

**Final Assessment Report**  
Submitted by SUPR-G to SCAPA

Program:	American Studies	
Degrees Offered:	MA	
Approved Fields:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Cultural Studies</li> <li>• Canadian-American Relations</li> </ul>	
External Consultants:	Dr. Jennifer Harris Professor University of Waterloo	Dr. Michael O’Driscoll Professor, University of Alberta
Internal Reviewers:	Dr. Kamran Siddiqui, Professor (member of SUPR-G committee)	Natalie Trevino, Graduate Student
Date of Site Visit:	April 18 & 19, 2016	
Evaluation:	<i>Good Quality with Report in Two years</i>	
Approved by:	<i>SUPR-G on January 23, 2017</i> <i>SCAPA on February 8, 2017</i>	

**Executive Summary**

The MA program in American Studies at Western is a unique program across Canada. The program offers two streams: American Cultural Studies and Canadian-American Relations. The program was started in 2010 by the Centre for American Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The Centre was multidisciplinary in nature with participation from several Departments, most significantly the Departments of History, Political Science (Faculty of Social Science), and Department of English and Writing Studies (Faculty of Arts and Humanities). The Centre received a generous donation of \$1.6 million for five years (2009-2014). The donation funds supported various administrative and learning activities of the Centre including the support for a full-time administrative assistant, research travel funds for faculty and graduate students, student awards, guest speakers, etc. The end of the donation funding significantly affected the operation of the Centre as an independent entity and in Summer 2016, the program has become part of the Department of History.

The external consultants were impressed by the quality of the program, competency of the affiliated faculty and the learning experience of graduate students in the program. However, they questioned the absence of any long-term plan for the sustainable operation of the Centre after the end date of donation funds. The primary concern of the review committee was the impact on the program’s quality and sustainability due to its transition into the Department of History. This includes concerns about the continuation of the multidisciplinary nature of the program, marketing of the program to maintain a consistent enrolment, and the learning experience of students through travel funds, guest speaker series, etc.

The Department of History in the response to external consultants’ report highlighted their commitment to the success of the program and to maintaining its multidisciplinary nature.

**Significant Strengths of Program:**

- The program is of high quality
- The uniqueness of this program across Canada is a major strength
- The program is structured well to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes
- The program completion time is very good
- The students’ satisfaction level with the program is high

**Suggestions for improvement & Enhancement:**

- The transition of the program into the History Department and its smooth continuation is a major challenge
- The maintenance of the interdisciplinary nature of the program is critical to maintain its uniqueness
- Historically, the program has strong participation and commitment from the Department of Political Science. This strong participation must continue for the sustainability of the program.
- Promotion and branding of the program is vital for its long-term viability. It is very critical that the program is promoted as multidisciplinary with its distinctive nature from the home Department, to attract students from other disciplines. This is particularly crucial for the Canadian-American Relations stream of the program.
- The learning opportunity for students through research study trips was a major strength of the program. The program Co-Directors should explore funding venues for these trips as well as alternative options for similar learning experiences.

<b>Recommendations required for Program sustainability:</b>	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline
Monitoring and necessary actions for the proper integration of the program into the Department of History	Program Co-Directors, Graduate Chair and Department Chair		Immediate
Maintenance of interdisciplinary nature of the program	Program Co-Directors and Graduate Chair		On going
Maintenance of students' cohesion	Program Co-Directors and Graduate Chair		On going
Promote strong continued participation from the Department of Political Science	Program Co-Directors, Associate Dean		On going
Enhance promotion and branding of the program and its interdisciplinary nature	Program Co-Directors and Graduate Chair		Immediate and on going
Continued administrative support for the promotion and operation of the program	Department Chair	budgetary	On going