



**FOR INFORMATION**

**PUBLIC**

**OPEN SESSION**

**TO:** UTSC Academic Affairs Committee

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**PRESENTER:** See above.  
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**DATE:** Tuesday, November 22, 2016

**AGENDA ITEM:** 3a

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

External Review of the Undergraduate Program in Health Studies

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

Under section 5.6 of the Terms of Reference of the University of Toronto Scarborough Academic Affairs Committee (UTSC AAC) provides that the Committee shall receive for information and discussion reviews of academic programs and units consistent with the protocol outlined in the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process. The reviews are forwarded to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs for consideration.

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

1. Committee on Academic Policy & Programs [For Approval] (November 1, 2016)
2. Agenda Committee of the Academic Board [For Information] (November 14, 2016)
3. **UTSC Academic Affairs Committee [For Information] (November 22, 2016)**
4. Academic Board [For Information] (November 24, 2016)
5. Executive Committee of the Governing Council [For Information] (December 5, 2016)
6. Governing Council [For Information] (December 15, 2016)

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

The item was presented to the Committee on Academic Policy & Programs on November 1, 2016 for information. The Committee has requested a follow-up report in one year

## HIGHLIGHTS:

The *Cyclical Review Protocol* “is used to ensure University of Toronto programs meet the highest standards of academic excellence” (UTQAP, Section 5.1). The *Protocol* applies to all undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered by the University, and the University’s full complement of undergraduate and graduate degree and diploma programs are reviewed on a planned cycle. Reviews are conducted on a regular basis, and the interval between program reviews must not exceed 8 years.

The external review of academic programs requires:

- The establishment of a terms of reference;
- The selection of a review team;
- The preparation of a self study;
- A site visit;
- Receipt of a report from the external review team;
- The preparation of a summary of the review report;
- The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs’ formal request for an Administrative Response;
- The Dean and Vice-Principal Academic’s formal Administrative Response; and
- Preparation of a Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

In accordance with the *Protocol*, an external review of the undergraduate program Health Studies was conducted in the 2015-16 academic year.

The review team met with a wide array of stakeholders including UTSC senior academic administrators, the Chair of the Department of Anthropology, the Associate Chair of Health Studies, the heads of cognate units, and faculty, staff and students. The reviewers highlighted the potential of the program, and the exceptional research productivity of the faculty. The reviewers also identified a number of areas they felt could be addressed, and made a series of recommendations regarding these areas.

The Campus Academic Plan, which was finalized and taken through governance during the 2015-16 academic year, includes initiatives such as strategic enrolment management, curriculum mapping, ensuring students develop strong communication skills, and developing alumni outreach; these initiatives will be central to Health Studies’ ongoing activities.

Regarding resources: the Dean’s Office has been actively engaged with the Health Studies faculty, the Department of Anthropology, and the Provost’s Office to explore alternative administrative structures, including EDU: B, EDU: A, and department status. There is strong support for an alternative structure that provides autonomy to both the Health Studies programs and faculty. In consultation with the Provost’s Office and the Health Studies faculty, the Dean’s Office will continue to explore the different options with a goal of making a decision regarding the optimal pathway to follow by the end of the academic year.

Regarding curriculum and program delivery: the Health Studies faculty have engaged in a fulsome discussion around the issues identified by the reviewers. Over the next year they will introduce a new introductory course in Epidemiology, and a new freestanding Minor in Health Humanities. As they modify the curriculum, the faculty will promote interdisciplinarity and also focus more attention on scaffolding and continuity of courses. The faculty are considering ways to integrate the BA and BSc programs into a single program, which will entail establishing a core of courses that all students must complete, and identifying additional courses focused on science and social science/humanities.

Regarding faculty and staff: the Dean's Office has allocated three new positions to this group over the next three years, one of which is being searched in 2016-17. The Dean's Office is supportive of mid or later career hires. The Dean's Office has asked UTSC HR Services to review the staffing needs of all the academic units with shared staff, and will consider their recommendations.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no net financial implications to the campus' operating budget.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Presented for information.

**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

1. External Reviewers Report (June 2016)
2. Provostial Summary of the External Review Report (Final)
3. Provostial Request for Administrative Response (September 20, 2016)
4. Dean's Administrative Response (October 3, 2016)

**UTQAP Cyclical Review**  
**Health Studies – Population Health: Major (BSc) and Co-op**  
**Health Studies – Health Policy: Major (BA) and Co-op**  
**June 2016**

**Reviewers:**

Olena Hankivsky, School of Public Policy, Simon Fraser University  
Elizabeth Watkins, Department of Anthropology, History and Social Medicine, University of California,  
San Francisco  
Annalee Yassi, School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia

**Introduction:**

UTSC has been forward-looking in its support and development of undergraduate programs in Health Studies. This interdisciplinary subject area is in an exciting phase of growth in Canada and around the world, and UTSC has the opportunity to become a leader in training the next generation of workers and scholars in this field. The review team noted with appreciation the commitment of the faculty, staff, students, and administration to the success of the program and their interest in and dedication to doing the work necessary to enable it to realize its full potential.

In the course of our site visit, we identified some major problems that must be addressed in order for the program to move forward. The problems can be illustrated by some representative comments we heard from interviewees during the review:

*“You come here- You teach- You leave- You go do your research and supervise your grad students downtown. The students here never see you and they can’t drop by to ask questions.”*

*“This program is dysfunctional- there are no regular meetings – everything is ad hoc – there is no transparency – no accountability – and no stable faculty teaching --- its all done by the seat of the pants.”*

*“The two streams are a historical accident. We all know that health policy and population health cannot be separated. We all know that you can’t separate the biological determinants from the social determinants. It makes no sense. “*

*“We are aware that the dual track [teaching stream- tenure-stream] is hierarchical and exploitative.”*

*“There is a lack of leadership – what is needed is a senior person who knows how universities run and who really understands the nature of population health.”*

*“Some tenure-stream faculty don’t want to teach large classes. They offload their admin tasks; and they bail and go downtown.”*

*“Courses change from year to year, and we can’t graduate because the courses aren’t offered when we need them.”*

We offer the following candid assessment and suggest recommendations in the spirit of helping UTSC to address identified issues, to rectify its structural deficits, and to ultimately build a strong and nationally-recognized Department of Health Studies.

