



FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: UTSC Academic Affairs Committee

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DATE: May 24, 2022 for May 30, 2022

AGENDA ITEM: 4

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Review of Academic Programs and Units: Department of Human Geography and its undergraduate programs, UTSC

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under section 5.7 of the *Terms of Reference* of the Academic Affairs Committee (UTSC AAC) provides that the Committee “shall receive for information and discussion reviews of academic programs and/or 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. **UTSC Academic Affairs Committee [For Information] (May 30, 2022)**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

- Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P), April 12, 2022 [For Information]. The Committee was satisfied with the Dean’s Administrative Response. No follow-up report was required.
- Academic Board, April 27, 2022 [For Information]. The Board was satisfied with the Report from AP&P.

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 should 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 (conducted remotely during the pandemic);
- Receipt of a report from the external review team;
- The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs’ formal request for an Administrative Response;
- The Chair/Director’s formal Administrative Response;
- The Dean and Vice-Principal Academic’s formal Administrative Response; and
- The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

In accordance with the *Protocol*, an external review of the Department of Human Geography and its undergraduate programs was initiated in the 2019-20 academic year. During a remote site-visit held on March 24-26, 2021, the review team met with a wide array of stakeholders, including UTSC senior academic administrators, the Department Chair, and faculty, staff and students in the Department. The reviewers assessed the Department as highly successful, and noted the Department’s large and growing undergraduate programs, commitment of faculty and staff to student learning, high student satisfaction, research excellence, and shared sense of purpose and collegiality.

The reviewers recommend the Department review course sequencing and co/prerequisites, to avoid overlap in course content and to ensure that students have the necessary background for upper-level courses. The Department responds that a review of co/prerequisites will be undertaken as part of a continuation of a curriculum review process started during the 2021-22 year. The Department Curriculum Committee has received reports evaluating the course content and sequencing from the City Studies, Geographic Information Systems, Urban Geography, Socio-culture Geography and Environmental Geography clusters which will support further discussion in a planned curriculum retreat later in 2022.

The reviewers recommend updating the Major in Physical and Human Geography curriculum to develop a more contemporary focus on themes which integrate human and physical geographies. The Department notes several opportunities to accomplish this, including: the creation new courses on urban climate change to integrate physical and human geography content, the integration of current courses on people and built environments into the Major in Physical and Human Geography, and the hiring of a future faculty position for the Physical and Human Geography program to provide leadership and act as a liaison with the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences. The Dean’s Office is very supportive of these plans, with more

points directly related to faculty complement planning offered related to other recommendations below.

The reviewers encourage the Department to develop a Major in Geographic Information Science, noting GIS as an area for enrolment growth in alignment with UTSC's goals to develop quantitative expertise. The Department has already begun early stages of development in this direction by introducing new GIS-focused courses in 2021-22 which contribute to curriculum gaps identified by the reviewers, and provide more options for the existing Minor in GIS. The Department will continue to develop more courses in this area as complement allows, and plans to request a new faculty position in GIS within the next two years to build towards a proposal for a new Major in GIS. The Dean's Office is supportive of these plans.

The reviewers note faculty concerns regarding students' written and oral communication skills, their understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and their ability to conduct research, commenting on several possible contributing factors. The Department agrees with this assessments and notes that developing skills in these areas have been a long-standing challenge. Since introducing a writing-focused course in 2015 (GGRB03H3 – Writing Geography), the Department has observed positive changes in the desired areas and expanded enrolment in this course. To build on this interest the department will look at ways to position this course in the curriculum as a requirement and/or as an A-level course. Additionally, the Department's Liaison Librarian is working on an information literacy curriculum mapping project to identify where and how to develop research skills within Human Geography programs, to produce recommendations on how to better scaffold research skills. The Dean's Office is supportive of these plans and funding for student success has been made available to departments via the Pedagogies of Inclusive Excellence Fund as a pathway to advance work in this area. A campus-wide Writing Support Task Force is also contributing to resourcing plans for longer-term supports for student writing at UTSC.

The reviewers recommend that course-based research opportunities be expanded, and that opportunities for research participation within the Department be publicized more widely. The Department highlights a number of current courses in this area, including CITC01H3 – Urban Communities and Neighborhoods Case Study: East Scarborough; GGRD31H3 – GIS Research Project; GGRD01H3 – Supervised Research Project; GGRD08H3 – Research Seminar in Environmental Geography; CITD01H3 – City Issues and Strategies; and GGRD25H3 – Work and Employment in the GTA. In Fall 2022 the Department will also introduce a Human Geography Internship, where students will register in GGRD31H3 - Independent Research Project or GGRD01H3 - Supervised Research Project, to undertake research by participating in a faculty member's research project. The Dean's Office is working with the Department to consider how this work will contribute to the ongoing development of experiential learning opportunities within Human Geography.

The reviewers comment that “more effective communication between the Arts and Science Co-op office and prospective students about the deliverables is required”; they also recommended additional outreach efforts to expand internship and employment opportunities for students. The Department acknowledges room for improvement in this area and will engage with this issue at the planned curriculum retreat. The Arts and Science Co-op Office is also working with

departments to ensure a broad range of placement options for students in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, as well as supporting work-integrated learning opportunities for students who are interested in workplace opportunities but may not wish to pursue a co-op program.

The reviewers note concerns that faculty and graduate students often focus their research activities at the St. George campus, which can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates. The Department notes that the realities of the tri-campus Graduate Department of Geography mean that the majority of the Department's graduate students are based at the St. George campus and primarily come to UTSC to TA or consult with supervisors, and that faculty must also spend time on the St. George campus consulting with students or teaching courses. However, the Department is exploring ways to expand on opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in research at UTSC as noted above.

The reviewers note a growing focus on Community-Engaged Research (CER) in the Department, and recommended clarification of research criteria in relation to promotion and processes for faculty whose research is community-focused. The issue of Community-Engaged Research is actively being discussed across the University of Toronto, including at UTSC, and the Dean's Office will work with the Department to ensure that CER is appropriately valued and recognized in promotion and PTR assessments and factored into faculty workload. The Department plans to expand their understanding of CER, including approaches such as ethnography, and to find ways to include work that faculty engage in overseas.

The reviewers recommend “strengthen[ing] the Department's research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and taking advantage of funding opportunities and initiatives available through the Office of the Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation.” There are initial plans with the Department's Liaison Librarian to showcase faculty research through TSpace, the institutional repository, and faculty are already submitting their work here. The Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation (OVPRI) at UTSC has also invested resources aimed at better communicating the impact of faculty research across the campus. In addition to publishing and presenting in conferences, faculty in the Department continue to promote their work through various media outlets in Canada, and in other countries. Finally, the Department plans to increase existing efforts for faculty to take the opportunity to apply for funding offered by the OVPRI at UTSC.

The reviewers note a strong need for faculty complement planning, particularly in areas of expected growth, and encouraged a complement mix that could provide leadership in research, community engagement, and curriculum development, and build stronger linkages with campus-wide research initiatives. The Department notes that faculty complement needs careful consideration and planning, particularly as the Department's programs continue to grow. As noted above, there are plans to request new faculty positions over the next five years, to support growth in GIS and City Studies, and leadership in the Physical and Human Geography program. To support Departments in their complement planning, the UTSC Faculty Complement Committee (FCC) provide recommendations to the Dean regarding the distribution of teaching-stream and tenure-stream faculty positions sought by academic units in the yearly recruitment cycle, within the context of strategic multi-year departmental and campus faculty complements. The Department will be encouraged to bring their plans and priorities forward each year through

the FCC. The Dean's office will also work with the Department to ensure it has the resources it needs to support the further development of their programs.

The reviewers observe that growth in student and faculty numbers warrants attention to staff complement to ensure sufficient capacity to support student advising, curriculum mapping and other functions. The Chair has noted in their response that the Department has shared staff with two other departments (Global Development Studies and Political Science), which presents challenges as the department continues to grow. The Department is working in consultation with the Dean's Office to develop a staff complement plan over the next three to five years to ensure adequate staffing resources.

The implementation timeline for departmental action is given in the Dean's Administrative Response. The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair. A brief report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, midway between the March 2021 site visit and the year of the next site visit, will be prepared. The next external review of the Department has been scheduled for 2028-29.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

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

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is presented for information only.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

1. External Review Report (June 9, 2021)
2. Provostial Request for Administrative Response (November 29, 2021)
3. Chair's Administrative Response (February 18, 2022)
4. Dean's Administrative Response (March 11, 2022)
5. Provostial Final Assessment Report and Implemental Plan (May 12, 2022)

Cyclical Review: Report

Department of Human Geography
University of Toronto Scarborough

As Commissioning Officer, I confirm that:

- ✓ The review report addresses all elements of the terms of reference, which reflect the requirements outlined in the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP), including the program evaluation criteria
- ✓ I have brought to the attention of the reviewers any clear factual errors in the report and the reviewers have corrected these.

Commissioning Officer:

William Gough, Vice-Principal Academic
and Dean

Report Accepted as Final on June 9, 2021

Reviewers are asked to provide an Appraisal Report that:

- Identifies and commends the program's notably strong and creative attributes
- Describes the program's respective strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for enhancement
- Recommends specific steps to be taken to improve the program, distinguishing between those the program can itself take and those that require external action
- Recognizes the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation;
- Respects the confidentiality required for all aspects of the review process; and
- Addresses all elements of the terms of reference, which reflect the requirements outlined in the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP), including the program evaluation criteria

Division/unit under review:	University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC): Department of Human Geography
Program(s) under review:	City Studies, BA: Specialist; Major and Co-op; Minor Diaspora and Transnational Studies, BA: Major; Minor (both suspended 2014-15) Human Geography, BA: Specialist; Major; Minor Physical and Human Geography, BA: Major Geographic Information Science (GIS): Minor (Arts) Urban Public Policy and Governance: Minor (Arts)
Commissioning officer:	Professor William Gough, Vice-Principal Academic and Dean
Date of scheduled review:	Wednesday March 24, Thursday March 25, and Friday March 26, 2021 (held remotely)
Reviewers' names and affiliations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Sara McLafferty, (Head) Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign • Professor Daniel Shrubsole, Associate Dean Undergraduate Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Western University • Professor John Smithers, Department of Geography, University of Guelph

1. Review Summary

The overall assessment of our review team is that the Department of Human Geography is highly successful, with large and growing undergraduate programs and faculty research contributions that compare favourably with national and international comparators. The Department's educational programs are a key strength: Faculty and staff are committed to student learning and success and have developed courses and curricula that engage and challenge students while honing their analytical and critical skills. Courses and programs effectively address current geographical theories, perspectives, and methodologies. Proof of the programs' success is evident in rapid enrolment growth and high levels of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and course offerings. Students hold faculty and staff in high regard for quality teaching and responsiveness to student concerns.

The Department's research activities are very good relative to the seniority and career stages of tenure stream faculty. Areas of particular strength include political ecology and social-cultural geography with particular strengths in critical perspectives that incorporate issues of uneven development and ethnic and racial inequality. The Department is also emerging as a center of excellence for research in urban GIS emphasizing transportation and land use. These themes mesh well with broader campus and university-wide research initiatives, although opportunities exist to develop linkages more fully. Beyond research and teaching, we were impressed by the degree of shared purpose, respect and genuine support that was evident across meetings with all members of the departmental community. Collegiality is strong, and linkages with cognate units, including those at the St. George campus, are generally well-developed. Faculty, students, and staff greatly appreciate the Department's open and effective leadership.

Despite these strengths, rapid growth in enrolment, development of innovative programs, and new research opportunities present a series of challenges for the Department. Faculty resources are stretched thin, particularly in the area of City Studies and, increasingly, GIS. These pressures often compel the Department to be in reactive mode, and strategic planning is difficult. With this in mind, we have the following recommendations:

1. There is a strong need for additional faculty in City Studies, and the Department should consider making one of these a senior (tenured) hire to provide leadership and support for the program. New faculty hires are also critical for the GIS program, particularly with development of GIS as a major. Prioritizing faculty hires whose expertise intersects across the Department's programs and links with broader campus and university research initiatives is recommended.
2. Review and improve course sequencing and co- and pre-requisite requirements in order to avoid overlap in course content and ensure that students have the necessary background and knowledge for upper-division courses.
3. Develop a more systematic and extensive partnership with the library, which can and is willing to assist in developing students' research abilities.

4. Expand research opportunities for undergraduate students in course work and through virtual and in-person ‘store front’ research promotion events. Collaborating with the library may be beneficial in this process.
5. The campus should provide funding for a full-time undergraduate assistant/advisor to serve the Department’s large and increasing undergraduate student population. The number of students served is very large relative to our experiences, and the current arrangement of a shared advisor is unsustainable.
6. Develop GIS as an undergraduate Major program to address the strong need for training in analysis, application, and management of geospatial technologies and data, and to contribute to the university’s initiative on data science.
7. Clarify research criteria for Community Engaged Scholarship (CES) in relation to promotion and tenure. Given the growing presence of CES in the Department, it is important that the University work collaboratively with departments and faculty to establish meaningful criteria for CES research.
8. Strengthen the Department’s research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and taking advantage of funding opportunities and initiatives available through the Office of the Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation.
9. Regarding future space planning, we would encourage senior administrators to consider the teaching needs, including GIS lab space and tutorial rooms, as well as office space for staff and faculty, and social/gathering spaces for students.
10. Better promote career opportunities in Geography by utilizing materials from the Canadian Association of Geographers and American Association of Geographers websites.
11. Strengthen relationships with alumni by launching a LinkedIn site and through other outreach efforts in order to expand internship and employment opportunities for students, and potentially increase external funding.

2. Program Evaluation Criteria

i) Objectives

The programs’ and Departmental missions are well aligned with those of the university. Greater alignment will be achieved when the Department updates its academic plan (the previous academic plan was completed in 2015).

The course contents and program structure satisfy the requirements of a high-quality Human Geography Program. Professors are committed to providing students with learning opportunities related to the theory and practice of contemporary human geography. There is a desire to improve students' abilities to conduct research and write, and suggestions to address these aspirations are made in subsequent sections of the report. City Studies is a unique program offering within Canada that focuses on issues of local and regional significance including urban governance, policy, and transportation while providing students opportunities to learn from and engage with community partners in the Scarborough region. The Department has developed a suite of courses to serve students outside the Department.

ii) Admission requirements

Admissions requirements are reasonable, consistent with other Geography Programs we are familiar with, and serve the needs of the Department.

iii) Curriculum and program delivery

Across Canada, Geography Departments have striven to achieve offerings focused at a variety of scales (i.e., local to global, urban to rural, heartland to hinterland, developed and developing regions) and across a diversity of thematic areas (e.g., social, cultural, political, economic, indigenous, racial) not just as an issue of student choice and intellectual curiosity, but also as an ethical imperative given the diversity of Canada's population and its experiences. The Department achieves a very high level of diversity in both areas (e.g., queer geographies) although students indicated that still greater choices are desired. Future hires can provide for this and/or provide greater depth of coverage where student demand warrants. Many Canadian Geography Departments have also focused attention on the need for students to develop a reasonable competency in research skills (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, GIS, remote sensing) so that students can undertake research, obtain employment, and make the discipline more attractive from an employment perspective. The proposal to develop a new major in GIS would address this need and could complement and expand current substantive offerings and programs.

