

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
Evaluation of Graduate Programs
School of Ethics, Social Justice and Public Service
Faculty of Human Science
Saint Paul University
Cycle: 2019-2020
Date: 2022-02-02

I. Programs

- Master of Arts in Public Ethics
- Graduate Diploma in Public Ethics program

II. Evaluation Process (Outline of the visit)

- The Final Assessment Report for the evaluation of the aforementioned program(s) was based on the following documents: (a) the self-study brief produced by the academic unit, (b) the report produced by the external evaluators following their site visit, and (c) the comments from the School Director, Matthew McLennan, and the Dean, Human Sciences, George Smith, on the aforementioned documents.
- The site visit, which took place on June 10–11, 2021, was conducted by Kathryn J. Norlock, Trent University, and Alain Létourneau, Université de Sherbrooke.
- The visit was conducted virtually due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The reviewers were provided a comprehensive self-study brief that had been previously presented and discussed at the School Assembly prior to revision effective June 26, 2019. The virtual visit included Bianca Briciu from the Providence School of Transformative Leadership and Spirituality, Saint Paul University as internal delegate.
- During the site visit, the external evaluators met with the Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, at the University of Ottawa, Claire Turenne-Sjolander, the Rector, Saint Paul University, Chantal Beauvais, Vice-Rector, Academic and Research, Saint Paul University, Jean-Marc Barrette, the Dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences, George Smith, the Vice-Dean of Graduate Studies, Anna Sheftel, the chief librarian, members of the support staff, regular professors and graduate students.

Comments from the Internal Delegate

- The questions from the external delegates created in-depth knowledge about strengths of the School of Public Ethics, Social Justice and Public Service and its challenges. It is a school that grew out of the faculty of philosophy and developed with close attention being paid to make the courses sufficiently distinct from those at the University of Ottawa. The school has just started a 1-year MA in Social Justice and Ecology, a timely area of study with a lot of interest. The MA in Public Ethics has been changed to 2 years in order to allow students sufficient time to do both the course work and the research for their thesis or major research paper. Canada School of Public Service is the largest institution that the school collaborates with. The program has some challenges with recruitment given the fact that it does not currently have a BA and

one external reviewer suggested putting on the website placement data about graduates and career opportunities to increase interest. The professors in the school received very good feedback from students and a common theme that emerged was the need for more internships, networking and collaboration projects with businesses and institutions. The school created a partnership with the Newcomer Navigation System and it developed a winter school about Big Data and public ethics that brought in attendees from the public service sector. The external delegates suggested close collaboration with communication and marketing in order to ease the amount of marketing work some of the professors are engaged in. There is a strong desire in the school for developing a PhD program and many professors receive grants for their research. Overall, the meetings went well and the discussions showcased the many strengths of the school, with a few suggestions for improvement.

III. Summary of Reports on the Quality of Programs¹

This section aims to inform the unit on the strengths and weaknesses observed during the evaluation process in order to improve its programs.

EMPHASIZING THE STRENGTHS AND IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

Strengths

- Unique program in Ontario, if not Canada
- Obvious relevance to societal needs
- Proximity with the Federal Government and NGO organizations
- Engaging the community and demanding public dissemination of student work
- Well-regarded, harmonious, and supportive faculty complement with a substantial record of research
- Commitment to bilingualism
- Highly satisfied student body

Challenges

- Communicating the strengths of the program to potential applicants, as well as wider communities
- Recruitment of domestic and international students, and particular francophone students
- Few seminars are offered in French compared to what is announced

IV. Program Improvement²

The programs under evaluation are in conformity with the standards of the discipline. The following recommendations aim at maintaining or increasing the level of quality already achieved by the programs.

Recommendation 1: To improve domestic recruitment, direct advertisement of the MA graduate program in Public Ethics should be extended to undergraduate programs across Ontario and Canada.

Recommendation 2: Set up a series of meetings with public servants to be better acquainted with

¹ Based on the external report.

² Idem.

their specific needs.

Recommendation 3: Program faculty should be added to a university “expert bank” and media outlets should be informed of faculty expertise by Communications or other outreach offices.

Recommendation 4: The program’s website should include placement data of its graduates (jobs, PhD programs, etc.).

Recommendation 5: Strengthening ties with other research and teaching programs, in Canada (especially Québec) and outside.

Recommendation 6: Alumni tracking should be improved, and alumni news should be available on the program website.

Recommendation 7: Faculty should discuss the possible development of a “pro-seminar” for new students, to build cohort cohesion and orient students to graduate school, to improve student success in the program.

V. Conclusion

Saint Paul University offers a program in Public Ethics that is unique in Ontario. This program with obvious relevance to societal needs takes advantage of its proximity with governmental and non-governmental institutions. Suggestions for improvement focus on student recruitment and promotion, rather than fundamental changes.

