. Folklore 2100 or Sociology 3040
- d. Three additional credit hours in each of Anthropology, Folklore, and Sociology.

In meetings with the Review Panel students consistently voiced a high level of satisfaction with the program, while they also identified areas in which the program needs enhancement and strengthening of resources. Recommendations appear at the end of the report.

Faculty

Summary (2009-2010):

Current faculty in the program include a tenure-track anthropologist (Angela Robinson), a contract folklorist (John Bodner) with a course remission to chair program, a tenured folklorist-anthropologist (Doreen Klassen), a tenured sociologist-anthropologist with full remission for service as Associate Vice-Principal Research (Ivan Emke), a tenured sociologist (Marie Croll), and a contract sociologist (Christine Abbott), as well as a social historian (Rainer Baehre), cross-appointed from Historical Studies (currently on sabbatical). A per course instructor, Kevin Baker, is teaching two courses per term, to cover Dr. Croll's courses.

| Faculty | Tenured/ TenureTrack | Contract |
|--------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Anthropology | 1 (Robinson) | |
| Folklore | ½ (Klassen)* | Bodner** |
| Sociology | 1 (Croll)*** | Baker**** |

*half sabbatical (Winter Term) but teaching one reading course

**1 remission as chair, but teaching overload course

***full sabbatical

****per course instructor, covering Croll; two courses per term

Summary (2008-2009):

Current faculty in the program included tenure track anthropologist (Angela Robinson), a contract folklorist (John Bodner), a tenured folklorist-anthropologist with a course remission to chair the program (Doreen Klassen), a tenured sociologist-anthropologist with three course remission for service as Division Head (Ivan Emke), a tenure-track sociologist (Marie Croll), and a contract sociologist (Christine Abbott), as well as a social historian (Rainer Baehre) cross-appointed from Historical Studies.

| Faculty | Tenure Track | Contract |
|--------------|------------------------|------------|
| Anthropology | 1 (Robinson) ½ (Emke)* | |
| Folklore | ½ (Klassen)** | 1 (Bodner) |

Social and Cultural Studies program faculty members belong to a number of national and international scholarly organizations and participate to varying degrees within these organizations, presenting papers at annual conferences, publishing in the organizations' journals, or serving as referees for publications. At the community level, faculty members are involved with government, heritage organizations, educational institutions, community organizations and local businesses, involvements that illustrate commitment to the people of the region of Newfoundland and Labrador at large.

Community Service

Despite heavy teaching loads, faculty of the program make extensive contributions to the community, pursuing both interdisciplinary research and community outreach.

- Faculty members are often invited to speak locally on aspects of Newfoundland history, tradition, culture and local knowledge.
- Organizations in which faculty members have been actively engaged include the Corner Brook Museum and Archives; the Regional Heritage Fair; the Health and Literacy Committee for Corner Brook; District Advisory Council; the Ktaqamkuk Heritage Foundation; specialty programming, CBC (regional and provincial); the Corner Brook Committee on Family Violence; the AIDS Committee of Western Newfoundland; the Folk Art of Bond Penney Exhibit; Corner Brook Arts and Culture Centre; and the House Museum Mi'kmaw Exhibit.
- Faculty members have served as advisors to the Department of Justice, Newfoundland and Victim Services Branch, Corner Brook; Labrador Métis Association; Solicitor-General, Canada; Ktaqamkuk Mi'kmaw Research Ethics Committee, NL; the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, Aboriginal Division, Corner Brook, NL.
- Dr. Ivan Emke works extensively in community radio, in Corner Brook, including during the East Coast Music Awards, 2009, and in other communities, such as Twillingate.
- Dr. Angela Robinson's research has brought her into Mi'kmaw communities, where she acts as *pro bono* advisor to institutions such the Ktaqamuk (Newfoundland) Mi'kmaq Research Ethics Committee; the Corner Brook Aboriginal Women's Association; the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network; the Ktaqamkuk Heritage Association, and the Kitpu First Nation. She has actively promoted regional, provincial, and national supports for aboriginal students.
- Faculty members helped to plan and organize events in such roles as the following:
 - Member of conference committee (e.g., a forum for students from Business, Environmental Studies/Sustainable Resource Management, and Social/Cultural Studies, the SWGC Art Gallery, students from CONA, and the public at large (March 2009);

- Member of program committee , Sound in the Land II: A Festival/Conference of Mennonites and Music, June 2009, Conrad Grebel University, Waterloo, Ontario;
 - Organizer, “Artistic Expression, Identity and the Aboriginal Experience in Western Newfoundland,” SWGC Art gallery, November 2008;
 - Organizer, “Doing Oral History Workshop,” Museum Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Corner Brook, 2003;
 - Program committee member, “Women in Motion,” International and Interdisciplinary Conference,” Mount Allison University, May 2003;
 - Co-Chair, “Perspectives on Contemporary Legend,” Glynmill Inn, Corner Brook, June 2003;
 - Organizer, “Woodland Echoes: A Symposium on the Forestry Industry in Western Newfoundland,” Corner Brook, 2001.
- Finally, the SWGC Folklore Archives house primarily student research, and are overseen by faculty members. (It is recommended below that with funding and space, the archive could expand to include research from other areas of Social/Cultural Studies, and serve not only students but the members of the community of Western Newfoundland.)

REVIEW PANEL FINDINGS: Urgent Needs and Recommended Improvements

In meetings with the Review Panel students consistently voiced a high level of satisfaction with the program. The Panel commends members of the program’s faculty for their dedication to:

- offering a vital interdisciplinary program that appeals to students and maintains a satisfactory level of enrolment;
- continuously seeking ways to develop and enhance the program;
- maintaining a good overall balance between research and teaching that significantly enriches the program.

