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

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Susan McCahan, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
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PRESENTER: Same as above
CONTACT INFO:

DATE: February 5, 2020 for February 24, 2020

AGENDA ITEM: 4

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Proposal for the closure of the Specialist in Interactive Digital Media (HBA), University of Toronto Mississauga and Faculty of Information

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs approves the closures of undergraduate programs within an existing degree, as defined by the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process. *(AP&P Terms of Reference, Section 4.4.b.i.)*

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. Academic Affairs Committee [For Recommendation] (January 13, 2020)
2. **Committee on Academic Policy and Programs [for Approval] (February 24, 2020)**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The proposal to close the Specialist in Interactive Digital Media was approved at the University of Toronto Mississauga Academic Affairs Committee meeting on January 13, 2020. It was approved by the Faculty of Information's Faculty Council on February 6, 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS:

This is a proposal to close the Specialist Program in Interactive Digital Media (IDM) offered by the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) and the Faculty of Information (FI). Introduced in 2011, this program was designed to capitalize on faculty expertise in the field from the Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology (ICCIT) and FI as both units contributed to the teaching of program-specific courses for the IDM Specialist. Though interest and enrolment in the IDM Specialist initially met expectations, student interest declined, and the

program struggled to attract an appropriate number of qualified students. As a result, the IDM Specialist was administratively suspended in January of 2017, with a notice posted in the UTM Academic Calendar beginning in 2017-2018 alerting students to the program's status.

Since the program was introduced in 2011, the faculty complement in ICCIT has grown significantly and the unit has introduced many new courses, programs and opportunities, which expanded the academic scope of its offerings. These offerings have seen greater success and uptake by students than the IDM Specialist, helping ICCIT to know where to focus their academic developments. For example, they have recently introduced a certificate program focused on professional development and experience, with a required work-integrated learning component. As well, FI has developed a new Bachelor of Information (BI) degree that was launched in September 2019 and is now the focus of the Faculty's undergraduate offerings. Closure of this program will allow ICCIT and FI to continue to plan for new programs and offer existing programs that are current and appealing, addressing the needs of their students, and society more broadly. The impact of this closure to FI will be minimal, as the program has been administratively suspended since September 2017 and FI has not provided any teaching resources for the program since that date. Courses that were initially introduced to support the IDM Specialist exclusively have since been incorporated into the normal course offerings of ICCIT and are taught by ICCIT faculty. These courses will continue to be offered to students and support other programs offered by ICCIT. Though the IDM Specialist provided a great academic experience to students, the growth of ICCIT and FI has placed each unit in an advantageous position to better serve their students and faculty through other pathways. Therefore, this proposed closure reflects the natural outcome of curricular review. Both ICCIT and FI are in full support of the closure.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no negative implications to the closure of the Specialist.

RECOMMENDATION:

Be it Resolved,

THAT the proposed closure of the Specialist in Interactive Digital Media, University of Toronto Mississauga and the Faculty of Information, dated November 28, 2019, to which admissions were administratively suspended in January 2017, be approved, with an anticipated program closure date of June 30, 2020.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

- *Cover*
- *Proposal for the closure of the Specialist in Interactive Digital Media, University of Toronto Mississauga & Faculty of Information*

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:	Interactive Digital Media Program, specialist option (ERSPE2172)
Department / Unit (if applicable):	Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology (ICCIT)
Faculty / Academic Division:	University of Toronto Mississauga Faculty of Information
Faculty / Academic Division contact:	**Amrita Daniere** Vice-Principal Academic & Dean vpdean.utm@utoronto.ca **Wendy Duff** Dean, Faculty of Information wendy.duff@utoronto.ca
Department / Unit contact:	Rhonda McEwen Director, ICCIT rhonda.mcewen@utoronto.ca
Effective date admissions to the program were administratively suspended:	January 11, 2017
Effective date of full closure of program:	June 30, 2020
Version Date:	November 28, 2019

