

Graduate Diploma: Legislative Drafting Program Review Summary Report, February 2023

Program Reviewed:

- Graduate Diploma in Legislative Drafting

External Review Team Appointed by the Provost & Vice President Academic:

- Carla Ali, Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados
- Gordon Hebb, Chief Legislative Counsel, House of Assembly, Nova Scotia
- Dr. Ali Dewan, Associate Professor, Faculty of Science, Athabasca University (Internal Observer)

Key Milestones:

- Program Review Kick-off: November 2021
- Self-Study submitted to Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Council: June 2022
- Virtual Site Visit: October 20-21, 2022
- Receipt of External Reviewer Report: December 20, 2022
- Program Response Report to Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Council: February 2023
- Program Response Report to Academic Planning, Priorities and Standards Committee (APPSC) of General Faculties Council: June 20, 2023
- Public Posting of GDL Program Review Summary Report: following APPSC meeting
- Annual Program Update to APPSC: June 2024

Summary of Key Findings from the Self-study and External Reviewer Reports:

The self-study identified the key strengths of the program as:

- in depth instruction on the essential principles and techniques of legislative drafting in the parliamentary tradition.
- highly experienced instructors who are legislative counsel drawn from around the Commonwealth providing feedback on student work and mentoring to students.
- the opportunity for students to practice applying their knowledge and skills on numerous occasions throughout the program through formative and summative assessments.
- showcasing the knowledge and skills students have gained in a capstone drafting project consisting of a complete bill that is openly accessible online.

- the opportunity for students to engage in work integrated learning while completing the capstone project.

These strengths were added to by the external reviewers who found:

- the cost of the program is attractive.
- flexibility of study is advantageous -- ability to move at own pace; ability to study at any time which enables students to undertake the program while employed and to obtain extensions for completion of courses as required.
- the online platform is suitable, providing accessibility of course material which is comprehensive and well-structured.
- the program is skills based with exercises that provide good practice of knowledge gained on the topics studied.
- good rubrics and guidance are provided to instructors for marking and marking is perceived as being fair; instructors provide recommendations for improvements to course content which are acted upon.
- adequate resources are provided for staff.
- there is good support for students from administrative staff and good communication between administrative staff and students.

The significant opportunities for improvement and enhancement of the program identified by the self-study and the external reviewers were:

- extend the diploma to create an LLM program in legislative studies or link with an existing one to enhance the GDLD program's stature and attract students.
- improve interactivity between students and instructors and among students.
- enhance the value of the program by providing for more collaboration and mentorship between students and instructors and provide more support and guidance concerning the profession of legislative counsel.
- reach out to Indigenous communities to promote the program as a resource for self-governing lawmaking and improve and expand promotion of the program in general.
- keep program materials current and relevant.

Program Council Action Plan Including Dean's Response:

	Recommendations (in order of priority for the program)	Proposed Action(s)	Timeline (include specifics)	Individual(s) Responsible for Leading the Action(s) (by role)	Responsibility for Resourcing Action(s) (if applicable; by role)	Dean's Response
1	Link with an LLM program	Identify potential academic partners offering LLM programs and approach them concerning possible cooperation.	June – December 2023	Program Director	(Resource implications to be determined)	Agreed.
2	Revise assessments	Propose collaboration to the Commonwealth of Learning on revising assessments in the program materials. Identify and engage appropriate expert reviser.	June 2023 – June 2024	Program Director	FHSS	Agreed. Pending availability of SME funds.
3	Present webinars on course topics	Approach program instructors to identify potential “difficult topics” for presentation in webinars and engage them for that work.	June 2023 and ongoing	Program Director	FHSS	Agreed. Pending availability of resources.

4	Create hub for professional information and networking	Identify sources of information on the profession of legislative counsel and opportunities in that field. Make these available to current and prospective students in an online portal.	July – December 2023	Program Director	FHSS	Agreed. Pending availability of resources.
5	Add study materials on statutory interpretation	Revise LGST553 to update this topic already included	July – December 2023	Program Director	(Program Director workload)	Agreed.
6	Add study materials on specialized legislation and other documents	Approach instructors for suggestions of additional forms of legislation and engage expert(s) to write study materials on them.	January 2024 – January 2025	Program Director	FHSS	Agreed. Pending availability of SME funds.
7	Add country-specific study materials and examples	Approach instructors for suggestions of country-specific examples and engage expert(s) to write study materials on them.	January 2024 – January 2025	Program Director	FHSS	Agreed. Pending availability of SME funds.
8	Present webinars for graduates and potentially the profession	Approach instructors for suggestions of topics based on their research, scholarly publications, or professional experience	January 2024 and ongoing	Program Director	FHSS	Agreed. Pending availability of resources.

		<p>and engage them to present webinars. Approach the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice and the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel to collaborate on such webinars.</p>				
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