FOR APPROVAL   **PUBLIC**   **OPEN SESSION**

TO:	Academic Affairs Committee
SPONSOR: **CONTACT INFO:**	Professor Amrita Daniere, Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean 905-828-3719, vpdean.utm@utoronto.ca
PRESENTER: **CONTACT INFO:**	Professor Anthony Wensley 905-569-4733, anthony.wensley@utoronto.ca
DATE:	October 21, 2019 for October 28, 2019
AGENDA ITEM:	4

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Program Closure: Combined Degree Programs, HBA (ICCIT) / MI (FI)

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under Section 5.5 of its terms of reference, the consideration of "new undergraduate programs within an existing degree, as defined in the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process, and the closure of such programs" are among the responsibilities of the Academic Affairs Committee.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. **Academic Affairs Committee [For Approval] (October 28, 2019)**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

No previous action in governance has been taken on this proposal.

HIGHLIGHTS:

This is a proposal to close the following three combined degree programs (CDPs) offered through the Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology (ICCIT) at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) and the Faculty of Information (FI):

1. UTM, Honours Bachelor of Arts, Specialist in Interactive Digital Media / Master of Information (HBA/ MI)

2. UTM, Honours Bachelor of Arts, Specialist in Digital Enterprise Management / Master of Information (HBA/ MI)

3. UTM, Honours Bachelor of Arts, Major in Communication, Culture, Information and Technology / Master of Information (HBA/ MI)

These CDPs were introduced in 2014. At the time, it was perceived that undergraduate programs in the ICCIT were a natural precursor to graduate training in information studies and so these three CDPs would provide students with an intuitive academic path to the Faculty of Information while reducing the collective time to completion of both degrees by half a year. Additionally, ICCIT and FI already had an established relationship through the Specialist in Interactive Digital Media Program, which was introduced in 2011 and capitalized on faculty expertise in the field from both units. Since their commencement, however, these programs have struggled to attract qualified students, even though many ICCIT undergraduates do go on to the MI program at FI.

In April 2017, the ICCIT underwent an external review of the Institute and its programs, including these three CDPs. The resulting external reviewer's report explicitly stated that there was a lack of clarity in the objectives of the CDPs and recommended these programs be closed. In response to this, admission to these programs were administratively suspended on April 2, 2019, with a notice posted in the UTM Academic Calendar as well as the SGS Academic Calendar alerting students to the program's status.

At the graduate level, the Master of Information (MI) degree program offered by FI will remain open and unchanged as a result of this closure. Similarly, at the undergraduate level, the Specialist in Digital Enterprise Management and Major in Communication, Culture, Information and Technology programs will remain open and unchanged. The Specialist in Interactive Digital Media program, however, is also currently administratively suspended (as of the 2017-2018 academic year). A separate proposal to close this specialist program is currently being developed by ICCIT. With no students currently enrolled in any of the CDPs, it is expected that there will be no negative impact to either the academic unit or the corresponding stand-alone programs. Students will be informed with respect to the termination of these programs through student organizations and e-mail announcements to the student body.

Both ICCIT and FI are in full support of the closures.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no net implications for the campus' operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Be it Resolved,

THAT the proposed closure of the combined degree program, HBA/Master of Information offered through the Institute of Communication, Culture, Information & Technology at the University of Toronto Mississauga, and the Faculty of Information, as recommended by the Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean, Professor Amrita Daniere, in the proposal dated October 10, 2019, be approved with an anticipated program closure date of January 1, 2020.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

Proposal for the Closure of an Existing Program

University of Toronto
Proposal for the Closure of an Existing Program

The process followed for the closure of any program is the same as that required for the approval of any new such program.

Closure Proposed: **Please specify precisely what is being closed:**	Combined Degree Programs: 1. UTM, Honours Bachelor of Arts, Specialist in Interactive Digital Media / Master of Information (HBA/ MI) 2. UTM, Honours Bachelor of Arts, Specialist in Digital Enterprise Management / Master of Information (HBA/ MI) 3. UTM, Honours Bachelor of Arts, Major in Communication, Culture, Information and Technology / Master of Information (HBA/ MI)
Department / Unit	Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology (ICCIT) Faculty of Information
Faculty / Academic Division:	University of Toronto Mississauga Faculty of Information
Faculty / Academic Division contact:	Yen Du Program & Curriculum Officer Office of the Dean, UTM yen.du@utoronto.ca Anna Pralat Manager, Dean's Office Faculty of Information anna.pralat@utoronto.ca
Department / Unit contact:	Rhonda McEwen Director, ICCIT rhonda.mcewen@utoronto.ca

