

**Ohio University Center for Law, Justice & Culture
Seven-Year Review – Fall 2023**

Program Review

Review Team

External Reviewer: Paul Collins, Ph.D., Professor of Legal Studies and Political Science, Graduate Program Director, Department of Political Science, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Internal Reviewers: C. Scott Smith M.M., Associate Professor of Horn and Theory, Ohio University School of Music; and Jesse Strycker, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Educational Studies, Ohio University, The Gladys W. and David H. Patton College of Education.

Executive Summary

The review team visited the Ohio University Center for Law, Justice & Culture (CLJC) on the Athens campus November 9, 2023. The Center has no full-time faculty, but rather unites faculty across campus with an interest in law, justice, and culture to offer courses, experiential learning opportunities, advising, and other related activities, such as special forums, speakers, and events. Prior to the visit, the committee received the CLJC self-study report that included details on the curriculum; assurance of learning; faculty; student services; student success; resources and facilities; and areas for development and improvement. The committee met with faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, administration, and Dean Matt Ando, College of Arts and Sciences, in person. Two of the graduate students attended a meeting virtually via Teams.

The Center offers the following degrees and certificates:

Undergraduate

Certificate in Law, Justice & Culture

Graduate

M.A. in Law, Justice & Culture (in person and online)

Overall judgment

Is the program viable, in jeopardy, or non-viable?

- The committee believes the program to be viable, and has room for growth if hiring recommendations are followed.
- During our meetings, it was described as a “crown jewel” and “amazing,” with supportive faculty who “want students to succeed.”

- It offers tremendous opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students, as well as to faculty. It has great potential for growth, if appropriate resources are available, which we discuss below.

Commendations

- After reviewing the Center for Law, Justice & Culture, the committee enthusiastically commends the Center’s faculty for their excellence in teaching and research. We join the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences as recognizing the Center as a “crown jewel” of the University and are very excited about both its past accomplishments and potential for growth. This sentiment was shared during our on-campus interviews with administrators, faculty, and undergraduate and graduate students, who all recognized the Center’s excellence and the unique and important function and services it provides in the absence of a university law school.
- The Center’s core undergraduate and graduate teaching mission is performed by faculty from across campus whose research focuses on law, justice, and culture. This includes faculty in African American Studies, Anthropology, Communication, English, Geography, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Sociology, and Social Work. Thus, students obtain a high-quality education that recognizes the interdisciplinary nature of law, and how law is imbedded in culture, politics, and society. This is an excellent framework for an interdisciplinary liberal arts education in the law.
- The Center offers students a real community space in Bentley Hall’s basement that allows faculty and students to interact on an informal basis, which provides substantial educational and mentoring opportunities and helps build the identity and culture of the Center.
- The Center’s exceptional experiential learning opportunities deserve special recognition. These opportunities begin even before students enter Ohio University with the Summer Law & Trial Institutes, which serves not only an important educational function for high school students, but also a means of recruiting top students to Ohio University. Once students are on campus, they have access to extraordinary pre-law advising; internships with high profile social justice organizations, such as the Ohio Innocence Project; a highly competitive mock trial team; study abroad programs in Northern Ireland and South Africa; an incredible speaker series; a top-notch M.A. program; and much more. Very few law and society programs in the nation provide their students with such a diverse array of high-impact opportunities.
- The Center has seen remarkable growth at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. For example, enrollments in the competitive undergraduate certificate are up about 25% from pre-Covid numbers. Likewise, the online M.A. program shows strong growth, with enrollments up more than 150% from 2019-20. Programs like the Center truly make Ohio University a destination of choice for many students.

Areas of Concern

- The Center is doing amazing things on a “shoestring budget,” as one faculty member put it. Center leadership is superb, but the Center largely succeeds because of the goodwill of a small number of incredibly dedicated faculty. We worry what would happen if one of these

dedicated faculty members fell ill or left the University. As another faculty member put it, the Center is “a victim of its own success,” in that it is facing resource problems because demand for all of the amazing things the Center offers – including courses, degrees, a space for students to meet, and experiential learning opportunities – is overwhelming. Below, we make some recommendations with these concerns in mind.

