



Faculty of Arts

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June 14, 2007

TO: The Planning and Budget Committee

FROM: Reeta C. Tremblay, Dean, Faculty of Arts

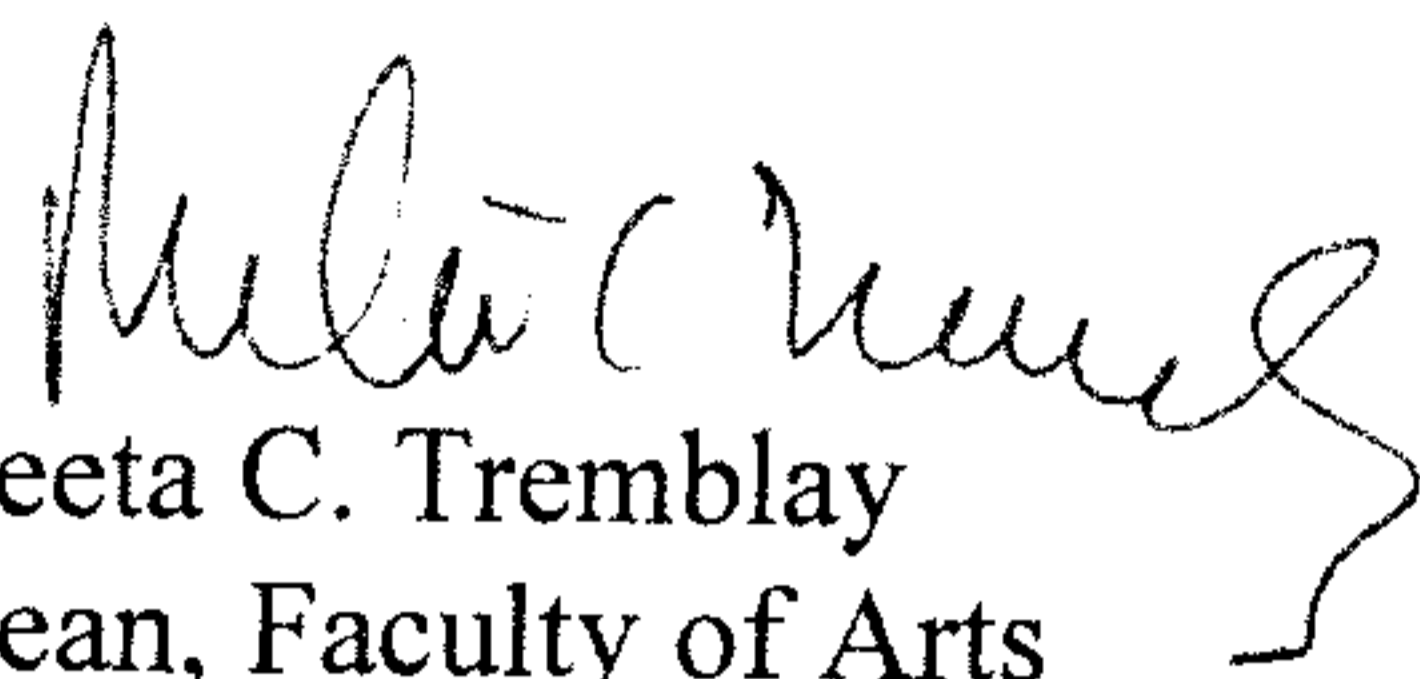
SUBJECT: Department of Sociology, Action Plan

I am forwarding you the department of Sociology's action plan. After receiving the Academic Program Review report in September 2006, the department began a series of discussions. This action plan is a result of those departmental deliberations and a consultation with me. I am pleased to report that the department has begun to implement several of the APR recommendations, such as: the exploration of the feasibility of an undergraduate internship program (Recommendation 3); the review of the undergraduate curriculum and the course content of distance education courses (Recommendations 4, 5, and 15); the initiation of a regular department seminar series (Recommendation 12); and an active involvement of the department's faculty members in participating in university related committees (Recommendation 21 – the action plan contains a reference to 12 committees in which sociology faculty members were involved during the academic year 2006-07).