1 Brief Summary

This is a proposal to close the Specialist Program in Interactive Digital Media (IDM) offered through the Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology (ICCIT) at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) and the Faculty of Information (FI). Introduced in 2011, this program was designed to capitalize on faculty expertise in the field from ICCIT and the Faculty of Information (FI) as

both units contributed to the teaching of program-specific courses for the IDM Specialist. A combined degree program between the IDM Specialist and the Faculty of Information's Master of Information degree program was then introduced in 2014 as part of a suite of three combined degree programs with FI in order to provide a streamlined pathway for students wishing to pursue both degrees. Though interest and enrolment in the IDM Specialist initially met expectations, student interest declined and the program struggled to attract an appropriate number of qualified students. Interest and enrolment in the combined degree program was even less with no applicants and no student enrolments in any year. As a result, the IDM Specialist was administratively suspended in January of 2017, with a notice posted in the 2017-2018 UTM Academic Calendar alerting students to the program's status.

Since the program was introduced in 2011, the faculty complement in ICCIT has grown significantly (from 4 full-time faculty to 19) and the unit has introduced many new courses, programs, and opportunities, which expanded the academic scope of its offerings. These offerings have seen greater success and uptake by students than the IDM Specialist, helping ICCIT to know where to focus their academic developments. For example, they have recently introduced a certificate program focused on professional development and experience, with a required work-integrated learning component. Additionally, a new major program in Technology, Society, and Coding is being developed at UTM. As well, FI has developed a new Bachelor of Information (BI) degree that was launched in September 2019 and is now the focus of the Faculty's undergraduate offerings.

Though the IDM Specialist offered a great academic experience to students, the growth of ICCIT and FI has placed each unit in an advantageous position to better serve their students and faculty through other pathways. A proposal to close the Combined Degree Program: UTM, Honours Bachelor of Arts, Specialist in Interactive Digital Media / Master of Information is also being brought forward as a major modification through a different proposal.

2 Rationale

Initially conceived to leverage the existing synergies between ICCIT and FI at the St. George campus, the IDM Specialist Program was introduced in September 2011. The intent of the program was to provide UTM students with exposure to faculty expertise from FI. This was a mutually beneficial arrangement as ICCIT was a newly established unit with only 4 full-time faculty and FI offered only graduate programming at the time. Since that time, there have been significant changes in both offering units: FI has introduced its own undergraduate degree, the Bachelor of Information (BI) and ICCIT presently consists of 19 full-time faculty from a diverse range of research areas, and so is better able to support its own undergraduate offerings.

When introduced, the IDM Specialist was able to attract sufficient student interest to achieve a class size of 18 students or more. In subsequent years, however, it became difficult to attract more than 10-15 qualified students and in the last year before administrative suspension, there were less than 8 student applicants to the program. Currently there is only one fourth-year student in the program. This inability to establish a critical mass of students in the program 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 a specialized program such as the IDM, it would take more

than one student to realize this. The result of this is that this program has be unable to gain momentum and has struggled to find its place within ICCIT and at UTM.

3 Impact on other programs/units of the proposed closure

This proposal to close the IDM Specialist is a joint initiative between ICCIT at UTM and FI. Both units are in full support of the closure. Closure of this program will allow ICCIT and FI to continue to plan for new and offer existing programs that are current and appealing, addressing the needs of their students, and society more broadly.

The impact of this closure to FI will be minimal as the program has been administratively suspended since September 2017 and FI has not provided any teaching resources for the program since that date. Courses that were initially introduced to support the IDM Specialist exclusively have since been incorporated into the normal course offerings of ICCIT and are taught by ICCIT faculty. These courses will continue to be offered to students and support other programs offered by ICCIT. The combined HBA/ MI degree program in IDM is currently also administratively suspended with no students enrolled. This program is being concurrently proposed for closure under a separate major modification proposal.

