

**Internal Academic Review 2004-2005**  
**School of Policy Studies**  
**Internal Academic Review Committee Report to Senate**

**School of Policy Studies**

The School of Policy Studies features two professional graduate programs which balance theoretical and applied research taught by faculty and senior practitioners. The School has taken a leading role and established a highly visible and collaborative research profile within the University. Faculty members are very well regarded with strong reputations as leaders and analysts on Canadian public policy issues. The School's student body is regionally and professionally diverse and they commented on the benefits of the programs' excellent and numerous networking and employment opportunities. External Reviewers expressed envy for the remarkably professional, qualified and dedicated staff.

The School of Policy Studies has undergone a period of unprecedented change and the amalgamation of the Schools of Policy Studies and Industrial Relations has resulted in a larger, more complex Unit. The intention of the integration was to produce administrative efficiencies and encourage positive interdisciplinary, supportive teaching and research partnerships between the internal disciplines. The challenge of the integration was compounded by faculty turnover, rising enrolment and strong demand for its programs. The School has completed the merger and it is now poised to map a new direction with renewed focus. The Senate Internal Academic Review Committee (IARC)'s key recommendations are intended to guide the Unit as it rebuilds this newer, and larger foundation and to enhance and support its leadership in the multi-disciplinary efforts of the University.

**Major Recommendation**

1. CURRICULUM REVIEW: The IARC noted the high level of participation of students in the review and gave serious consideration to their comments. Students were clearly aware of the merger and they expressed areas of satisfaction with the quality of the programs and the mix of the academics and practitioners teaching the programs.

Students expressed certain concerns which could be directly attributed to the challenges of the merger, such as the lack of good current information on course and program expectations, class scheduling issues and the availability of the international exchange program. Other concerns could be characterized as either “pre- or post-merger” and the IARC took note of the School’s efforts to attend to issues such as clarification of student and faculty roles in the Master’s research project. While the IARC recognizes many of the issues identified by students are directly related to the merger, it suggests that the future smooth operation, full integration and future prosperity of the School will be built on the success of these endeavours.

*The IARC recommends that the School of Policy Studies adhere to its plans to review curriculum in the fall 2006.*

2. FUTURE DIRECTION: The IARC concurs with reviewers’ suggestion for the Unit to ensure and enable open discussion among members including faculty, staff and students with respect to the long-term strategic goals of the School. Reviewers encourage a consideration of the role of adjuncts, tenured and tenure-track faculty, and research centres to ensure each reinforces the future direction of the School once agreed upon by its members. The IARC suggests that such school-wide discussions will ensure both faculty and students share common expectations and predictability with respect to the programs.

*The IARC applauds the School of Policy Studies for its efforts to successfully balance competing demands and maintain the high quality of its professional graduate programs through the merger process and encourages the School to undertake a strategic planning exercise and set priorities for the coming years.*

## **Outcomes of the Internal Academic Review of the School of Policy Studies**

*Response submitted by the Director of the School of Policy Studies*

### **Recommendation 1: Curriculum Review**

This year the School was successful in filling two faculty positions in the areas of Organizational Theory and Human Resource Management. With this full complement of faculty with teaching and research interests in Industrial and Labour Relations, the School will undertake a major review of the MIR curriculum beginning in fall 2006. A new core course and two new optional courses will be introduced in 2006-07.

The School completed a comprehensive review of the MPA curriculum in 1999-2000. Since then, faculty have reviewed the core curriculum on an annual basis, in response to faculty and student concerns. In 2004-05, the School implemented curriculum changes intended to provide MPA students with greater flexibility in the selection of optional courses and course concentrations, while ensuring that each student had a foundation in Economic and Quantitative Analysis in a policy context, along with more advanced knowledge in at least one area of Economic and Quantitative Analysis. (The visit of the IAR external consultants coincided with the implementation of these changes as well as the second phase implementation of the expansion of the MPA full-time program from 30 to 50 students.)

In spring 2005, the School of Policy Studies reviewed and modified the core MPA curriculum to address particularly student concerns arising from the first-year implementation of the changes in the core courses in Economic and Quantitative Analysis. Initial concerns appear to have been addressed. In addition, the School has reviewed and revised the guidelines for the completion of Master's Research Projects. Our annual exit survey and class meetings will guide us on the need for any additional modifications.