**Summary of Recommendations:**

**1. Recruit a leader and become an independent department:** The unit needs to hire a mid-career or senior interdisciplinary scholar with experience running an academic unit or research center, who is capable of and eager to assume both the visionary strategic leadership and the day-to-day management of this program. This individual must have strong leadership skills, a clear understating of the state-of-the-art in population health including up-to-date interdisciplinary thinking about health studies, a national research reputation, demonstrated ability to attract funding, and the ability to bring the existing faculty together and to hire additional faculty to meet the teaching demands. The interim director is clearly not capable of meeting the challenges of leading this program at this time. The hiring of a dedicated permanent full-time director is absolutely essential and should not be delayed. The entire program is at risk, and there is no way to move to department status without this strong leadership in place.

**2. Offer a single major with two degree options:** The two streams of health policy BA and population health BSc should be abolished in favour of a single course of study in health studies leading either to the BA or the BSc, depending on the elective courses the student chooses and whether this is a joint major with another program in the science or arts stream.

**3. Hire additional faculty and concentrate areas of expertise:** The program should commit to hiring tenured and tenure-stream faculty, so that there is a level playing field among all faculty members. Existing teaching-stream faculty should be prioritized into one of the newly allocated tenure-stream positions. The program also needs to highlight its niche – the provision of an integrated approach to health studies – and to refine its research themes into two or three core areas of strength and identity, so that it will be complementary to related programs at the other UT campuses.

**4. Provide sufficient administrative support:** Administrative duties must be apportioned appropriately among the program director, the administrative staff, and the tenure-stream faculty. A program assistant should be hired to deal with the multiple demands of running such a large undergraduate program and to support the implementation of new initiatives, so that these duties are not inappropriately assigned to temporary or non-tenured-track faculty.



**1. Programs**

**a. Objectives:**

The Health Studies program, to fulfill its immense potential and respond in a robust manner to University of Toronto’s mission and the UTSC Academic Plan (2015-20), should move quickly to form a Department. This program has a unique and exciting niche; it is immensely popular with the student body, who fill this program to capacity and beyond. The time is ripe to seize the opportunity, particularly as new Health-related undergraduate programs are growing up across the country, including on the

other campuses of U of T, and the time to distinguish the UTSC Department of Health Studies as an innovative cutting-edge state-of-the-art integrated Department in Health Studies is now. The strong integration of arts and humanities in this interdisciplinary approach is what most distinguishes it from other programs – and this should be showcased and further strengthened in strategic hiring.

Additionally, the Health Studies program at UTSC is well-positioned to respond strongly to University of Toronto's mission of *Community Building*. With hundreds of students enrolling in its foundational courses each year, and some 700 students currently in its Major programs, Health Studies is poised to play a strong role in U of T's quest for "*re-examining and re-inventing undergraduate education.*" We offer recommendations to further build on the strengths of Health Studies regarding both these aspects.

UTSC's Academic Plan (2015-20) states: "*A major focus has been the development of innovative undergraduate programs that fill niche areas not offered at other University of Toronto divisions.*" The Health Studies program, with its focus on health humanities, is indeed unique and fills a niche not offered in other U of T divisions; furthermore, this program may well be at the leading edge in Canada in this regard.

The Health Studies Academic Plan (2015) states: "*Through innovations in both research and teaching, UTSC's Health Studies program promotes—and is itself built upon—deeply integrated biological, social science, and humanistic perspectives on health.*" It goes on to state: "*What binds together these disciplinary approaches—and our award-winning multidisciplinary faculty—is our consciousness of the need for rigorous biological knowledge to be understood in tandem with the social milieu of human health and embodiment. Our commitment to unearthing the radically interdisciplinary foundations of health makes Health Studies at UTSC not only a distinct and timely academic program: it is a ground-breaking one as well.*" We concur with these statements and applaud UTSC for embracing this innovative approach. What we heard from students is that Health Studies is highly valued; thus, the program is indeed well positioned, with its integrated approach and emphasis on health humanities, to make an important contribution to this relatively new area of scholarship. However, we believe that some changes are needed quickly to "walk-the-talk" of a deeply integrated interdisciplinary program; our recommendations have this aim in mind.

The UTSC Academic Plan (2015-20) also states: "*We value the engagement with our community that provides intellectual and research leaven, knowledge transfer and potential for social transformation.*" Again, we believe that the Health Studies program is well positioned to engage with the community to pursue social transformation. The co-op program is a good start, but needs strengthening, as we discuss below. Moreover, we believe that there is considerable room for expansion of experiential learning.

#### **b. Admissions Requirements:**

The program has done an excellent job attracting a large (and growing) number of students due to its open door policy. There are no admission requirements; this, alas, has led to admission of students with lower grades entering this program when they are not capable of admission to other programs. Low grades not only affect a student's own future plans including graduate studies, but also can threaten the rigour – and perceived rigour – of the program. This is particularly a concern for the BSc program as it appears that students who were not doing well in Life Sciences come to this program in order to graduate with a BSc. We applaud the accessibility of program, and we do not recommend changes to the admission requirements. Nonetheless, for the sake of bright promising students who are truly interested in Health Studies, and for the reputation of the program overall, some structural changes to

the program are needed to ensure that the Health Studies program remains popular for its innovation and timeliness in responding to community needs, and not as a default major for students who cannot be admitted to other programs.

