



University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

Program Reviewed:	Latin American Studies, B.A. (Hons.): Major, Minor
Division/Unit offering program:	Faculty of Arts & Science
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professor Laura Beard, Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies, University of Alberta 2. Professor Maarten van Delden, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of California, Los Angeles
Date of review visit:	February 2, 2018
Date reported to AP&P:	November 1, 2018

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

1 Outcome

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that there were no issues to be drawn to the attention of the Agenda Committee but requested a follow up report in one year to address the possible integration of the program within the Department of Spanish & Portuguese.

2 Significant Program Strengths

- Program is a small gem
- Students who are amazing communicators and excellent representatives of a high quality education
- Impressive, large array of experiential learning and research opportunities
- Clear curriculum mapping and learning outcomes

- Staff administrator and director are both highly regarded by those involved in the program

3 Opportunities for Program Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Considering combining the program with a larger unit to increase the Latin American Studies program's visibility within the University
- Exploring structural options that will allow for core tenure-stream faculty and prioritizing hires in cognate units
- Promoting the program, and engaging students or interns in enhancing program outreach efforts
- Developing a more formal advisory group that would meet regularly and consult broadly with individuals involved with Latin American Studies
- Attending to the noticeable drop in enrolment in the Major program
- Developing a curriculum on Indigenous Peoples in Latin America
- Reviewing issues with frequency and quantity of course offerings
- Exploring additional options for experiential learning and research opportunities, and funding for study abroad options



4 Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

October 2, 2018

Professor Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost Academic Programs
University of Toronto

Re: UTQAP cyclical review of Latin American Studies

Dear Professor McCahan,

Along with the faculty, staff and students of Latin American Studies, I am pleased with the external reviewers' assessment of LAS and its programs: Latin American Studies, B.A., Hons., (Major, Minor). The reviewers complimented Latin American Studies on "*the commitment of the core faculty, the coordinator, and the Director of the Latin American Studies Program, the excellence and enthusiasm of the current students, the innovative courses recently developed in the curriculum, the research strengths in the program, and the engagement with the Latino community in Toronto.*"

The quality of this program notwithstanding, as per your letter dated July 23, 2018, the review report raises a number of issues and challenges. I am writing to address the areas of the review report that you identify as key. The response to these items and implementation plan are separated into immediate (6 months), medium (one to two years), and longer (three to five years) terms, where appropriate, along with who (Director, Dean) will take the lead in each area. Latin American Studies has discussed the reviewers' comments through consultation with various groups and has begun to implement changes where appropriate and that are consistent with Latin American Studies' mission.

Strategic Planning & Faculty Complement

While the reviewers "appreciate[d] the many advantages of preserving the unit's independence, in particular from the point of view of maintaining its distinct identity," they noted that the "goal of moving towards the possibility of permanent faculty appointments in Latin American Studies ... is at odds with the program's continued status as a stand-alone unit" and that "combining with a larger unit might increase the Latin American Studies program's visibility within the University."

Latin American Studies is unique in its status as a small "stand-alone" unit within the Faculty. As the reviewers noted, this stand-alone status poses problems for engaging faculty in teaching. Because there are no faculty appointments, or even partial appointments, associated with the program, the program curriculum relies on courses provided by other units, with the largest number of program courses coming from Spanish and Portuguese. The program is delivered primarily through sessional instruction. Indeed, none of the LAS-code courses are taught by

faculty with continuing appointments. This presents a problem for students in the major and minor, who should have access to teaching and tenure stream faculty through their LAS-specific courses.

The Dean's office has been working with the unit to come up with a satisfactory arrangement in which the LAS program can be linked more closely with an A&S department, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the program. Discussions are currently underway with the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, which already has significant ties with the program. These discussions are taking place in a context in which LAS is recognized as an interdisciplinary program. The current Director has highlighted the interdisciplinary structure that is key to the success of the program. Nevertheless, building a connection to a larger department would bring many advantages, including the engagement of continuing tenure-stream faculty teaching in the program. Maintaining an ongoing Director for the program during the transition, and possibly on an ongoing basis should the program grow and thrive, would help to ensure that the interdisciplinary nature of the program is preserved. Consultations will be required with both units.

Immediate-term response: At present, there are 18 students in the LAS major and 39 students in the LAS minor, making a faculty appointment associated only with LAS teaching unfeasible.

In the interim, the Dean's office is engaged in discussions with the Chair of Spanish and Portuguese and the Director of the Latin American Studies program, as noted above. Both programs have identified areas of teaching needs in the Latin American sector. Should the change currently under discussion take place, the Dean's office has proposed the allocation of funds to Spanish and Portuguese, equivalent to one full-time faculty, that will support teaching in both programs, including areas recommended by the reviewers.