More generally, we will be looking for program innovations that have the potential to be of value to students in both programs. One such initiative is a new interchange program with Fudan University, which will take 13 students from the MIR, MPA and PMPA programs to China for six weeks in spring 2006.

### **Recommendation 2: Future Direction**

The School of Policy Studies will begin a process to develop a new strategic plan in the early fall 2006. As noted above, the School had undergone a period of unprecedented change over the last three years. A central goal of this process must be to build a common understanding among faculty from diverse backgrounds and varying views of a new and redefined mandate for the School of Policy Studies. Delaying the start of this process to fall 2006 allows new faculty to participate fully in the development of this new

vision. The next few years will be crucial in determining the future profile of the School of Policy Studies.

We are grateful for the IAR Committee and the external consultants for their time and advice in our ongoing efforts to improve the School of Policy Studies.

Follow-up on these recommendations and issues will take place in the annual budget and staffing strategy meetings between the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and the Vice-Principal (Academic)

Report of the Internal Academic  
Review Committee for School of Policy Studies  
Queen's University

## 1.0 Introduction

Dr. Suzanne Fortier, Vice President (Academic) appointed the following individuals as the Review Team for the internal academic review of the School of Policy Studies:

Mr. Tom Anger, Business (Chair)  
Ms. Anne Beaubien, Business (Staff)  
Dr. Charles Beach, Economics  
Dr. David Haglund, Political Studies  
Mr. Chris Jones, Master Student, Chemistry  
Dr. Audrey Kobayashi, Geography  
Mr. Charles Sumbler, Undergraduate Student

The assessment was conducted in several stages. First, documents entitled *Internal Academic Review School of Policy Studies*, Volumes 1 & 2 were analyzed; second, the external examiners, Dr. Nancy Oleweiler (Simon Fraser University) and Dr. Bert Rockman (Ohio State University), came for a two-day visit during which members of the Review Team sat in on their meetings; third, the Review Team analyzed the report of the external examiners and received feedback from the Director of the School of Policy Studies, Dr. Arthur Sweetman.

The conclusions/recommendations reached in this report are based on the materials reviewed, interviews conducted, the feedback from Dr. Arthur Sweetman, and supplemental materials reviewed, such as the OCGS reports for the Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Master of Industrial Relations programs (MIR).

The Review Team would like to acknowledge cooperation and importance of the School's staff and management during the review process, as well as the important perspective provided by the external consultants.

## 2.0 The School of Policy Studies – An Overview

The School of Policy Studies (SPS) is a complex unit encompassing both degree programs and affiliated programs and centres. SPS is a highly visible unit within the university and to the external community that has experienced growth, change, and integration of previously separate programs. It has both a tenure track, fulltime faculty and a significant complement of adjunct faculty on contract. The School has grown considerably from a faculty of 1.5 at its founding to 12.5 in the 03-04 academic year. Part of this growth is a function of the School having merged with the School of Industrial Relations, and absorbing its four faculty positions. The integration of the Policy Studies component with the Industrial Relations component has produced a larger, more complex public policy unit that makes sense in terms of administrative efficiencies and capturing

positive teaching and research externalities. However, the merger has come at a time when the School was undergoing a number of changes that have created significant challenges. These changes include curriculum, staff and faculty turnover, a substantial increase in enrollment, and a cultural shift as a result of an influx of new hires and the merger of two separate units.

The School has a highly regarded external reputation, and is also held in high esteem by the University's leadership who are pleased with the development of SPS and its trajectory. The School is highly visible in Canadian public policy arenas with a rich tradition fostered by their workshops and conferences, publications and policy analysis provided by world class faculty, strong graduate programs with outstanding students, and excellent adjuncts that include many senior policy analysts, advisories, and politicians.

The core of the School is its two degree programs. In 2004-05, there were 53 new students in the full-time MPA program and 86 students in the part-time Professional MPA program; the MIR program has 32 new students.

