Executive Summary and Implementation Plan

Quality Assurance Cyclical Program Review

Department of Political Science

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

March 2017

In accordance with the Lakehead University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Department of Political Science submitted a self-study (July 2013, revised September 2013). Volume 1 presented the program descriptions and outcomes, an analytical assessment of their programs and program metrics including results from a student survey along with institutional information and statistical data. Volumes 2 and 3, respectively, provided a collection of the program course outlines and the CV's for each full-time member in the Department.

Two external reviewers and one internal reviewer, selected by the Senate Academic Quality Assurance Sub-committee (SAC-QA) from a set of proposed reviewers, examined the materials and completed a day and a half site visit on November 26-27, 2013. The site visit included meetings with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Deputy Provost, Dean of the Faculty, Program Chair, tenured faculty, support staff, University Librarian, several alumni and current undergraduate students. The team also toured the library, some classrooms and Departmental facilities.

In their report (April 2014), the Review Team provided feedback that describes how the undergraduate Political Science programs meet the Quality Assurance Framework evaluation criteria and are consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities. The admission standards, curriculum structure and delivery, and teaching and assessment methods are appropriate, reflect the discipline, and are effective in preparing graduates to meet defined program outcomes and the University's undergraduate Degree Level Expectations.

The Review Team identified several strengths including the following:

> Courses in Political Science, as indicated by the course outlines and discussions with faculty and students, encourage the development of theoretical and practical thinking skills, ability to communicate clearly, and an interest in problem-solving.

Programs offered by the Department include a focus on student-centred learning, in particular the development of leadership and independent critical thinking skills.

The Department is to be commended for sustaining enrolments at a time when Political Science enrolments across the country are generally in decline. Offering courses in pre-law and on-line contributes to this sustained growth.

Most commendable is the energy of the students we met who commented favourably on the emphasis on teaching in the Department and the positive dynamic generated by recent hires in the last few years.

The Review Team noted several strengths of the program(s) while expressing concern about the resources available to the Department, the alignment of teaching on the two campuses and the currency and breadth of the course content.

The Review Team provided a number of recommendations with supporting rationale.

The Chair(s) of the Department (past and current), in consultation with the Dean of Social Sciences and Humanities, submitted a response to the Reviewer's Report (September 2014, updated September 2016). Clarifications and corrections were presented followed by a response to each of the recommendations made by the Review Team.

A Final Assessment Report (FAR) has been prepared to provide a synthesis of the external evaluation and internal response to the recommendations. This report identifies the significant strengths of the programs, the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The Implementation Plan identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the FAR; who will be responsible for providing any resources made necessary by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations; who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Programs covered by this cyclical review:

- Bachelor of Arts (Political Science)
- Bachelor of Arts (Political Science) Pre-Law
- Bachelor of Arts (Political Science and Economics)
- Honours Bachelor of Arts (Political Science)
- Honours Bachelor of Arts (Political Science) Pre-Law
- Honours Bachelor of Arts (Political Science and Economics)

- Honours Bachelor of Arts (Political Science and History)
- Honours Bachelor of Arts (Political Science and Philosophy)

Implementation Plan (Part A): Departmental Responsibilities - Department of Political Science

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility*	Timeline
Establish Active Departmental Undergraduate Studies committee that includes members on both campuses	- Coordinate activities incl. course delivery (3) - Hold regular meetings (4) - Curriculum review (5) including Theory requirement (14) - Address University priority - Aboriginal and Environmental Education (6) - Clarify relationship between pre-law and law courses (12) - Clarify cross-listings (8) - Consider greater participation in allocation of resources (?) (10) - Consider ways to distribute thesis supervision more equitably (17) - Strengthen student internship program (15)	Chair and Department members	Sept 2015
Better tracking of student metrics (9)	- Graduation rates - Learning outcomes	Chair and Vice-Provost, IPA	Mar 2017

Develop a speaker series	- Work with Dean SSH and other University administrators to operationalize (11)	Dean and Chair	March 2017
Develop clearer relationship with Faculty of Law	- Clarify course alignments (7) especially with respect to the pre-Law courses	Dean SSH Dean Law Chair POLI	March 2017
Enhance student activities/advising	- Assign a TTFT member to take on this role (13) - Maintain support for student Political Science club (16)	Chair	Ongoing
Establish Graduate studies committee	- Investigate possibility of offering a graduate degree (18); assess if this option has been adequately addressed through the creation of the MA Social Justice	Department Dean SSH Dean FGS	Mar 2017

Implementation Plan (Part B): Decanal & Administration Responsibilities

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility*	Timeline
Consider hire of one full-time member of Faculty	Department to develop Strategic Hiring initiative proposal as part of regular budget cycle	Dean	January 2017

*The Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Department Chair shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans' Annual Reports and filed in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).