In light of this positive assessment, the committee members would like to thank all participants for the evaluation of the programs. They congratulate the unit on the rigour of the work accomplished and on the quality of the self-study report, as well as that of the report produced by the external reviewers.

Schedule and Timelines

A meeting will be organized with the program chairs, the Faculty Dean and Vice-Dean following the reception of the Final Assessment Report so that a plan of action can be put in place along with deadlines particular to each recommendation. A progress report that outlines the completed actions and subsequent results will be submitted to the evaluation committee on a date agreed upon at the time of the meeting regarding the action plan.

The next cyclical review will take place in no more than eight years, in 2026-2027. The self-study brief must be submitted no later than June 2026.

Unit Response to the External Review Report and Action Plan

Faculty: Human Sciences

Department: School of Ethics, Social Justice and Public Service

Programs evaluated: Master of Arts in Public Ethics and Graduate Diploma in Public Ethics

Cyclical review period: 2019-2020

Date: October 29, 2021

Note: This document is submitted to the Senate, as well as the Quality Council, and will be published on the University Web site.

General comments:

On September 17, 2021, the School of Ethics, Social Justice and Public Service was made aware of the External Review Report produced in the context of the cyclical program evaluation. We were extremely pleased with the positive evaluation of our graduate programs. Given that the Public Ethics graduate programs have committed to providing an outstanding training and research experience, we were gratified to see that the external reviewers found that our MA and GD in Public Ethics are “of high quality and continued value to the university.” Student recruitment and promotion, rather than the quality of the programs, are what is at issue. The report makes seven recommendations, of which several are considered high priority. We take the recommendations seriously and feel confident that by addressing them, our graduate programs will be even stronger. The recommendations and our response, produced jointly by the School and the Faculty, are included below.

It is noteworthy, however, that for several the recommendations as detailed below, the capacity of the School to address them depends on funding and is therefore limited by the wider context of the University’s budget. Decisions made by the Government of Ontario in recent years have had a major negative impact on the University’s budget, including:

- Our base grant was frozen, so despite the growth in our student population, our grant amount has remained the same over the years. Without the freeze, based on partial data for the 2020–2021 school year, the number of FTE eligible for funding would have increased by 32%, a growth that has not been reflected in our funding. Consequent revenue loss: \$1,628,000.
- For the start of the 2019 school year, we were required to reduce tuition fees by 10%, without compensation, and for the start of the 2020 school year we had to impose a tuition freeze, again without compensation. Consequent revenue loss: \$843,000.
- In May 2019, our Graduate Expansion Capital Grant was discontinued (44% of our students are at the graduate level – major impact). Consequent revenue loss: more than \$300,000.
- No additional funds from the Canada-Ontario agreement were paid to us in 2019–2020 and it seems the program has been cancelled. Consequent revenue loss: between \$150,000 and \$300,000.

With these points in mind, the School pleads for understanding of its situation: we have an excellent MA and GD that are currently under-supported by the Government of Ontario, and consequently our capacity to carry through with the evaluators' recommendations depends in part upon extraordinary efforts on the part of our full-time Faculty.

Recommendation 1: To improve domestic recruitment, direct advertisement of the MA graduate program in Public Ethics should be extended to undergraduate programs across Ontario and Canada.

Unit response	Priority Level*	Actions to be undertaken	Assigned to	Timeline	Curriculum change?
<p>As reflected in the evaluation, the MA in Public Ethics is a high-quality program suffering from chronic incertitude about student numbers, in the area of domestic recruitment in particular. Therefore, domestic recruitment is the School's top priority. The School is prepared to partner with Recruitment and Promotions in whichever ways would be most helpful and impactful.</p>	<p>Urgent</p>	<p>Meet monthly with Recruitment and Promotions to identify recruitment opportunities, tailor recruitment materials to target audiences, and track impactfulness of recruitment and promotion activities.</p> <p>Hire and train work study students (preferably current students in the program) to assist with domestic recruitment.</p> <p>Advocate for annual budgeting for work study positions earmarked for recruitment and promotions.</p>	<p>Matthew McLennan and Julie Paquette</p>	<p>Initial meetings with Recruitment and Promotions have occurred and a timeline of regular meetings will be established in October 2021.</p> <p>Work study positions have been created and will start in January 2022.</p>	<p>No.</p>

* PRIORITY LEVEL : 1. URGENT-IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED 2. IMPORTANT-ACTION REQUIRED WITHIN 18 MONTHS (MAXIMUM) 3. ADVISED: DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY-ACTION TO BE DISCUSSED AND MUST BE IN PLACE BY MID-CYCLE (WITHIN 4 YEARS)