The Department has established learning outcomes for its specializations, majors and minors. It has very detailed learning expectations and outcomes for each course level. This is consistent with the Department's commitment to student learning and success. While the Department plays the lead role in the Major in Physical and Human Geography (BA), there is an absence of a faculty leader and the program appears dated and tired. However, it is also evident that there is a latent commitment to the major embedded in the belief that the existence of a program featuring a deliberate integration of physical and human geography phenomena holds an essential place in post secondary academic geography. Although this program has modest levels of enrollment (perhaps reflecting the lack of attention), we were informed that this program attracts a some of the Department's best students. We suggest that future faculty appointments in Human Geography could provide leadership and the development, with agreement of other relevant Departments, of a more contemporary focus on themes which integrate human and physical geographic processes such as climate change in the city or people and the built environment.

There appears to be an issue with the sequencing of courses. Some students complained of too much overlap between courses offered at 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-year levels as well as similar substantive courses offered at the same time. Some faculty commented that 4th-year students taking introductory courses were not challenged by the course material because it was too basic. These comments indicate a need for the Department to review its co- and prerequisite structure in order to provide greater connection between courses while retaining the ability to attract students from other cognate programs into courses at introductory and/or senior levels.

All programs are committed to students developing skills that will serve them well in their future careers and in better understanding the world around them – communication and listening, reading and notetaking, writing, qualitative and quantitative reasoning, interdisciplinary critical thinking, research, professional training, social activism, and digital competency. This mix of skills and opportunities, in addition to experiential learning (see below) reflect the cutting edge of geographic training in leading geography departments.

Experiential learning.

There is a formal co-op program within City Studies that provides paid employment opportunities for successful students. Some students voiced some dissatisfaction with the program because it did not guarantee them employment despite paying the coop fee and did not have an exclusive claim by UTSC for any position. This concern is common to many co-op programs modelled in a similar manner to UTSC. More effective communication between the Arts and Science Co-op Office and prospective students about the deliverables is required. Some courses provide applied assignments and some are partnered with community groups and local government agencies. These efforts are laudable.

Opportunities for student learning beyond the classroom.

Some faculty expressed a level of disappointment at student's ability to conduct research, particularly in C and D level courses. Part of this challenge might be addressed by tightening up the pre-requisite structure to C and D level Human Geography courses. It might also be addressed by developing a more systematic Department-wide partnership with the library, which is willing and able to assist in developing student's research abilities. In brief, specific courses within the Department would be identified to deliver a specific set of research skills in partnership with library staff. Implementing these two approaches should better enable Human Geography students to conduct research in 3rd and 4th-year.

Opportunities for student research experience.

Given the outward facing nature of the Department and its programs, as illustrated by highly engaged community-based research, there are likely more opportunities to better promote student research via a number 'store-front research' initiatives, which could also include student internships as well as course-based research. For instance, at the University of Guelph, students can complete the standard GEOG 4990 – Independent Research Project in Geography, which is a full-credit offering where students undertake a major paper on a research topic under the supervision of a faculty member. In a few instances a parallel offering has been put on where groups of students have worked with the city of Guelph on projects. It is also our understanding that the library is willing and able to promote student-based research via displays in the foyer to the wider UTSC campus, and there may be virtual outlets as well.

At Western and Guelph, the Provost and Deans have recently offered competitive undergraduate research assistantships, which might be a model to further promote undergraduate research opportunities at UTSC. At Guelph, Departments in some colleges receive a small number of these each year (3–5) to allow faculty to employ an enrolled undergrad in the service of ongoing research.

If the major in GIS is implemented, expansion of the GIS program should result in the creation of research projects if only because the nature of such training frequently involves completion of a capstone project.

Obviously, a challenge in building active research into the undergraduate course offerings is that some of the courses are already very large enrolment – making the provision of small group settings conducive to research activities (doing, presenting, etc.) difficult. We note that that the Department has made strong efforts to sustain the presence of tutorial and discussion-like components in several courses.

iv) Assessment of learning

The Department has a commitment to ensuring students graduate with strong written and oral communication skills; that they have an ability to do research with both primary and secondary sources; that they have a deep understanding of geographic concepts, methods and findings; and that they comprehend debates that have occurred in the past as well as in our contemporary world. Despite this commitment, most faculty expressed some level of challenge, and in some cases dissatisfaction with their ability to have students achieve these aspirations. Part of the issue may be related to relatively large tutorials and lab classes in which students have few opportunities to prepare for and engage in debate and discussion, and faculty having the time to provide thoughtful and constructive feedback to students. It was also suggested across conversations with multiple groups (faculty, administration, library etc.) that there were comparatively high numbers of students at UTSC, including in all geography programs, who were from newly landed immigrant families and might have a challenge in developing fluency in English, particularly writing clearly and concisely.

v) Quality indicators

In terms of curricula, course offerings and learning objectives, the Department's programs perform very well in relation to international comparators. Students learn about contemporary concepts, theories, debates, and methodologies, and they are challenged to analyze problems, write persuasively, and think critically. No information was provided on post-graduation indicators of program quality such as employment and educational outcomes; however, our assessment indicates that the programs are rigorous and comparable to those offered by leading geography programs in Canada and the U.S.

Student completion rates and time to completion.

We did not receive any information about time-to-completion rates, but we assume that these metrics are generally used to assess graduate programs. We are aware that some students will

seek employment during their undergraduate studies, which may preclude them from undertaking a full-course load, thus extending their completion time.

Quality of the educational experience, teaching and graduate supervision.

NA

Implications of any data (where available) concerning post-graduation employability.

NA

Availability of student funding.

NA – although data were shared indicating that 76% of domestic intake students in the year previous to the self study were OSAP eligible, indicating a comparatively high level of financial need within the student body.

Provision of student support through orientation, advising/mentoring, student services.

The students we met hold the faculty and staff in high regard for their strong dedication to and delivery of good quality courses. They also appreciate the Department's responsiveness to their concerns. We observe that the Department's student body (e.g., majors and specializations) is quite large relative to our experience and would be served by a full-time Undergraduate Assistant rather than sharing one as is the case with the Department of Human Geography.

Program outreach and promotion.

Outreach and promotion efforts can be increased to enhance visibility. First, the Department could better promote employment opportunities in Geography by utilizing materials on the Department webpages that are accessible from the Canadian Association of Geographers (JOBS AND CAREERS | cag-acg) and American Association of Geographers (About Geography Careers Overview | AAG) websites. Second, the Department could better promote the success of its own graduates by establishing a UTSC LinkedIn site for alumni and students. This strategy, which could be managed by a full-time Undergraduate Assistant (<10% of job) has been used successfully in other Geography departments we are aware of and is popular with alumni and students.

As noted in the self study, the Department is also in the process of enhancing its visibility in and around the new space that it now inhabits. We support this strategy as a useful step in building not just external visibility and brand, but also establishing that same level of 'recognizability' within the UTSC community.

vi) Quality enhancement

Current and Additional Faculty Complement:

Enrollment data provided to us indicate the majority of students are currently (and recently) enrolled in the City Studies Program (323), followed by Human Geography (105) and the Physical and Human Geography Program (22). A challenge facing the Department is to reduce the current imbalance, which might be achieved by:

- a) providing additional faculty hires in the area of cities and urban geography

- b) promoting faculty linkages and teaching across programs. At present, Department members seem to be primarily aligned with a specific program and somewhat secondarily with the Department. Given the Department's history of development, this is understandable. However, it is our belief that the curriculum can be enriched and modest efficiencies gained if courses taught by new faculty and some current courses are cross-listed between geography (especially urban geography/GIS) and city studies.
- c) developing GIS as a major. GIS is a popular minor and has the potential to be another area of enrollment growth for the Department. It also aligns with UTSC's desire to develop quantitative expertise. The development of a major or specialization cannot occur in the absence of additional faculty hires. We note that the core of the current GIS faculty is relatively young in their career stage or teaching-stream appointments. Given this observation and the desire for this to be an area of research strength for UTSC, consideration should be given to adding at least one tenure stream appointment in GIS.

Staff

Relative to our experiences, the program enrollments at UTSC are quite large and the number of dedicated staff relatively low, and in some cases stretched to absolute capacity, in their ability to discharge their duties. We suggest that one person be assigned as the "Undergraduate Advisor" for the Department, with key responsibilities to include at least the following: timetabling, student advising, better serving the needs of the Departmental Curriculum Committee, outreach as it relates to promoting students and alumni to participate in a yet to be developed UTSC Human Geography LinkedIn page, and promoting internship and employment prospects in human geography and city studies.

Space

We understand that UTSC is: (a) "tight" for space currently, and (b) actively expanding in real time. Members of the Department are nervous about what decisions might be made. We would encourage senior administrators to consider the teaching needs of the Department (e.g., GIS space and tutorial rooms) as well as office space for staff and faculty. In addition, social spaces for students and faculty are important to relieve stress, especially as the coming years of post-Covid will be challenging for faculty, staff and students.

3. Faculty/Research

i) Scope, quality, and relevance of faculty research activities

Overall, the research profile of faculty in the Department is very good. Faculty publish regularly, and their publications include books and peer-reviewed articles in high-quality, international journals. Individually, faculty in the Department of Human Geography are making strong research contributions in their respective fields. In addition to publications, their C.V.s show externally funded grants from major funding agencies including SSHRC and numerous honors and awards from disciplinary organizations such as the AAG, the European Schools of Planning, and the Society of South Africa Geographers. All of these highlight the quality and impact of faculty research activities.

Promotion and tenure outcomes also reveal the Department's attention to research quality and impact. Several faculty members have recently been promoted to Associate Professor, and their research profiles are comparable to those of faculty at similar career stages in research-intensive geography departments. Thus, faculty are advancing through the ranks based on a thorough review of their research accomplishments, including external reviews by leading scholars, and the Department's complement of tenured and promoted faculty is expanding via application of appropriate, research-focused criteria. Given the dearth of full professors in the department, it is crucial that Associate Professors be mentored and supported towards continued excellence in research and teaching so that they can quickly achieve promotion to Professor.

The Department has done well in establishing areas of research synergy and excellence. The faculty concentrations in political ecology and social geography are especially strong and well-regarded, and there are emerging clusters of excellence in areas such as GIS/transportation, urban governance, and feminist and indigenous geographies. These research areas are highly relevant to social and environmental issues and inequalities in the Toronto region and at the national, and global scales, and they mesh well with University areas of research priority such as Cities/Suburbs and Data Science. Also impressive are the faculty's strong ties and outreach with community organizations and non-profit and governmental agencies, that are on the front lines of coping with and addressing these issues.

The growing focus on community-engaged scholarship (CES) in the Department and University emphasizes the need for clear research criteria and expectations for faculty whose research is community focused. As a result, untenured faculty are sometimes put in the challenging position of being asked to propose their own criteria for CES and/or justify their research strategies. Given the growing presence of CES in the Department it would seem important that the University take a lead in establishing meaningful criteria for community-engaged scholarship and work collaboratively with departments and faculty in the process. The review team is aware of specific work that has occurred in some Canadian universities (e.g., MUN, SFU, UBC-Okanagan, Guelph) in recent years to embed specific language in tenure and performance assessment documents for purposes of clarifying and securing the place of CES in the assessment of research. We are also aware that these discussions would likely involve the Faculty Association and require a formal agreement among relevant constituents of the University.

Despite the quality and relevance of faculty research activities, there are important opportunities to strengthen the Department's research visibility, impact, and profile. We learned that few faculty in the Department take advantage of UTSC's internal research funding programs, which can support post-docs, research clusters, and international research endeavours. Also, with a few notable exceptions, faculty in the Department are not involved in UTSC's efforts to create interdisciplinary research institutes focused on environment, urban-suburban dynamics, and health – all areas in which the Department has some depth of faculty members. Participating in these programs could provide research funding and opportunities for cross disciplinary collaboration which would enhance the Department's research profile and impact.

ii) Appropriateness of research activity relative to national and international comparators.

Based on peer-reviewed publications, grants, and awards, levels of research activity by faculty in the Department are on par with those in similar, research-focused, geography departments in Canada and the U.S. As in most Departments, research activity varies among faculty members. For the most part, however, this variation reflects disparities between teaching stream and tenure stream faculty who have different research expectations, as well as split appointments in which discipline-specific expectations may come into play. While their research records are still developing, recent faculty hires show signs of considerable research promise, an indication of the Department's growing commitment to building research excellence.

iii) Appropriateness of research activities for students.

Research opportunities for undergraduate students were not explicitly addressed during our visit. However, the students we met with expressed a desire for research opportunities (one was involved in a project) and greatly appreciated hands-on assignments and projects offered in courses offered by the Department of Human Geography. There is clearly a need for the Department to publicize research opportunities for undergraduate students more widely and to encourage faculty to incorporate undergraduates in their research projects when feasible. Funding opportunities available through UTSC's Office of the Vice-Principal, Research & Innovation might be leveraged to support undergraduate students who work on faculty research projects.

Although graduate programs are outside the purview of our report, we note that many faculty in the Department work closely with graduate students, incorporating students in faculty-driven research projects and mentoring graduate student work. Concerns were raised that the tri-campus structure of graduate programs, with programs centred at the downtown campus, results in faculty and graduate students focusing their research activities downtown, thus diminishing the research environment at the Scarborough campus. This is a structural issue that has no easy solutions, but it can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates, who are not immersed in a research-intensive setting. At the same time, courses offered in the Department have a strong research focus: human geography faculty effectively incorporate research methodologies, theories, debates, and research publications in their courses.

iv) Faculty complement plan.

Additional faculty are needed to meet high and increasing student demand for the Department's courses and programs. Needs are especially acute in City Studies, where the rapid increase in student demand has far out-stripped faculty resources, resulting in a heavy reliance on sessional and temporary faculty. We strongly endorse the Department's proposed plan to hire at least two additional tenure-stream faculty in City Studies and urge the Department to consider making one of these hires at the senior (Associate or Full) level. A tenured hire could provide leadership in research, community engagement, and curriculum development for the City Studies group and build stronger linkages with campus-wide research initiatives. In terms of expertise, areas mentioned include urban planning, real estate, land markets, and urban economic geography. These make sense given teaching needs in the City Studies program and a recent faculty

retirement. The Department also might want to consider hires whose research focuses on the suburban context, or on city-suburb relations, as these would mesh well with the Office of the Vice-Principal, Research & Innovation's proposed interdisciplinary initiative around cities and suburbs.