Recommendations

- University support for a joint hire between the Center and a relevant department, which will allow the new faculty member to dedicate at least two courses per year to teaching in the Center.
- University support for a hybrid faculty and staff position to help cover courses in the Center and help administer and grow the Center’s outstanding experiential learning opportunities, which are in very high demand.
- A reevaluation of the remuneration for Center leadership, which does not appear to be commiserate with their very high workloads.
- University and College support for encouraging faculty members affiliated with the Center to offer courses to Center students. Limits on the ability of faculty to teach outside of their home departments was identified by several faculty members we spoke with as one of the main issues facing the Center.
- Evaluating providing the Center new or additional space. The Center has outgrown its current space. This may be an opportunity for alumni engagement, especially if the Center opts to seek out funding for a mock trial courtroom that can also serve as a meeting space.
- A thorough and deliberative discussion between key stakeholders in the Center, College, and University administration to discuss future growth of the Center and the resources needed to meet that growth potential. Programs like the Center for Law, Justice & Culture have been growing in North America, both in terms of the number of colleges and universities offering such programs, and student enrollment in such programs. CLJC, as an already established and exceptional program, provides Ohio University a competitive advantage in attracting students. However, because it is struggling to meet current demand, the Center will need additional resources to meet its promise.

Curriculum

Is the program able to deliver the required courses and electives for students to complete program requirements in a timely manner?

- A relatively large number of faculty who previously offered courses in the program have retired. As a result, CLJC is struggling to offer students an appropriate number of course options in areas important to the interdisciplinary study of law, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, current resource constraints make it difficult to recruit faculty to teach courses, since there is not as much freedom for these faculty to offer courses targeted at students outside of their home departments as there was in the past. This creates some challenges for students to complete program requirements in a timely manner.

Is the program attracting majors likely to succeed in the program? Is the number of majors appropriate for the program? Is the program attracting a diverse group of students?

- There is no question that the program is attracting students. The undergraduate certificate has seen strong growth, with enrollments up about 25% from pre-Covid numbers. Likewise, the online M.A. program shows strong growth, with enrollments up more than 150% from 2019-20. Enrollment in the in-person M.A. program is returning to pre-Covid numbers.
- The number of certificate and M.A. students is appropriate for the program, although there are clear opportunities for further growth, if appropriate resources are provided.
- The program attracts a diverse group of students, generally reflecting the makeup of the student body at Ohio University.

Are the financial resources sufficient to support the program? Is the distribution of faculty sufficient to support the program?

- Due to the retirement of several faculty who contributed courses to the Center, the Center is struggling to offer an appropriate number of course options at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, faculty indicated that there was such high interest in experiential learning opportunities – such as mock trial – that they could easily expand such opportunities if they had the resources to do so. Several faculty spoke to the “fragile system of leadership” in which CLJC relies largely on the goodwill of a small number of faculty to do things like take on leadership positions, run summer programs, and teach course overloads to meet student demand.

Assurance of Learning

Are pedagogical practices appropriate for students to meet the program learning outcomes?

- CLJC offers outstanding classes that correspond to best practices in the field of undergraduate and graduate education in law and society. In addition, the Center offers an exceptional array of experiential learning opportunities, including mock trial, involvement in organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union Campus Action Team of Ohio University and the Ohio Innocent Project, internships with Southeastern Ohio Legal Services, study abroad in Northern Ireland and South Africa, an outstanding speaker series, and many more.

Are the assessment policies and procedures appropriate? Are the assessment data used for program improvement?

- The assessment policies and procedures are appropriate and are used for program improvement. Most students meet or surpass benchmarks: 98% for undergraduate students and 90% for graduate students (personal circumstances account for the single graduate student who did not meet benchmarks).

Faculty

Is the number and distribution of faculty sufficient to carry out the mission of the program?

