



FOR INFORMATION

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TO: Agenda Committee

SPONSOR: Nicolas Rule, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

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PRESENTER: Same as above

CONTACT INFO:

DATE: April 2, 2026 for April 9, 2026

AGENDA ITEM: 2 (b)

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Semi-Annual Report on the Reviews of Academic Units and Programs

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, “has general responsibility...for monitoring, the quality of education and the research activities of the University. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Committee works to ensure the excellent quality of academic programs by...monitoring reviews of existing programs....The Committee receives annual reports or such more frequent regular reports as it may determine, on matters within its purview, including reports on the ...[r]eviews of academic units and programs.” (*Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) Terms of Reference, Sections 3, 4.9*)

Within the *Accountability Framework for Cyclical Review of Academic Programs and Units*, the role of AP&P is to undertake “a comprehensive overview of review results and administrative responses.” AP&P “receive[s] semi-annual program review reports including summaries of all reviews, identifying key issues and administrative responses,” which are discussed at a “dedicated program review meeting with relevant academic leadership.” (*Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units*). AP&P’s role is to ensure that the reviews are conducted in line with the University’s policy and guidelines; to ensure that the Office of the Vice-President and Provost has managed the review process appropriately; to ensure that all issues relative to the quality of academic programs have been addressed or that there is a plan to address them; and to make recommendations concerning the need for a follow up report.

“The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs submits the summary and the Dean’s Administrative Response to the Report (including the implementation plan and excluding all confidential information) to University governance through the Committee on Academic Policy

and Programs (AP&P) of the Academic Board on a biannual basis in the form of a compendium of draft Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Plans” (*UTQAP*, 6.9.2.1).

The compendium is forwarded, together with the record of the Committee’s discussion, to the Agenda Committee of the Academic Board, which determines whether there are any issues warranting discussion at the Board level. The same documentation is sent to the Executive Committee and the Governing Council for information.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. Committee on Academic Policy and Programs [for information] (March 31, 2026)
2. **Agenda Committee of the Academic Board [for information] (April 9, 2026)**
3. Academic Board [for information] (April 16, 2026)
4. Executive Committee of the Governing Council [for information] (May 4, 2026)
5. Governing Council [for information] (May 13, 2026)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

Governing Council approved the *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units* in 2010. The *Policy* outlines University-wide principles for the approval of proposed new academic programs and review of existing programs and units. Its purpose is to align the University’s quality assurance processes with the Province’s Quality Assurance Framework through establishing the authority of the University of Toronto’s Quality Assurance Process (*UTQAP*).

The Semi-Annual Report on the Reviews of Academic Units and Programs was previously submitted to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs on October 21, 2025.

HIGHLIGHTS:

External reviews of academic programs and units are important mechanisms of accountability for the University and a vital part of the academic planning process. Academic reviews are critical to ensuring the quality of our programs through vigorous and consistent processes that assess the quality of new and existing programs and units against our international peers.

Materials for the external review reports and the complete decanal responses for twelve external reviews of units and/or academic programs are being submitted to AP&P for information and discussion. Of these, one was commissioned by the Vice-President & Provost; and eleven were commissioned by Deans. The signed administrative responses from each Dean highlight action plans in response to reviewer recommendations.

Overall, the themes raised in these reviews echoed those in previous compendia: the strong quality and reputation of our programs, the high calibre of our students, and the significant

scholarly and professional contributions of our faculty. Reviews consistently highlighted innovative and relevant curricula, interdisciplinary breadth, and the impressive ways units connect theory to practice through research opportunities, experiential learning, and partnerships beyond the university. Many also commended the commitment to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion, and to fostering vibrant intellectual and social communities for students.

As always, the reviews noted areas for further development. Units were encouraged to strengthen coordination across cognate programs, to ensure the sustainability of teaching and program delivery, and to continue enhancing supports and mentorship for students and faculty alike. Reviews also underscored the importance of addressing enrolment pressures, strengthening experiential and career supports, engaging in strategic complement planning, and ensuring that diversity and accessibility goals are reflected in curricula, faculty hiring, and student opportunities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for information and feedback

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

Compendium of Reviews of Academic Programs and Units



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PROVOST,
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Reviews of Academic Programs and Units