The current Director will oversee the establishment of an advisory committee of Latin Americanist scholars within the Faculty of Arts and Science, nominated regularly from a range of disciplines, who will consult on programming decisions.

The reviewers recommended exploring “structural options that will allow for core faculty who are tenure stream faculty” and endorse the prioritization of new hires in cognate units as outlined in the self-study (Brazilian and Southern Cone literature and culture, political science, etc.).

Immediate-to-medium-term response: As a stand-alone program, LAS is not eligible to hold faculty appointments. As an inter-disciplinary program, the unit currently relies on teaching from other units. In recent years, however, LAS courses have been taught exclusively by sessional instructors. As noted above, the Faculty is exploring options with LAS that will change the structure of the unit to ensure that students in the program have access to research and teaching by faculty with continuing appointments.

In addition, the Director is currently in consultation with faculty members and their Chairs in relevant units, including History, Anthropology, and Spanish and Portuguese, to determine the feasibility of encouraging faculty from cognate units teaching LAS courses. The Director will initiate such discussions, but the Dean's office will play a role as facilitator. Collaboration between the LAS program and cognate units will enhance research and study abroad for LAS students, and may encourage program growth.

Outreach and Administration

The reviewers made several suggestions about promoting the program, and engaging students or interns in enhancing program outreach efforts.

Immediate-term response: Effective September 2018, the program is posting three Work-Study positions to assist in the creation of promotional content for distribution through our social media channels: faculty and student profiles, events and initiatives. These assistants will also support visits to courses with Latin American content taught in other academic units to talk about the program and events. The program is currently in production of print materials to distribute in these visits.

As part of their outreach to the community at large, the program continues to work with community media to profile our program, students, and events. The program is co-sponsoring a Latin American Film Festival to be held during the last week of September and October as part of their contribution to the celebrations of Latin American Heritage Month, newly designated by the federal government. The program will engage faculty and students to introduce the films and talk about the LAS program; this initiative should improve awareness of the program in the local Latin American community and in the city overall.

Medium-term response: In the coming academic year, the program will collaborate with community partners in outreach efforts to Latino high school students, co-sponsoring a series of workshops on journalism and leadership. Specific initiatives include a collaboration with the Canadian Hispanic Heritage Council, with whom the unit is partnering for the Toronto Latin American Film Festival. Other events will be organized in collaboration with the Institute for Creative Exchange, the organization Latin@s en Toronto, and with a correspondent for NotiMex, who has offered to facilitate workshops for the unit.

The reviewers recommended developing a more formal advisory group that would meet regularly and consult broadly with individuals involved with Latin American Studies.

Immediate-term response: Effective this September, the Program Director is establishing a formal Advisory Committee will include faculty with a longstanding interest in LAS, including former Directors, reading and research group members, event organizers and regular event attendees. As a component of the Advisory Committee, a Research Committee of 3-4 members will also be established to plan academic and cultural events. The Advisory Committee has already held its first meeting of the year, and the newly established research committee will be meeting in the coming weeks. The Director has designated a \$6,000 fund for which the Research Committee will be responsible, and which will be allocated towards academic events including colloquia and invited speakers. The responsibilities of this committee will include consultation with student and community groups and other individuals involved with program activities.

Medium-term response: The Director will continue to assign affiliated faculty members to an annual Undergraduate Research Award Committee; as in previous years, the Program Director will assign faculty to this committee, and will participate in the reviewing of student applications, as well as in matching students with appropriate faculty advisors for their projects.

Undergraduate

The reviewers highlighted the noticeable drop in enrolment in the Major program.

Immediate-term response: The reduction in numbers in the major program is partly due to demographic shifts reflected across universities in Ontario, and particularly in the humanities. The Program Coordinator and the Director are taking steps to address this trend and boost student numbers through outreach and program promotion, as discussed above.

The Faculty will allocate \$5000 to the program for 2018-19 to support efforts to promote the program. Promotion efforts have included the professional design and printing of cards and brochures, and their wider distribution. The program has also created short videos of students (with professional assistance) to show at the opening of events and at the Toronto Latin American film festival. In addition, the program is co-sponsoring the opening gala of the film festival, featuring remarks from the Associate Vice-President, International Partnerships at the University of Toronto, along with municipal, provincial, and federal leaders. This initiative is intended to give greater visibility to the program within and beyond the university

Possible structural changes in the program, as noted above, along with greater engagement from faculty in cognate units, may also increase the program's visibility to students in the Faculty.

The program recognizes the possibility of future growth due to demographic trends of Latin American populations in Canada and the hemispheric importance of the region in relation to Canada. The Director will work with the Vice-Dean, Academic Planning and Strategic Initiatives, to identify possible growth opportunities within the Faculty.

The reviewers encouraged developing curriculum on Indigenous Peoples in Latin America.