- Due to the retirement of several faculty who contributed courses to the Center, the Center is struggling to offer an appropriate number of course options at the undergraduate and graduate

levels. In addition, faculty indicated that there was such high interest in experiential learning opportunities – such as mock trial – that they could easily expand such opportunities if they had the resources to do so. Several faculty spoke to the “fragile system of leadership” in which CLJC relies largely on the goodwill of a small number of faculty to do things like take on leadership positions, run summer programs, and teach course overloads to meet student demand.

How are the faculty workloads distributed to support delivering the curriculum?

- Because CLJC does not have faculty associated only with the Center, it instead relies on faculty from across campus to offer courses to fulfill the requirements of the undergraduate certificate program and the M.A. program. During the site visit, it became evident that it is increasingly challenging to find faculty to teach courses in the Center due to a large number of recent retirements and because it is increasingly difficult for faculty to offer courses to students outside of their home departments (since many faculty offer spots in courses aimed at students in their home departments to Center students).

Do the faculty have the appropriate minimal credentials to deliver the curriculum?

- All faculty responsible for teaching CLJC courses have the requisite degree of Ph.D. or J.D.

Student Services

Does the Program have an appropriate level of administrative services to support students?

- CLJC is primarily administered by three faculty members, who go above and beyond to ensure student success. The Center Director, a faculty member, currently receives one course reduction and a \$5,000 stipend. The Graduate Director, a faculty member, currently receives one course reduction. The Director of Legal Experience and Pre-Law Program is a hybrid staff and faculty position.
- During the onsite review, it became evident that this system of leadership was “fragile,” generally owing to the Center’s success. That is, Center leadership are stretched too thin and are struggling to keep up with student demand.

Does the Program have an appropriate level of student academic services to support students?

- The Center offers an exceptional array of experiential learning experiences to students. Indeed, the Center is a model not only in terms of Ohio University, but nationwide, in terms of the academic services offered to students. As noted above, the issue here is that the Center is frequently relying on the goodwill of faculty members to go above and beyond to provide student academic services.

Student Success

Is the program using current and historic metrics to evaluate student success in the program?

- CLJC uses both current and historical metrics to evaluate student success in the program, including enrollments, degrees granted, and benchmarking learning outcomes. Note, however, that assessment policies and procedures for the undergraduate Certificate program were completed and approved in April 2022 so historic data is not yet available.

Is the program using current and historic metrics to evaluate student outcomes (i.e., employment data, licensure data)?

- CLJC uses both current and historical metrics to evaluate student success in the program, including employment and salary after graduation.

Are students able to move into discipline-related careers and/or pursue further academic work?

- Students who graduate with the undergraduate certificate and the M.A. degree are well equipped to enter a variety of fields and are well prepared for graduate and law school. Alumni include award-winning lawyers and teachers.

Resources and Facilities

Does the unit have appropriate program-specific resources to support student learning outcomes?

- The available resources can support student learning outcomes.

Does the unit have appropriate program-specific facilities to support student learning outcomes?

- The Center for Law, Justice & Culture is located on the ground floor of Bentley Hall on Ohio University's Athens campus. It includes a student lounge, the pre-law director's office, and the center director's office. During the 2022-2023 academic year, CLJC received the Experiential Learning Space Designation by the Center for Advising, Career & Experiential Learning. During the onsite visit, it became clear that the Center has outgrown this space. While students value the space immensely, the success of the Center means that it is no longer large enough to meet the demands of students and faculty.

Program Development/Improvement

Does the program identify areas of short-term development/improvement?

- The Center identifies a variety of areas for short-term development and improvement. These include working with the new Dean on the ways in which CLJC contributes to the College's mission and vision, and appropriate compensation and workload for program administration; coordinating with other online M.A. programs about course scheduling; implementing a new writing competition; hiring an assistant mock trial coach; launching a new study abroad program; continuing to consider options for using the Center's *Reimagining Undergraduate Law, Justice & Culture at Ohio University* grant (\$26,000); continuing to work out a 3+3 law school agreement with Case Western Reserve University; and implementing assessment plans.

Does the program identify areas of long-term development/improvement?

