FOR INFORMATION   **PUBLIC**   **OPEN SESSION**

TO:	UTSC Academic Affairs Committee
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PRESENTER: **CONTACT INFO:**	Prof. Suzanne Sicchia: Acting Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning & Undergraduate Programs 416-208-2978, acting.vdundergrad.utsc@utoronto.ca
DATE:	October 12, 2023 for October 19, 2023
AGENDA ITEM:	5c

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Review of Academic Programs and Units, UTSC
      c) Department of Political Science and its Undergraduate Programs

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under section 5.7 of the Terms of Reference of the University of Toronto Scarborough Academic Affairs Committee (UTSC AAC) provides that the Committee "shall receive for information and discussion reviews of academic programs and/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] (October 19, 2023)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

- Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P), April 13, 2023 [For Information]. The Committee was satisfied with the Dean's Administrative Response. No follow-up report was required.
- Academic Board, April 27, 2023 [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 formal Administrative Response, combining responses from the Dean and Vice-Principal Academic; and
- The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

In accordance with the Protocol, an external review of the Department of Political Science and its undergraduate programs was commissioned for the 2021-22 academic year. During a remote site-visit held from March 22-24, 2022, 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 among the top Political Science units in Canada, and noted significant progress made since the Department's previous review. They commended the Department's high student enrolments, unique program offerings, and dual focus on research and teaching with a collegial culture and high student satisfaction.

The review team noted several areas for enhancement and development. They recommended that the Department and UTSC should:

- Explore ways to expand student research training and opportunities
- Explore ways to enhance the co-op program, such as streamlining the application process, exploring ways to support students facing barriers, integrating professional development into credit courses, and/or expanding placements into government organizations
- Enhance offerings in specific areas, such as big data analysis and data science, and ethics and public policy
- Continue efforts to expand faculty diversity, prioritizing Black and Indigenous hiring, and incorporating coverage of I-EDI issues across the curriculum
- Explore ways to incentivize external grant funding to strengthen the Department's ability to support student research
- Give attention to available supports for part-time faculty
- Explore appropriate ways to provide enhanced orientation and support for Teaching Assistants
- Considering ways to enhance student advising and mentoring
- Considering ways to enhance connections and collaborations with external and internal parties, including cognate departments, research institutes, members of the Scarborough and GTA communities, and international comparator programs

- Exploring development of a Departmental governance framework, with an eye to increasing transparency and accountability, and encouraging engagement of non-tenure-track faculty and student representatives
- Assessing the Department's available spaces and spatial needs and exploring creative options to optimize available resources

In response to these recommendations the Department will:

- Create common modules on research design and methods and professional skills into A-level courses over the next two years.
- Undertake an overall curriculum review of research skills in current courses to improve and systematize offerings, beginning with the A-level and moving up through to the D-level, over the next two years.
- Offer a senior research seminar as an undergraduate capstone research experience
- Expand opportunities for the Beyond the Classroom and Summer Research Scholar programs for undergraduate research.
- Integrate opportunities for faculty to describe student research and mentoring into the Progress Through the Ranks (PTR) process.
- Prioritize alignment between skill sets and co-op program placements in curriculum changes over the next two years, and integrate professional development into existing courses. The Arts & Science Co-op Office at UTSC works with Departments to explore potential placement opportunities and prepare students for placements and will support the Department in determining the best approach.
- Explore a faculty complement request to hire a colleague with expertise in teaching students how to leverage computing and new sources of data.
- Align faculty hiring within the Pathway to Parity and UTSC's strategic plan
- Expand courses in Indigenous politics and governance (completed in 2022-23) and explore curricular reforms in the next two years towards decolonizing the curriculum.
- Implement a UTSC-specific Teaching Assistant (TA) orientation in September, beginning in 2023
- Create the Community Engagement and Research Opportunities Committee as a standing committee in the Department, to track and systematize inter-Departmental opportunities for coordination and collaboration .
- Update the current Department Constitution in multiple areas such as committee structure, terms of reference, and roles and responsibilities.
- Following a space audit in 2022-23, formalize a system for the rational allocation of office space and create an ad hoc space committee in 2023.

Additionally, the Dean and Dean's Office will:

- Work closely with the Department on planned curriculum changes
- Review and assess faculty complement proposals as part of the Faculty Complement Committee, where dedicated lines are prioritized for diversity hires, particularly Black and Indigenous faculty

- Continue to prioritize commitments to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action through the UTSC Working Circle which supports implementing the recommended actions on campus, and on which the Department is represented.
- Support teaching-stream faculty through a recently established teaching award category for Contract Limited Term Appointment and part-time faculty, and through recommendations of a recent working group on the experience of teaching-stream faculty, led by the Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity and Success
- Work with the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation on the coordination of EDI training modules for TAs
- Work with Departments to review staff complement and planning for appropriate staff support, and support for community-engaged initiatives
- Continue to work as a campus to consider long-term flexible options to build community and reduce space pressures on campus

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 2022 site visit and the year of the next site visit, will be prepared. The next external review of the Department has been scheduled for 2029-30.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

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

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is presented for information only.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

1. Review Report (May 2, 2022)
2. Provostial Request for Administrative Response (December 5, 2022)
3. Administrative Response (March 14, 2023)
4. Provostial Final Assessment Report and Implemental Plan (March 14, 2023)