### **c. Curriculum and program delivery:**

While the program has a nicely multidisciplinary set of faculty members, excellent support staff, and solid university support (e.g. library, co-op program, research office), the way in which the Health Studies program is currently organized does not reflect the current thinking in population health and health policy with respect to the need for a fully integrated understanding of health. The program's structure perpetuates false binaries between biological and social sciences and between population health and health policy. There are indeed debates in the literature as to the best of the integrated models. A designated milestone of public health, for example, has been "an ecosystem approach to health" combining social and biological determinants, with strong emphasis on participation, social justice, and sustainability in policy responses to health issues. Another is "a social determination of health" approach (particularly popular in Latin America) in which *sustainability* (of a healthy planet in the anthropocene), *sovereignty* (and agency of individuals, communities, and societies), *solidarity* (social inclusion, social justice) and *security* (biophysical health) are seen in relation to each other in a multi-scalar understanding linking macro-meso-micro social and environmental/biological processes. Students need to understand the *relationships* amongst these processes, not just a static understanding of these elements independently. While all students are offered courses that span the biological sciences, social sciences, and humanities, and while some of the courses do indeed appear to try to integrate the material using case studies and innovations, some students could graduate from the program with a skewed and not fully-integrated understanding of health and therefore lack the skills to address the complexity of health issues or to go on to graduate programs in related fields.

Additionally, the strengths and unique niche of Health Sciences at UTSC lie precisely in bringing a strong humanities focus to an interdisciplinary field; the existing dual stream is a hindrance rather than a facilitator to showcasing this unique niche. Moreover, there is great consternation among the faculty at UTSC Health Studies about the need to hire enough faculty to offer "science-specific" courses to fill perceived gaps in the biological science expertise in the program. We agree that there are gaps in health science expertise (in many aspects of environmental health, for example). However, as discussed below, we strongly recommend hiring faculty who are *interdisciplinary* and who approach health studies as an interdisciplinary field. The program does not need experts with strong disciplinary backgrounds in either "the hard sciences" (biomedical fields, such as toxicology, radiology, microbiology) or in one aspect of social science or humanities. It needs faculty who embrace an integrated vision of health and who are intentionally community-oriented in their research and teaching.

We applaud the flexibility of BA and BSc degree options, but simply put, the structuring of the program into entirely separate BA and BSc degree pathways undermines its cohesiveness and the unique perspective it has the potential to offer. We therefore strongly recommend that there be one Health Studies Major program, in which students can obtain either a BA or a BSc degree, depending on their course selection. We strongly support students being encouraged to take double majors; if the student's other major is science-oriented, the student should have no difficulty fulfilling the requirements of a BSc, and conversely, if the other major is arts-oriented, a BA would be earned.

The review team was asked to make suggestions on curriculum content and course delivery, as well as on the program structure. We suggest keeping the Foundations courses, but improving the use of the

tutorials and adopting much greater emphasis on problem-based learning (PBL). The tutorials – or small group sessions – should exist to enhance and deepen the material presented in lectures, rather than repeat it. Students considered the current system of tutorials to be weak. We recommend that the faculty develop a plan for collective implementation for community-based assignments, group problem-solving, and problem-based learning, to ensure that the curriculum is meaningful, innovative, and integrated. Courses should promote state-of-the-art understandings, offer practical application opportunities whenever possible, and be delivered in an engaging manner.

While the need for integration and embracing of interdisciplinarity is paramount, the other major area in which the Health Studies program can excel is experiential learning – or community-based learning (CBL). A strong coop program exists at UTSC; faculty members must work in collaboration with co-op staff to articulate learning objectives and identify the kinds of opportunities that would benefit the students. To complement the co-op option, there are other CBL opportunities that should be pursued, such as placements with community organizations that promote health equity and actively address determinants of health. There are dozens of civil society organizations in the Toronto area that could be called upon as community partners. Many organizations are using innovative techniques, including a variety of arts-based approaches, to engage their target populations. The area of Community Art and Health is being rapidly developed in other countries and is growing at a fast pace across Canada. Placement of students with community arts organizations that target one or several marginalized populations (“equity-seeking communities” such as LGBTQ, women victimized by domestic violence, refugees, street-involved youth, aging populations, drug-addicted, children at risk) would fit well with the Health Studies program. It is important to stress that CBL must not be treated as less valuable academically than classroom learning; on the contrary, these experiences must be properly developed and conducted, and then rigorously theorized and analyzed using the skills built in the program. We recommend that CBL courses be offered at the B level to provide students with ideas of how health studies can be applied and prepare them for co-op and later job opportunities, as well as at the D level to serve as, or feed into, a capstone course. In order to ensure that these experiences are provided at the highest possible academic level, we recommend that one of the new hires be explicitly devoted to overseeing a suite of courses on community-based health service/community practice for health equity and the like. This focus area may also serve as a basis for a future masters program, as discussed below, and would be a good area for recruitment of a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair.

Beyond the Foundations courses (with PBL and CBL components strengthened), we recommend that in year 2 (as soon as students are admitted to the major program), the first term should offer three introductory courses: Introduction to biological and physical sciences; Introduction to social science and the humanities; and Introduction to statistics and health research methods. The courses should be team-taught, to expose students to a larger array of faculty members. In a large university such as U of T, no new faculty members should have to be hired to teach these courses, as faculty members in other programs ought to be willing to lecture in one or two sessions or to serve as resource people on topics within their field of expertise. Students who have taken previous courses on any or all of these subjects either in high school or in other programs and who can pass “challenge” exams in these courses should be able to take elective courses instead. The collective goal of these courses would be to ensure a baseline understanding for all students in the program.

We recommend the Core requirements of the Health Studies program consist of: two terms of Foundation courses in year 1; the three introductory content courses in the first term of year 2 (for those who need them); and a PBL Population Health course and a CBL course, also offered in year 2. It is beyond the scope of this review to offer details of which B, C, and D level courses should be retained



and which are not needed. We do recommend that Level D allow at least one full year (two terms) of CBL courses, with strong faculty support, to provide students with practical experience and critical thinking skills for employment or graduate school. We believe that retaining those current faculty members who fit into the team spirit of innovative learning proposed, and recruiting only new faculty members who are passionate about teaching in this cutting-edge program, should allow a robust program to be developed.

