

**University of Victoria**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**Academic Program Review 2019**  
**1. REPORT SUMMARY**

This is a summary of the Review Committee's Report and its contribution to the Academic Program Review for the Department of Sociology at the University of Victoria. The Committee consists of three members, Drs. Stephen Katz (Chair), Sara Dorow and Michael Prince, who visited the Department February 7-8, 2019 and met with University administrators and Sociology faculty, staff and students. The Committee found the Department to be an accomplished research unit with many faculty members internationally acclaimed for their research awards, external grants, scholarly publications and leadership in Canadian Sociology. The Department offers full BA, MA and PhD degree programs consisting of comprehensive theory and methods courses, along with substantive areas clustered mainly in health, crime, gender, family and global social inequality.

There is a lively Department culture consisting of online and social media sites, undergraduate and graduate student groups, colloquia and seminar series, regular newsletters, career development workshops and Co-operative education. All faculty members participate in Department committees as well as University boards and committees, with some serving in administrative positions. Members of the Department seem satisfied with office, meeting and study spaces, as well as infrastructural supports, but the Department will be seeking an equipped laboratory space for qualitative and quantitative research staffed by a lab instructor.

The Department has recently experienced a number of faculty leaving through retirement and, along with its steady if not growing student numbers, is planning to renew its teaching complement with new tenure-track positions. Since its last Academic Program Review in 2010, the Department has shown itself capable of adapting and changing in ways that demonstrate its commitment to excellence and support for the University's strategic mission and future planning. Given the Department's research productivity and overall strengths, the Committee finds its positioning in the University's strategic planning documents to be somewhat lacking and more limited than one would expect. Indeed, Sociology seems rather insular and under-valued in the University's strategic core and 'hallmark' priorities and objectives. Thus, the Committee is recommending that the Administration and the Department engage in a creative exchange to sharpen Sociology's identity in the University's vision for the future.

In reviewing the Department's teaching and degree programs, the Committee is impressed with the faculty's dedication to effective instruction, student success, dynamic learning and knowledge translation in the classroom. There are multiple options available to students in the undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The Department has devoted considerable attention to its foundational courses and limiting upper year class sizes to ensure the best learning opportunities for students. The Committee has made several recommendations to improve such opportunities in each year of the BA program regarding course content, pre-requisite structuring, syllabus oversight and Honours student advising. In the graduate programs the Committee has made recommendations regarding student funding stability and course options. While the Department's curriculum is united by critical and theoretically informed

approaches, it also has a conservative tendency. Thus, the Committee has offered recommendations that address issues of curricular diversity and breadth of field.

The Committee shares with the Department its excitement about moving ahead with plans for new faculty hiring to strengthen its core areas, replace retired members, correct its gender imbalance and bring greater Indigenous representation to its staffing, scholarship and teaching. As such the Committee has made recommendations to strengthen these plans. Given the good working relationship the Department has with the Administration, the Committee concludes that, along with faculty renewal and changes in response to this Academic Program Review, the Department can advance its leadership and expertise and play a greater role in the University's research strategies, plans and overall vision.