The shortage of faculty is also critical in GIS, and the Department is right to prioritize GIS for future tenure-track hiring. GIS is a rapidly expanding field that meshes well with the University's broader data science initiative and could help fill the huge societal demand for students who are trained to manage, analyze, visualize, and critically understand geospatial big data. Currently, the GIS program relies heavily on teaching and sessional faculty, with only two tenure stream faculty contributing to GIS course instruction. Adding a GIS major to the rapidly growing GIS minor will require additional tenure stream faculty to offer the advanced GIS courses needed for a major program, while continuing to staff introductory GIS classes. In prioritizing areas for GIS hiring, we note that the existing curriculum lacks courses in key topics including geovisualization, spatial databases, and space-time analysis, and in application areas, such as health and environmental justice. Any of these would be promising areas for faculty hiring and would complement existing departmental research strengths while creating potential synergies with campus- and university-wide research initiatives.

v) Use of existing human resources.

Our information on this topic is somewhat limited, but the Department appears to make appropriate and effective use of its faculty resources. Teaching loads are well-defined and consistent among faculty: for example, all tenure stream faculty are given the opportunity to teach one graduate course per year. Thus, the Department does a good job in allocating its limited faculty resources equitably and efficiently, and it fills gaps by hiring temporary and sessional faculty who currently teach 40 percent of Departmental courses. However, the high reliance on temporary and part-time faculty is not sustainable in the long run: Although many sessional instructors are excellent teachers, their precarity raises concerns about quality, content, and continuity. The Department clearly needs additional permanent faculty.

4. Relationships

i) Strength of the morale of faculty, students and staff.

The review team was impressed by the degree of shared purpose, reciprocal respect and genuine support that was evident across all our meetings with members of the Departmental community. Faculty and Staff spoke of professionalism across the board and noted the material support that is provided on an ongoing basis, and especially in light of the challenges of the past year during the Covid-19 pandemic. The students with whom we met were unequivocal in their endorsement of both faculty and staff, and pointed to numerous instances where they had been supported by faculty and staff members collectively and individually. Notably the students use language, such as 'caring' and 'going the extra mile', in describing their interactions. This is indeed impressive and a credit to the culture that has developed in the unit.

Briefly with respect to the three groups in turn:

Faculty:

Within the faculty cohort, there is a commitment to the Department as a unified collective, but also a situation of close association with their area of principal teaching activity. In multiple cases, it was shared (in non-specific terms) that, owing to past circumstances and in response to the last external review, collective investment had been made to update and solidify internal Departmental governance practices, reorient curriculum and rejuvenate the faculty roster via a series of faculty appointments. The sense was given that with this ‘ship mending’ now largely accomplished, time is at hand to look to the future in both tactical (near term) and strategic ways (e.g., manageable growth) that stabilize and support the best of what is currently in place and build on opportunities in ways that are both achievable and sustainable. As noted elsewhere, a significant number of these conversations centred on the rapid recent growth and future potential of City Studies and also the prospect of an expanded effort around GIS. While not arising as any sort of existential threat to the strength of collegial relationships, the desire for investment in the City Studies Program to better balance the staffing against other facets of the program was discernable to the review team in our interactions.

It was noted that there is a shared view concerning the importance of mentorship and the belief that such practices, now formalized in the Department, are an important investment in not just the success of individuals, but in fostering a full roster of successful and contributing colleagues – a team-like perspective. Early career faculty expressed appreciation and enthusiasm for the value of mentoring and indicated that they felt well supported both institutionally and collegially, however, it was noted that the foundations for mentoring teaching stream faculty needed strengthening.

Our conversations indicate that faculty would value seeing and working with each other more frequently in situ at UTSC. This was especially noted by early career faculty. Reviewers came to understand that a by-product of the ‘geography’ of the graduate program was that graduate students are predominantly located at the St. George campus – leading to a situation where advisors are frequently there as part of their advising and shared research endeavours. This sometimes results in a periodic paucity of faculty colleagues on site at any given time at UTSC. This seems to us to be a structural challenge given the organization of the graduate program, but it is a situation that does little to enhance the esprit de corps of the unit.

Staff:

The review team was struck by the cohesion that was evident amongst staff members with whom we spoke – a strong sense of a staff ‘team’. While as individuals, staff members clearly have distinct and differentiated roles, we were struck by the knowledge staff possess about each others’ roles and the degree of personal and professional support that they provide to one another. Our conversations comport with observations made in the self study around workload pressures for staff generally, and some individuals in particular. Notwithstanding what appear to be significant cumulative pressures (in some instances due to sheer volume), it is clear the Department is supported by a group of staff professionals who are dedicated to their work and

supportive of each other. It is to be hoped that escalating overload leading to fatigue does not erode individual and collective morale.

Separate conversations with faculty and staff reveal that these two key groups hold very positive views of each other – further extending the notion of a team-like culture in the workplace. Staff report highly positive interactions with faculty colleagues and noted that faculty (and students where applicable) are understanding of the pressures facing staff, and collegial and cooperative in playing their own respective roles in administrative matters. Similarly, several faculty made particular note of the quality of the support they receive from staff. Given that this degree of mutual respect is not universal in academic settings we feel it warrants noting, and attribute it to a prevailing culture of mutual respect and professionalism within the unit.

Students:

Student leaders were highly complementary about their interactions with both faculty and staff – the former being more frequent. We noted the use of the word ‘kind’ in more than one instance pertaining to faculty’s interaction with student. One student observed that the Department of Human Geography had offered the “best student experience” of his academic journey at UTSC. Some of this was attributed to class size management that afforded the opportunity for students to make friends and develop continuing relationships with classmates as opposed to the challenges of large room lecture classes in other programs at the senior level.

Students, in a few different ways, did express an appetite to have a more formal (or regularized) voice in Departmental governance and program planning. There was no suggestion of disregard for student input, but rather that a more formal / deliberate mechanism might allow for stronger involvement.

ii) Scope and nature of relationships with cognate Faculties, academic departments and units.

The Department exhibits strong linkages to cognate Faculties, Departments and other units – partly by virtue of the comparatively high number of cross appointments within the faculty roster itself. Most visible amongst these is the role of faculty in the Centre for Critical Development Studies and their IDS program, and the widespread involvement of faculty in the University of Toronto Tri-campus Geography and Planning program. While there are internal linkages, by virtue of cross appointment status, with the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences (DPES), both the self study and subsequent conversations indicate that this can be strengthened when opportunity arises for focused consideration of the Physical and Human Geography major. Conversations during the site visit revealed a latent desire within the unit to bolster this major and to further develop links to DPES in mutually beneficial ways. Beyond these core linkages the self study identifies a broad array of campus and university-based continuing interactions which include both research and teaching/learning focused endeavours (e.g., Centre for Community Partnerships, OISE’s Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, the Transportation Research Institute). Finally, the Department enjoys the support of a strong library system and designated library staff who have played, and presumably will continue to play, a supporting role in the delivery of the Department’s teaching program across all majors. The review team was highly impressed with the array of activities in which the library was engaged

in the service of the teaching program. It was particularly evident that early career faculty are in the process of developing strong relationships with library colleagues in support of both teaching and research.

iii) Extent to which the unit has developed or sustained fruitful partnerships with other universities and organizations in order to foster research, creative professional activities and to deliver teaching programs.

There is strong evidence of formal and informal collaborations involving departmental faculty and other universities and organizations. In some cases, these are achieved via continuing adjunct appointments or other similar forms of sustained affiliation (e.g., Kepe, Sorensen, Hunter, Buckley), and in a number of other instances they relate to continuing research affiliations involving both international and domestic partners from academic, governmental and community-based partners. Notable amongst those identified in the self study is the number of continuing collaborative research projects that have created de facto networks of collaborators and the prospect of future research beyond presently funded projects.

iv) Scope and nature of the unit's relationship with external government, academic and professional organizations.

Notable in the self study and in the review teams' interaction with Department members is the strength (both in number and substance) of the unit's connection to the local community and the City of Toronto. Numerous faculty members have conducted mandated research on behalf of (and sometime with) the local Scarborough community and the wider City of Toronto and authored reports that have influenced policy making at the level of both City and Provincial government. In several other instances, the focus has been on identified communities of interest – including equity seeking groups in society— in the interest of improving policy making and practice. Examples of these are itemized in appendix M of the self study. Similarly, the profile of faculty roles in academic or professional scholarly endeavours is highly impressive. These range from editorship roles on prestigious international and domestic journals, to leadership positions on numerous professional scholarly associations and national research panels. Finally, it is noteworthy that the pattern of engagement is broad-based across the faculty cohort and features contributions from both tenure track and teaching stream colleagues and those at differing career points.

v) Social impact of the unit in terms of outreach and impact locally and nationally.

The degree of outreach, engagement and impact at the local level was highly discernable to the review team – and in numerous cases, eminently scalable. As noted in previous reports, the City Studies program in particular features elements that connect teaching and learning with community-based research and known research needs in the local community setting. The opportunity for co-op study extends these opportunities further. In addition, since the previous external review of the Human Geography programs (in 2013-14), the department has brought on expertise enabling it to engage in a more fulsome manner in research and outreach in the service of a variety of racialized or otherwise “othered” groups in society – including indigenous communities as a part of the university's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Report. Lastly, we note the seemingly strong presence of ‘Community-Based Research’ as an epistemological and methodological component of the Department’s research landscape. Here we note research that is being conducted by multiple faculty members working toward knowledge co-production with community and societal actor groups in both the GTA and in other, sometimes remote, communities.

5. Organizational and Financial Structure

- i) The appropriateness and effectiveness of the unit’s organizational and financial structure, and its use of existing human, physical and financial resources in delivering its program(s).

The Department has taken necessary and appropriate steps to adopt a model of distributed leadership and management/coordination. Owing to the centralization of graduate programs at the St. George campus, the unit has not created a position for graduate program co-ordinator, but has elected instead to organize leadership and coordination roles relative to some clear lines of delineation in the undergraduate teaching program. This strategy allows for specific individuals to provide concerted focus on each of major teaching programs in the unit – including the distinctive demands of co-op programs. Though not furnished with a listing of Departmental committees per se, the expectation of the review team is that both Associate Chairs and the GIS Coordinator benefit from the input and advice of either formalized or ad hoc curriculum committees. In a broader sense, it is clear to the review team that the work undertaken in recent years to amend and strengthen departmental governance processes and practices has been well received (such work is always a work in progress of course) and that the Department models to a very noticeable degree, the principles of inclusion, equity and transparency in Departmental decision making.

In relation to staffing, the Department benefits from a highly skilled support staff that covers needs relating to management, finance and support for teaching and learning. Though somewhat distinctive in structure, the practice of ‘staff sharing’ between units has origins in an earlier configuration of cognate units and is reported to have been a model that has been very effective over time. However, absolute growth in the Department (faculty and students) in recent years, together with upward trending performance in research and grant procurement has resulted in a situation where multiple staff members are approaching, or perhaps have already passed, workload capacity. The review team was advised that this is recognized within the Department and by senior leadership – with the prospect of some realignment of duties for certain individuals pending. Consultations with staff comport fully with the observations concerning demands on staff made in the self study. We take this opportunity to call particular attention to the existing and potentially expanding workload facing the Department’s Program Coordinator given the growing complexity of curriculum mapping processes, the comparatively high numbers of both programs and students on the current roster, and the prospect that the Department might well experience growth—perhaps quite significant growth—in its most popular programs in the near future.

ii) The appropriateness with which resource allocation, including space and infrastructure support, has been managed.

Since the previous external review, much has been accomplished to better meet the space and infrastructure needs of the Department. The move to Highland Hall has alleviated a severe shortage of faculty office space and, importantly, consolidated Departmental space, such that faculty, and others involved in the teaching program (sessional instructors, TAs etc.), are in proximity to one another. Similarly, and importantly, space has also been dedicated to improving student experience in both formal settings and in less formalized study and group work practices. The self study identifies certain spaces as serving multiple purposes to these ends – suggesting a strategy designed to optimize the use of space. This said, while the Department’s space and infrastructure needs are presently well served, the impression is that space is also fully utilized such that future growth in either the Department itself or neighbouring units may create new challenges – either in the form of office and research space for faculty (including sessional faculty who make up a significant portion of the teaching roster), students as numbers grow, or staff.

iii) Opportunities for new revenue generation

Opportunities for new revenue generation did not feature significantly in either the self study or consultations with the review team. Indeed, fair to say the department is challenged on multiple fronts at present to deliver its programs as currently existing. Paradoxically, however, the clearest path to new revenue generation is through growth in the teaching program in the form of increased numbers of ‘new’ students in the Department’s majors (i.e., new enrolments at UTSC). The City Studies program seems poised to do just that, perhaps accompanied by growth in GIS education. This will, of course, necessitate in depth conversation and mindful consideration at both the Department level and within senior leadership given current pressures. In a more modest vein, given the current interest in expanding the place of GIS teaching and research in the department (and hence the UTSC campus), the wide ranging applicability of GIS-based analyses across disciplines and current ‘credentialization’ wave in both places of education and professional practice, the Department might at some stage wish to consider developing a ‘continuing education’ certificate in GIS – initially on a cost recovery basis, but eventually with the prospect of new revenue.

6. Long-Range Planning Challenges

This is a collegial and well-managed Department whose extensive educational and research activities are closely aligned with campus- and university-wide goals and initiatives. With its robust undergraduate enrollments, urban focused programs, and commitment to serving a diverse student population, the Department has promising future opportunities. However, rapid enrolment growth has made it difficult for the Department to engage in strategic long-range planning as short-term needs have taken precedence. Hiring new faculty to fill critical needs, especially in City Studies and GIS, will help in alleviating teaching-related challenges and thus increase opportunities for long-range planning.

Given instructional needs and research opportunities, the Department's plan to add five new faculty primarily focused in City Studies and GIS is highly appropriate. To achieve maximum impact, these appointments should be made strategically to foster synergies among various programs, for example, in areas such as urban-focused, applied GIS and spatial analysis, or in fields like participatory GIS that bridge with human geography. Specializations that mesh well with campus research priorities, such as GIS applications in health, are also desirable. We also encourage the department to consider searching for a tenured faculty member in City Studies to contribute additional leadership and vision to that program.

Departmental resources for student and faculty support appear to be limited (although little information was provided), and levels of financial need among students are high. In this context it is important that the Department seek out new sources of funding to support student research experiences, study abroad and internship opportunities, etc. Strengthening connections with alumni by creating an alumni organization and by showcasing research and teaching activities through social media and other channels can help to link current students with career opportunities and encourage alumni to contribute their time, knowledge, and (if possible) monetary resources to the Department.

