

BROCK UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLAN
OCTOBER 2007

A. ACADEMIC MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY

To create and sustain an environment in which faculty and students can absorb, generate and disseminate knowledge to their full capacity. This goal will be achieved through high quality research, vigorous intellectual interaction, and a comprehensive range of outstanding graduate, professional, and undergraduate programs.

B. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

1. Programs Offered

By any measure, the Faculty of Social Sciences is the largest faculty in the university. In 2006-07 it had 4,975 majors (30% of the University total), 4,428 full-time equivalent course enrolments (29% of the University total), 150 faculty members (26% of the University total), and a budget of \$16.7 million (25% of the University's total academic budget). The Faculty also generated almost \$3.4 million of research funding, which is over 30% of the University's total research funding. The Faculty of Social Sciences takes great pride in its ability to deal with large numbers of students and produce a significant amount of research in spite of the fact that the numbers above indicate that it does not have its fair share of faculty members and other resources.

The Faculty of Social Sciences currently consists of three centres (Applied Disability Studies, Labour Studies, Women's Studies), eight departments (Child and Youth Studies; Communications, Popular Culture and Film; Economics; Geography; Political Science; Psychology; Sociology; and Tourism and Environment), and two programs offering only graduate degrees (Popular Culture (shared with the Faculty of Humanities), and Social Justice and Equity Studies).

The centres and departments all offer undergraduate programs (with the exception of Applied Disability Studies which offers only graduate programs). The Department of Psychology offers a Ph.D. The departments of Child and Youth Studies, Economics, Geography, Political Science, and Psychology offer master's degree programs. There are also interdisciplinary M.A. degrees offered by the programs in Popular Culture (shared with the Faculty of Humanities) and Social Justice and Equity Studies. The Centre for Applied Disability Studies is currently offering a Master's in Applied Disability Studies (MADS), a graduate diploma geared mainly to professionals working in the field, and an M.A. in Applied Disability Studies.

The Faculty of Social Sciences has been very progressive in offering a number of innovative programs in a variety of delivery formats. The Departments of Child and Youth Studies and Geography have B.A./B.Ed programs. There are other inter-faculty programs in Business Economics (with the Faculty of Business) and Neuroscience (with the Faculties of Applied Health Science and Mathematics and Science). There is also an inter-departmental program within the Faculty in International Political Economy (Economics and Political Science). Co-op programs, collaborative programs with colleges, internships, or similar experiential learning programs are offered by virtually all the centres and departments, and

several units are in the process of adding more. A few examples of the collaborative programs with colleges are:

- Concentration in Geomatics (Geography and Niagara College)
- Policing and Criminal Justice (Communications, Popular Culture, and Film; Geography: Political Science; Psychology; Sociology and Niagara College)
- Behavioural Science Technology (Psychology and St. Lawrence College)
- Montessori program (Child and Youth Studies and Sheridan College)
- Child & Youth Work (Child and Youth Studies and Durham College)

2. Established strengths

The Faculty of Social Sciences emphasizes high quality in both teaching and research. All faculty members are selected based on their teaching and research potential, and they are provided with appropriate support to develop both sets of skills. The Faculty of Social Sciences will continue to emphasize excellence in teaching and provide a strong support system to ensure that competent, hard-working students will be able to complete their programs successfully. Most of our courses consist of both lecture and seminar components so that students have an opportunity to develop their oral communication skills at the same time that they are learning the material in the course. Most of our courses also have a significant writing component so that students have an opportunity to develop their writing skills.

Our faculty members take their teaching very seriously as indicated by the number who have won major awards and by the number who are involved in developmental programs organized by the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Educational Technologies. We are particularly proud of the fact that we engage in such high quality teaching in spite of the fact that our Faculty's share of total course enrolments is considerably greater than our share of faculty members.

Our faculty members are also very strong researchers. The scope of research within the Faculty is indicated by the fact that in the last few years faculty members have received major grants from the Canadian Institute for Health Research, the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and many other funding organizations. Research conducted ranges from important theoretical research to applied research conducted in partnership with many non-academic community partners. This type of partnership is valuable not only because it leads to high-quality research, but also because it heightens the university's profile and promotes linkages between the university and the community. The skills of our researchers are demonstrated by the fact that our Faculty produces over 30% of the University research funding with about 26% of its faculty members.

The Faculty of Social Sciences has an excellent group of support staff who serve as administrative assistants, departmental coordinators, academic advisors, and in various other positions. The students and faculty members would not be able to accomplish what they have without the support of this excellent group of people. We are fortunate that the Faculty of Social Sciences is able to attract and retain such a strong contingent of staff people. We are committed to help them improve their skills by ensuring that they have a good range of development opportunities.