#### **d. Assessment of Learning:**

The program currently leaves assessment decisions to individual course instructors. Course syllabi indicate use of mixed methods of assessment: participation in tutorials, homework, quizzes, writing assignments, journal reflections, multiple choice question (MCQ) exams (a poor method to use in a discipline as caveated and subjective as “health” but alas an understandable necessity to some extent in the very large courses at least at this stage of TA development), group work, and term papers. Students noted not only their desire to move away from MCQs, but also assessment methods such as open-book tests and instead to engage more deeply with the material, perhaps through simulated practical applications to demonstrate subject comprehension and application. They also requested greater guidance on assignments, especially from the tutorial leaders. The review team recommends that teaching assistants be given adequate training in both the content and methods of the courses in which they are hired to assist. In this way, the TAs might be able to work with the faculty to develop more meaningful assignments that would afford students the opportunity to go into more depth on topics covered and also to more effectively prove their mastery of the material.

#### **e. Quality Indicators:**

As noted above, there are no formal admission requirements; the program of study is open to all who choose it. The program acknowledges that the quality of both entering and graduating students – as measured by the sole criterion of CGPA – is on the low side. However, the review team’s interview with a dozen student members of the departmental student association found the students to be bright, engaged, articulate, and committed to Health Studies as their chosen major.

The review team was not provided with information on student completion rates, time to completion, or post-graduation outcomes (either employment or further education), so we cannot comment on these indicators. We recommend that the program begin immediately to track graduates’ outcomes, to ensure that the curriculum is adequately preparing students for advanced degrees or for appropriate jobs in the public and private sectors.

The review team was not provided with course evaluations, so we cannot comment on the quality of the educational experience and teaching in the Health Studies program. The sheer numbers of students who enroll in the program’s courses and who enlist as majors would seem to indicate that students appreciate the quality of the educational experience provided by the Health Sciences faculty. The anecdotal evidence provided to us by the students in our lunchtime session indicated general satisfaction with the courses. They asked for greater innovation in teaching methods specifically including more experiential learning opportunities; we second this notion and support the hiring of additional faculty to reduce the student to faculty ratio, to allow faculty more time to develop creative educational experiences and to focus on individual students who want or require more attention.

As an undergraduate program, student funding is not applicable (as it would be for a graduate program). However, we recommend that the budget provided to the departmental student association be raised from its current allocation of \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year. It is clear that the students put these funds to excellent use, for example, in offering programming for career exploration.

Given the oversubscribed nature of Health Studies, the program does not need to engage in outreach and promotion, nor should it do so until more faculty are hired to reduce the student to faculty ratio and to allow for more consistent and more varied course offerings.

The provision of centralized student services, as described in Appendix D of the self-study, appears to be adequate. The review team was very impressed with the University Library, in terms of the resources available and the willingness of the staff to meet the needs of both students and faculty in Health Studies. The advising provided within the program by the supervisor of studies and by the undergraduate program advisor is excellent, but unsustainable. Given the large numbers of students enrolled in courses and as majors, the program must apportion student advising and mentoring duties across the entire faculty. Similarly, junior faculty must be matched with senior faculty who can serve as mentors to provide meaningful guidance to building successful careers at UTSC.

## **2. Faculty/Research**

It does not appear that the program has developed in line with any kind of specific strategic vision or plan. This is reflected in the current faculty composition that, on balance, is very junior (for a young program) and somewhat diffuse in terms of any overlapping research interests or strengths. It is, however, worth noting that in comparison to national and international peers, the faculty is productive, in terms of their own respective programs of research, publication and ability to attract funding.

In order to move the program successfully into a free standing Department, it is strongly recommended that the University engage in the immediate cluster hiring of 3-4 mostly mid to senior level academics (as opposed to staged hiring over a number of years) to augment the faculty complement. Such hires will be well positioned to engage in the strategic development of the program, to identify niche areas of identity, and to assist with partnership building within the University of Toronto community and beyond. As part of this hiring process, special attention and resources should be dedicated to attracting a strong leader with requisite skills, experience, passion and vision for building a new Department. It is strongly recommended that any new hires demonstrate deep commitment to the integrated vision of the program and have experience working across disciplines and facilitating various forms of experiential learning. In order to stretch available resources, new hires could also be cross-appointed between departments (such as Political Science, International Development Studies, Historical and Cultural Studies, or Environmental Science) to create teaching and research synergies. Finally, in the process of transitioning from a program to a Department, some junior faculty may find better-suited homes in other units of the University and some current temporary faculty (e.g. teaching stream and/or limited term) should be encouraged to apply for permanent full-time positions.

## **3. Relationships:**

During our review, we had the opportunity to meet with students, staff, and faculty. The undergraduate students with whom we engaged are all members of AHA, which is active in student development, career coaching, and the provision of support and outreach to students in the health studies program. As noted above, we recommend increasing the AHA's funding to allow them to continue and even

expand their work. In general the students are enthusiastic, loyal, and committed to the program. Their morale is affected by the following issues: access to courses that will allow them to move through the program seamlessly and to graduate on time, more information in terms of assignments and course expectations, better quality tutorial experiences which build on rather than replicate lecture materials, more support and opportunities through the co-op program for both volunteer and intern placements, and better career support and counseling.

The staff have clearly created a very supportive environment among themselves with good communication, cohesion, and collaboration. Each person with whom we met has an extremely heavy administrative load compared to similarly situated individuals in other institutions. Even though staff are working under great pressures and strains, the morale within the group is remarkably high. However, some complaints were articulated about the lack of hands-on faculty involvement in the hiring of tutorial assistants and the lack of responsiveness by faculty to certain administrative requests in a timely fashion.

The faculty voiced most of the concerns about the program. While they had kind words for some of the senior faculty who had tried their best in their interim roles, overall faculty morale was very negatively affected by perceptions that the program is inherently dysfunctional, that it suffers from a lack of stable competent leadership, and that there is a complete absence of strategic thinking/planning and transparency in decision-making. While each member with whom we met expressly supported the integrated vision of the program, there exists serious frustration about how things have been led and managed and the real absence of any stable cohesive and inclusive plan for the future. Faculty complained about last minute decisions, hastily called ad hoc meetings, and the lack of regular faculty meetings, retreats, and individual mentoring.