Report to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

March 31, 2026

Reviews of Academic Programs and Units

Report to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

March 31, 2026

Provostial Reviews

Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy and its programs

- *Undergraduate*: Doctor of Pharmacy: PharmD (Streams: PharmD, PharmD for Pharmacists); Certificate in Global Studies in Pharmacy
- *Graduate*: Pharmaceutical Sciences: MSc, PhD (Fields: Biomolecular Pharmaceutical Sciences; Clinical, Social and Administrative Pharmaceutical Sciences); Pharmacy: MScPhm

Decanal Reviews

Faculty of Arts & Science

- Canadian Studies program (housed in University College)
 - ▶ *Undergraduate*: Canadian Studies (HBA): Specialist, Major, Minor; Asian Canadian Studies: Minor; Certificate in Black Canadian Studies
- Cognitive Science program (housed in University College)
 - ▶ *Undergraduate*: Cognitive Science (HBA): Major (Streams: Language and Cognition; Perception and Attention; Thinking and Reasoning); Cognitive Science (HBSc): Major (Streams: Cognition and the Brain; Computational Cognition)
- Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies
 - ▶ *Undergraduate*: Criminology and Sociolegal Studies (HBA): Specialist
 - ▶ *Graduate*: Criminology and Sociolegal Studies: MA, PhD
- Department of Spanish and Portuguese
 - ▶ *Undergraduate*: Spanish (HBA): Specialist, Major, Minor; Portuguese (HBA): Specialist, Major, Minor; Latin American Studies (HBA): Major, Minor
 - ▶ *Graduate*: Spanish: MA, PhD
- Women and Gender Studies Institute
 - ▶ *Undergraduate*: Women and Gender Studies (HBA): Specialist, Major, Minor;
 - ▶ *Graduate*: Women and Gender Studies: MA, PhD

Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering

- The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering
 - ▶ *Undergraduate*: Computer Engineering: BAsC; Electrical Engineering: BAsC
 - ▶ *Graduate*: Electrical and Computer Engineering: MASc, MEng, PhD
- University of Toronto Institute for Aerospace Studies
 - ▶ *Graduate*: Aerospace Science and Engineering: MEng, MASc, PhD

Temerty Faculty of Medicine

- Physician Assistant program
 - ▶ *Undergraduate*: Physician Assistant: BSc

University of Toronto Mississauga

- Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences
 - ▶ *Undergraduate*: Astronomical Sciences (HBSc): Specialist; Astronomy (HBSc): Major; Biological Chemistry (HBSc): Specialist; Biomedical Physics (HBSc): Specialist; Chemistry (HBSc): Specialist, Major, Minor; Earth Science (HBSc): Specialist, Major, Minor; Environmental Geosciences (HBSc): Specialist; Geology (HBSc): Specialist; Physics (HBSc): Major, Minor
- Department of Historical Studies
 - ▶ *Undergraduate*: Classical Civilization (BA): Major, Minor; History (BA): Specialist, Major, Minor; History of Religions (BA): Specialist, Major, Minor; Diaspora and Transnational Studies (BA): Major, Minor; Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies (BA): Major, Minor; History and Political Science (BA): Specialization (Joint with Political Science); South Asian Humanities, Minor; Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Minor

University of Toronto Scarborough

- Department of Historical and Cultural Studies
 - ▶ *Undergraduate*: Classical Studies: Minor (Arts); Global Asia Studies (BA): Specialist, Major, Minor; History (BA): Specialist and Co-op, Major and Co-op, Minor; Religion, Minor (Arts); Women's and Gender Studies (BA): Major and Co-op, Minor; Combined Degree Program with OISE: MT

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	<u>Undergraduate Programs:</u> Doctor of Pharmacy, PharmD - PharmD Program - PharmD for Pharmacists Program Certificate in Global Studies in Pharmacy (U of T Global Scholar) <u>Graduate Programs:</u> Master of Science, MSc, Pharmaceutical Sciences - Fields: - Biomolecular Pharmaceutical Sciences - Clinical, Social and Administrative Pharmaceutical Sciences Master of Science in Pharmacy, MScPhm Doctor of Philosophy, PhD, Pharmaceutical Sciences (regular, transfer, direct-entry, flexible-time) - Fields: - Biomolecular Pharmaceutical Sciences - Clinical, Social and Administrative Pharmaceutical Sciences
Division Reviewed:	Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy
Commissioning Officer:	Vice-President and Provost
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	- Michael Coughtrie, Former Dean & Professor of Biochemical Pharmacology, The University of British Columbia - Jayanth Panyam, Dean & Professor, School of Pharmacy, University of Washington - Cate Whittlesea, Professor of Pharmacy Practice & Director, School of Pharmacy, University College London