	Wendy Duff Dean, Faculty of Information wendy.duff@utoronto.ca
Effective date program will be closed to new admissions:	April 2, 2019
Effective date of full closure of program:	January 1, 2020
Version Date:	October 18, 2019

1 Brief Summary

This is a proposal to close the following three combined degree programs (CDPs) offered through the Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology (ICCIT) at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) and the Faculty of Information (FI):

1. UTM, Honours Bachelor of Arts, Specialist in Interactive Digital Media / Master of Information (HBA/ MI)

2. UTM, Honours Bachelor of Arts, Specialist in Digital Enterprise Management / Master of Information (HBA/ MI)

3. UTM, Honours Bachelor of Arts, Major in Communication, Culture, Information and Technology / Master of Information (HBA/ MI)

These CDPs were introduced in 2014. At the time, it was perceived that undergraduate programs in the ICCIT were a natural precursor to graduate training in information studies and so these three CDPs would provide students with an intuitive academic path to the Faculty of Information while reducing the collective time to completion of both degrees by half a year. Additionally, ICCIT and FI already had an established relationship through the Specialist in Interactive Digital Media Program, which was introduced in 2011 and capitalized on faculty expertise in the field from both units. Since their commencement, however, these programs have struggled to attract qualified students, even though many ICCIT undergraduates do go on to the MI program at FI.

In April 2017, the ICCIT underwent an external review of the Institute and its programs, including these three CDPs. The resulting external reviewer's report explicitly stated that there was a lack of clarity in the objectives of the CDPs and recommended these programs be closed. In response to this, admission to these programs were administratively suspended on April 2, 2019, with a notice posted in the UTM Academic Calendar as well as the SGS Academic Calendar alerting students to the program's status.

As combined degree programs, these CDPs are, by definition, connected to existing undergraduate and graduate programs in ICCIT and FI. At the graduate level, the Master of Information (MI) degree program offered by FI will remain open and unchanged as a result of this closure. Similarly, at the undergraduate level, the Specialist in Digital Enterprise Management and Major in Communication, Culture, Information and Technology programs will remain open and unchanged. The Specialist in Interactive Digital Media program, however, is also currently administratively suspended (as of the 2017-2018 academic year). A separate proposal to close this specialist program is currently being developed by ICCIT. With no students currently enrolled in any of the CDPs, it is expected that there will be no negative impact to either academic unit or the corresponding stand-alone programs. Both ICCIT and FI are in full support of the closures.

2 Rationale

The three HBA/ MI combined degree programs in ICCIT and FI were introduced simultaneously in 2014 and were initially conceived of as an opportunity to streamline the academic pathway to the MI program in FI for ICCIT's strongest undergraduate students. Within the CDPs, the requirements of both degree programs would be packaged together as one program set, allowing students the chance to secure early admission to the MI program, participate in graduate courses as an undergraduate student, and earn advanced credit in their MI program. Time to completion of the CDPs would be 5.5

years instead of the full 6 years that is required to complete the two degrees separately. The combined degree programs would also capitalize on the existing synergies between ICCIT and FI.

Since their inception, the CDPs have struggled to attract qualified students. In no year did applications exceed three students and more recently there have been no suitable applications even though many ICCIT students meet the enrolment criteria and go on to apply to the Master of Information program at the Faculty of Information. This inability to establish a critical mass of students in the programs has been detrimental to its success. Without a cohort, students lose out on the benefits of a shared academic experience and the opportunity to learn and grow with their peers. While large student numbers would not be required to foster such a cohort and atmosphere in these specialized CDPs, it would take more than one student across all three programs to realize this. The result of this is that these programs have be unable to gain momentum and have struggled to find their place within ICCIT and FI.

Additionally, ICCIT recently underwent an external review of their unit and programs in April 2017. In the resulting External Reviewer Report for ICCIT, the external review team explicitly recommended the closure of all three combined degree programs:

> The ICCIT offers three Combined HBA/MI (Honours BA and Masters in Information), one based on CCIT, one on DEM [Digital Enterprise Media], and a final one on the IDM [Interactive Digital Media] (currently suspended). We did not look closely at these programs as they are essentially combinations of existing programs and the iSchool's [Faculty of Information] Master of Information which we were not reviewing. Few students enroll in the combination, though there may be many students who do the HBA and then separately apply to the MI. We believe that these should be dropped or redesigned to be more attractive.