- The Center identifies a variety of areas for long-term development and improvement. This includes revising and updating governance and administration policies; increasing the number of faculty affiliates; identifying and mentoring future Center Directors; and pursuing the possibility of new or additional space, including a mock trial courtroom.

Are the identified areas of short- and long-term development/improvement appropriate to support enhanced student success and/or assurance of student learning?

- These are very well thought out areas for improvement that will enhance student success and learning.

Dear Matt and Kristine,

I have read the program review report and shared it with CLJC faculty. Overall, I am satisfied with the committee's findings and recommendations. Below are my responses, which I also have shared with CLJC faculty for feedback before sharing with you.

College and University Prominence The report quotes the dean as describing CLJC as “crown jewel” of the university, something we are happy to hear and aspire to be in a meaningful way. Much of what follows, especially in terms of recommendations, aim at increasing the Center's value and prominence within both the college and university. We believe the CLJC can offer the best, most unique prelaw experience in Ohio and the surrounding region, if it doesn't already.

Experiential and Co-curricular Learning Opportunities The biggest growth in the last decade has been in student organizations, experiential learning programs such as the Mock Trial Team, study abroad, recruitment and pipeline efforts such as the Summer Law and Trial Institute (SLTI), scholarships, partnerships with law schools, and internships. These opportunities draw interest among law-related alumni eager for engagement and stewardship. Altogether, this has created great pressure especially on the center and pre-law directors in terms of oversight, advising, finances, fundraising, promotion, etc. Yet, we could easily double the size of many of our programs, given support. See below for the recommendation to appoint a new Assistant or Associate Director of Pre-Law Advising and Engagement.

Graduate Courses In several places the report alludes to the challenge of offering graduate courses and especially finding available seats in online courses. The problem is more severe than they describe and faced by other online programs, e.g. the MSS program. We hope the college is able to work with our graduate director and other online program directors to help coordinate and incentivize departments to offer more online courses more predictably.

“Shoestring Budget” One area that happily needs correction is the characterization of resources and specifically compensation for the center and graduate directors. Since writing the self-study in early September, the college offered the current center director either an additional course reduction or a stipend to \$10K. Since the site visit, the new graduate director has been offered a stipend of \$2.5K for the next three semesters in addition to a single course reduction. This helps a lot! Our operating budget remains a small fraction of what it was before 2020, with around \$3K in discretionary funding. We have become more creative with Foundation funds and intentional with targeting campaign drives. But sustaining, not to say growing, our successful programs is fiscally precarious.

New Joint Hires The report recommends a joint faculty hire with a relevant department. We would like to see multiple joint hires in the next few years, each committed to teaching at least one LJC or graduate elective course a year as well as affiliation and service in CLJC. A proposal for one such hire has been submitted in conjunction with Political Science. We recommend another such hire with History and/or Sociology should the opportunity arise.

Assistant or Associate Director of Pre-Law Advising and Engagement Equally urgent is what the report proposes as a “hybrid faculty and staff position.” We hope to discuss with the dean a new CAS or CAS/ACE joint position to assist in advising pre-law majors and other law-curious students. CAS alone has close to 300 pre-law majors. Every semester, 175 or so individual students who seek pre-law or other legal career advising every semester. An assistant or associate director would not only share this burden and allow the pre-law director to focus more on alumni and external relationships, including persistent interest from multiple law schools to create 3+3 agreements. A new position would enable us to create and staff multiple CAS Learning and Doing courses such as Mock Trial and more internships, Law Career Exploration, LSAT Prep, and Law School Application Prep. This position would also be responsible for teaching the graduate legal writing course and/or other LJC courses, leading additional pre-law learning communities, serving as assistant Mock Trial coach, scheduling and arranging major annual events such as Pre-Law Day, Law Fair, and SLTI, and developing other student co-curricular and experiential opportunities such as LSAT preparation, all in close conjunction with the center and pre-law director. Such a position would allow Larry Hayman as pre-law director more time to expand his work with alumni, donors, and external partners such as the Ohio State Bar Foundation, ACLU Ohio, Ohio Innocence Project, Midwest and National associations of Pre-Law Advisors, and more, in order to expand strategic internship placement sites, increase student support funds, create and expand accelerated and guaranteed pathways to law schools for prospective students, and create new experiential learning opportunities such as Moot Court, which some alumni have been eager to fund.