7. International Comparators

The Department's large City Studies program and its sole focus on human geography distinguish it from many geography departments in Canada and beyond. In addition, the tri-campus structure adds a layer of complexity for evaluating the Department's research contributions. However, several leading geography Departments share at least some of these characteristics and thus serve as useful international comparators. Specifically, Departments at Arizona State and Michigan State combine urban studies and geography, and the University of Washington's Department has a sole focus on human geography. These programs are among the best in the U.S. Geography Departments at Hunter College-CUNY, Temple University, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the University of Maryland-Baltimore are situated in large, urban, areas and are public, research universities that have missions comparable to UTSC's and serve student populations from similarly diverse ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds.

The Department compares very favourably with these highly regarded geography programs in North America. With far more undergraduate student majors and minors than comparative departments in the U.S., the Department stands out for its contributions to undergraduate education. Its programs are in high demand by students; the programs address critical social and environmental issues in cities and nationally and internationally; they embrace innovative experiential and community-engaged approaches; and according to our observations, student satisfaction is very high. These accomplishments are even more impressive in light of the aforementioned shortages in full-time faculty and staff. Opportunities exist to expand the Department of Human Geography's educational contributions by adding the GIS major and by enhancing co-op and other experiential learning opportunities, but in order to be sustainable, these new initiatives will require additional investments in faculty and staff.

Regarding research, the Department compares favourably with comparators in terms of standard metrics of academic accomplishment including books, peer-reviewed publications, and grant activity. However, as noted in earlier sections of this report, opportunities exist to enhance the Department's research reputation and impact and to contribute more fully to ongoing research initiatives at UTSC, especially those focused in the Scarborough region. To increase research visibility, efforts such as publicizing research accomplishments through the web site and social media, and increasing student participation in research, will also be important. Through careful hiring of tenure stream faculty, the Department has taken valuable steps to create identifiable clusters of research excellence, and it is important that these efforts continue while balancing research considerations with essential teaching needs. Areas of expertise that bridge the department's programs and that fit well with university- and campus-wide research themes such as city/suburbs, health, and data science can be prioritized in future tenure-stream faculty hiring to strengthen research contributions and impacts.



November 29, 2021

Professor William Gough
Vice Principal Academic and Dean
University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Professor Gough:

Thank you for forwarding the report of the March 2021 external review of the Department of Human Geography and its programs. The following programs were reviewed: City Studies, B.A.: Specialist, Major and Major Co-op, Minor; Human Geography, B.A.: Specialist, Major, Minor; Physical and Human Geography, B.A.: Major; Geographic Information Science: Minor (Arts); Urban Public Policy and Governance: Minor (Arts).

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 praised the department as highly successful, with large and rapidly growing undergraduate programs that effectively address current geographical theories, perspectives, and methodologies; the high student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and course offerings; the research strengths in political ecology and social-cultural geography, particularly in issues of uneven development and ethnic and racial inequality. They also highlighted the department’s emergence as a centre of excellence for research in urban GIS emphasizing transportation and land use; its commitment to “Community-Based Research”; and its strong collegiality and well-developed linkages with cognate units, including those on the St. George campus.

I am writing at this time:

1. to request your administrative response to this report, which should include a plan for implementing the recommendations;
2. to request your feedback on the review summary component of the draft *Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan*; and
3. to outline the next steps in the process.

1. Request for Administrative Response and Implementation Plan:

In your **Administrative Response**, please address the following areas raised by the reviewers and their impact on academic programs, *along with any additional areas you would like to prioritize*.

For each area you address, please provide an **Implementation Plan** that identifies actions to be accomplished in the immediate (six months), medium (one to two years) and longer (three to five years) terms, and who (Department, Dean) will take the lead in each area. If appropriate, please identify any necessary changes in organization, policy or governance; and any resources, financial and otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.

- The reviewers recommended a review of course sequencing and co/prerequisites, to avoid overlap in course content and to ensure that students have the necessary background for upper-level courses.
- The reviewers recommended updating the Major in Physical and Human Geography curriculum to develop a more contemporary focus on themes which integrate human and physical geographic processes.
- The reviewers encouraged the Department to develop a Major in Geographic Information Science, noting GIS as an area for enrolment growth in alignment with UTSC's goals to develop quantitative expertise.
- The reviewers noted faculty concerns regarding students' written and oral communication skills, their understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and their ability to conduct research, commenting on several possible contributing factors.
- The reviewers recommended that course-based research opportunities be expanded, and that opportunities for research participation within the Department be publicized more widely.
- Noting dissatisfaction from some students that participation in the co-op program did not guarantee employment, the reviewers commented that "more effective communication between the Arts and Science Co-op office and prospective students about the deliverables is required"; they also recommended additional outreach efforts to expand internship and employment opportunities for students.
- The reviewers noted concerns that faculty and graduate students often focus their research activities at the St. George campus, which can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates.
- The reviewers noted a growing focus on Community-Engaged Research (CER) in the Department, and recommended clarification of research criteria in relation to promotion and tenure processes for faculty whose research is community-focused. (*The VPAP Office understands that an institutional conversation about CER is underway and expects that UTSC will be key institutional partners in the development of resources to support CER.*)
- The reviewers made a recommendation to "strengthen the Department's research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and

taking advantage of funding opportunities and initiatives available through the Office of the Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation.”

- The reviewers noted a strong need for faculty complement planning, particularly in areas of expected growth, and encouraged a complement mix that could provide leadership in research, community engagement, and curriculum development, and build stronger linkages with campus-wide research initiatives.
- The reviewers observed that growth in student and faculty numbers warrants attention to staff complement to ensure sufficient capacity to support student advising, curriculum mapping and other functions.

Please prepare this response in consultation with the unit under review. As part of this consultation, please request a brief administrative response from the unit that focuses on items within their control. Please reflect this consultation and respond to the key elements of the unit’s response in your response.

Finally, please confirm the **date of the next review** and your plans for **monitoring the implementation of recommendations** until then. I will ask you to provide a brief report to me midway between the 2020-21 review and the year of the next site visit.

2. Draft of Final Assessment Report (including Review Summary)

In December 2021, my office will provide a draft version of the *Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan* (FAR/IP), which will include a summary of the review of the Department of Human Geography. At that time we will request your feedback regarding tone or accuracy of the summary component, and your response to any information that is requested in the comments. This document becomes part of the governance record.

3. 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), the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs prepares a report on all program and unit reviews and submits these periodically to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P).

The review of the Department of Human Geography will be considered by AP&P at its meeting on **April 12, 2022. Please plan to attend this meeting, and ensure that the unit leadership also attends.** Your presence is important and will allow you to respond to any questions the committee may have regarding the report, and your administrative response and implementation plan. An overview of what happens at AP&P is [available on our website](#).

I would appreciate receiving your completed administrative response and plan for implementing recommendations, as well as a copy of the unit’s response, and any comments on the draft FAR/IP by **Friday, March 11, 2022**. This will allow my office sufficient time to prepare materials for the AP&P meeting.

The review summary and the Dean's administrative response are the two key components of the FAR/IP, which will be finalized after the AP&P meeting and distributed to you, the unit leads, the Governing Council secretariat, and the Quality Council, and posted on our [website](#), as required by the UTQAP.

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

Sincerely,



Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

cc.

Annette Knott, Academic Programs Officer, University of Toronto Scarborough
Daniella Mallinck, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance
David Lock, Coordinator, Academic Planning and Reviews
Emma del Junco, Assistant Coordinator, Academic Planning and Reviews



February 18, 2022

Dr. William A. Gough
Vice-Principal Academic and Dean
University of Toronto Scarborough

Chair's Administrative Response: External Review of the Department of Human Geography, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Bill,

I am pleased to provide the administrative response to the external review of the Department of Human Geography. I want to thank the review team – Professor Sara McLafferty, (Head) Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Professor Daniel Shrubsole, Associate Dean Undergraduate Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Western University; and Professor John Smithers, Department of Geography, University of Guelph – for their consultation with us during the remote site-visit, held from March 24-26 2021, and for their Report, which was finalized on June 9, 2021, and shared with our faculty, staff and students.

We deeply appreciate the reviewers overall positive assessment of Human Geography and note their description of the department as “highly successful, with large and growing undergraduate programs and faculty research contributions that compare favourably with national and international comparators.” They note the strength of the department’s academic programs, the engaging and challenging curriculum, the commitment of faculty and staff to student learning and success, and the high level of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and course offerings. Further, they comment on the department as an emerging centre of excellence for research in urban GIS. The reviewers also give attention to the challenges within the department and make several recommendations. Where changes are within departmental control, a response is given below.

- *The reviewers recommended a review of course sequencing and co/prerequisites, to avoid overlap in course content and to ensure that students have the necessary background for upper-level courses.*

We thank the reviewers for their recommendation. The department has been engaging in an ongoing review of our course co-/pre-requisites over the past several years. Most recently, our goal has been to replace specific course co-/pre-requisites with a minimum number of completed credits, with the goal of making upper-level courses more accessible to a greater number of students. While this strategy has been successful, an unintended consequence has been that some students, particularly those from outside of the department, have been insufficiently prepared for some courses. To resolve this issue, the department is planning a

two-day, in-person retreat to take place within the next year, at which course co-/pre-requisites will be reviewed, and any courses that require firm co-/pre-requisites for students to successfully achieve the learning outcomes will be identified. Regarding course sequencing and avoiding potential overlap in course content: in Fall 2021 the department's Curriculum Committee began a curriculum review process for all of our courses. In January 2022, reports evaluating the course content and sequencing were received from the City Studies and GIS programs, and from the Urban Geography, Socio-cultural Geography, and Environmental Geography clusters of the Human Geography program. These reports will feed into discussions that will take place during our two-day retreat, where content and sequencing will be considered both within and across clusters. An additional short-term action is being led by the Department of Human Geography's Liaison Librarian, who will be working with the Curriculum Committee to encourage program coordinators to leverage their expertise and offer of assistance with the development of course guides that focus on particular skills, consistent with identified learning outcomes.

- *The reviewers recommended updating the Major in Physical and Human Geography curriculum to develop a more contemporary focus on themes which integrate human and physical geographic processes.*

We thank the reviewers for this recommendation. Concurrently with the development of our self-study in support of this review process, and in line with the comments in the review Report, the department has initiated discussion regarding the development of new courses focused on urban climate change as a way to better integrate the disciplinary content of the Major in Physical and Human Geography. The reviewers also suggest development of courses focused on people and built environments; these courses already exist in the department (for example: CITB08H3 – The Economy of Cities; CITC03H3 – Real Estate and the City; CITC18H3 – Urban Transportation Policy Analysis; and CITD12H3 – Planning and Building Public Spaces in Toronto), but they have not been included as required or elective courses in the Major. At the two-day retreat that will take place within the next year, the department will explore how to integrate these courses into the Major. Finally, the reviewers recommend that a future faculty hire is needed in the Physical and Human Geography program, to provide leadership, and instill a clearer sense of direction and integration. We agree with this recommendation and will be bringing a request forward for consideration to the UTSC Faculty Complement Committee planning process. A key goal for the department is to ensure this new faculty member will be able to act as a liaison between the Department of Human Geography and the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences, which also supports the delivery of this Major. Bearing this goal in mind, we may seek a possible cross-appointment with the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences.

- *The reviewers encouraged the Department to develop a Major in Geographic Information Science, noting GIS as an area for enrolment growth in alignment with UTSC's goals to develop quantitative expertise.*

We thank the reviewers for their recommendation. The department introduced two new GIS-focused courses this year, GGRC15H3 (Spatial Databases and Applications), and an upper-year special topics course on Cartographic Design. Both courses are in areas identified by the reviewers as gaps in our GIS curriculum, and they will expand on the elective offerings for the existing Minor program in GIS, while at the same time building on the department's GIS course portfolio as we move towards establishing a Major program. The department will continue to expand research and curriculum in geographic information science, including developing more new courses, as faculty complement allows. In preparation for the development of a Major in GIS, the department is conducting a curriculum survey of established GIS programs at North American universities. This gap analysis will highlight the additional knowledge, skills and applications that should be included in a major program. Finally, plans are in place for hiring strategically to build faculty strength that bridges our GIS expertise with other department interests, such as urban geography and city studies. Towards this end the Department will be submitting a request for a new GIS faculty position within the next two years. We anticipate being in a position to begin the development of a proposal for a new GIS Major within the next two to three years, assuming the required additions to our faculty complement.

- *The reviewers noted faculty concerns regarding students' written and oral communication skills, their understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and their ability to conduct research, commenting on several possible contributing factors.*

We appreciate the reviewers highlighting this issue, which has been a long-standing challenge in the department. We agree that, in many of our courses, students have struggled with their written, oral and research skills. In 2015-16, the department introduced a new writing course, GGRB03H3 (Writing Geography) to address this gap in student learning; it is worth noting that enrolments for this course doubled for the first time in Winter 2022, from about 20 to over 40 students. While the course has resulted in a positive change in the desired areas, we are interested in expanding on its beneficial impacts, and are planning to either transition the course from an elective to a requirement, and/or offer it earlier – as an A-level (first year) course.

In addition, working with the Curriculum Committee and department faculty, our Liaison Librarian is currently actively engaged in an information literacy (IL) curriculum mapping project. The IL curriculum map will strategically identify where and how to develop research skills within Human Geography programs. The planned outcome of this assessment will be recommendations to better scaffold research skills for students as well as required supports. Attention to racialized perspectives, Indigenous ways of knowing and Black knowledges will be an important part of the pedagogical approach and methodology for this process, to align with the goals of the campus-wide curriculum review. We envisage this as a short to medium term goal, that can be completed within one year.

- *The reviewers recommended that course-based research opportunities be expanded, and that opportunities for research participation within the Department be publicized more widely.*

We thank the reviewers for their recommendation. It is important to note that there are already a number of course-based opportunities to engage in research in the department, for example: CITC01H3 – Urban Communities and Neighborhoods Case Study: East Scarborough; GGRD31H3 – GIS Research Project; GGRD01H3 – Supervised Research Project, GGRD08H3 – Research Seminar in Environmental Geography, and CITD01H3 – City Issues and Strategies. Nevertheless, following a curriculum mapping exercise conducted in 2020, and in collaboration with the UTSC Library, we have developed a new seminar course, GGRD25H3 (Work and Employment in the GTA), that offers students the chance to undertake geographically-informed labour market research on employment trends in the Toronto Region. The course introduces students to working with Statistics Canada data, including national occupational categories (NOCs) and national industry categories (NAICS) within the metropolitan census area, and strategies for synthesis and analysis of union research, scholarly work, third sector reports, consultancy research and municipal employment surveys. This course also offers students a resume building workshop to learn how to include skills from undergraduate research on their CV. In the short to medium term, with the help of our Liaison Librarian, the department plans to model additional C- and D-level courses after this example.

