

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEW (UPR)
REPORT ON: FORENSIC SCIENCE PROGRAMS
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM
 January 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Review Preparation

In preparing this document, the Program Development Committee reviewed the following: Forensic Science Programs Self-Study (SS) (2013/14), the report of the external reviewers (ER) (April 2015), the response from the Program Chair (PC) (Winter 2016), and the response from the Assistant Provost (Winter 2016) to the above material. The external reviewers were: Dr. Michael J. Shkrum, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, Western University, Dr. James Watterson, Department of Forensic Science, Faculty of Science, Engineering and Architecture, Laurentian University, and Dr. David Tanovich, Faculty of Law, University of Windsor.

Program Overview

The Honours Bachelor of Forensic Science (BFS), with concentrations in either Biology, Chemistry, or Molecular Biology/Biochemistry, and the Combined Honours Bachelor of Arts in Forensics were housed in the Centre for Inter-Faculty Programs during the period of review but have now transitioned to the Faculty of Science. The programs provide students with an interdisciplinary education in both the arts and the sciences. “The BFS degree focusses on training and analysis of scientific evidence.” (ER, p.2) The BFS is “intended for students who will want to continue on in Forensic Science, in graduate school in science, in crime labs, as forensic police officers, or in professional school such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, etc.” (SS, p.10) The Combined BA in Forensics provides training in the identification, collection and presentation of evidence in criminal investigations, as well as an education in a second area of study in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The Combined BA in Forensics is “intended for students going into law school, policing, social work, social justice, forensic anthropology, communication or media, visual arts, etc.” (SS, p.10)

Enrolments

Undergraduate

	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016
BFS Full-Time	85	102	101	96	89
BFS Part-Time	2	5	6	11	13
Combined BA Forensics Full-time	15.5	17	15.5	15	23.5
Combined BA Forensics Part-Time	0.5	2.5	2.5	2	2

Human Resources

Faculty/Instructors

Program Chair and AAS III	1
Limited-term AAS II	1

Full/Part-time Staff

The programs are administered by the Office of the Dean of Science (Associate Dean), with support from full and part-time staff available in that office.

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT (with Implementation Plan)

Significant Strengths of the Programs

The Forensic programs are academically rigorous interdisciplinary programs. In addition to providing broad-based theoretical knowledge in the discipline, the curriculum incorporates a practical research component ensuring “that any student either pursuing a forensic science career or interacting with a forensic scientist is well-prepared to critically assess the available scientific information”. (ER, pp. 3,4,10) Of note is that one of only two certified forensic entomologists in Canada teaches a course in the programs. (ER, p.4)

Opportunities for Program Improvement/Enhancements

With regard to the Bachelor of Forensic Science, the reviewers noted that specialized courses in forensic chemistry, forensic toxicology, or forensic DNA analysis should be considered for those students seeking to pursue advanced study or employment in forensic biology or forensic chemistry. (ER, p.3). These courses would also benefit students in the Combined Honours BA in Forensics as they may pursue careers (e.g. law) in which they will interact with forensic scientists. Their understanding of key forensic disciplines such as forensic DNA analysis or toxicology will be hindered by a lack of courses focused on these areas in their curriculum.” (ER, p.3) Since the programs are now housed in the Faculty of Science, there may be increased opportunities for movement in this direction.

There is also an opportunity to address concerns raised by the external reviewers around adequate resources in terms of support staff and physical space with the move to the Faculty of Science.

Further opportunities for program improvements are captured in the recommendations listed below.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recommendations (in priority order)

(Final recommendations arrived at by the Program Development Committee, following a review and assessment of the External Reviewers report, the Program Chair’s response and the Assistant Provost’s response.)

Recommendation 1: That the Program submit learning outcomes for both the Bachelor of Forensic Science and the Combined Honours Bachelor of Arts in Forensics that clearly correspond to the University's stated "Characteristics of a University of Windsor Graduate". *[The Self-Study only included one set of program-level learning outcomes and it is unclear to which program they relate.]*

Agents: Forensics Program Chair, CTL, Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning

Completion by: Fall 2018

Recommendation 2: That the Program submit learning outcomes and assessment methods for each of its “57-xxx” courses that clearly correspond to the University's stated "Characteristics of a University of Windsor Graduate".

Agents: Forensics Program Chair, CTL, Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning

Completion by: Fall 2018

Recommendation 3: That the Program develop a plan to continue to maintain some degree of redundancy in teaching qualifications of faculty so that courses may be reassigned with a minimum of impact on the students in times of personnel shortage (e.g., sabbatical leaves).

Agents: Program Chair, Dean of Science

Completion by: Fall 2018

Recommendation 4: As enrolments increase, that the Program Chair be prepared to make a case to the Dean for additional resources in the form of:

- a) a faculty or AAS/LS appointment with “real-world” expertise.
- b) greater allocation of teaching assistant positions
- c) a laboratory technician appointment

Agents: Program Chair, Dean of Science

Completion by: Fall 2018

Recommendation 5: That the Program develop a plan to manage the number of students that each faculty member supervises, in the event that enrolment increases, in order to maintain the personal interaction between core faculty members and students particularly in the 400 course series.

Agents: Program Chair, Dean of Science

Completion by: Fall 2018

Recommendation 6: That the Program investigate and report on the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing accreditation through the Forensic Educational Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC).

Agents: Program Chair, Dean of Science

Completion by: Fall 2018

Recommendation 7: That the Program report on the advantages and disadvantages of the establishment a Forensic Program Advisory Committee, involving the major stakeholders from the various programs/faculties, to assist in the future expansion of the forensic program.

Agents: Program Chair, Forensics Program Committee

Completion by: Fall 2018

Recommendation 8: That the Program report on its efforts to continue and enhance its community outreach activities (e.g. annual CSI workshop) which are good marketing tools.

Agents: Program Chair, Forensics Program Committee

Completion by: Fall 2018

Recommendation 9: That an alumni development plan ~~needs to~~ be developed to support fundraising and student recruitment.

Agents: Program Chair, Dean of Science

Completion by: Fall 2018