The School is also the umbrella for a number of research institutes, including the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, the Industrial Relations Centre, the Centre for the Study of Democracy, the Canadian Opinion Research Archive, and the Centre for International Relations. Similarly, the School encompasses multiple distinct research programs and related endeavors such as the Defense Management and Third Sector Programs, the Policy Forum, and the Ukraine Project. The work undertaken by the School and related institutes is supported by a remarkably professional and dedicated staff who must cope with the increasing workload and changing responsibilities that inevitably arise with the growth of faculty and student cohorts, and the growth in the range and number of program activities.

This report synthesizes the information of the self study; comments by groups during the external consultants visit; the external consultants report and discussions of the Review Team. It also provides recommendations for the School as it continues to move forward.

### 3.0 Teaching

Policy problems do not come in neat disciplinary boxes. They need to be approached through the analytical insights generated by a variety of disciplines. Courses draw on analytical techniques from political science, economics, quantitative methods, law and management. In a multidisciplinary program, the intellectual challenge is to integrate across disciplines – to draw on and pull together a variety of perspectives to understand complex policy issues. This integration requires considerable intellectual stretching.

The MPA and MIR programs offer an innovative mix of rigorous interdisciplinary core courses and optional courses taught either by faculty in their area of research or by senior practitioners. The small size of the School offers numerous networking opportunities for students with faculty and fellows, practitioners and other visitors to the School, and alumni. The regional and professional diversity of their students also contributes to

learning. Graduates of the programs have enhanced employment options, confidence in their professional capacity (knowledge and skills), and a sophisticated approach to problems in their professional fields.

Instructors often follow disciplinary norms of student evaluation in core courses. In optional courses, there is a wide range of evaluative instruments, including exams, research papers, short assignments, briefing notes, student presentations, group work, and workplace simulations. Students are evaluated on written and other assignments that replicate the work they will undertake in professional settings, such as preparing briefing notes, cabinet memoranda, presentations, and oral briefings.

The courses in the MIR program are designed to provide an appropriate balance between labour and management perspectives. The core courses emphasize a required body of knowledge and skills for an integrated understanding of policy and practice in both Human Resource Management and Labour Relations. The changing skill needs are covered through analytical seminars and elective courses. The course content is heavily oriented towards applied research and policy to meet changing market demands.

### 3.1 Challenges

The growth of the MPA program, the merger with Industrial Relations, and the focus of new faculty have created significant tension and uncertainty for the students and faculty alike. For example, with the growth of the MPA program from 35 to 50 students, several of the newer faculty expressed concern about larger class sizes. However, the Committee did not see a significant issue with some faculty members having a class size of 35 students. The Committee believes that with increasing enrollments, faculty will need to be encouraged and supported to adjust their pedagogy from a seminar style (traditionally used in SPS) to a lecture-discussion style approach.

The Committee, through faculty interviews found that the current arrangements of allocating teaching credits between faculty and schools make it difficult to have cross-teaching arrangements. There should be greater flexibility of such arrangements between the SPS and other cognate units such as Political Studies and Economics.

The Committee encourages the SPS to conduct an in depth curriculum review of their programs in the coming year. With the growth of the MPA, it is apparent that there are insufficient faculty who are willing to act as supervisors for Masters Research projects. As a result, students feel that they are being actively discouraged from undertaking a research project.

In addition, the merger provides the SPS with an excellent opportunity to examine course requirements and weights, seminar versus lecture-discussion courses, and linkages across programs. The latter may provide opportunity for common or joint elective courses across the three programs. This may alleviate the concern some MIR students expressed that not all courses in the calendar were being offered.

If one examines a university program as input-process-output, then the output side is the placement of its graduates. It is apparent from conversations with the students that they are concerned about their career prospects and the support they are receiving for career planning and placement. The Committee would encourage the SPS to allocate more resources in this area to support students in their job search. The Committee also recognizes that with tight budget constraints, this is a difficult task. However, the SPS may want to reallocate resources from the Industrial Aptitude Test that students take on entering either program to the placement function. It was felt by the IAR Committee that the Industrial Aptitude Test is an unnecessary expense, as the graduate students had already made a career choice.

### 3.2 Recommendations

The Internal Academic Review (IAR) Committee recommends with the completion of the merger, that the SPS undertake a curriculum review of their programs, examining program requirement linkages across programs, and the placement of their graduates.

