The Undergraduate Council (UGC) met on February 1, 2013 with the Chair of Legal Studies, Dr. Deborah Anthony, Dr. Kathryn Eisenhart (author of the program review) from LES, and Dr. Will Miller, Interim Dean of the College of Public Affairs and Administration to discuss the Legal Studies Review.

As noted by the Dean and the Curriculum Committee, UIS is the only public university in Illinois that offers the LES B.A. The goals of the LES BA are to provide students with a high quality education using law as the academic discipline and to give students the tools they need to succeed in employment or further education. The LES department lists its program objectives to meet these goals. During the review period the department has shifted from a paralegal preparation focus to a broader liberal arts approach to law. The department has also undergone significant turnover in its faculty during this time. The curriculum includes a set of core courses and concentration specific courses for the General Legal and Legal Assistant concentrations. Courses are offered in appropriate (on-ground or online) formats as needed.

The department review indicates that there have been only limited changes to its curriculum since its last review and these changes have been primarily with regards to course numbering and number of credit hours. Departmental faculty nevertheless contend that the curriculum is at the cutting edge of Legal Studies and that it remains a model for other institutions. The courses are mostly taught by full-time tenure/tenure-track faculty, as well as qualified adjuncts. The major assessment tool for the department remains its Legal Studies Closing Seminar, in which students write a research paper modeled after a case note. The Undergraduate Council found that the program needs to improve its assessment process through multiple assessment measures and through aggregating assessment evidence across students. The number of LES majors has not seen significant growth over the review period, although the department continues to attract a large number of Capital Scholar Honors students. The number of degrees granted has also declined during the review period. The department does not offer a minor in LES. The department currently offers a General Legal Studies concentration and a Legal Assistant concentration that have separate requirements for completion. The review indicates that current enrollment data does not provide a clear understanding for the demand and sustainability of the concentrations.

The UGC has the following recommendations:
• The department with the assistance of the Dean’s office should expand its recruitment and outreach efforts to recruit and retain students.
• The department needs to examine the sustainability of its two concentrations and decide if changes need to be made.
• The department with the assistance of CASL needs to develop means of assessment across the curriculum and across students.
• The department has expressed a need for a remedial course to address critical reading, writing and analysis. The LES Department should explore if the current remedial course offered on this campus by the English Department can be used for this purpose or if a different course is advisable. The LES Department should work with the ENG Department to delineate content that could possibly be included in the course.

CC

Dr. Deborah Anthony, Chair, Legal Studies Department
Dr. Will Miller, Interim Dean of the College of Public Affairs and Administration