3. Opportunities

Student enrolment in the Faculty of Social Sciences has grown significantly in the last few years. For the next few years we will be pursuing selective opportunities for growth in enrolment by emphasizing Economics, Labour Studies, Political Science, Tourism and Environment, and Women's Studies. We will also be examining opportunities for innovative niche programs. The other departments within the Faculty will focus more on consolidating their current positions than on pursuing the rapid growth in number of students that we have experienced in the last few years. Within the context of more controlled growth we recognize the need to continue to attract high-quality students by offering new and innovative programs. The Faculty also wants to continue to nurture its existing graduate programs and develop interesting new graduate programs without in any way detracting from the quality of our undergraduate programs, which we value highly. As indicated later in this plan, a number of units have plans for new or expanded graduate programs that are in formative stages.

The Faculty will likely experience a number of retirements in key areas in the next few years. These people will be missed, and it will be difficult to replace them. We must continue to be an employer of choice for high-quality faculty members. We can do this by continuing to develop new and high-quality programs that are of interest to potential faculty members and by continuing to maintain a fertile research environment. We must also continue to pay appropriate salaries, and to provide proper start-up funds, research space, and support. We must also ensure that the student-faculty ratios of the Faculty of Social Sciences are brought down so that they are in line with the University average.

The Faculty must also continue to be an employer of choice for support staff. We need to provide a positive work environment at appropriate rates of pay and with good opportunities for personal development.

The Faculty must continue to emphasize the importance of good research conducted in a variety of ways. Some of this will be research carried out by individuals and others will involve large multi-disciplinary groups. Much of it will involve working in partnership with community groups as many of our faculty members are already doing.

The Faculty must continue to emphasize high-quality teaching. This aim is important in attracting and retaining both good students and innovative teachers. We need to work with CTLET to ensure that faculty members have the opportunity to develop their skills. We need to work with Facilities Management and ITS to ensure that classrooms have the best technical equipment for the benefit of our students and faculty members.

C. ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES OF THE FACULTY

1. Improve the student experience by strengthening the teaching and learning environment.
2. Strengthen the research environment for faculty and graduate students.
3. Ensure that the administrative capacities of the Faculty of Social Sciences are sufficient to support the Faculty's teaching and research missions. This requires that the administrative resources available to centres and departments be commensurate with the duties assigned to them.

4. Employ appropriate governance structures and processes both within the Faculty and in the University to support the Faculty's teaching and research missions.
5. Promote linkages with a broad range of groups, institutions, and communities at the local, national, and international levels.

D. FACULTY ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLAN

Create a scholarly environment with appropriate and extensive resources that integrates the work of faculty, students and staff into a pervasive culture of research and creative activity.

- promote excellence in undergraduate programs by increasing the number of full-time faculty members
- support collegial working relationships
- encourage more interdisciplinary, international, and collaborative research
- encourage community-based research with community partners and recognize faculty participation in these initiatives
- support the integration of teaching and research so that students gain insights into the research process, obtain research experience (when relevant), and are exposed to leading-edge knowledge
- increase the number of graduate students in a phased manner, consistent with available financial support and faculty resources
- ensure that there is adequate equipment and space to foster the research environment
- address the impact that administrative and teaching loads, including student supervision, has on the ability of faculty members to perform research
- establish a mentoring program to assist new faculty members in the development of a research program
- promote community placements for students to foster their research programs, where appropriate
- ensure that there are adequate library resources and technological support, including shop resources

Develop a full array of graduate and professional programs that educate the next generation of highly qualified people and enhance our scholarly capacity.

- improve the student environment by moving the student-faculty ratio of the Faculty of Social Sciences closer to the University average student-faculty ratio
- move toward transforming the Faculty's two centres offering undergraduate programs (Labour Studies, Women's Studies) into departments
- reduce the number of students who are undeclared or are otherwise outside a specific academic program

- preserve the integrity of the seminar system by restricting the size of seminars
- develop a writing program for all students that would consist of a first-year writing course and writing-intensive courses in later years
- develop new graduate and undergraduate programs and systematically review and modify existing programs to ensure that students are being properly prepared for informed citizenship and productive careers
- work with the Faculty of Graduate Studies in the strengthening of graduate programs
- ensure that all students have proper academic support including good academic advising
- ensure that class sizes are appropriate for the material being taught
- ensure that all classrooms have appropriate equipment for the courses being taught in them and faculty have adequate technological support for instructional hardware and software
- establish a mentoring program to assist new faculty members in the development of teaching skills
- maintain and strengthen training programs for teaching assistants
- ensure that there are appropriate library and IT resources for students and instructors
- ensure that there are appropriate levels of staff support
- ensure that duties expected of staff are commensurate with the resources available
- ensure that staff members have appropriate training to carry out their duties
- ensure that staff members have appropriate space to carry out their duties
- ensure that staff members have appropriate IT support to carry out their duties
- develop positive relationships with other units of the University to support the Faculty's mission

Prepare our students for leadership roles in an increasingly complex world by providing a wide range of innovative interdisciplinary and traditional undergraduate programs, and encouraging faculty-student interaction through a variety of teaching and experiential learning approaches.

- provide opportunities for experiential learning including community placements, where appropriate
- develop more collaborative programs with colleges and other educational institutions, where appropriate

Engage with the community to enhance the economic, social, cultural and intellectual lives of the citizens of Niagara and beyond.

