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

TO:	UTSC Academic Affairs Committee
SPONSOR: **CONTACT INFO:**	Prof. William A. Gough, Vice-Principal Academic and Dean 416-208-7027, vpdean.utsc@utoronto.ca
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:	5d

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Review of Academic Programs and Units, UTSC
        d) Department of Sociology 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), February 16, 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 Sociology and its undergraduate programs was commissioned in the 2020-21 academic year. During a remote site-visit held on February 15, 17 and 18, 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 praised the department as "strong and vibrant", with unique and well-structured programming, highly engaged faculty, and morale and innovation in the pandemic that exceeded expectations.

In their report, the reviewers recommended that the Department:

Continue to explore modifications in programming areas, including whether or not to maintain the Specialist and that impacts of program developments on enrolments and student pathways be reflected in longer-term planning.

- Review potential repetition of course material at different levels and connections between sub-fields.
- Maintaining or developing remote or hybrid courses to accommodate a wider range of students.
- Consolidate and enhance community engagement and experiential learning activities, and expand them in relation to strategic priorities and student interests.
- Consider options for introducing flexibility in program and admission requirements, to enhance equity and inclusivity.
- Coordinate recruitment efforts with Divisional administration to attract students to enrol in Sociology programs.
- Expand the Student Experience Survey and conduct periodic surveys of graduates.
- Establish a committee to develop a departmental research plan with a collective vision and objectives.
- Explore options for more dedicated departmental staff and services.
- Planning to ensure effective use of available space.

In response to these recommendations the Department will:

- With the Department Curriculum Committee, carry out a pathway analysis and track enrolment, investigate new options for programs or Certificates, and move forward with plans to close the existing Specialist program and Combined Degree Program with the Master of Teaching.
- Examine remote or hybrid possibilities within programming for second- and third-year students
- Establish a Land Based Learning Lab to support Department activities related to community engagement and experiential learning
- Adjust admission requirements to bring program pathways in line with other social sciences disciplines, and replace SOCA03Y3 with two new half-credit courses
- Resume a Student Experience Survey in 2023-24 to analyse student demographics and pathways
- Implement a research support plan for faculty, led by the Associate Chair
- Pursue a faculty hire in the area of environmental law and society

Additionally, the Dean and Dean's Office will:

- Led by the Associate Dean, Experiential and Global Learning, coordinate infrastructure to support Department experiential learning activities, including two years of pilot staffing enabled by the Provost's Office and University Fund.
- Develop a Strategic Enrolment Management framework under the leadership of the Vice-Dean, Recruitment, Enrolment and Student Success, which will assist the Department in attracting students and assist with data analysis needs
- Facilitate connections with the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO)
- Work with the Department to support their curriculum review, including considering opportunities for development
- Plan to ensure appropriate staffing support is available for the Department
- Work with Departments to identify short- and long-term solutions for space

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 February 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 (March 28, 2023)
2. Provostial Request for Administrative Response (July 20, 2022)
3. Chair's Administrative Response (November 28, 2022)
4. Dean's Administrative Response (December 19, 2022)
5. Provostial Final Assessment Report and Implemental Plan (December 19, 2023)