In all three groups (faculty, staff, students), there is consensus and support for formally separating from the Department of Anthropology that has served as a temporary home for the program following the reorganization of the Faculty. Unfortunately, the program has not developed adequate linkages or communication or partnerships (other than through individual faculty) with other programs at the University of Toronto explicitly in health and related disciplines (e.g., Dalla Lana School of Public Health or a new emerging program at the Mississauga campus). We did not see any indication of partnerships beyond the University, other than those relationships forged by individual researchers as part of their own program of research.

While there is great potential for liaising with external government, academic, and professional organizations, this aspect of the program is largely undeveloped except through some preliminary links through the co-op program.

Finally, while the nature and geographic location of the program position it to have local and even national impact through a variety of experiential learning opportunities, these kinds of outputs and effects have not yet materialized in a systematic fashion.

#### **4. Organizational and Financial Structure:**

The current organization of Health Studies as a program within the Anthropology department does not well serve either the faculty or the students. Without a dedicated chair, who is trained in the methodologies of health studies and has relevant subject matter expertise, the program lacks guidance on day-to-day matters and vision for the future. The location of Health Studies within Anthropology

might have been a good temporary solution when there were no directly-appointed faculty, but it is now time to make a change. As discussed above, the review team recommends that Health Studies be organized as a stand-alone department, not as a program within the Anthropology Department. A department with its own chair will enable Health Studies to function as a harmonious unit, to synergize the research and teaching interests of its faculty, and to provide a coordinated curriculum of state-of-the-art courses to its students.

The review team also noted with concern the false dichotomy set up by the organization of the undergraduate program into two separate degree pathways, one leading to the BA and the other to the BSc. It is strongly recommended, as discussed earlier, that the undergraduate curriculum be reduced to a single program, with additional science and arts courses differentiating the BSc degree from the BA degree.

Since the review team was not given access to departmental or program finances, we cannot comment on the appropriateness of resource allocation.

The team did note with concern the extraordinary burden on administrative staff who each must serve three or even six different units. While these personnel clearly handle their workloads with competence and aplomb, there is no room for expansion of duties, which hinders the innovation that any unit can undertake, at least from an administrative perspective. Further, there seems to be limited cross-training of staff, so that an entire function rests solely with one individual; if that individual is ill or on vacation, no progress can be made until their return. The number of staff has not kept pace with either the growth in the number of students or the hiring of new faculty. It is recommended that staff be kept apprised of the progress of faculty searches and engaged early in the process of on-boarding those faculty. The staff have great institutional knowledge that can work synergistically with the intellectual strengths of existing and new faculty to create strong, well-supported teaching and research programs.

Given the needs of the Health Studies program-cum-department to build its infrastructure, provide adequate support to its faculty, manage its very large courses, and engage in essential innovations (such as conducting regular student surveys and tracking graduate outcomes; making greater use of educational technologies), the review team recommends the immediate hire of a Program Assistant to work closely with the Interim Director and then with the Chair/Program Director once that person is hired.

The review team did not visit the space in which faculty or administrative staff are located nor the classrooms in which Health Studies courses are held, so we cannot comment on the appropriateness of space. The self-study noted with concern the uncertainty surrounding space allocation for Health Studies personnel once the new building is erected, but the Interim Dean assured us that the faculty and staff would be accommodated either in the new building or in an existing facility that will be vacated by departments moving into the new one.

## **5. Long-range Planning Challenges:**

The long-range vision is to become a world-leading department in Health Studies, known for its integrated approach to health with strong focus not only on the biological and social sciences but also on the arts and humanities. The department has the potential not only to continue to attract large numbers of students, but also to attract and educate the best and brightest. The department also has

potential to attract considerable research funds from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, and elsewhere.

As stressed above, we believe that it is essential to move quickly to turn Health Studies into a Department. This means immediately commencing a search for a Departmental Chair. If the program/department can clearly articulate its exciting ambition to become an internationally leading program in Health Studies, a passionate skilled individual, committed to innovations in understanding and promoting health equity in all its complexity, can be easily attracted. We recommend that the interim program leader immediately engage an executive search firm to begin this process as soon as possible. The goal should be to have the new Chair of the Department in place, ready to start by July 1, 2017. We cannot emphasize enough that the time to act is now.

Once the Department Chair is in place, we recommend proceeding quickly to hire three new faculty members, ensuring that at least one or two are at senior levels. All three positions should have research interests consistent with developing a graduate program in Health Studies. As long as faculty continue to be pulled downtown to conduct their graduate teaching and research, the Health Studies department will continue to suffer – subsidizing other departments and depriving its own students of the availability of faculty and research opportunities.

As graduate programs in public health are well-established at the St. George campus, and as UT Mississauga is planning a graduate program in health promotion (to complement their planned undergraduate programs related to Health), we recommend that the vision for the unique niche of UTSC's Health graduate program be a Masters of Arts (MA) in Health Studies. This would capture a unique niche that would appeal to many students and employers, such as philanthropic organizations, non-profit groups, and government agencies, especially those charged with health promotion missions and increasingly interested in using arts to promote health. We believe a wide variety of jobs exist for which students with this MA degree would be well trained and highly suited. A "4+1" option may be especially attractive to students, in which high-performing students in the BA stream could elect to begin the requirements of their MA in the fourth year of their BA program, so that only one additional year would suffice to earn the MA. Once the Masters program is well-established, a PhD program can be in the long-term vision.

We see room for the development of extensive national and international collaborations in addition to more robust connections with other UTSC departments, including Critical Development Studies and Historical and Cultural Studies. Internationally there is growing interest in this area; there is much desire for North-South collaborations and other such partnerships. Joint appointments—as well as cross-appointments—with these UTSC units may be quite desirable, especially until the graduate programs in Health Studies are well-established. Recruitment of individuals who can bring these collaborative links should be encouraged. We believe it is in the interest of UTSC and the community it serves to stem the flow of faculty energy downtown. We see graduate training and research opportunities at UTSC as key to accomplishing the objectives as outlined in UTSC's strategic and academic plans.

Finally, the Department may wish to consider offering Certificate Programs. For example, courses in areas such as "community health and art practice" could target community-based artists and social animators who want to learn more about the theories behind their activities.