Immediate-term response: Students in LAS have indicated interest in a course on Indigenous Peoples in Latin America. Our reviewers also highlight this point. The program is currently developing a new course on Indigenous Realities in Latin America, to be taught by Dr. Victor Rivas in winter of 2019 as LAS 302. The program will develop this course in consultation with colleagues in the Centre for Indigenous Studies

In addition, the program has consulted with the Director of Indigenous Initiatives in the Office of the Vice-President and Provost, who has offered a number of key contacts that will allow the program to effectively develop the course and related activities, and to promote collaboration and the cross-promotion of courses between our program and other units.

The new course will be taught in alternate years. It follows on the successful development of two other new courses, Latinos in Toronto, (an experiential learning course), and Critical Perspectives on Development and Volunteerism in Latin America (a combined course and guest-speaker series focused on the impact and ethics of volunteer projects, and the only course of its kind in Canada). This course and series was offered through collaboration with Region of Peel Public Health.

The reviewers also suggested that the program review issues with frequency and quantity of course offerings.

Immediate-term response: As noted above, the Dean's office is working with the program to develop a plan that will engage continuing faculty in the core curriculum. This should expand the variety of courses currently offered.

The recent development of three new courses (described above) has also added greater variety to the LAS curriculum. Each of these is taught in alternate years.

An additional course, first offered in 2016, LAS 401, on Political Ecologies and Extractivism, is now being offered in alternate years. This course has included an optional study abroad component in Ecuador, in collaboration with the Munk School for Global Affairs and Public Policy. Two LAS students participated in this component in 2016.

The program regularly offers an introductory sequence of LAS 200-201, and two other courses at the 300 level, one in the humanities and one in the social sciences, with alternating topics. The program also collaborates with New College to co-sponsor and offer two joint courses on the Hispanic Caribbean, JLN 327 and JLN 427.

In 2018-19, the Director will work with the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate and International, to review the LAS curriculum.

The reviewers suggested exploring additional options for experiential learning and research opportunities and funding for study abroad options.

Immediate-term response: Structural changes in the program, described above, will increase students' contact with tenure-stream faculty, enhancing their opportunities to engage in faculty research programs.

The program will continue to offer the course, LAS 401: Latinos in Toronto, in alternate years, in collaboration with our community partners. The program is also applying for a Community Partnership Research Program Grant, in collaboration with the Hispanic Canadian Heritage Council; this program aims to develop a virtual museum on the topic of Latin American immigration to Toronto, incorporating oral history through interviews, and textual and photographic resources through archival research. This project will allow for the direct involvement of undergraduates as student researchers, ongoing collaboration with community partners, and the development of a new experiential learning course focused on the historical components of Latino experiences in Toronto.

LAS 400 (Political Ecology and Extractivism), will continue to offer a field study component. The program has met with staff from the Center for International Experience to discuss ways to make funding available for more students to participate in this and similar opportunities.

Medium-term response: Over a number of years, small groups of our students have had the opportunity to travel to Cuba as part of JLN 427: Revolution and Culture in Cuba. This year, the program initiated a new funding model, in collaboration with New College, in order to make this a regular, funded opportunity for two or three students each year. The program is able to offer the field study component to three students this year, although the long-term funding agreement

with New College is still pending.

To conclude, we appreciate that the external reviewers identified Latin American Studies' strengths and noted significant areas for development. Latin American Studies has already begun to move forward with plans to address the recommendations as presented by the reviewers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Cameron".

David Cameron, CM, FRSC
Dean and Professor of Political Science

cc.

Susan Antebi, Director, Latin American Studies

Poppy Lockwood, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning and Strategic Initiatives, Faculty of Arts & Science

Daniella Mallinck, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Andrea Benoit, Academic Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the program's strengths as its place as a small gem within the University; students who are amazing communicators and excellent representatives of a high quality education; an impressive, large array of experiential learning and research opportunities; clear curriculum mapping and learning outcomes; and the staff administrator and director who are both highly regarded by those involved in the program. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: considering combining the program with a larger unit to increase the Latin American Studies program's visibility within the University; exploring structural options that will allow for core tenure-stream faculty and prioritizing hires in cognate units; promoting the program, and engaging students or interns in enhancing program outreach efforts; developing a more formal advisory group that would meet regularly and consult broadly with individuals involved with Latin American Studies; attending to the noticeable drop in enrolment in the Major program; developing a curriculum on Indigenous Peoples in Latin America; reviewing issues with frequency and quantity of course offerings; and exploring additional options for experiential learning and research opportunities, and funding for study abroad options. The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty and program's responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that there were no issues to be drawn to the attention of the Agenda Committee but requested a follow up report in one year to address the possible integration of the program within the Department of Spanish & Portuguese.