Secondly, drawing on a similar approach in the Department of Global Development Studies, in Fall 2022 the department plans to introduce a Human Geography Research Internship. Through an application and selection process, promising students will register for either GGRD31H3 (Independent Research Project) or GGRD01H3 (Supervised Research Project) and undertake a research internship with a faculty member. Students will participate in the faculty member's research project, with evaluation criteria based on the quality of their contribution (e.g., literature/archive search, annotated bibliographies, assisting with surveys or mapping, etc.), as well as writing a short reflection paper on the experience. By agreement between the student and the faculty member, the quality of the student's research contribution will determine whether they can be considered a co-author on an article. To start with, this opportunity will be available to third and fourth-year students. There is no financial compensation for the internship and students will invest no more time than needed for a regular course.

- *Noting dissatisfaction from some students that participation in the co-op program did not guarantee employment, the reviewers commented that "more effective communication between the Arts and Science Co-op office and prospective students about the deliverables is required;" they also recommended additional outreach efforts to expand internship and employment opportunities for students.*

We thank the reviewers for their observation and note that the department works closely with the Arts and Science Co-op Office to identify and advocate for the best Co-op opportunities for our students. However, our ability to identify placements is limited, and we are reliant on the Co-op Office for support. It is also important to note that students are responsible for putting their best effort into applying for Co-op placements, as these placements are not guaranteed. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement, and the department will tackle this issue at the two-day retreat that will take place within the next year. We will also give more attention to managing students' expectations regarding Co-op. Finally, we see great potential in an increased focus on developing other kinds of experiential learning opportunities as a way of building on and expanding our existing co-op offerings.

- *The reviewers noted concerns that faculty and graduate students often focus their research activities at the St. George campus, which can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates.*

We thank the reviewers for their concern. Most of the department's graduate students are based on the St. George campus within the tri-campus Graduate Department of Geography and primarily come to UTSC to TA or consult with their supervisors. Given this reality our undergraduate students have limited opportunities to be exposed to graduate students' research. Faculty members in the Department of Human Geography at UTSC also hold a graduate appointment in a tri-campus Graduate department(s) and must spend some of their time on the St. George campus consulting with their graduate students, as well as teaching graduate courses. These realities notwithstanding, as discussed above, the department is exploring ways to expand on opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in research at UTSC, including by working with our Liaison Librarian to increase student involvement in research, both within courses and as part of the new internship courses.

- *The reviewers noted a growing focus on Community-Engaged Research (CER) in the Department, and recommended clarification of research criteria in relation to promotion and processes for faculty whose research is community-focused.*

We thank the reviewers for this recommendation. We note that the issue of Community Engaged Research is actively being discussed in various spaces across the tri-campus University of Toronto, including at UTSC. We are eager to receive further guidance and criteria from the Dean's and Provost's Offices to ensure that CER is appropriately valued and recognized in promotion and PTR assessments. The department plans to use departmental meetings and our two-day retreat to expand our understanding of CER, including approaches such as ethnography, and to find ways to include work that faculty engage in overseas. While we hope these ideas will ultimately contribute to UTSC institutional processes, we plan to implement them in internal departmental processes such as PTR.

- *The reviewers made a recommendation to “strengthen the Department’s research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and taking advantage of funding opportunities and initiatives available through the Office of the Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation.”*

We thank the reviewers for this recommendation, which the department is actively engaged in. Our Liaison Librarian made a presentation at a department meeting to promote showcasing faculty research through TSpace, the institutional repository. Faculty have already begun to submit deposits to TSpace and we will continue to do so. Please see recent statistics to view use of research in the last 6 months including page views, downloads, and where in the world our research is being viewed:

<https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/3320/statistics>.

Secondly, in addition to publishing and presenting in conferences, faculty in our department continue to promote their work through various media outlets, not only in Canada, but in other countries, for those who do overseas work. Finally, while our faculty are already taking the opportunity to apply for funding offered by the OVPRI at UTSC, we plan to immediately increase this effort.

- *The reviewers noted a strong need for faculty complement planning, particularly in areas of expected growth, and encouraged a complement mix that could provide leadership in research, community engagement, and curriculum development, and build stronger linkages with campus-wide research initiatives.*

We thank the reviewers for this recommendation. We agree that faculty complement needs careful consideration and planning, particularly as our programs continue to grow. First, to support the development of a new Major program in GIS, we plan to request two new faculty positions in GIS over the next five years, with the first position request being made within the next two years. Regarding City Studies, which is the fastest growing program in the department, one growth position has already been approved and a search is currently underway. However, additional capacity is needed in City Studies. Our plan is to request a second faculty position within the next two years, and a third faculty position within five years. In the short term, City Studies will benefit from a Teaching Stream position in the area of Community Engaged Learning – this position has been identified as a hiring priority in previous complement plans and it continues to be a priority in the department. While this position will primarily serve City Studies, it will also support the Human Geography programs. Finally, as discussed above, there is a need for a new faculty hire in Physical and Human Geography to provide leadership for the Major program. At our planned, two-day retreat, we will be able to think carefully about such a position. Requests for faculty hires will be submitted as a part of UTSC’s annual Faculty Complement Committee planning process.

- *The reviewers observed that growth in student and faculty numbers warrants attention to staff complement to ensure sufficient capacity to support student advising, curriculum mapping and other functions.*

We thank the reviewers for this recommendation. The department has shared staff with two other departments (Global Development Studies and Political Science), a situation that presents many challenges, particularly as the department continues to grow. We are in the process of hiring a program coordinator to be shared by Human Geography and Global Development Studies, but it is already clear that the workload will be heavy for one person. Ideally, the department would have a dedicated program coordinator to support our growing enrolments. Similarly, the Chair’s Assistant is also shared by the same three departments and is gradually being overloaded. Our plan is that in three to five years, the Department of Human Geography will have a dedicated Chair’s Assistant, who can also serve as the departmental Administrative Assistant (a position currently shared by six social sciences departments).

Regards,



Dr. Thembela Kepe
 Chair, Department of Human Geography
 University of Toronto Scarborough

Implementation Plan

Action	Timeline	Lead
Undertake a curriculum review to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all courses that require firm pre-requisites; and • Resolve the existing course sequencing problem and eliminate overlap in course content. 	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	HG Faculty and Liaison Librarian
Develop and introduce new courses focused on urban climate change and on people and built environments to support the Major program in Physical and Human Geography.	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty

Action	Timeline	Lead
Introduce a new GIS Major. This includes doing an analysis of GIS programs and courses across the country, to ensure the UTSC program is modelled on the best of these.	Long term [3-5 years]	HG Faculty
Introduce a new required, first-year course focused on improve written and oral communication skills. Alternatively, strongly integrate these skills in our first-year core courses.	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty and Liaison Librarian
Conduct an information literacy (IL) curriculum mapping project that will strategically identify where and how to develop research skills within HG programs.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	Liaison Librarian and HG Faculty
Introduce a Human Geography Research Internship opportunity.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	HG Faculty
At an upcoming department retreat, expand our understanding of CER, to include work that faculty do overseas, including approaches such as ethnography. Link these understanding to how we do internal evaluations (e.g. PTR)	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty
Strengthen the department's research visibility and impact via open access posting on T-Space. Increase the up-take of this for all faculty.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	Liaison Librarian and HG Faculty
<p>Through the FCC process, submit requests for the following faculty positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One teaching stream position in the area of Community Engaged Learning in City Studies • One tenure stream position in GIS 	Medium term [1-2 years]	Chair, Human Geography
<p>Through the FCC process, submit requests for the following faculty positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One tenure stream position in City Studies 	Long term [3-5 years]	Chair, Human Geography

Action	Timeline	Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One tenure stream position in GIS • One tenure stream position in Physical and Human Geography; ideally, this role will be at the Associate or Professor rank in order to take on the leadership of the Major program; this role could be a cross-appointment with the Dept of Physical and Environmental Sciences 		
<p>Review and prioritize administrative staff needs; when appropriate, submit requests for additional administrative staff support to the Dean. Potential requests include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Program Coordinator to provide student advising and support; • A Chair’s Assistant/Department Administrative Assistant. 	<p>Medium to long term [1-5 years]</p>	<p>Chair, Human Geography</p>



March 11, 2022

Dr. Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-President and Provost
University of Toronto

Dean's Administrative Response: External Review of the Department of Human Geography, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Susan,

Thank you for your letter of November 29, 2021 requesting my administrative response to the external review of the Department of Human Geography. We want to thank the review team – Professor Sara McLafferty, Head, Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Professor Daniel Shrubsole, Associate Dean Undergraduate Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Western University; and Professor John Smithers, Department of Geography, University of Guelph – for their consultation with us during the remote site visit, held from March 24-26 2021, and for their report, which was finalized on June 9, 2021.

I appreciate the seriousness with which the reviewers approached the external review process, as well the thoughtful consideration given to the Department of Human Geography and its undergraduate programs in the review Report. I am very pleased by the overall positive review of the department. The reviewers describe Human Geography as “highly successful, with large and growing undergraduate programs and faculty research contributions that compare favourably with national and international comparators.” They note the strength of the department’s academic programs, the engaging and challenging curriculum, the commitment of faculty and staff to student learning and success, and the high level of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and course offerings. Further, they comment on the department as an emerging centre of excellence for research in urban GIS. Finally, the reviewers emphasize that they were “impressed by the degree of shared purpose, respect and genuine support that was evident across meetings with all members of the departmental community.”

The external review report was sent to the Chair of Human Geography, Dr. Thembela Kepe, on June 14, 2021, with a request to share it widely among the faculty, staff and students. On January 11, 2022 the decanal group, including myself, the Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning and Undergraduate Programs (VDTLUP), Acting Vice-Dean, Recruitment, Enrolment and Student Success (VDRESS), Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity, and Success (VDFAES), Acting Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum (ADUPC), Associate Dean Experiential and Global Learning (ADEGL), Director, Office of the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, and the Academic Programs Officer, met with the Chair, of Human Geography to discuss the external review report and administrative response; I am pleased with the depth of the discussion that took place.

My administrative response to the points raised in your letter is given below. This response has been developed in close consultation with the Chair of Human Geography, and reflects the key elements of the unit response letter, dated February 18, 2022. It also includes responses to points raised in the Request for Administrative Response that are outside departmental control.

Let me address the specific points raised in your letter:

- *The reviewers recommended a review of course sequencing and co/prerequisites, to avoid overlap in course content and to ensure that students have the necessary background for upper-level courses.*

In his response, the Chair notes that the Department has been engaged in an ongoing review of course co/pre-requisites for the last several years, with the goal of replacing specific course co/pre-requisites with a minimum number of completed courses. This has improved access to courses, however an unintended consequence of this has been that some students have been insufficiently prepared for some courses. The department will undertake a further review of course co/pre-requisites in the coming year in a planned curriculum retreat to identify courses that require firm co/pre-requisites for students to achieve the learning outcomes. The Chair also notes that the Department's Curriculum Committee began a curriculum review process in Fall 2021, and in January 2022 received reports evaluating the course content and sequencing from the City Studies and Geographic Information Science programs, and from the Urban Geography, Socio-cultural Geography, and Environmental Geography clusters of the Human Geography program. These reports will feed into discussions that will take place during the planned curriculum retreat, where content and sequencing will be considered both within and across clusters. An additional short-term action is being led by the Department's Liaison Librarian, who will be working with the Curriculum Committee to encourage program coordinators to leverage their expertise and offer of assistance with the development of course guides that focus on particular skills, consistent with identified learning outcomes.

- *The reviewers recommended updating the Major in Physical and Human Geography curriculum to develop a more contemporary focus on themes which integrate human and physical geographic processes.*

The Chair notes several opportunities to address this recommendation. First, the department has initiated discussion regarding the development of new courses focused on urban climate change as a way to better integrate the disciplinary content of the Major in Physical and Human Geography. Second, there are several current courses in the area of people and built environments, as the reviewers suggest, that can serve as the basis for these developments (for example: CITB08H3 – The Economy of Cities; CITC03H3 – Real Estate and the City; CITC18H3 – Urban Transportation Policy Analysis; and CIRD12H3 – Planning and Building Public Spaces in Toronto). These courses have not as yet been included as required or elective courses in the Major. The department will explore, at the planned curriculum retreat in the next year, ways to integrate these courses into the Major. Finally, the reviewers recommend that a future faculty hire is needed in the Physical and Human Geography program, to provide leadership, and instill a clearer sense of direction and integration. The Department will be bringing a request forward for consideration to the UTSC Faculty Complement Committee planning process. The Department's goal for this new hire will be to act as a liaison between the Department of Human Geography and the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences, which also supports the delivery of this Major. Bearing this goal in mind, the Department may seek a possible cross-appointment with the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences. I am supportive of these plans and will speak more directly to faculty complement planning under the second-to-last point below.

- *The reviewers encouraged the Department to develop a Major in Geographic Information Science, noting GIS as an area for enrolment growth in alignment with UTSC's goals to develop quantitative expertise.*

The Chair's response describes early stage developments underway in the Department to support this recommendation. The Department introduced two new GIS-focused courses in 2021-22, GGRC15H3 (Spatial Databases and Applications), and an upper-year special topics course on Cartographic Design. These courses contribute to areas identified by the reviewers as gaps in the GIS curriculum, and they will expand on the elective offerings for the existing Minor program in GIS, while at the same time expanding the Department's existing GIS course portfolio with the long-term goal of moving towards establishing a Major program. The Department will continue to expand research and curriculum in geographic information science, including developing more new courses, as faculty complement allows. In anticipation of developing a Major in GIS, the Department is conducting a curriculum survey of established GIS programs at North American universities. This gap analysis will highlight the additional knowledge, skills and applications that should be included in a Major. Finally, the Department has stated plans to hire strategically to build faculty strength to bridge the Department's GIS expertise with other active areas of interest, such as Urban Geography and City Studies. Towards this end the Department will be submitting a request for a new GIS faculty position within the next two years, and anticipates being in a position to begin developing a proposal for a GIS Major within the next two to three years. I am supportive of these plans and will speak more directly to Faculty complement planning under the second-to-last point below.

- *The reviewers noted faculty concerns regarding students' written and oral communication skills, their understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and their ability to conduct research, commenting on several possible contributing factors.*

The Chair agrees that students have struggled with their written, oral and research skills in many of the Department's courses, and expressed appreciation for the reviewers highlighting this issue, which has been a long-standing challenge in the Department. Since introducing a new writing course, GGRB03H3 (Writing Geography), in 2015-16, the Department has observed positive changes in the desired areas and doubled enrolment in Winter 2022, from about 20 to over 40 students. To expand the beneficial impacts of this course, the Department will change the role of this course in the curriculum, either to transition the course from an elective to a requirement, or offer it earlier – as an A-level (first year) course, or both. These plans align with campus-wide work that is currently underway to better support student writing. A Task Force on Writing Support has recently submitted its recommendations that will help to inform future resourcing and supports in this area across the campus.