Faculty members and students repeatedly indicated that the program has some pressing needs as well as areas for development or expansion:

Urgent needs

1. Tenure track appointment

Faculty and staff universally reported that a tenure track appointment is urgently required and necessary to sustaining the basis of the program core and developing the program. The earlier section on Faculty shows the current deployment of program members, involving overload teaching and a per course instructor to cover sabbaticals.

2. Dedicated space for program students

The most pressing concern commonly voiced by students, as well as some faculty members, was the need for a dedicated space where students—and occasionally faculty—could get together, and where senior students in particular could initiate study groups. A meeting space is particularly necessary to strengthen the cohesion of a student body engaged in an interdisciplinary program such Social/Cultural Studies.

Enhancements

1. Wider choice of electives

Program members emphasized the value of offering more electives to benefit students and allow faculty to draw on their own areas of interest. Such offerings may currently be limited by staffing and scheduling constraints.

2. More international content and issues

A need for increased international content in the program was identified. Such a broadening of perspectives would also potentially assist the development of an international profile and establishment of links, collaborations, and exchanges.

3. A praktikum component in the program

The benefits to the program of a praktikum component were recognized during interviews, although there would be added responsibility for supervision. The praktikum 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.

4. Improved archives

Archives exist but need significant development for which funding, as well as space, would be required. Expanded archives would afford opportunities to students for valuable experience as well as benefiting faculty and local communities.

5. More intensive examination of local culture

The program could extend its existing commitment to teaching, research, as well as archival activity related to local culture(s).

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

The program could consider expanding courses offerings on popular and appealing topics to promote the program, and recruit more broadly. Careful scheduling would also benefit such offerings.

7. More courses on history, religion, ethnomusicology

Courses in these areas would draw on expertise that is readily available in the program.

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.

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

A required Social/Cultural studies courses would benefit the integrity of the program, although the existing core is solid.

10. More extensive use of Special Topics courses

Special topics courses can be used to benefit the needs of the program for flexibility and variety, and draw on program members' expertise.

11. Support for Contemporary Theory

Some students and faculty noted the necessity for an upper level course in Contemporary Theory as a program component.

12. Support for Aboriginal Studies programming

Since there are faculty members with extensive experience and engagement with aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Studies courses, or an Aboriginal Studies Minor, could be valuable, and, it was noted, in keeping with the Strategic Plan.

13. Better promotion of the program

A recurrent theme during interviews was the need for better promotion of the program both internally and externally. The extensive participation members of the program in the community can enhance opportunities for recruitment. Suggestions for diversified programming in 5. above is also related to recruitment. The program should benefit from increased overall recruitment initiatives at SWGC.

14. Support for research

The Panel was impressed by the quantity and diversity of research being conducted by members of the program, and advocates support to ensure continued engagement. It would be beneficial if adequate staffing of the program would prevent excessive teaching demands, especially if the six-course norm remains unchanged.

15. Application for CURA grants and other funding

One program scholar has participated in a CURA (Community University research Alliances) grant. The Panel strongly recommends that, given the extensive community participation of program members, more CURA grants should be sought. Further, it was suggested that CFI grants might be appropriate for program needs, such as archiving equipment.

Social/Cultural Studies Majors and Minors Enrollment

| YEAR | SCS MAJOR | | | SCS MINOR | | | FOLKLORE MINOR | | | SOCIOLOGY MINOR | | | GRADS Majors | GRADS Minors |
|-----------|-----------|---------|----|-----------|--------|----|----------------|--------|----|-----------------|---------|----|-----------------|-----------------|
| | F | W | Gr | F | W | Gr | F | W | Gr | F | W | Gr | | |
| 1999-2000 | 3 | 4 (+1) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 (+1) | 8 (+1) | 4 | 23 | 26 (+3) | 10 | 0 | 14 |
| 2000-2001 | 14 (+4) | 13 (+3) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 (+1) | 5 (+1) | 0 | 26 (+1) | 26 (+4) | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| 2001-2002 | 17 (+7) | 16 (+2) | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 27 | 28 (+2) | 8 | 2 | 13 |
| 2002-2003 | 11 (+5) | 18 (+5) | 1 | 1 | 5 (+1) | 0 | 6 (+1) | 6 | 3 | 26 (+3) | 25 (+1) | 15 | 1 | 18 |
| 2003-2004 | 20 (+3) | 22 (+4) | 6 | 7 | 7 (+1) | 1 | 2 | 1 (+1) | 2 | 19 | 18 (+3) | 9 | 6 | 12 |
| 2004-2005 | 31 (+7) | | 4 | 7 (+1) | 10 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 15 | 14 (+3) | 9 | 4 | 13 |
| 2005-2006 | 34 (+6) | 34 (+5) | 5 | 8 (+1) | 10 | 4 | 2 (+1) | 3 (+1) | 0 | 7 (+1) | 7 (+1) | 4 | 5 | 08 |
| 2006-2007 | 30 (+4) | 33 (+4) | 11 | 14 (+2) | 15(+3) | 8 | 2 (+3) | 4 | 0 | 9 (+2) | 8 | 2 | 11 | 10 |
| 2007-2008 | 22 (+8) | 28 (+6) | 10 | 13 (+1) | 14(+2) | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 10 (+2) | 5 | 10 | 13 |
| 2008-2009 | 18 (+7) | 19 (+7) | 3? | 8 (+1) | 12 | NA | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 11 | NA | 3? | NA |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

number registered (+ number declared, but not registered)

F = Fall; W = Winter; Gr = graduated