Secondly, The IAR Committee encourages the University to develop a system to facilitate cross-teaching arrangements and transferring teaching credits between departments. This would facilitate efficient deployment of teaching resources for multidisciplinary departments like the SPS.

## 4.0 Scholarship

### 4.1 Overview

Historically, the School of Policy Studies has primarily focused on policy issues in Canada. It has contributed to policy development and research at both the provincial and federal level and has developed a strong reputation and connection with government officials. The SPS has also maintained a balanced approach in its scholarly activity between theoretical and applied research.

### 4.2 Challenges

As the SPS moves forward in the hiring of new faculty, it will have to strive to maintain a balance between a national research focus and the tendency of a new faculty to move more to research examining international policy issues. This shift is evident in work by recent hires from U.S. schools.

Second, the SPS has a number of Research Centres that rely on one or two key individuals. These Centres are self-sufficient as they all raise operational and research funding from government and private foundations. It is unclear what the SPS long-term strategy is for these Centres. If a Centre Director steps down or funding ceases, the current strategy is to let that particular Centre cease to exist. According to the current Director, the Centres should stand on their own, generating revenue and contributing overhead for the SPS.

Third, as faculty renewal and growth take place, it is important that new faculty members are integrated into the SPS and understand the culture of the School. It is apparent in a couple of recent hires that the new faculty did not understand the traditional roles and responsibilities within the SPS. This created concerns and increased tensions between the students and the faculty members involved, as well as between faculty members.

Fourth, as faculty renewal and growth take place, it is important to hire selectively and with a view of the future of the SPS. Faculty hires are potentially a thirty year decision and it is important to make the right choice at the outset.

#### 4.3 Recommendations

As the SPS is completing the merger of the two units, the IAR Committee encourages the SPS to develop a long-term (five years) strategic plan. This will help the SPS in a number of ways. Through the strategic planning process, the SPS can examine areas of research thrust, program development, role and support of the Centres, and hiring needs. Through this process the faculty and students will understand the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the SPS. It is encouraged that the process of developing a strategic plan be consultative and inclusive to maximize the communication and acceptance by the faculty.

Second, it is highly recommended that the SPS develop a Faculty Handbook for new hires. This will aid in the integration of new faculty into the school and provide them with much needed information on rules and regulations across the various academic programs.

Third, it is also recommended that the SPS implement a mentoring program for new faculty. The SPS can consult with other faculties within the University on how this could be accomplished.

Fourth, the SPS may want to allocate some resources to a research seminar series to encourage the faculty of the SPS and other cognate departments to share their research work.

#### 5.0 Resources and Staffing

##### 5.1 Overview

The SPS is fortunate to have enough space for faculty, staff, and students. This is essential to fostering a productive and collegial environment. However, the building is not fully accessible to those with special needs. For example, the access to the main doors, Room 202, and the corridor into Mac-Corry Hall are not automated for the physically challenged. In addition, the building is beginning to show its age, as there are a number of deferred maintenance items. For example, many areas of the building could use a fresh coat of paint and the windows at the front of the building require replacement or renewal.

The SPS has a highly qualified and dedicated staff. The staff members have been very understanding about the stress induced by the changes to the School during the merger. They felt that the majority of reallocation of staff and their duties was complete and thus looked forward to the challenges ahead.

## 5.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the University and the SPS work together to determine all accessibility issues and address them as soon as possible. In addition, the University should move to identify all deferred maintenance issues in the SPS building and address them in order to create a pleasant work and academic environment.

## 6.0 Strategic Planning

Over the last year the SPS has been merging under two strategic plans. Once this process is complete, it is important to develop a long-term strategic plan (minimum five years) for the SPS. This will help focus the new amalgamated unit, and set the direction for program development, research focus, and centre support for the SPS.

## 7.0 Conclusion

The SPS has just gone through a challenging period in its history with the amalgamation with the School of Industrial Relations. It now faces the task of building upon a strong history and an excellent staff and faculty in a collegial and supportive institutional culture. It is hoped that the SPS will find the recommendations of the IRA Committee helpful as they move ahead.