In addition, the Department's Liaison Librarian is working with the Department Curriculum Committee and department faculty on an information literacy (IL) curriculum mapping project. The IL curriculum map will strategically identify where and how to develop research skills within Human Geography programs. The Department's planned outcome of this assessment will be to produce recommendations to better scaffold research skills for students as well as required supports. Attention to racialized perspectives, Indigenous ways of knowing and Black knowledges will be an important part of the pedagogical approach and methodology for this process, to align with the goals of the campus-wide curriculum review. The Department views this as a short to medium term goal, that can be completed within one year. The campus curriculum review Working Circle will be releasing its recommendations this term, which will help to support this process. Dedicated

resourcing has also been made available to departments in the form of the Pedagogies of Inclusive Excellence Fund, to advance curricular and pedagogical work in this area.

- *The reviewers recommended that course-based research opportunities be expanded, and that opportunities for research participation within the Department be publicized more widely.*

The Chair has highlighted a number of current course-based opportunities for students to engage in research in the Department, for example: CITC01H3 – Urban Communities and Neighborhoods Case Study: East Scarborough; GGRD31H3 – GIS Research Project; GGRD01H3 – Supervised Research Project, GGRD08H3 – Research Seminar in Environmental Geography, and CITD01H3 – City Issues and Strategies. As well, the Department introduced in 2020-21 a new seminar course GGRD25H3 (Work and Employment in the GTA), that offers students the chance to undertake geographically-informed labour market research on employment trends in the Toronto Region. The course introduces students to working with Statistics Canada data and strategies for synthesis and analysis of union research, scholarly work, third sector reports, consultancy research and municipal employment surveys, as well as a resume building workshop to learn how to include skills from undergraduate research on their CV. In the short to medium term, with the help of our Liaison Librarian, the department plans to model additional C- and D-level courses after this example.

The Chair also highlights in their report that the Department will introduce in Fall 2022 a Human Geography Research Internship. Through an application and selection process, promising students will register for either GGRD31H3 (Independent Research Project) or GGRD01H3 (Supervised Research Project) and undertake a research internship with a faculty member. Students will participate in the faculty member's research project, with evaluation criteria based on the quality of their contribution (e.g., literature/archive search, annotated bibliographies, assisting with surveys or mapping, etc.), as well as writing a short reflection paper on the experience. By agreement between the student and the faculty member, the quality of the student's research contribution will determine whether they can be considered a co-author on an article. To start with, this opportunity will be available to third and fourth-year students. There is no financial compensation for the internship and students will invest no more time than needed for a regular course. The Department is working with my office to consider how this initiative will contribute to ongoing development of experiential learning opportunities in the Department.

- *Noting dissatisfaction from some students that participation in the co-op program did not guarantee employment, the reviewers commented that "more effective communication between the Arts and Science Co-op office and prospective students about the deliverables is required;" they also recommended additional outreach efforts to expand internship and employment opportunities for students.*

The Chair acknowledges in his response that the Department works closely with the Arts and Science Co-op Office to identify and advocate for the best Co-op opportunities for our students. However, the Department is reliant on the Co-op Office for support in identifying placements. As well, the Chair notes that students are required to take on responsibility for applying for Co-op placements, which are not guaranteed. Nevertheless, the Chair acknowledges there is room for improvement, and the Department will engage with this issue at the planned curriculum retreat in the next year, giving more attention to managing students' expectations regarding Co-op. Finally, the Chair sees great potential in increasing the Department's focus on developing further experiential learning opportunities to build and expand on their existing co-op offerings. The Arts and Science Co-op Office is also working with departments to ensure a broad range of placement options for students in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, as well as supporting work-integrated learning

opportunities for students who are interested in workplace opportunities but may not wish to pursue a co-op program.

- *The reviewers noted concerns that faculty and graduate students often focus their research activities at the St. George campus, which can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates.*

A majority of the Department's graduate students are based on the St. George campus within the tri-campus Graduate Department of Geography and primarily come to UTSC to TA or consult with their supervisors. Given this reality, the Department's undergraduate students have limited opportunities to be exposed to graduate students' research. As well, faculty members in the Department of Human Geography at UTSC also hold a graduate appointment in a tri-campus Graduate department(s) and must spend some of their time on the St. George campus consulting with their graduate students, as well as teaching graduate courses. These realities notwithstanding, the Department is exploring ways to expand on opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in research at UTSC, as noted in the point above.

- *The reviewers noted a growing focus on Community-Engaged Research (CER) in the Department, and recommended clarification of research criteria in relation to promotion and processes for faculty whose research is community-focused.*

As the Chair notes in his Response, the issue of Community-Engaged Research is actively being discussed in various spaces across the tri-campus University of Toronto, including at UTSC. The Dean's Office will work with the Department to ensure that CER is appropriately valued and recognized in promotion and PTR assessments and factored into faculty workload. The Department plans to use regular Departmental meetings and their planned two-day retreat to expand their understanding of CER, including approaches such as ethnography, and to find ways to include work that faculty engage in overseas.

- *The reviewers made a recommendation to "strengthen the Department's research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and taking advantage of funding opportunities and initiatives available through the Office of the Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation."*

In his Response, the Chair describes initial plans to work with the Department's Liaison Librarian to showcase faculty research through TSpace, the institutional repository. Faculty have already begun to submit deposits to TSpace and will continue to do so. The Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation (OVPRI) at UTSC has also invested resources aimed at better communicating the impact of faculty research across the campus. In addition to publishing and presenting in conferences, faculty in the Department continue to promote their work through various media outlets, not only in Canada, but in other countries, for those who do overseas work. Finally, the Department plans to increase existing efforts for faculty to take the opportunity to apply for funding offered by the OVPRI at UTSC.

- *The reviewers noted a strong need for faculty complement planning, particularly in areas of expected growth, and encouraged a complement mix that could provide leadership in research, community engagement, and curriculum development, and build stronger linkages with campus-wide research initiatives.*

The Chair's response notes that faculty complement needs careful consideration and planning, particularly as the Department's programs continue to grow. To support the development of a new Major program in GIS, the Department plans to request two new faculty positions in GIS over the next five years, anticipating making the first request within the next two years. Additional capacity is also needed in City Studies, which is the fastest growing program in the Department. One growth position has already been approved and a search is currently underway. The Department plans to request a second faculty position within the next two years, and a third faculty position within five years. While this position will primarily serve City Studies, it will also support the Human Geography programs. Finally, as discussed above, there is a need for a new faculty hire to provide leadership for the Physical and Human Geography program, envisioned as a joint hire with the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences.

To support the Department in their complement planning, in 2019-20, UTSC established the Faculty Complement Committee (FCC) to provide recommendations to me regarding the distribution of teaching-stream and tenure-stream faculty positions sought by academic units in the yearly recruitment cycle, within the context of strategic multi-year departmental and campus faculty complements. The FCC provides a consultative, inclusive and transparent process that involves all academic units in determining the complement submission at UTSC. The Department of Human Geography will be encouraged to bring their plans and priorities forward each year through the FCC. My office will also work with the Department to ensure it has the resources it needs to support the further development of their programs.

- *The reviewers observed that growth in student and faculty numbers warrants attention to staff complement to ensure sufficient capacity to support student advising, curriculum mapping and other functions.*

The Chair has noted in their response that the Department has shared staff with two other departments (Global Development Studies and Political Science), which presents challenges as the department continues to grow. The Department is working in consultation with my office to develop a staff complement plan over the next three to five years to ensure adequate staffing resources.

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of Human Geography. An interim report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will be prepared for 2024-25. The next external review of the Department has been scheduled for 2028-29.

Regards,



William A. Gough

Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

Cc: Dr. Thembela Kepe, Chair, Department of Human Geography, UTSC

Implementation Plan

Action	Timeline	Lead
Undertake a curriculum review to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all courses that require firm pre-requisites; and • Resolve the existing course sequencing problem and eliminate overlap in course content. 	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	HG Faculty and Liaison Librarian
Develop and introduce new courses focused on urban climate change and on people and built environments to support the Major program in Physical and Human Geography.	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty
Introduce a new GIS Major. This includes doing an analysis of GIS programs and courses across the country, to ensure the UTSC program is modelled on the best of these.	Long term [3-5 years]	HG Faculty
Introduce a new required, first-year course focused on improve written and oral communication skills. Alternatively, strongly integrate these skills in our first-year core courses.	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty and Liaison Librarian
Conduct an information literacy (IL) curriculum mapping project that will strategically identify where and how to develop research skills within HG programs.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	Liaison Librarian and HG Faculty
Introduce a Human Geography Research Internship opportunity.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	HG Faculty
At an upcoming department retreat, expand our understanding of CER, to include work that faculty do overseas, including approaches such as ethnography. Link these understanding to how we do internal evaluations (e.g. PTR)	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty
Strengthen the department's research visibility and impact via open access posting on T-Space. Increase the up-take of this for all faculty.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	Liaison Librarian and HG Faculty
Through the FCC process, submit requests for the following faculty positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One teaching stream position in the area of Community Engaged Learning in City Studies • One tenure stream position in GIS 	Medium term [1-2 years]	Chair, Human Geography

Action	Timeline	Lead
<p>Through the FCC process, submit requests for the following faculty positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One tenure stream position in City Studies • One tenure stream position in GIS • One tenure stream position in Physical and Human Geography; ideally, this role will be at the Associate or Professor rank in order to take on the leadership of the Major program; this role could be a cross-appointment with the Dept of Physical and Environmental Sciences 	<p>Long term [3-5 years]</p>	<p>Chair, Human Geography</p>
<p>Review and prioritize administrative staff needs; when appropriate, submit requests for additional administrative staff support to the Dean. Potential requests include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Program Coordinator to provide student advising and support; • A Chair's Assistant/Department Administrative Assistant. 	<p>Medium to long term [1-5 years]</p>	<p>Chair, Human Geography</p>

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1. Review Summary

Programs Reviewed:	City Studies, HBA: Specialist, Major and Major Co-op; Minor Human Geography, HBA: Specialist; Major; Minor Physical and Human Geography, HBA: Major Geographic Information Science: Minor (Arts) Urban Public Policy and Governance: Minor (Arts)
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Human Geography
Commissioning Officer:	Vice-Principal (Academic) & Dean University of Toronto Scarborough
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	Professor Sara McLafferty, (Head) Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Professor Daniel Shrubsole, Associate Dean Undergraduate Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Western University Professor John Smithers, Department of Geography, University of Guelph
Date of Review Visit:	March 24-26, 2021 (conducted remotely)
Date Reported to AP&P:	April 12, 2022

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: October 17-18, 2013

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Impressive rethinking of curriculum following departmentalization
- Dedicated faculty committed to keeping programs rigorous and up-to-date
- Unique City Studies program and cutting-edge Geography program
- Positive, supportive environment and excellent morale among students, faculty, and staff

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Enhancing the student learning experience and students' writing and research skills
- Exploring additional program development opportunities
- Changing the faculty complement composition to continue to meet curricular needs and bring stability to the Department
- Evaluating program staffing levels
- Addressing the need for a common student/faculty space and a computer lab to support emerging areas of research and teaching

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

1. About the University and UTSC: UTSC Strategic Plan, 2020-25; UTSC Academic Plan (2015-20); UTSC Admissions Viewbook (2020-21); Campus Virtual Tour; Interactive Campus Map.
2. About the Review: Terms of Reference; Review Report Template; Remote Site Visit Schedule.
3. About the Department: Previous External Review Report (2013); Final Assessment Report: Previous External Review (2013); Unit Academic Plan, April 2015; Unit Self Study, March 2021.
4. About Programs and Courses: Description of all programs (2020-21 Academic Calendar); Description of all courses (2020-21 Academic Calendar); Self-Study Data; Curriculum Mapping: Department of Human Geography Curriculum Map and Course Mapping
5. Course Syllabi (all courses).
6. Faculty CVs (all faculty).

Consultation Process

The reviewers met with the following: the decanal group, including the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, Vice-Dean Recruitment, Enrolment and Student Success, Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning and Undergraduate Programs, Vice-Dean Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Interim Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity and Success, Acting Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum, Director, Office of the VP Academic and Dean, and Academic Programs Officer; the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation; the Chair of the Department of Human Geography; Department of Human Geography faculty – tenure- and teaching-stream (all ranks); Staff, Arts and Science Co-op; UTSC Chief Librarian and library staff; departmental administrative staff; and undergraduate students.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program(s)

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Educational programs a key strength, with courses and curricula that engage and challenge students while honing their analytical and critical skills
 - ▶ Faculty and staff are committed to student learning and success
- Objectives
 - ▶ Departmental and program missions well aligned with University mission; greater alignment expected after Departmental academic plan update
 - ▶ All programs develop valuable skills (e.g., communication, writing, qualitative and quantitative reasoning, interdisciplinary critical thinking, research, professional training, social activism, and digital competency)
 - ▶ Courses and programs effectively address current geographical theories, perspectives, and methodologies
 - ▶ Programs' mix of skills, opportunities, and experiential learning reflects "the cutting edge of geographic training in leading geography departments"
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Reasonable admissions requirements serve the needs of the Department and are consistent with other Geography programs
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ High-quality course content and program structure
 - ▶ Laudable efforts to include applied assignments in courses, some of which are partnered with community groups and local government agencies
 - ▶ Department has made strong efforts to include tutorial and discussion-like components in several courses

- ▶ Faculty effectively incorporate research methodologies, theories, debates, and publications in their courses
- ▶ Department has developed a suite of courses to serve students not pursuing Human Geography programs
- Innovation
 - ▶ Unique City Studies program focuses on issues of local and regional significance, while providing opportunities to learn from and engage with community partners
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Department offerings achieve a very high level of diversity, in terms of both scale (local/regional/global) and in the breadth of thematic areas covered (e.g., social, cultural, political, economic, indigenous, racial)
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Very detailed learning expectations and outcomes for each course level are consistent with the Department's commitment to student learning and success
 - ▶ Department is committed to ensuring students develop strong communication and research skills, and a deep understanding of geographic concepts, methods and findings
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students hold faculty and staff in high regard for quality teaching, kindness, and responsiveness to concerns
 - ▶ Students praised Department's class size management, which affords opportunities to make friends and develop continuing relationships with classmates
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Reviewers note rapid enrolment growth and high levels of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and course offerings as indicators of programs' success

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Major in Physical and Human Geography appears “dated and tired”; reviewers suggest that modest enrolment levels in the program may be related to a “lack of attention” to updating the curriculum
 - ▶ Student complaints regarding course sequencing and overlapping content of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-year courses; faculty note that content of introductory courses may be too basic
 - ▶ Inclusion of active research activities is difficult in courses with very large enrolments
 - ▶ Students indicated a desire for “still greater” diversity in course content
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Faculty commented on challenges and dissatisfaction with development of student skills in communication, research, and understanding of concepts; possible contributing factors include relatively large tutorials and lab classes, and comparatively high numbers of students for whom English is a second language

- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ City Studies co-op students voiced dissatisfaction that they are not guaranteed employment despite paying the co-op program fee; reviewers note that “this concern is common to many co-op programs modelled in a similar manner to UTSC”
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ Absence of a faculty leader for the Physical and Human Geography major
- Student funding
 - ▶ OSAP eligibility data indicate a comparatively high level of financial need among students in the Department

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Review and improve course sequencing, including co- and pre-requisite requirements, to avoid overlap in course content, ensure that students have the necessary background and knowledge for upper-division courses, and to provide greater connection between courses while retaining the ability to attract students from other cognate programs into Human Geography courses
 - ▶ Expand research opportunities for undergraduate students through course work and internships
 - ▶ Identify specific courses to deliver a set of research skills, in partnership with library staff
 - ▶ Develop Geographic Information Science (GIS) as an undergraduate Major program, to address the strong need for training in analysis, application, and management of geospatial technologies and data, and to contribute to the university’s initiative on data science
 - ▶ Work with collaborating departments to develop a more contemporary focus for the Physical and Human Geography major, including themes integrating human and physical geographic processes
 - ▶ Consider offering competitive research assistantships to further promote undergraduate research opportunities
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Publicize research opportunities for undergraduate students more widely; partner with the library to promote student-based research to the wider UTSC campus
 - ▶ Encourage faculty to incorporate undergraduates in their research projects when feasible; consider leveraging funding opportunities available through UTSC’s Office of the Vice-Principal, Research & Innovation to support undergraduate students who work on faculty research projects
 - ▶ Better promote career opportunities in Geography by utilizing materials from the Canadian Association of Geographers and American Association of Geographers websites
 - ▶ Strengthen alumni relationships through a LinkedIn site and other outreach efforts, in order to expand internship and employment opportunities for students, and potentially increase external funding

- ▶ Improve communication with current and prospective students regarding the process and deliverables related to securing employment for students in the co-op program
- ▶ Establish a more formal mechanism for students to have a stronger voice in Departmental governance and program planning

2. Graduate Programs (n/a)

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Research
 - ▶ Faculty publish regularly, publications include books and peer-reviewed articles in high-quality international journals
 - ▶ Research activities are very good relative to the seniority and career stages of tenure stream faculty
 - ▶ Recent faculty hires show signs of considerable research promise, reflecting the Department's commitment to creating identifiable clusters of research excellence
 - ▶ Political ecology, social-cultural geography, critical perspectives incorporating issues of uneven development and ethnic and racial inequality noted as areas of particular research strength
 - ▶ Department is emerging as a center of excellence for research in urban GIS emphasizing transportation, urban governance, and feminist and indigenous geographies; GIS research themes are highly relevant to social and environmental issues and inequalities at the local, national, and global scales, and mesh well with University areas of research priority
- Faculty
 - ▶ Faculty are making strong research contributions in their respective fields, indicated by their publications, externally funded grants, and numerous honors and awards from disciplinary organizations
 - ▶ Highly impressive range of faculty roles in academic or professional scholarly endeavours, including editorship roles on prestigious journals and leadership positions in numerous professional scholarly associations and national research panels
 - ▶ Faculty promotion and tenure outcomes indicate the Department's attention to research quality and impact
 - ▶ Teaching loads are well-defined and consistent
 - ▶ Reviewers note "a shared view concerning the importance of mentorship" as an investment in the success of individual faculty members as well as the Department as a whole

- ▶ “Early career faculty expressed appreciation and enthusiasm for the value of mentoring and indicated that they felt well supported both institutionally and collegially”
- ▶ Department’s plan to add five new faculty primarily focused in City Studies and GIS is “highly appropriate” given instructional needs and research opportunities

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

- Research
 - ▶ Reviewers observe some variation in research activity among faculty members, but note that this likely reflects disparities in research expectations for tenure stream and teaching stream faculty
- Faculty
 - ▶ Reviewers note challenges faced by faculty conducting community-focused research, including “being asked to propose their own criteria for CES and/or justify their research strategies”
 - ▶ Rapid increase in student demand for Department’s courses and programs has resulted in a heavy reliance on sessional instructors; reviewers note concerns about quality, content, and continuity due to precariousness of sessional instructor positions

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ Strengthen the Department’s research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and taking advantage of internal funding opportunities and institutional initiatives
- Faculty
 - ▶ Mitigate unsustainable reliance on sessional instructors through hiring of additional permanent faculty
 - ▶ Address strong need for additional faculty in City Studies; consider hiring at a senior level to provide leadership in research, community engagement, and curriculum development in this area
 - ▶ Address critical need for new faculty in GIS, particularly with development of the GIS major; reviewers note that “the existing curriculum lacks courses in key topics including geovisualization, spatial databases, and space-time analysis, and in application areas, such as health and environmental justice”
 - ▶ Prioritize faculty hires whose expertise intersects across the Department’s programs and links with broader campus and university research initiatives, including themes such as city/suburbs, health, and data science
 - ▶ Clarify research criteria for Community Engaged Scholarship (CES) in relation to promotion and tenure processes

- ▶ Address imbalance in enrolment across programs, through additional faculty hires in key areas and promoting faculty linkages and teaching across programs
- ▶ Improve mentoring for junior and mid-career faculty to offer crucial support for research excellence and career progression
- ▶ Strengthen mentoring for teaching-stream faculty

4. Administration

Note: Issues that are addressed through specific University processes and therefore considered out of scope for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns) are routed to proper University offices to be addressed, and are therefore not included in the Review Summary component of the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Strong collegiality and impressive degree of shared purpose, respect and genuine support evident across meetings with all members of the departmental community; faculty, students, and staff report very positive relationships and interactions, and reviewers note “a prevailing culture of mutual respect and professionalism within the unit”
 - ▶ Faculty, students, and staff greatly appreciate the Department’s open and effective leadership
 - ▶ Evident faculty commitment to the Department as a whole, and close associations with their area of principal teaching activity
 - ▶ Strong cohesion among staff, providing a high degree of personal and professional support to each other
 - ▶ Faculty and staff noted the material support provided on an ongoing basis, particularly in light of pandemic-related challenges
 - ▶ Students were “unequivocal in their endorsement of both faculty and staff,” describing in very positive terms their interactions with members of the Department
 - ▶ Strong library system with highly engaged, supportive staff; “it was particularly evident that early career faculty are in the process of developing strong relationships with library colleagues in support of both teaching and research”
 - ▶ Impressive outreach, engagement and impact at the local level with community organizations and non-profit and governmental agencies
 - ▶ “Department has brought on expertise enabling it to engage in a more fulsome manner in research and outreach in the service of a variety of racialized or otherwise ‘othered’ groups in society” since the previous review
 - ▶ Well-developed linkages with cognate units across the University, partly due to the comparatively high number of cross-appointed faculty
 - ▶ Strong evidence of formal and informal collaborations between departmental faculty and other universities and organizations
- Organizational and financial structure

- ▶ Department has taken necessary and appropriate steps to adopt a model of distributed leadership and management, allowing specific individuals to provide concerted focus on each of the major teaching programs in the unit
- ▶ Work undertaken in recent years to strengthen departmental governance processes has been well received
- ▶ Department models principles of inclusion, equity and transparency in decision making
- ▶ Distinctive practice of 'staff sharing' between units has been very effective
- ▶ Significant improvements in space/infrastructure management since the previous external review, including the move to Highland Hall and consolidation of Departmental space to bring faculty, sessional instructors, and TAs into closer proximity
- ▶ Dedicated formal/informal gathering spaces improve students' experience
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Overall the Department is highly successful with large, high-demand undergraduate programs that address critical social and environmental issues and embrace innovative experiential and community-engaged approaches
- International comparators
 - ▶ Levels of research activity (books, publications, grants) are on par with similar research-focused geography departments in Canada and the U.S.
 - ▶ Course offerings and learning objectives perform very well in relation to international comparators
 - ▶ Number of major/minor programs offered and sole focus on human geography distinguish the Department from many geography departments in Canada and beyond

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

- Relationships
 - ▶ Reviewers note concerns that the tri-campus structure in which graduate programs are centred at the St. George campus results in faculty and graduate students focusing their research activities there, which can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates
 - ▶ Tri-campus structure can result in periods in which few faculty colleagues are present at UTSC; seeing and working with each other more frequently at UTSC would be valuable for faculty esprit de corps
 - ▶ Reviewers caution that escalating work overload and fatigue may erode staff morale
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Large number of students relative to dedicated staff in the Department; number of students is unsustainable for current arrangement of a shared advisor
 - ▶ Multiple staff members are approaching, or have passed, workload capacity following recent enrolment growth, a situation that is recognized within the Department and by senior leadership

- ▶ Departmental space is fully utilized and future growth may create challenges in the management and allocation of office and/or research space
- ▶ Department faces resource challenges in delivering its programs; reviewers note that the clearest path to new revenue generation is through additional enrolment
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Departmental resources are stretched thin due to rapid enrolment growth, program development, and new research opportunities; “these pressures often compel the Department to be in reactive mode, and strategic planning is difficult”
 - ▶ Limited Departmental resources for student and faculty support; high levels of financial need among students

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Develop a more systematic and extensive partnership with the library to support development of students’ research abilities
 - ▶ Continue enhancing visibility in new Departmental space to establish ‘recognizability’ within the UTSC community
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Seek funding for a dedicated, full-time undergraduate assistant/advisor to serve the large and increasing student population
 - ▶ Consider teaching needs, including GIS lab space and tutorial rooms, as well as office space for staff and faculty and social/gathering spaces for students in future space planning
 - ▶ Consider resource constraints carefully at Department and Division level when increasing program enrolments
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Consider “tactical (near term) and strategic ways (e.g., manageable growth) to stabilize and support the best of what is currently in place and build on opportunities in ways that are both achievable and sustainable” regarding growth and additional investment in City Studies and GIS
 - ▶ Consider developing a continuing education certificate in GIS, beginning on a cost recovery basis, but with the prospect of new revenue generation in the future
 - ▶ Seek new sources of funding to support student research experiences, study abroad and internship opportunities, etc.
 - ▶ Strengthen connections through an alumni organization; showcase research and teaching activities through social media and other channels in to link current students with career opportunities and encourage alumni to contribute to the Department
 - ▶ Additional investments in faculty and staff will be needed in order to expand the Department’s programs and enhance co-op and other experiential learning opportunities

2. Administrative Response & Implementation Plan



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

March 11, 2022

Dr. Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-President and Provost
University of Toronto

Dean's Administrative Response: External Review of the Department of Human Geography, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Susan,

Thank you for your letter of November 29, 2021 requesting my administrative response to the external review of the Department of Human Geography. We want to thank the review team – Professor Sara McLafferty, Head, Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Professor Daniel Shrubsole, Associate Dean Undergraduate Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Western University; and Professor John Smithers, Department of Geography, University of Guelph – for their consultation with us during the remote site visit, held from March 24-26 2021, and for their report, which was finalized on June 9, 2021.

I appreciate the seriousness with which the reviewers approached the external review process, as well the thoughtful consideration given to the Department of Human Geography and its undergraduate programs in the review Report. I am very pleased by the overall positive review of the department. The reviewers describe Human Geography as “highly successful, with large and growing undergraduate programs and faculty research contributions that compare favourably with national and international comparators.” They note the strength of the department’s academic programs, the engaging and challenging curriculum, the commitment of faculty and staff to student learning and success, and the high level of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and course offerings. Further, they comment on the department as an emerging centre of excellence for research in urban GIS. Finally, the reviewers emphasize that they were “impressed by the degree of shared purpose, respect and genuine support that was evident across meetings with all members of the departmental community.”

The external review report was sent to the Chair of Human Geography, Dr. Thembela Kepe, on June 14, 2021, with a request to share it widely among the faculty, staff and students. On January 11, 2022 the decanal group, including myself, the Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning and Undergraduate Programs (VDTLUP), Acting Vice-Dean, Recruitment, Enrolment and Student Success (VDRESS), Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity, and Success (VDFAES), Acting Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum (ADUPC), Associate Dean Experiential and Global Learning (ADEGL), Director, Office of the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, and the Academic Programs Officer, met with the Chair, of Human Geography to discuss the external review report and administrative response; I am pleased with the depth of the discussion that took place.

My administrative response to the points raised in your letter is given below. This response has been developed in close consultation with the Chair of Human Geography, and reflects the key elements of the unit response letter, dated February 18, 2022. It also includes responses to points raised in the Request for Administrative Response that are outside departmental control.

Let me address the specific points raised in your letter:

- *The reviewers recommended a review of course sequencing and co/prerequisites, to avoid overlap in course content and to ensure that students have the necessary background for upper-level courses.*

In his response, the Chair notes that the Department has been engaged in an ongoing review of course co/pre-requisites for the last several years, with the goal of replacing specific course co/pre-requisites with a minimum number of completed courses. This has improved access to courses, however an unintended consequence of this has been that some students have been insufficiently prepared for some courses. The department will undertake a further review of course co/pre-requisites in the coming year in a planned curriculum retreat to identify courses that require firm co/pre-requisites for students to achieve the learning outcomes. The Chair also notes that the Department's Curriculum Committee began a curriculum review process in Fall 2021, and in January 2022 received reports evaluating the course content and sequencing from the City Studies and Geographic Information Science programs, and from the Urban Geography, Socio-cultural Geography, and Environmental Geography clusters of the Human Geography program. These reports will feed into discussions that will take place during the planned curriculum retreat, where content and sequencing will be considered both within and across clusters. An additional short-term action is being led by the Department's Liaison Librarian, who will be working with the Curriculum Committee to encourage program coordinators to leverage their expertise and offer of assistance with the development of course guides that focus on particular skills, consistent with identified learning outcomes.

- *The reviewers recommended updating the Major in Physical and Human Geography curriculum to develop a more contemporary focus on themes which integrate human and physical geographic processes.*

The Chair notes several opportunities to address this recommendation. First, the department has initiated discussion regarding the development of new courses focused on urban climate change as a way to better integrate the disciplinary content of the Major in Physical and Human Geography. Second, there are several current courses in the area of people and built environments, as the reviewers suggest, that can serve as the basis for these developments (for example: CITB08H3 – The Economy of Cities; CITC03H3 – Real Estate and the City; CITC18H3 – Urban Transportation Policy Analysis; and CIRD12H3 – Planning and Building Public Spaces in Toronto). These courses have not as yet been included as required or elective courses in the Major. The department will explore, at the planned curriculum retreat in the next year, ways to integrate these courses into the Major. Finally, the reviewers recommend that a future faculty hire is needed in the Physical and Human Geography program, to provide leadership, and instill a clearer sense of direction and integration. The Department will be bringing a request forward for consideration to the UTSC Faculty Complement Committee planning process. The Department's goal for this new hire will be to act as a liaison between the Department of Human Geography and the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences, which also supports the delivery of this Major. Bearing this goal in mind, the Department may seek a possible cross-appointment with the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences. I am supportive of these plans and will speak more directly to faculty complement planning under the second-to-last point below.