Recommendation 2: Set up a series of meetings with public servants to be better acquainted with their specific needs.					
Unit response	Priority Level*	Actions to be undertaken	Assigned to	Timeline	Curriculum change?
<p>Prior the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the School had made stronger links to the public service via the university's government-appointed University Champion. This resulted in a series of meetings with her team, and led to four public talks on campus in 2019 by high-placed public servants with expertise in ethics, public policy, and governance. The School will re-establish links, assess the needs of public servants, and push for greater presence in the public service.</p> <p>The annual Winter School, slated for its third year, has been a crucial point of contact with the public service and therefore its promotion should be a priority of the program.</p>	Important	<p>Re-establish contact and strengthen links with SPU's government-appointed University Champion and/or her office.</p> <p>Support the Winter School as a recruitment course, and open space for meetings with government departments sending students.</p>	Julie Paquette, with assistance from Matthew McLennan, Richard Feist, Sophie Cloutier, Rajesh Shukla, Monique Lanoix, Louis Perron	<p>Meetings with the Champion's office can begin as early as November 2021 and the School will seek regular meetings.</p> <p>The third iteration of the Winter School is currently being promoted, and the School can begin to establish what its fourth iteration will look like in 2023.</p>	No.

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Recommendation 3: Program faculty should be added to a university “expert bank” and media outlets should be informed of faculty expertise by Communications or other outreach offices.

Unit response	Priority Level*	Actions to be undertaken	Assigned to	Timeline	Curriculum change?
The School agrees that this would be helpful and is prepared to assist in the creation of an expert bank.	Important	Hire work-study students to compile and update Professor research information for banking and dissemination.	Matthew McLennan and Julie Paquette	Two work study positions (one English, one French) have been created for January to May 2022.	No.

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Recommendation 4: The program’s website should include placement data of its graduates (jobs, PhD programs, etc.).

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<p>Currently at SPU the Alumni Office does not track alumni in any systematic way. This is due to lack of resources, for reasons detailed in the general comments above.</p> <p>At present, Professors in the program track alumni and get them involved in recruitment and promotion and other activities in an ad hoc way.</p>	<p>Advised</p>	<p>Advocate for institutional support for the Alumni Office.</p> <p>Meet with the Alumni Office to assess current capacities and needs.</p> <p>Reach out informally to alumni to create an intra-School central database to a) assist Alumni Office and b) strengthen School capacity</p>	<p>Matthew McLennan, with assistance from Julie Paquette, Sophie Cloutier, Monique Lanoix, Richard Feist, Rajesh Shukla, and Louis Perron.</p>	<p>Work with the Alumni Office can begin immediately to assess its current capacities and needs regarding this recommendation.</p>	<p>No.</p>

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Recommendation 5: Strengthening ties with other research and teaching programs, in Canada (especially Québec) and outside.					
Unit response	Priority Level*	Actions to be undertaken	Assigned to	Timeline	Curriculum change?
<p>Professors in the program have a strong record of research and collaboration with other programs, but it is agreed that greater presence and visibility of the School in other programs is a priority.</p> <p>A key factor in improving the visibility of the School’s research profile is in supporting the existing Centre de recherche en éthique publique et gouvernance (CRePUG).</p>	Important	<p>Work with Recruitment and Promotions to identify pertinent programs.</p> <p>Identify and create opportunities (conferences, publications, etc.) to partner with other programs via the CRePUG.</p>	Matthew McLennan, Julie Paquette, Sophie Cloutier and Monique Lanoix, with assistance from Richard Feist, Rajesh Shukla, and Louis Perron	The School Director has met with Recruitment and Promotions to discuss the issue and will meet regularly in the lead-up to the 2022 academic year.	No.

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Recommendation 6: Alumni tracking should be improved and alumni news should be available on the program website.					
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Recommendation 7: Faculty should discuss the possible development of a “pro-seminar” for new students, to build cohort cohesion and orient students to graduate school, to improve student success in the program.

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<p>The School is committed to the quality of the student experience and agrees that this is a crucial way to improve it. Prior to receiving the evaluation, the School instituted an orientation session responding to these concerns.</p>	<p>Important</p>	<p>Two hour-long orientation sessions (one in English, one in French) were offered on September 7, 2021. Student participation was low on the English side.</p> <p>The School must therefore study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The impactfulness of the sessions on student experience b) Ways to ensure better student participation c) Which changes if any to make to the current orientation session 	<p>Matthew McLennan, with content review and participation by Sophie Cloutier, Julie Paquette, Monique Lanoix, Rajesh Shukla, Richard Feist, and Louis Perron.</p>	<p>The first orientation sessions ran on September 7, 2021, prior to the official start of classes. A session will run every September.</p> <p>Students will be polled informally mid-program (December) and end-program (subsequent December) to assess the impactfulness and pertinence of the information session.</p>	<p>No.</p>

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