At the Dean's level, certain new initiatives were taken this year which have resulted in an automatic response to some of the recommendations underlined in the Sociology APR (Recommendations 10 and 24). The Faculty has begun a new initiative of creating the position of an undergraduate academic advisor in all departments who will receive a stipend in proportion to the enrollments in the home department. All academic advisors will be in place by September 2007. This should allow a regular faculty member in each department to guide and advise students in their undergraduate programs. The Sociology department will move during summer 2007 to its new location on the 4th floor of the Arts and Administration building. Its space needs have been adequately met by receiving the allocation of an extra 1,046 square footage (presently the department has 3,724 sq. feet; in the new location the department will occupy 4,770 sq. feet).

The department remains conflicted with regard to its participation in several interdisciplinary programs where its members are involved and where its courses are being offered (Recommendations 6 – 9). Most of the issues have arisen due to a lack of consultation with the department when some of the interdisciplinary programs were initiated by the Faculty of Arts. Both the Police Studies diploma and the Master of Employment Relations programs have sociology courses as a part of their core requirements. I

have held two meetings with the department representatives who participate in these programs and the Head of the department, Dr. Stephen Riggins. I have asked the department to prepare a long term plan for the Dean's office with regard to teaching resource implications in order to satisfy the needs of both the sociology majors and the diploma students. I am pleased to note that the department remains committed to interdisciplinary initiatives. However, I am of the opinion that the department needs to slow down with regard to any additional commitment to another interdisciplinary program such as Law and Society (Recommendation 7) until we have resolved the budgetary implications and have satisfied the needs of both the Sociology department and the two interdisciplinary programs mentioned above.



Reeta C. Tremblay
Dean, Faculty of Arts

c: Dr. Stephen Riggins, Head, Department of Sociology

TO: Dean of Arts, Reeta Tremblay, Ph.D.

FROM : Stephen Harold Riggins, Ph.D.
Head of Sociology Department.

SUBJECT: Action Plan by the Department of Sociology:
A Response to the Academic Program Review of 2006.

DATE: May 10, 2007.

Recommendation 1: Immediate attention to renewal of staff, so that knowledge transfer can occur prior to retirement.

Departmental Response: The Administrative Secretary, Judy Smith, expects to retire in the summer of 2008. (She has been employed in the Sociology Department since 1979.) We acknowledge the importance of this recommendation. However, we have been concerned about knowledge transfer for some time.

Responsibility: Department Head and our two secretaries.

Progress: For the benefit of future office staff we maintain files so that new secretaries can quickly master their required tasks. This includes information about courses which need to be offered each term, the number of sections, and prerequisites for advanced courses. There are files of form letters and a file of information about course waivers. We have also begun to document secretarial responsibilities related to graduate studies. We do not systematically save information about the financial aspects of research grants because we think this work should be done by other university offices.

Recommendation 2: The position of Administrative Secretary be upgraded to Administrative Assistant II to accord with work currently done by the Administrative Secretary.

Departmental Response: On at least two previous occasions the department has attempted to upgrade the position of Administrative Secretary. This was rejected by the Administration.

Responsibility: Future department Head.

Progress: We are in favor of upgrading this position, but we think it should not be attempted again until the present Administrative Secretary retires.

Recommendation 3: The feasibility of developing a co-op program or an internship program be explored.

Departmental Response: We agree that an internship – especially at the undergraduate level – is a desirable addition to the curriculum. The department is in the early stages of implementing this recommendation. We hope to develop an undergraduate

internship modeled after the one in Political Science (PS 4000). If our own program is successful, we will probably develop the internship at the graduate level.

Responsibility: The department established an internship committee of five faculty members, who began meeting in April 2007.

Progress: Our goal is to have the undergraduate internship in the MUN *Calendar* for the autumn of 2008.

Recommendation 4: The department be strongly encouraged to continue the process already begun to consolidate/review the undergraduate curriculum. In particular, the department should consider offering the first (classical) theory course consistently and in lock-step with the methods course and the second (contemporary) theory course.