- encourage international activities, local, national and international field trips and exchange programs that provide students with an opportunity to learn in a non-traditional setting

- build fruitful collaborative relationships with groups, institutions, and communities
- encourage community-based research in partnership with community groups
- develop continuing education courses to respond to the needs of community groups and individuals

Create a vibrant educational gateway to Canada and expand our international engagement through our commitment to diversity, globalization and equity, and the creation of mutually beneficial partnerships.

- work with Brock International to develop international linkages in teaching and research

E. INITIATIVES WITHIN THE FACULTY ACADEMIC PLAN

The centres and departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences have been active in developing new initiatives as indicated by the information provided earlier in this document. However, new initiatives have been somewhat limited in the last few years because of the immediate needs presented by the size of the double cohort and the general pressures of large enrolment in Social Sciences courses. The units within the Faculty are looking forward to undertaking a number of innovative initiatives in the coming years.

Short-term (1-2 years)

Initiative	Resource Requirement
Reduce student-faculty ratio	Substantial. Either reducing the number of students in the Faculty or hiring a significant number of new faculty and staff.
Faculty-wide initiative – develop a Writing Initiative consisting of a first-year writing course for all students and writing-oriented courses in the upper-years of all programs.	Substantial. Faculty of Humanities will need to expand the current first-year pilot course, and upper-year instructors in the Faculty of Social Sciences will need instruction in developing writing-oriented courses. These instructors will also need additional TA support. Ongoing evaluation of this initiative will be needed.
All departments and centres are moving toward developing new collaborative programs with colleges	Ultimately, a full-time administrator will be needed to develop and manage these initiatives
The Centre for Applied Disability Studies will seek opportunities to expand its involvement internationally	Self-funding through Grants, e.g., CIDA
The Centre for Applied Disability Studies will develop a Centre of Excellence in Research in Applied Disability Studies and Applied Behaviour Analysis	Self-funding through Grants

The Department of Child & Youth Studies is exploring the possibility of participating in an Aboriginal Studies program with the Faculty of Education	1 faculty position plus travel and related funds, and space
Department of Child and Youth Studies – increase enrollment in M.A Program	1 faculty position .5 administrative position Funding for about 5 additional students each year Adequate equipment and space for above faculty, staff and students
Department of Political Science – develop new Ph.D. program	3 faculty positions .5 administrative position Funding for about 5 new students each year Adequate equipment and space for above faculty, staff and students
Department of Sociology – develop new M.A. program	2 faculty positions .5 administrative position Funding for about 10-12 new students each year Adequate equipment and space for above faculty, staff and students
The Centre for Women’s Studies is moving toward converting its status to a full-fledged department. It also plans to continue to publish the Wise Journal and will be turning it into an on-line journal purely for student articles.	Minimal

Medium-term (3-5 years)

Initiative	Resource Requirement
The Centre for Applied Disability Studies will expand MA program to include fields in Assessment and Counselling (of persons with disabilities)	2 faculty positions plus funding for field supervisors . Funding for 3-5 more MA students Adequate <u>accessible</u> space (offices and labs) for faculty staff and students
The Centre for Applied Disability Studies will develop a new Ph.D. program	3 faculty positions plus funding for field supervisors .5 administrative position Funding for about 10-15 new students each year Adequate equipment and space for above faculty, staff and students
The Centre for Applied Disability Studies will develop a (Professional) Doctorate in ADS	Self-funding

The Centre for Applied Disability Studies will establish an Assessment, Counselling and Treatment Clinic (for training of students and community outreach)	Self-funding <u>Accessible</u> clinic space
The Centre for Applied Disability Studies will develop an undergraduate program	2 faculty positions Appropriate staff support Space for faculty and staff
The Department of Child & Youth Studies is considering developing a Statistical Consulting Service.	Self-funding, but will require limited start-up funding
Centre for Labour Studies – deliver short non-credit courses for members of local unions	Minimal; plan is that these courses should be self-funding
Department of Communications, Popular Culture, and Film – develop new Ph.D. program	3 faculty positions .5 administrative position Funding for about 5 new students each year Adequate equipment and space for above faculty, staff and students
Department of Child and Youth Studies – develop new Ph.D. program	3 faculty positions plus funding for field supervisors .5 administrative position Funding for about 5 new students each year Adequate equipment and space for above faculty, staff and students
Department of Tourism and Environment – develop new M. A. program	2 faculty positions .5 administrative position Funding for about 10-15 new students each year Adequate equipment and space for above faculty, staff and students
Program in Social Justice and Equity Studies – develop new Ph.D. program	3 faculty positions .5 administrative position Funding for about 5 new students each year Adequate equipment and space for above faculty, staff and students
Department of Psychology – increase size of existing graduate programs from 40 to 60 students and build faculty depth within existing focus areas	3 faculty positions 1 administrative position Funding for all students Increase in part-time and non-salary budgets and adequate IT support Adequate equipment and space for above faculty, staff and students