4 Student Accommodation

Table 1: Undergraduate Student Enrolment in IDM Specialist (2019-2020)

	Year one	Year two	Year three	Year four
Current enrolment	0	0	0	1

In June of 2019, nine (9) students completed the IDM Specialist program and received their undergraduate degree. Currently, there is one (1) fourth-year student remaining in the IDM Specialist. This student is set to complete their program requirements this academic year and graduate in June 2020. As noted above, all courses for the IDM Specialist will continue to be offered by ICCIT so there should be no impedance to the student with respect to access to required program courses. ICCIT will continue to provide academic support and counselling to the student with respect to the IDM Specialist. There are no inactive students in the program; however, inactive students can always be accommodated as the courses for this program continue to be offered by ICCIT at UTM. The UTM Office of the Registrar has been aware of the administrative suspension of this program since January 2017 and is also aware of this proposal for closure.

Because all courses from the IDM Specialist will continue to be offered, the anticipated impact to future students will be negligible. Students will be encouraged to explore this field through the available courses (CCT301H5 – Design for Online Cultures; CCT341H5 – Introduction to IT Consulting; CCT365H5 – Surveillance; CCT372H5 – Knowledge Media Design: Contexts and Practices; CCT374H5 – Critical Histories of Information Technologies; CCT376H5 – Introduction to Modelling Information; CCT381H5 – Virtual Media Audiences: Imagined and Actual; CCT382H5 – Digital Games and Learning; CCT385H5 – An Introduction to Media Environments; CCT471H5 Knowledge Representation and

Reasoning; CCT480H5 – User Experience Analysis; and CCT481H5 – Augmented Places and Social Media Spaces) and ICCIT is developing new programs (such as a recently introduced Professional Experience Certificate in Digital Media, Communication, and Technology and a new Major Program in Technology, Coding and Society that is being developed) that are more relevant to current student interests.

One of the goals of the IDM was to provide students with access to graduate faculty in FI because ICCIT was a new unit at the time with only 4 full-time faculty. Since that time ICCIT's faculty complement has grown to 19 full-time faculty with a wide range of expertise in communication, traditional media, digital media, and technological innovation. This increase in the number and diversity of ICCIT faculty allows students to pursue a far wider range of potential learning opportunities through the existing ICCIT courses and programs than were available in the IDM Specialist.

The current remaining student in the program is already aware of the administrative suspension of the program and ICCIT's plans to bring forward this proposal for closure. As the student is on track to complete their requirements and graduate by June 2020, there will be no need for any accommodations; however, such options have been communicated to the student in the event that they are needed. After approval, ICCIT will contact the student directly to advise them of the new program status. Current ICCIT students have been made aware of the intention to close this program through communications with student organizations and e-mail announcements to the general student body from administration. If approved, an update on the program status will be provided through the same channels.

5 Faculty / Staff Accommodation

Faculty teaching and workload will not change as a result of these closures as this program has been administratively suspended since 2017 and FI no longer provides any teaching resources to the program. Many ICCIT faculty also hold cross-appointments and graduate appointments in the Faculty of Information and collaboration across these academic units continues. For example, many of these faculty were engaged, along with colleagues from UTSC, in the development of a new concentration in the PhD in Information concentration called Media, Technology and Culture.

At UTM, administrative resources will not change.

6 Governance Process

Steps	Approving Body	Approval Date
Development/consultation within Unit	Rhonda McEwen Director, ICCIT, UTM	October 2, 2019
	Wendy Duff Dean, Faculty of Information	October 31, 2019

Consultation with Dean's Office (& VP, AP)	Heather Miller Vice-Dean, Teaching & Learning	October 2, 2019
	Programs Committee Faculty of Information	October 31, 2019
	VPAP consultation	November 28, 2019
Divisional Governance Approval	UTM Academic Affairs Committee	January 13, 2020
	Faculty of Information Council	February 6, 2020
Submission to Provost's Office		
AP&P		**February 24, 2020**
Ontario Quality Council – reported annually		**July 2020**
MTCU – reported annually		