Departmental Response: The classical theory course (Soci. 3150) is consistently offered every term. There are normally two sections of Soci. 3150 during both the autumn and winter terms. We agree that a contemporary theory course should be required of sociology Majors. (It was in fact a requirement until circa 1990 when finding instructors became a problem.) We are in agreement that the introductory sociology course should be a prerequisite for all third-year and fourth-year courses.

Responsibility: The entire faculty of the Sociology Department.

Progress: Contemporary Social Theory (Soci. 3160) will be required for Majors beginning in the autumn of 2007. The course will be offered every autumn and winter term and is in the *Calendar* for 2007-08.

In order to encourage students to major in sociology as soon as possible, our introductory sociology course (Soci. 2000) has been reclassified as a first-year course (Soci. 1000) beginning in the autumn of 2007. Sociology 1000, and two courses at the 2000-level, have now been formally made prerequisites for all 3000-level sociology courses.

We have had on-going discussions concerning the requirements for methods courses, but have not been able to agree on how these courses should be organized. We do not have the resources to consistently provide the ideal two-term course in methods.

Recommendation 5: The effectiveness of distance courses be comprehensively reviewed (WebCT, course evaluations).

Departmental Response: We acknowledge that it is important to investigate the content of distance education courses and to determine if they are of uneven quality.

Responsibility: The topic is being investigated by a member of the department (Anthony Micucci) who wrote our first report on distance education courses a decade ago.

Progress: A report is expected this summer.

Recommendation 6: The department develop a plan and policy outlining how they will collaborate in future. This will enable all the parties involved in Women's Studies to better anticipate what their own role in the continuation of Women's Studies must be, at both the departmental and faculty administrative levels.

Departmental Response: Many members of the department are opposed to additional Sociology faculty being cross-appointed with Women's Studies. In their opinion, our priority must be providing courses for sociology students. To my knowledge, however, no one objects to sociologists being given course remissions for the supervision of theses in Women's Studies (or in other departments/programs).

Progress: Now that Women's Studies has been given the status of a department in the Faculty of Arts beginning in the autumn of 2007, it might be easier to work out some type of future relationship.

Recommendation 7: The department provide a forum to investigate to what extent they wish to make Law and Society an integral part of the department.

Departmental Response: We acknowledge in principle the validity of this recommendation. However, at the moment the department is barely able to meet the demands of the Police Studies program – and the Criminology Certificate – because we have only two tenure-stream criminologists.

Responsibility: Department Head and specialists in criminology and deviance.

Progress: No real progress can be made on this recommendation until the department is allowed to hire a third specialist in criminology, deviance, or criminal justice. Hiring in this area is our priority.

Recommendation 8: The Dean of Arts together with the Dean of Graduate Studies find some mechanism to explore what support is necessary for the delivery of interdisciplinary programs, both undergraduate and graduate, and then commit to providing such support.

Departmental Response: This is not within the mandate of the Sociology Department, but we are prepared to make a proposal, if asked.

Responsibility: Dean of Arts and Dean of Graduate Studies.

Recommendation 9: The Dean of Arts review the faculty's commitment to special or interdisciplinary programs such as Women's Studies, Police Studies, Law & Society.

Departmental Response: The Head gave the Dean of Arts a detailed report on the department's involvement with the Police Studies program (written by Anthony Micucci and Scott Kenney) in May 2007.

Responsibility: Dean of Arts.

Progress: It is essential that the Dean of Arts call a meeting in the very near future for all people involved in providing courses for the Police Studies program. It is unacceptable that the sociology department has *never* been consulted about the Police Studies program.

Recommendation 10: The department appoint an undergraduate coordinator and/or find a way to ensure that regular faculty are available to guide students in their undergraduate programs. An undergraduate coordinator should ideally be given a course remission as an incentive to undertake this important task.

Departmental Response: We agree that all departments in the Faculty of Arts should have undergraduate coordinators.

Responsibility: Dean of Arts, department Head, and one faculty member.

Progress: The Dean of Arts has complied with this recommendation. All departments are now required to have undergraduate coordinators. Dr. Ailsa Craig volunteered to be our first undergraduate coordinator. According to university policy however, she will receive a small stipend rather than a course remission.

Recommendation 11: A mentoring program be instituted to deal with teaching-related issues involving sessional instructors and new faculty.

