

**FOR APPROVAL**

**PUBLIC**

**OPEN SESSION**

**TO:** UTM Academic Affairs Committee

**SPONSOR:** Professor Amrita Daniere, Interim Vice-Principal Academic & Dean  
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**PRESENTER:** Professor Ajay Rao  
**CONTACT INFO:** Associate Professor, Historical Studies; Vice-Dean Graduate Studies  
& Postdoctoral Affairs

**DATE:** September 2, 2022 for September 12, 2022

**AGENDA ITEM:** 4

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Academic Unit Name Change: Centre for South Asian Civilizations (CSAC), EDU:C, UTM

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

Under section 5.1 of its terms of reference, the Academic Affairs Committee is responsible for name changes of academic units.

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

- UTM Academic Affairs Committee [for approval] (September 12, 2022)

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

None

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

The Centre for South Asian Civilizations (CSAC) was established in 2013 through an endowment by Vasu Chanchlani and support from the UTM Dean's office. CSAC brings together the University of Toronto's outstanding tricampus South Asia faculty and graduate students for workshops and research activities. CSAC is based at the UTM campus, which world-renowned for its depth of faculty expertise in this area, but enjoys membership and hosts events across all three UofT campuses. The Centre has grown dramatically since its inception and now regularly hosts events ranging from cultural performances to graduate summer schools.

To more accurately reflect the variety of intellectual approaches covered within CSAC and the Centre’s focus on humanism, critical practice, and the study of South Asian communities, CSAC is proposal to re-name the unit to the Centre for South Asian Critical Humanities, effective October 1, 2022.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Be it Resolved,

THAT the name of the Centre for South Asian Civilizations (CSAC), EDU:C, UTM be changed to Centre for South Asian Critical Humanities, effective October 1, 2022.

**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

- Proposal to rename an academic unit: Centre for South Asian Civilizations (CSAC), EDU:C, UTM



## University of Toronto Mississauga Proposal to Rename an Academic Unit

<b>CURRENT Unit Name:</b>	Centre for South Asian Civilizations (CSAC)
<b>PROPOSED Unit Name:</b>	Centre for South Asian Critical Humanities
<b>Faculty / Academic Division:</b>	University of Toronto Mississauga
<b>Faculty / Academic Division contact:</b>	Amrita Daniere Interim Vice-Principal Academic & Dean, UTM <a href="mailto:vpdean.utm@utoronto.ca">vpdean.utm@utoronto.ca</a>
<b>Dean's Office contact</b>	Yen Du Manager, Academic Programs, Reviews & Quality Assurance Office of the Dean, UTM <a href="mailto:yen.du@utoronto.ca">yen.du@utoronto.ca</a>
<b>Unit contact:</b>	Shivaji Mukherjee Interim Director, CSAC <a href="mailto:Shivaji.mukherjee@utoronto.ca">Shivaji.mukherjee@utoronto.ca</a>
<b>Effective date of unit name change:</b>	October 1, 2022
<b>Version Date:</b>	August 31, 2022

The Centre for South Asian Civilizations (CSAC) at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) is proposing to re-name their EDU-C to the ***Centre for South Asian Critical Humanities***, effective October 1, 2022. The new name will more accurately reflect the variety of intellectual approaches covered and the centre's focus on humanism, critical practice, and the study of South Asian communities. While the term "civilizations" is more closely tied to the study of ancient and historical cultures, our centre draws from disciplines including not only religion and history, but also art history, literature, political science, and languages. Furthermore, "civilization" is a politically problematic term as it implies an overt value judgment that a given society is better, more advanced, and superior to other forms of social organization. Civilizational theory projects into the past bounded geographic zones and regions that prefigure modern nation states. The term

“humanities” is intended broadly to refer to thinking about what it means to be human and also includes humanistic social sciences. We conceive of the intellectual activities of the centre as postdisciplinary. Our approach is critical, cutting across traditional disciplinary boundaries as part of a broader objective of decolonizing the humanities.

CSAC was established in 2013 through an endowment by Vasu Chanchlani and support from the UTM Dean’s office. CSAC brings together the University of Toronto’s outstanding tricampus South Asia faculty and graduate students for workshops and research activities. CSAC is based at the UTM campus, which world-renowned for its depth of faculty expertise in this area, but enjoys membership and hosts events across all three UofT campuses. The Centre has grown dramatically since its inception and now regularly hosts events ranging from cultural performances to graduate summer schools. While similar centres in the U.S. and Canada are usually framed as "South Asian Studies", the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago<sup>1</sup> is the only North American South Asia program with "civilizations" in the name. We have not adopted the descriptor "South Asian Studies", so that CSAC is clearly differentiated from the Centre for South Asian Studies<sup>2</sup> and EDU:D within the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, Faculty of Arts & Science on the St. George campus, which more directly shares the area studies orientation of U.S. South Asia centres. The Centre for South Asian Studies at the Munk School has a much broader focus that includes international and policy studies. Renaming CSAC as the Centre for South Asian Critical Humanities will further clarify the distinction from the Centre for South Asian Studies.

Consultation occurred in Fall 2021 with faculty members associated with CSAC and with undergraduate and graduate students. There was overwhelming support for this proposed name change. We also consulted with the Chairs of the following UTM departments: Anthropology, English and Drama, Historical Studies, Language Studies, Visual Studies, Philosophy, and Political Science. There was no concerns or opposition from any of these department Chairs. Currently (August 2022), additional consultation is being undertaken to confirm continued support of the proposed name change. CSAC members and the units named above have been advised that the proposal is moving forward with a new effective date of October 1, 2022. The UTM Dean’s Office has also consulted with the Dean’s Offices at the Faculty of Arts & Science and University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) campus. In particular, consultation has occurred with the following units across the tri-campus:

- Asian Institute, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy (Faculty of Arts & Science)
- Centre for South Asian Studies, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy (Faculty of Arts & Science)
- Centre for the Study of Korea, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy (Faculty of Arts & Science)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://salc.uchicago.edu/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/ai/program/centre-for-south-asian-studies/>

- Department of East Asian Studies (Faculty of Arts & Science)
- Centre for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy (Faculty of Arts & Science)
- University College (Faculty of Arts & Science)
- Department of English (UTSC)
- Department of Historical and Cultural Studies (UTSC)

Feedback received to date has been positive and supports the name change. Any feedback received has been incorporated into the proposal, as appropriate.

Resource implications are minimal (on-campus signage, etc.). CSAC is currently revising the centre website, and the name change will be integrated into the new website once approved. No changes to space or staffing will be affected by the proposed name change.