Space We have been aware for a while of how useful a Courtroom would be not only to mock trial and SLTI but to a wide range of courses and activities as well as alumni engagement and the recruitment of prospective students as well as continuing students who grow interested in pre-law. It was only during the site visit, however, when the reviewers suggested we have maybe outgrown our location in Bentley 001, that we realized they are correct. We need more office space as well as a bigger student lounge/work-study area, as well as a courtroom. The reviewers suggested that this may be a good time to find available space on campus, and we hope the college might authorize a space resource study for an expanded CLJC as well as a courtroom, which could also be the target of a campaign effort.



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January 24, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am grateful to the CLJC faculty and staff for the work that they put into the self-study, and I am grateful to the review committee for their thorough review and thoughtful report.

The Center is a model for one way that I hope to achieve national excellence and recognition for the College of Arts and Sciences at OHIO: it is an interdisciplinary center of scholarship that builds on the great traditions of the liberal arts and sciences to engage with, and enable students to engage with, important challenges facing society. I look forward to learning from the Center and to working with them. I want to support their continued success, and I want to build other centers of excellence like it. It is my belief and hope that the Center will play a leading role in shaping how the College responds to the president's Dynamic Strategy initiative. That process is currently under way, and our next steps will depend the outcome of that initiative. For now, I provide these responses to the recommendations in the report.

Joint faculty hire with a relevant department. We are in the process of developing a multi-year proposal/plan for faculty hiring for the college, on instructions from the provost's office. We anticipate a joint proposal from the CLJC and Political Science. We also acknowledge that our faculty governance process calls for all proposals to be reviewed by our chairs and directors and by our Faculty Advisory Committee.

Hybrid faculty and staff position. The case for such a position is strong, and we are working to explore how this can be done. The hire would again be considered in the context of our faculty governance process.

Center budget including compensation for center leadership. As Prof. Uhalde notes, we did adjust the compensation of some leadership this past fall. We have also gathered the information for a review of compensation for leadership positions, and we expect to carry out that work this summer. We hope that the college strategic planning to accompany the president's dynamic strategy process will present an opportunity for to raise funds for additional strategic investment in the CLJC. We also see that the CLJC is a strong candidate for raising funds from donors, and we will work with the Center leadership and our advancement team on a strategy for external funding.

Enabling faculty to teach with the Center. We hope that the Educate portion of the president's dynamic strategy process will lead university leadership to find ways to enhance support for interdisciplinary and

interdepartmental teaching. Within the college we will convene conversations with our department chairs about interdisciplinary teaching to seek ways to become more supportive.

Space. Whenever I've visited the Center, there have been lots of people using the space intensively. We will work with the center leadership to assess their needs and try to find additional space. One silver lining of the enormous loss of faculty and staff over the last five years is the increased likelihood that we can find additional space for the Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Ando". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matthew" being more prominent than the last name "Ando".

Matthew Ando
Dean
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February 2024

This is a summary of the Graduate Council - Program Review Committee's review of the UCC review and related materials from the Center for Law, Justice & Culture.

The Center for Law, Justice & Culture is deemed viable from the materials provided. We would like to highlight the following points:

- The center is well positioned as evident from its recent growth in students and offerings (this is impressive given declines in other areas) - and its alignment with university strategy related to experiential learning.
- Growth should be carefully managed (and possibly controlled) to make sure student goals can still be met.
 - More resources will be needed otherwise.
- The center may want to look at a pure stipend model for leadership, which would create more teaching capacity.
- The joint hire model seems to make a lot of sense for an area like this - we are glad to see this being pursued by college leadership.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or the other committee members, David Brown or Vladimir Marchenkov, if you have any questions about this review.

Sincerely,

Gabe Giordano
Chair, Program Review Committee - University Graduate Council