Departmental Response: While mentoring is important, newly hired faculty do not think that this is necessary in a medium-sized department such as Sociology. Our per-term instructors have been employed with us for several years (most were undergraduate students in our department) and have a good understanding of procedures and policies.

Responsibility: Department Head.

Progress: The department Head provides some informal advice concerning teaching and course outlines. For other assistance the Head advises faculty to contact the Instructional Development Office. Recently hired faculty members have attended instructional development seminars and workshops organized by that office.

Recommendation 12: A regular departmental seminar series be instituted, providing speaking opportunities for faculty and graduate students in the department as well as for visiting scholars.

Departmental Response: We acknowledge that establishing a departmental seminar series is a good idea. Time and money to organize such a series is limited, however.

Responsibility: Dr. Stephen Crocker has volunteered to organize a series of presentations by faculty members in the future.

Progress: A series of departmental seminars has been implemented to some extent through the monthly graduate student seminar. Several faculty members, the department Head, and the Dean of Arts have spoken to graduate students on these occasions.

Recommendation 13: The department consider participating in the development of interdisciplinary programs at the graduate level.

Departmental Response: There is some interest among faculty members in doing this in the future, especially in the area of Mass Media Studies and Cultural Studies. But at the moment we do not have the capacity to be involved in any additional interdisciplinary programs at either the graduate or undergraduate level. The Heads of most departments in the Faculty of Arts seem to share this opinion and are reluctant to commit their departments to additional interdisciplinary programs.

Recommendation 14: The department investigate the feasibility of internship or co-op programs at the Masters level.

Departmental Response: We agree that a graduate internship is needed.

Responsibility: Future department Head and faculty members who teach graduate students.

Progress: It is too early to undertake this investigation. We need to experiment first with an internship at the undergraduate level. Once our proposed undergraduate internship has been in existence for a couple of years we should be able to undertake this investigation.

Recommendation 15: The department require a second theory course in contemporary theory, the content of which could vary depending on who is teaching it. Five current faculty members appear to be willing to teach such a course on a rotating basis.

Progress: This recommendation has been met. The contemporary theory course will be required of sociology Majors beginning in the autumn of 2007. The requirement is in the MUN *Calendar* for that term.

Recommendation 16: A sociology-specific graduate handbook be developed that outlines the sociology graduate program requirements and the processes for navigating the program.

Departmental Response: The department's Graduate Coordinator meets each autumn with the incoming graduate students and explains procedures to them. We also organize a party each autumn for faculty and graduate students which is an occasion for students to informally meet professors who are not teaching at the graduate level that term.

Responsibility: Department Head and Graduate Coordinator.

Progress: We will try to put information concerning graduate requirements and processes on the department's website before the end of this summer.

Recommendation 17: The department revisit its requirements on the timing of writing of comprehensive examinations, which seem unnecessarily onerous.

Departmental Response: In my opinion we are flexible about the timing of these examinations. If the timing is sometimes a problem, we believe it is due to university regulations.

Recommendation 18: The department pursue a more active graduate student recruitment program, particularly in light of its very active research profile, provided it has the support to do so and to support the graduate students once recruited.

Departmental Response: We do send promotional materials to potential graduate students and to sociology departments across Canada. Faculty members also informally recruit students, especially among our own undergraduates. This policy would require a large increase in baseline graduate funding. In our opinion the department should have

more input in the design of the School of Graduate Studies website related to our own graduate program. We would like permission to place advertisements in student newspapers across Canada.

Responsibility: Graduate Coordinator.

Progress: About 50% of our graduate students are from outside the province.

Recommendation 19: The department involve graduate students in departmental issues/decisions that concern them.

Departmental Response: In my opinion the APR Review Committee has misperceived the amount of graduate student input in departmental matters which concern them. Two graduate student representatives attend all department meetings about graduate studies, including admissions. Graduate students are also consulted informally on faculty hiring. One graduate student participates in our architecture committee which provided advice for the remodeling of the 4th floor of the Arts and Administration Building, our new home beginning this September.

Recommendation 20: Further consideration be given to retaining Maritime Sociology as an area of departmental strength, for which it is and has been widely known. This also fits in with the University's Strategic Plan.