## **6. International Comparators:**

While there are numerous undergraduate programs in health studies in Canada, the United States, and other countries, the review team felt that comparisons were, at this point, not a useful metric for assessment. Instead, we urge the administration and the faculty to act on the internal recommendations to strengthen the undergraduate program and build a department that will be ready for international comparison at its next cyclical review.

## UTQAP Review Summary

<b>Program(s) Reviewed:</b>	Health Studies – Population Health, B.Sc. (Hons.): Major, Major Co-op  Health Studies – Health Policy, B.A. (Hons.): Major, Major Co-op
<b>Division/Unit Offering Programs:</b>	UTSC Department of Anthropology
<b>Commissioning Officer:</b>	Dean and Vice-Principal, Academic, UTSC
<b>Reviewers:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Olena Hankivsky, School of Public Policy, Simon Fraser University</li> <li>2. Elizabeth Watkins, Department of Anthropology, History and Social Medicine, University of California, San Francisco</li> <li>3. Annalee Yassi, School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia</li> </ol>
<b>Date of review visit:</b>	May 31 - June 1, 2016

### Previous Review

**Date:** Jan. 17 – 18, 2008 (with Department of Social Sciences and its programs)

**Summary of Findings and Recommendations:**

**1. Undergraduate Programs (Health Studies, BA/BSc: Maj, Co-op)**

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Attractive to students

The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:

- Program lacks intellectual rigor and rationale
- Student needs not being met
- Students under the impression that enrolling in the program was a means to enter medical school

**2. Graduate Programs (n/a)**

**3. Faculty/Research**

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- At least one full time appointment is necessary for the viability of the program

#### **4. Administration**

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Health Studies program needs a comprehensive review by a task force of strong faculty members

**Last OCGS Review(s) Date(s):** n/a

## **Current Review: Documentation & Consultation**

### **Documentation Provided to Reviewers:**

- Documentation about the university: UTSC Strategic Plan, 2014-15 to 2018-19; UTSC Academic Plan, 2015-20, UTSC by the Numbers; UTSC Admissions Viewbook, 2016-17
- Documents about the review process: Terms of Reference; Site Visit Schedule
- Documents about the department: Health Studies Academic Plan, April 2015; Health Studies Self Study, April, 2016;
- Documents about programs and courses: Description of Programs, 2016-17 UTSC Academic Calendar; Description of Courses, 2016-17 UTSC Academic Calendar; Course Enrolments, 2008-16; Course Syllabi
- Faculty CVs

### **Consultation Process:**

The reviewers met with the following groups: the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, Vice-Dean Undergraduate, Assistant Dean Academic, and Academic Programs Officer; the Vice-Principal Research; the Chair of the Department of Anthropology; heads of cognate academic units, including the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, and the Dalla Lana School of Public Health; the Associate Chair of Health Studies; junior and senior members of the faculty; undergraduate students; administrative staff from the Office of Arts and Science Co-op, departmental administrative staff; and library staff.

## **Current Review: Findings & Recommendations**

### **1 Undergraduate Program**

Health Studies – Population Health, B.Sc. (Hons.): Major, Major Co-op

Health Studies – Health Policy, B.A. (Hons.): Major, Major Co-op

#### **The reviewers observed the following strengths:**

- Overall quality
  - Notable commitment of the faculty, staff, students, and administration to the success of the program and enabling it to realize its full potential



- Objectives
  - Program fills a unique and exciting niche
  - Aligned with central priorities of “Community Building” and “Re-examining and Reinventing Undergraduate Education”
  - Strong interdisciplinary integration of arts and humanities distinguishes it from other programs
  - UTSC has the opportunity to become a leader in training the next generation in this field
- Admissions requirements
  - Open door admission policy has attracted a large and growing number of students
- Assessment of learning
  - Assessment decisions handled by individual course instructors
- Students
  - Immensely popular with students, who fill this program to capacity and beyond
  - Active student association
  - Students appreciate the quality of the educational experience provided by the Health Sciences faculty
  - Students are enthusiastic, loyal, and committed to the program
- Support
  - Excellent advising by undergraduate program adviser and supervisor of studies

**The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:**

- Curriculum and program delivery
  - Current program organization does not reflect the current thinking in population health and health policy with respect to the need for a fully integrated understanding of health
    - Students could graduate from the program with a skewed and not fully-integrated understanding of health and therefore lack the skills to address the complexity of health issues or to go on to graduate programs in related fields
  - Existing separate BA and BSc streams is a hindrance rather than a facilitator to showcasing the programs’ interdisciplinary niche
  - Concern among the faculty about the need to hire enough faculty to offer “science- specific” courses to fill perceived gaps in the biological science expertise in the program
- Assessment of learning
  - Students would like to move away from multiple choice question exams
- Quality indicators
  - No completion rates, time-to-completion, or post-graduation information available
- Support

- Students consider the current system of tutorials to be weak; rather than tutorials that repeat classroom learning, students would prefer tutorials that expand classroom learning and provide more guidance on assignments
- The current level of student advising provided by the Undergraduate Advisor is unsustainable given large enrolments

**The reviewers made the following recommendations:**

- Objectives
  - Interdisciplinary approach should be showcased and further strengthened in strategic hiring
- Admissions requirements
  - Ensure the program stays popular not just because of the lack of entry requirements, but rather for its innovation and timeliness
- Curriculum and program delivery
  - Create a single course of study in health studies leading either to the BA or BSc, rather than offering separate programs in population health (BSc) and health policy (BA)
  - Keep the Foundations courses, but improve the use of tutorials and adopt a greater emphasis on problem-based learning
  - Develop a plan for collective implementation for community-based assignments, group problem solving, and problem-based learning, to ensure that the curriculum is meaningful, innovative, and integrated
  - Provide more training for TAs and develop more innovation in assessment and teaching methods
  - Consider starting an MA in Health Studies and include 4+1 option, as well as certificate options
  - Pursue more community-based learning opportunities to strengthen co-op programs, including articulating learning objectives and identifying opportunities that would benefit students
    - Consider adding placements with organizations that serve marginalized populations
    - Offer community-based learning courses at the B-level and the D-level
  - Offer introductory courses in biological and physical sciences, social science and the humanities, and statistics and health research methods in the first term of year 2 to ensure a baseline of understanding for all students in the program
  - Consider offering certificate programs in areas such as community health and art practice
- Assessment of learning
  - Use assessment methods where students can more deeply engage with the material, such as open book tests
- Quality indicators