- *The reviewers encouraged the Department to develop a Major in Geographic Information Science, noting GIS as an area for enrolment growth in alignment with UTSC's goals to develop quantitative expertise.*

The Chair's response describes early stage developments underway in the Department to support this recommendation. The Department introduced two new GIS-focused courses in 2021-22, GGRC15H3 (Spatial Databases and Applications), and an upper-year special topics course on Cartographic Design. These courses contribute to areas identified by the reviewers as gaps in the GIS curriculum, and they will expand on the elective offerings for the existing Minor program in GIS, while at the same time expanding the Department's existing GIS course portfolio with the long-term goal of moving towards establishing a Major program. The Department will continue to expand research and curriculum in geographic information science, including developing more new courses, as faculty complement allows. In anticipation of developing a Major in GIS, the Department is conducting a curriculum survey of established GIS programs at North American universities. This gap analysis will highlight the additional knowledge, skills and applications that should be included in a Major. Finally, the Department has stated plans to hire strategically to build faculty strength to bridge the Department's GIS expertise with other active areas of interest, such as Urban Geography and City Studies. Towards this end the Department will be submitting a request for a new GIS faculty position within the next two years, and anticipates being in a position to begin developing a proposal for a GIS Major within the next two to three years. I am supportive of these plans and will speak more directly to Faculty complement planning under the second-to-last point below.

- *The reviewers noted faculty concerns regarding students' written and oral communication skills, their understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and their ability to conduct research, commenting on several possible contributing factors.*

The Chair agrees that students have struggled with their written, oral and research skills in many of the Department's courses, and expressed appreciation for the reviewers highlighting this issue, which has been a long-standing challenge in the Department. Since introducing a new writing course, GGRB03H3 (Writing Geography), in 2015-16, the Department has observed positive changes in the desired areas and doubled enrolment in Winter 2022, from about 20 to over 40 students. To expand the beneficial impacts of this course, the Department will change the role of this course in the curriculum, either to transition the course from an elective to a requirement, or offer it earlier – as an A-level (first year) course, or both. These plans align with campus-wide work that is currently underway to better support student writing. A Task Force on Writing Support has recently submitted its recommendations that will help to inform future resourcing and supports in this area across the campus.

In addition, the Department's Liaison Librarian is working with the Department Curriculum Committee and department faculty on an information literacy (IL) curriculum mapping project. The IL curriculum map will strategically identify where and how to develop research skills within Human Geography programs. The Department's planned outcome of this assessment will be to produce recommendations to better scaffold research skills for students as well as required supports. Attention to racialized perspectives, Indigenous ways of knowing and Black knowledges will be an important part of the pedagogical approach and methodology for this process, to align with the goals of the campus-wide curriculum review. The Department views this as a short to medium term goal, that can be completed within one year. The campus curriculum review Working Circle will be releasing its recommendations this term, which will help to support this process. Dedicated

resourcing has also been made available to departments in the form of the Pedagogies of Inclusive Excellence Fund, to advance curricular and pedagogical work in this area.

- *The reviewers recommended that course-based research opportunities be expanded, and that opportunities for research participation within the Department be publicized more widely.*

The Chair has highlighted a number of current course-based opportunities for students to engage in research in the Department, for example: CITC01H3 – Urban Communities and Neighborhoods Case Study: East Scarborough; GGRD31H3 – GIS Research Project; GGRD01H3 – Supervised Research Project, GGRD08H3 – Research Seminar in Environmental Geography, and CITD01H3 – City Issues and Strategies. As well, the Department introduced in 2020-21 a new seminar course GGRD25H3 (Work and Employment in the GTA), that offers students the chance to undertake geographically-informed labour market research on employment trends in the Toronto Region. The course introduces students to working with Statistics Canada data and strategies for synthesis and analysis of union research, scholarly work, third sector reports, consultancy research and municipal employment surveys, as well as a resume building workshop to learn how to include skills from undergraduate research on their CV. In the short to medium term, with the help of our Liaison Librarian, the department plans to model additional C- and D-level courses after this example.

The Chair also highlights in their report that the Department will introduce in Fall 2022 a Human Geography Research Internship. Through an application and selection process, promising students will register for either GGRD31H3 (Independent Research Project) or GGRD01H3 (Supervised Research Project) and undertake a research internship with a faculty member. Students will participate in the faculty member's research project, with evaluation criteria based on the quality of their contribution (e.g., literature/archive search, annotated bibliographies, assisting with surveys or mapping, etc.), as well as writing a short reflection paper on the experience. By agreement between the student and the faculty member, the quality of the student's research contribution will determine whether they can be considered a co-author on an article. To start with, this opportunity will be available to third and fourth-year students. There is no financial compensation for the internship and students will invest no more time than needed for a regular course. The Department is working with my office to consider how this initiative will contribute to ongoing development of experiential learning opportunities in the Department.

- *Noting dissatisfaction from some students that participation in the co-op program did not guarantee employment, the reviewers commented that "more effective communication between the Arts and Science Co-op office and prospective students about the deliverables is required;" they also recommended additional outreach efforts to expand internship and employment opportunities for students.*

The Chair acknowledges in his response that the Department works closely with the Arts and Science Co-op Office to identify and advocate for the best Co-op opportunities for our students. However, the Department is reliant on the Co-op Office for support in identifying placements. As well, the Chair notes that students are required to take on responsibility for applying for Co-op placements, which are not guaranteed. Nevertheless, the Chair acknowledges there is room for improvement, and the Department will engage with this issue at the planned curriculum retreat in the next year, giving more attention to managing students' expectations regarding Co-op. Finally, the Chair sees great potential in increasing the Department's focus on developing further experiential learning opportunities to build and expand on their existing co-op offerings. The Arts and Science Co-op Office is also working with departments to ensure a broad range of placement options for students in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, as well as supporting work-integrated learning

opportunities for students who are interested in workplace opportunities but may not wish to pursue a co-op program.

- *The reviewers noted concerns that faculty and graduate students often focus their research activities at the St. George campus, which can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates.*

A majority of the Department's graduate students are based on the St. George campus within the tri-campus Graduate Department of Geography and primarily come to UTSC to TA or consult with their supervisors. Given this reality, the Department's undergraduate students have limited opportunities to be exposed to graduate students' research. As well, faculty members in the Department of Human Geography at UTSC also hold a graduate appointment in a tri-campus Graduate department(s) and must spend some of their time on the St. George campus consulting with their graduate students, as well as teaching graduate courses. These realities notwithstanding, the Department is exploring ways to expand on opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in research at UTSC, as noted in the point above.

- *The reviewers noted a growing focus on Community-Engaged Research (CER) in the Department, and recommended clarification of research criteria in relation to promotion and processes for faculty whose research is community-focused.*

As the Chair notes in his Response, the issue of Community-Engaged Research is actively being discussed in various spaces across the tri-campus University of Toronto, including at UTSC. The Dean's Office will work with the Department to ensure that CER is appropriately valued and recognized in promotion and PTR assessments and factored into faculty workload. The Department plans to use regular Departmental meetings and their planned two-day retreat to expand their understanding of CER, including approaches such as ethnography, and to find ways to include work that faculty engage in overseas.

- *The reviewers made a recommendation to "strengthen the Department's research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and taking advantage of funding opportunities and initiatives available through the Office of the Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation."*

In his Response, the Chair describes initial plans to work with the Department's Liaison Librarian to showcase faculty research through TSpace, the institutional repository. Faculty have already begun to submit deposits to TSpace and will continue to do so. The Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation (OVPRI) at UTSC has also invested resources aimed at better communicating the impact of faculty research across the campus. In addition to publishing and presenting in conferences, faculty in the Department continue to promote their work through various media outlets, not only in Canada, but in other countries, for those who do overseas work. Finally, the Department plans to increase existing efforts for faculty to take the opportunity to apply for funding offered by the OVPRI at UTSC.

- *The reviewers noted a strong need for faculty complement planning, particularly in areas of expected growth, and encouraged a complement mix that could provide leadership in research, community engagement, and curriculum development, and build stronger linkages with campus-wide research initiatives.*

The Chair's response notes that faculty complement needs careful consideration and planning, particularly as the Department's programs continue to grow. To support the development of a new Major program in GIS, the Department plans to request two new faculty positions in GIS over the next five years, anticipating making the first request within the next two years. Additional capacity is also needed in City Studies, which is the fastest growing program in the Department. One growth position has already been approved and a search is currently underway. The Department plans to request a second faculty position within the next two years, and a third faculty position within five years. While this position will primarily serve City Studies, it will also support the Human Geography programs. Finally, as discussed above, there is a need for a new faculty hire to provide leadership for the Physical and Human Geography program, envisioned as a joint hire with the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences.

To support the Department in their complement planning, in 2019-20, UTSC established the Faculty Complement Committee (FCC) to provide recommendations to me regarding the distribution of teaching-stream and tenure-stream faculty positions sought by academic units in the yearly recruitment cycle, within the context of strategic multi-year departmental and campus faculty complements. The FCC provides a consultative, inclusive and transparent process that involves all academic units in determining the complement submission at UTSC. The Department of Human Geography will be encouraged to bring their plans and priorities forward each year through the FCC. My office will also work with the Department to ensure it has the resources it needs to support the further development of their programs.

- *The reviewers observed that growth in student and faculty numbers warrants attention to staff complement to ensure sufficient capacity to support student advising, curriculum mapping and other functions.*

The Chair has noted in their response that the Department has shared staff with two other departments (Global Development Studies and Political Science), which presents challenges as the department continues to grow. The Department is working in consultation with my office to develop a staff complement plan over the next three to five years to ensure adequate staffing resources.

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of Human Geography. An interim report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will be prepared for 2024-25. The next external review of the Department has been scheduled for 2028-29.

Regards,



William A. Gough

Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

Cc: Dr. Thembela Kepe, Chair, Department of Human Geography, UTSC

Implementation Plan

Action	Timeline	Lead
Undertake a curriculum review to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all courses that require firm pre-requisites; and • Resolve the existing course sequencing problem and eliminate overlap in course content. 	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	HG Faculty and Liaison Librarian
Develop and introduce new courses focused on urban climate change and on people and built environments to support the Major program in Physical and Human Geography.	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty
Introduce a new GIS Major. This includes doing an analysis of GIS programs and courses across the country, to ensure the UTSC program is modelled on the best of these.	Long term [3-5 years]	HG Faculty
Introduce a new required, first-year course focused on improve written and oral communication skills. Alternatively, strongly integrate these skills in our first-year core courses.	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty and Liaison Librarian
Conduct an information literacy (IL) curriculum mapping project that will strategically identify where and how to develop research skills within HG programs.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	Liaison Librarian and HG Faculty
Introduce a Human Geography Research Internship opportunity.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	HG Faculty
At an upcoming department retreat, expand our understanding of CER, to include work that faculty do overseas, including approaches such as ethnography. Link these understanding to how we do internal evaluations (e.g. PTR)	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty
Strengthen the department's research visibility and impact via open access posting on T-Space. Increase the up-take of this for all faculty.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	Liaison Librarian and HG Faculty
Through the FCC process, submit requests for the following faculty positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One teaching stream position in the area of Community Engaged Learning in City Studies • One tenure stream position in GIS 	Medium term [1-2 years]	Chair, Human Geography

Action	Timeline	Lead
<p>Through the FCC process, submit requests for the following faculty positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One tenure stream position in City Studies • One tenure stream position in GIS • One tenure stream position in Physical and Human Geography; ideally, this role will be at the Associate or Professor rank in order to take on the leadership of the Major program; this role could be a cross-appointment with the Dept of Physical and Environmental Sciences 	<p>Long term [3-5 years]</p>	<p>Chair, Human Geography</p>
<p>Review and prioritize administrative staff needs; when appropriate, submit requests for additional administrative staff support to the Dean. Potential requests include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Program Coordinator to provide student advising and support; • A Chair's Assistant/Department Administrative Assistant. 	<p>Medium to long term [1-5 years]</p>	<p>Chair, Human Geography</p>

3. Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P) Findings

The spokesperson for the reading group reported that the review summary accurately reflected the full review. The reading group noted that administrative response outlined in detail the actions that the Department had already taken and demonstrated that many of the recommendations could be addressed in the short to medium term.

Professor Katherine Larson, Vice-Dean, Teaching, Learning and Undergraduate Programs commented that the Department had been developing strategies in consultation with the UTSC Arts and Science Co-op Office to increase the range of placement options and to encourage students to apply more broadly for cooperative opportunities. She also noted that there were other experiential learning opportunities that may benefit students as well.

Professor Thembela Kepe, Chair, Department of Human Geography, noted that the Department had planned to hold a retreat within one year, with discussion topics to include managing student expectations and facilitating greater knowledge in the process for cooperative placements.

In response to a member's question regarding the number of students who participated in a cooperative placement, Professor Kepe indicated that the cooperative program was available only to students enrolled in the City Studies program and approximately 10 students had a cooperative placement. Professor William Gough, Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, UTSC, indicated that approximately 4000 of the 14000 registered students at UTSC were enrolled in a cooperative program.

No follow-up report was requested.

4. Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the department as highly successful, with large and rapidly growing undergraduate programs that effectively address current geographical theories, perspectives, and methodologies; the high student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and course offerings; the research strengths in political ecology and social-cultural geography, particularly in issues of uneven development and ethnic and racial inequality; they also highlighted the department's emergence as a centre of excellence for research in urban GIS emphasizing transportation and land use; its commitment to "Community-Based Research"; and its strong collegiality and well-developed linkages with cognate units, including those on the St. George campus.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: conducting a review of course sequencing and co/prerequisites; updating the Major in Physical and Human Geography curriculum to develop a more contemporary focus; developing a Major in Geographic Information Science; addressing factors contributing to concerns around students' communication skills, understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and ability to conduct research; expanding and better-publicising course-based research opportunities; improving communication between Arts and Science Co-op office and prospective students around co-op

placement deliverables, and enhancing outreach efforts to expand student internship and employment opportunities; addressing concerns that faculty and graduate students often focus their research activities at UTSG, which can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates; clarifying research criteria in relation to promotion and tenure processes for faculty whose research is community-focused; strengthening the Department's research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and taking advantage of available funding opportunities and initiatives; engaging strategically in faculty complement planning, particularly in areas of expected growth; and ensuring that the staff complement has sufficient capacity to support student advising, curriculum mapping and other functions.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Division, unit and programs' responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result.

5. Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of Human Geography. The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than Winter 2025 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in 2028-29.

6. Distribution

On June 29, 2022, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Vice Principal Academic & Dean of UTSC, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to the Chair of the Department.