Departmental Response: In my opinion the APR Review Committee has misunderstood department policy. Although it was suggested at one point that we consider Maritime Sociology as a subspecialty of Environmental Sociology, no faculty member has ever suggested that we should no longer retain Maritime Sociology as an area of departmental strength. Indeed, several faculty members are currently engaged in research in this area.

Recommendation 21: The administration and department open lines of communication. We feel that the difference of perception might be resolved if the Administration recognizes the intense commitment of Sociology faculty to community (national, international) involvements; and the department recognizes the value of participating more fully in the running of the university and the faculty.

Departmental Response: I acknowledge that faculty members were not participating as fully as we could have been in 2005-06 in the running of the university. Some of us have been exceptionally active members of national organizations, however.

Responsibility: All faculty members.

Progress: Sociology faculty members obviously fulfilled this obligation during the academic year 2006-07. The following list demonstrates the degree and range of participation of Sociology faculty members in the running of the university during this year. (Please note that this list may not be exhaustive):

- (1). Scott Kenney sits on the MUN Senate.
- (2). Robert Hill serves on the Arts Graduate Committee.
- (3). Karen Stanbridge is a member of the Smallwood/ISER Awards Committee, and is the MUN representative for the Canadian Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences.

- (4). Linda Cullum is the Interim Head of Women's Studies. She is also a member of the Smallwood/ISER Executive, the Digital Research Centre for Qualitative Research, and the MUN Survey Committee – post-Katz action.
- (5). Stephen Riggins chaired the Academic Program Review Committee for the Political Science Department, and served on the Arts Faculty SSHRC application committee for both M.A. and Ph.D. students.
- (6). Nicole Power is a member of the Newfoundland Studies Minor Committee, and the Women's Studies Search Committee. She is also the Convener for the Women/Gender and Health Affinity Group; and the Newfoundland Centre for Applied Health Research, MUN.
- (7). Peter Sinclair is the Chair of the Academic Program Review Committee for the Anthropology Department.
- (8). Larry Felt is the Chair of Memorial University's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research.
- (9). Ronald Schwartz serves on the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research.
- (10). The per-term instructor Linda Cohen (Parsons) chairs the Women's Studies Undergraduate Committee and is a member of the Executive Council of Women's Studies.
- (11). Ailsa Craig is a member of the Women's Studies Council and is on the organizing committee for the Outlive Homophobia Campaign.
- (12). Barbara Neis is on the hiring committee in Economics, and the Research Committee of the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research. She also reviews fellowship applications for the Harris Centre.

Recommendation 22: The department should do more to communicate what it is doing to the rest of the university community and more widely.

Departmental Response: We agree that members of the department should do more to publicize their achievements.

Responsibility: All members of the Sociology Department, including per-term instructors.

Progress: The Head has expanded and updated the department website. The Head is also writing a history to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first sociology course at Memorial (1956). He is scheduled to speak about the topic at this year's annual meeting of the Canadian Sociology Association where he has organized a session on the history of Canadian sociology.

The department was a co-sponsor, along with Women's Studies, of a celebration of Dr. Neis' achievements as a scholar and social activist.

We hope to create an online departmental newsletter this summer.

Recommendation 23: The Administration should find a mechanism by which the Sociology Department be given some amount of the research overheads that faculty generate.

Departmental Response: This is an urgent matter which the Administration needs to resolve soon.

Recommendation 24: The department Head work together with the Administration to organize reallocation of space to Sociology.

Progress: The Dean of Arts has solved this problem by allowing the Sociology Department to move to the 4th floor of the Arts and Administration Building this summer.

Recommendation 25: The Administration find Sociology a room immediately to serve as social space, and graduate student work space.

Progress: The Dean of Arts has solved this problem by allowing the Sociology Department to move to the 4th floor of the Arts and Administration Building this summer.

Recommendation 26: The process of faculty renewal be accelerated.

Responsibility: Not within the mandate of the Sociology Department.

Progress: In the opinion of the Head of the Sociology Department, the Dean of Arts and the Vice-President (Academic) facilitated this process in both 2005-06 and 2006-07.