- Track graduates' outcomes, to ensure that the curriculum is adequately preparing students for advanced degrees or for appropriate jobs in the public and private sectors
- Students
  - Further strengthen student association with more funding
  - Hire additional faculty to reduce the faculty/student ratio
- Support
  - Apportion student advising and mentoring duties across all faculty
  - Provide students with more information in terms of assignments and course expectations
- Outreach / Promotion
  - Refrain from outreach or promotion until more faculty are hired to reduce the faculty/student ratio

## 2 Graduate Program

[n/a]

## 3 Faculty/Research

**The reviewers observed the following strengths:**

- Faculty
  - Multidisciplinary complement

**The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:**

- Faculty
  - Current complement is very junior and somewhat diffuse in terms of overlapping research interests and strengths, reflecting the lack of overall strategic plan for the program

**The reviewers made the following recommendations:**

- Research
  - Highlight the provision of an integrated approach to health studies and refine research streams into two or three core areas
- Faculty
  - New hires should demonstrate deep commitment to the integrated vision of the program and have experience working across disciplines and facilitating various forms of experiential learning
  - Commit to hiring three new tenured and tenure-stream faculty

- Ensure that one of the new hires is devoted to overseeing a suite of courses on community-based health service/community practice for health equity
- Consider cross-appointing new hires between departments (such as Political Science, International Development Studies, Historical and Cultural Studies, or Environmental Science) to create teaching and research synergies
- Consider the correct balance between teaching stream and tenure stream positions in the complement
- Match junior faculty with senior faculty who can serve as mentors to provide meaningful guidance to building successful careers at UTSC

## 4 Administration

### The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Organizational and financial structure
  - Excellent support staff with remarkably high morale
  - Solid university support (e.g. library, co-op program, research office)
- Planning / Vision
  - UTSC has been forward-looking in its support and development of undergraduate programs in Health Studies
  - Opportunity to become a leader in training the next generation of workers and scholars in this field
  - Potential not only to continue to attract large numbers of students, but also to attract and educate the best and brightest
  - Potential to attract considerable research funds from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, and elsewhere
- Reputation / Profile
  - At the leading edge in Canada for health humanities

### The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:

- Relationships
  - Faculty morale negatively affected by perceptions that the program is inherently dysfunctional, and suffers from a lack of stable leadership, strategic thinking/planning, and transparent decision-making
  - No indication of partnerships beyond the University, other than those relationships forged by individual researchers as part of their own program of research
- Organizational and financial structure

- Staff have extremely heavy administrative loads, especially compared to similarly situated individuals in other institutions, due to supporting multiple units, limited cross training, and large student populations
- Lack of hands-on faculty involvement in the hiring of tutorial assistants
- Current position within the Anthropology Department doesn't serve the programs, faculty, or students

**The reviewers made the following recommendations:**

- Relationships
  - Work to develop extensive national and international collaborations in addition to more robust connections with other UTSC departments, including Critical Development Studies and Historical and Cultural Studies
- Organizational and financial structure
  - Establish Health Studies as a department and distinguish it as an innovative, cutting-edge, and state-of-the art unit
  - Hire an experienced mid-career or senior interdisciplinary scholar to run the new department; seek someone capable of and eager to assume both visionary strategic leadership and day-to-day management
  - Distribute administrative duties among program director, administrative staff, and tenure-stream faculty
  - Hire a program assistant to deal with the demands of running such a large undergraduate program and support the implementation of new initiatives
  - Apprise staff of the progress of faculty searches and engage them early in the process of on-boarding faculty

**ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE – Appended**

September 20, 2016

Professor William A. Gough  
Vice-Principal Academic and Dean  
University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC)

Dear Prof. Gough,

Thank you for forwarding the report of the May 2016 External Review of the Health Studies programs in the Department of Anthropology.

As indicated in our *Statement of Institutional Purpose*, the University of Toronto is committed “to being an internationally significant research university, with undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of excellent quality.” This quality is assessed through the periodic appraisal of programs and units, which considers how our research scholarship and programs compare to those of our international peer institutions and assesses the alignment of our programs with established Degree Level Expectations. The University views the reports and recommendations made by external reviewers as opportunities to celebrate successes and identify areas for quality improvement.

The reviewers stated that the very popular Health Studies programs fill a unique and exciting niche by bringing a strong humanities focus to this interdisciplinary field. They observed the notable commitment of the faculty, staff, students, and administration to the success of the programs and their dedication realizing the programs’ full potential.

I am writing at this time to request your administrative response to this report and your thoughts on a timeline for implementing recommendations. At the same time I am forwarding a summary of the review report for comment.

Specifically I would ask you to address the following areas raised by the reviewers, along with any additional areas you would like to prioritize:

#### **Resources**

- The reviewers strongly encouraged the creation of an appropriate academic home for Health Studies, which would provide a base for content knowledge, research activity, and program delivery. This structure would allow for the development of future academic programs, ensure ongoing quality, and provide support for the tenure and promotion process.

#### **Curriculum & Program Delivery**

- The reviewers encouraged reconsideration of the programs’ curricular pathways to facilitate student learning and highlight the programs’ interdisciplinary strengths.

## Faculty & Staff

- The reviewers recommended reviewing the faculty complement size and structure to ensure balance and adequate support for the academic programs.
- The reviewers observed that administrative duties could be better distributed and more appropriately supported.

In terms of next steps, reviews of academic programs and units are presented to University governance as a matter of University policy. Under the *University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process* (UTQAP), it is the responsibility of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs to prepare a Report on all program and unit reviews and submit these biannually to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P). The summary of the external review of the undergraduate Health Studies programs offered by the Department of Anthropology will be considered by AP&P at its meeting on November 1, 2016. Your presence at this meeting is important and will allow you to respond to any questions the Committee may have regarding the report and your administrative response and plan for implementing recommendations. The implementation plan should identify changes to be accomplished in the immediate (6 months), medium (1-2 years) and longer (3-5 years) terms, and who (Department, Dean) will take the lead in each area. AP&P may either conclude that there are no substantive issues that need to be dealt with or recommend that the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs bring forward a follow-up report in a year.