> The main problem with the two Combined programs is that their objectives are not clear. If the objective is to provide students with a shorter path to getting a BA and MI then the difference between a 5.5 year program and a 6 year program is not enough. If the objective is to recruit good students early on to take the MI, the combined program is not sufficiently different from just doing the two separately to attract appropriate students. If the objective is to recruit students out of high school to UTM with the attractive prospect of direct entry into a joint program, then there needs to be direct entry into the program. Our point is that the ICCIT and iSchool should decide what their objectives are and how to connect with student objectives. The current design does not distinguish itself sufficiently to be worth the administration.

> **We therefore recommend the Combined programs be dropped or redesigned with a clear objective in mind.**

The subsequent administrative suspension of these three CDPs on April 2, 2019 and this proposal for program closure are in direct response to the reviewer's report. These closures will fulfill an integral part of the Implementation Plan for ICCIT that was developed with the UTM Office of the Dean. Furthermore, it will provide both ICCIT and FI an opportunity to assess their current program offerings so that more desirable programming can be developed.

3 Impact on other programs/units of the proposed closure

This proposal to close the three CDPs is a joint initiative between ICCIT at UTM and FI. Both units are in full support of the closures. Although it was felt that the combined degree programs would offer a set of attractive options for students, this has not been proven to be the case. Closure of these programs will allow for both ICCIT and FI to re-assess and plan for new programs that are current and appealing, addressing the needs of students, UofT, and society.

Because there are no students currently registered in the programs and there has only been one student completion across all three programs in their history, the anticipated effect on other units is negligible – the standalone programs that these CDPs build on will remain open and unchanged (the IDM Specialist is the one exception to this, see Section 4 Student Accommodation below) and all courses that support these programs will continue to be offered to students.

4 Student Accommodation

Table 1: Undergraduate Students Enrolled Across All Three CDPs (UTM)

	Year one	Year two	Year three	Year four
Current enrolment	0	0	0	0

Table 2: Graduate Student Enrolled in All Three CDPS (FI)

	Year one	Year two
Current enrolment	0	0

There are currently no students in any of the combined degree programs (see Table 1 and Table 2 above). Since their inception, there has been only one student who completed the requirements of the combined degree program. This student completed their MI degree and graduated from the Faculty of Information in June 2019.

As noted previously, though the combined degree programs are closing, the separate undergraduate and graduate programs will continue to be offered to students (except for the Interactive Digital Media Specialist). Students will therefore continue to have the option to follow the standard academic path to complete both their HBA and MI degrees (i.e. complete the requirements of their ICCIT program and apply for admission to the MI program upon graduation with their HBA). In this way, the proposed closures will have minimal impact to students. The one exception to this is the Specialist in Interactive Digital Media program, which has been administratively suspended since 2017 and is currently being proposed for closure under a separate proposal. As an additional route students enrolled at St. George will be able to take a Bachelors of Information degree and subsequently take a MI degree.

> Students will be informed with respect to the termination of these options through consultations with student organizations and email announcements to the student body.

5 Faculty / Staff Accommodation

> As there are currently no students enrolled in any of the CDPs and the closure of these programs will not result in the deletion of any course offerings, there will be little to no impact on faculty and staff in both ICCIT and FI. Faculty teaching and workload will not change as a result of these closures. Staff will be no longer be required to advise and administer these programs, including providing information to potential students and processing applications. It should be noted that interest in the CDPs has been low and only 2-3 applications have been received in the past two years, with none being accepted; therefore, staffing needs have not been extensive.

6 Governance Process

Steps	Approving Body	Approval Date
Development/consultation within Unit	Rhonda McEwen Director, ICCIT	September 23, 2019
	Kelly Lyons Chair, Programs Committee, Faculty of Information	September 12, 2019
Decanal & Provostial Sign-Off	Heather Miller Vice-Dean, Teaching & Learning	September 19, 2019
	Wendy Duff Dean, Faculty of Information	October 31, 2019
	VPAP sign-off	October 1, 2019
Divisional Governance Approval	UTM Academic Affairs Committee	October 28, 2019
	Faculty of Information Council	November 28, 2019
Submission to Provost's Office		
AP&P – reported annually		July 2020
Ontario Quality Council – reported annually		July 2020
MTCU – reported annually		