I would appreciate receiving your completed administrative response and plan for implementing recommendations, as well as any comments on the summary by October 3, 2016. This will allow my office sufficient time to prepare materials for the AP&P meeting. At the same time, we will work closely with you to develop a summary of the review's outcomes, including plans for implementing recommendations, appropriate for posting on the University's Quality Assurance web site as required by the UTQAP.

Please feel free to contact me or Justine Garrett, Coordinator, Academic Planning and Reviews, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Sioban Nelson  
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

cc.

Daniella Mallinck, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance

Justine Garrett, Coordinator, Academic Planning and Reviews

Mark A. Schmuckler, Vice-Dean, Undergraduate, UTSC

Lesley Lewis, Assistant Dean, Academic, UTSC

Annette Knott, Academic Programs Officer, UTSC



3 October 2016

Professor Sioban Nelson  
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs  
Office of the Vice-President and Provost  
Simcoe Hall  
University of Toronto

Dear Sioban,

**Administrative Response:**  
**External Review of the Undergraduate Program in Health Studies**

Thank you for your letter of September 20, 2016 requesting my administrative response to the external review of the undergraduate program in Health Studies [B.A. (Honours): Major/Major Co-op in Health Studies – Health Policy; B.Sc. (Honours): Major/Major Co-op in Health Studies – Population Health]. I appreciate the seriousness with which the reviewers approached the external review process, and am grateful for the careful consideration they have given to the program. I note with pleasure that the reviewers highlight the “immense potential” of the program, and the exceptional research productivity of the faculty.

The external review report was sent to the Chair of the Department of Anthropology to be shared with the Health Studies faculty. The decanal group, including myself, the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate, and Assistant Dean, Academic, met with the Acting Chair of Anthropology, the Associate Chair of Health Studies, and the Health Studies faculty on September 7, 2016 to discuss the external review, and the recommendations from the review report. I am pleased with the depth of the discussion that has already taken place and will continue in future. I am confident the ongoing discussion will prove to be productive. We are taking the recommendations of the reviewers seriously and already have begun to act upon them.

As you know, the UTSC campus has been actively engaged in an academic planning process. The Campus Academic Plan was finalized and taken through governance during the 2015-16 academic year. Many of the initiatives included in the academic plan – strategic enrolment management, curriculum mapping, ensuring students develop strong communication skills, and developing alumni outreach – will be central to Health Studies’ ongoing activities.

Let me address now the specific points raised in your letter:



***Resources:***

- The reviewers strongly encouraged the creation of an appropriate academic home for Health Studies, which would provide a base for content knowledge, research activity, and program delivery. This structure would allow for the development of future academic programs, ensure ongoing quality, and provide support for the tenure and promotion process.

The Dean's Office has actively engaged with the Health Studies faculty, the Department of Anthropology, and the Provost's Office to explore alternative administrative structures, including EDU: B, EDU: A, and department status.

The Health Studies faculty and the Department of Anthropology are strongly supportive of an alternative structure that provides autonomy to both the Health Studies programs and faculty. For this reason, they have expressed reservations about the EDU: B structure. While it provides more autonomy and a direct report to the Dean, it has a complicated appointment structure that only allows up to 49% of a faculty member's appointment to be in the EDU: B. Our pre-tenure and pre-promotion faculty have expressed unease with this structure.

My Office will continue to explore different options, in consultation with your Office and working closely with the Health Studies group, with a goal of making a decision regarding the optimal pathway to follow by the end of the year. Together we will examine the concerns of the pre-tenure and pre-promotion faculty, and seek ways of moving forward that will minimize uncertainty.

***Curriculum and Program Delivery:***

- The reviewers encouraged reconsideration of the programs' curricular pathways to facilitate student learning and highlight the programs' interdisciplinary strengths.

Early in September, the Health Studies faculty had a fulsome discussion on the curriculum and program delivery issues that were identified by the reviewers. There is consensus at the broad level about the changes they would like to make over the course of the next year. These include developing a new introductory course in Epidemiology and introducing a new freestanding Minor in Health Humanities. There is also consensus that, as they continue to modify their curriculum, the faculty will promote interdisciplinarity, and focus more attention on scaffolding and continuity of courses from one level to the next.

In response to the reviewers recommendation to ensure that courses incorporate case-study/problem-based learning and ecosystem/eco-health approaches, the faculty note this already takes place to a very great extent, despite the complications caused by the current organization of the programs into separate BA and BSc streams.

The faculty agree with the reviewers' assertion that the current organization of the programs into separate BA and BSc offerings "perpetuates false binaries between

biological and social sciences and between population health and health policy.” They are considering ways to integrate the BA and BSc streams into a single program. This will include establishing a core of courses that will be required of all students. Upon completion of the core, students would then be able to take additional science or social science/humanities courses. Students taking sciences courses would be working towards a BSc, while students taking social science/humanities courses would be working towards a BA. This structure would ensure that all students are well grounded in a core interdisciplinary approach to health studies, and also able to concentrate their studies at the upper levels.

***Faculty and Staff:***

- The reviewers recommended reviewing the faculty complement size and structure to ensure balance and adequate support for the academic programs.

The Dean’s Office has allocated three new positions to this group over the next three years, one of which is being searched in 2016-17. At present the complement consists of two full professors, four assistant professors and one assistant professor, teaching stream. The Dean’s Office is supportive of mid or later career hires in the searches that will take place over the next three years to provide a more balanced demographic distribution.

- The reviewers observed that administrative duties could be better distributed and more appropriately supported.

This problem has been identified across all of the social science units that share administrative support. The Dean’s Office will ask UTSC HR Services to review the staffing needs of the unit, and will consider their recommendations.

Regards,



Professor William Gough  
Vice-Principal Academic and Dean