Date of Review Visit:	March 3-5, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	April 23, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 20, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: November 26-28, 2018

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Strong research activities, “By every measure, (including extramural funding, numbers of publication, citation index, and others) the University of Toronto is one of the top research-intensive schools of pharmacy in the world”
- Reviewers ranked the Faculty as the top in Canada and within the top 20 in the world
- PharmD provides an appropriate balance of didactic, lab-based, and experiential education
- Students in pharmacy and the pharmaceutical sciences go on to lead in the delivery of healthcare within the province and throughout Canada
- Faculty’s relationships with cognate Faculties and units are strong and collegial

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Responding to changes to the profession that could lead to decreased student demand
- Maintaining the quality of applicants
- Leading in the preparation of students for diverse careers by providing programmatic support related to career development and professionalism
- Ensuring an expanded range of experiential placements
- Enhancing the PharmD by modifying the curriculum structure to create space for pharmacotherapeutic and experiential learning opportunities, considering the sufficiency of the pre-rotation course and preparation, and ensuring the quality of community based rotations
- Supporting graduate student progress to completion and additional income streams for graduate students
- Building cross-disciplinary interaction and community across the two graduate fields
- Working with students to address challenges around payments
- Increasing competitiveness of grant applications
- Ensuring clear governance for management of research space
- Extending ethics and responsible conduct in research training
- Continuing to improve low internal morale through better communication and clarification of staff and faculty responsibilities
- Supporting community building especially amongst faculty, and enhancing communication of rules and procedures around course loads, teaching assignments, assessment efforts, and research contracts
- Focusing on diversity and inclusion in the planned climate survey

- Enhancing support for faculty and being more forward-thinking in complement planning
- Addressing the shortage of full time teaching stream or clinician scientists, and the lack of formal onboarding or mentoring for junior and mid-career faculty
- Addressing challenges to the Faculty's financial stability (including building repairs, compensation of experiential sites, and international graduate student costs)
- Considering how, if enrolment is reduced, the Faculty would manage the resulting deficit in tuition revenue

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

- Review Terms of Reference
- Site Visit Schedule
- Self-Study and appendices including access to course descriptions and faculty CVs
- Previous review report including administrative response
- 2022-2027 Academic Plan

Consultation Process

- Vice-President & Provost
- Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
- Dean, Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy
- Director, PharmD for Pharmacists Program
- Director, PharmD Program
- Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream and Academic Lead, Experiential Education
- Acting Associate Dean, Academic
- Acting Associate Dean, Research
- Director, Graduate Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Graduate Students
- Director, Graduate Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Director, Research Administration
- Professor and Director, Centre for Pharmaceutical Oncology
- Director, Finance
- Chief Administrative Officer
- Director, Advancement
- Director, Facilities Management
- Director, Office of Experiential Education (OEE)
- Director, Academic Administrative Services
- Registrar and Director, Student Services
- Director, Information and Learning Technology
- Director, Communications
- Director, Administration, Faculty & Staff Relations

- Manager, Student Records, Scheduling and Assessment
- Administrator, Education Office
- Administrative Assistant & Receptionist, Offices of the Dean and CAO
- Program Course Administrator
- Graduate Programs Coordinator, Graduate Department
- Program Coordinator, PharmD for Pharmacist Program
- Manager, Alumni Relations
- Dean, Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education
- Director, Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, Dalla Lana School of Public Health (DLSPH)
- Associate Director, Centre for Advancing Collaborative Healthcare & Education
- Interim Vice Dean, Strategy, Temerty Faculty of Medicine
- Interim Dean, Faculty of Dentistry
- Dean, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work
- Vice-Dean, Research and Program Innovation
- Lead, PDR & Practice Consultants, OCP
- Director of Pharmacy Services, The Scarborough Hospital
- Pharmacy Director, St. Michael's Hospital
- Director, Pharmacy Clinical, UHN
- Preceptors
- Undergraduate Students
- Alumni
- Pre-Tenure Faculty
- Teaching Stream Pre-Continuing Status Faculty Members
- Teaching Faculty Clinician Scientists, Clinician Educators, Lecturers

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
 - ▶ Programs are popular and highly regarded
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Program offers practicing pharmacists with a bachelor's degree a pathway to earn the PharmD credential, consistent with established North American upgrading models
 - ▶ Ongoing redesign of PharmD curriculum aligned with best practices in integrated, systems-based health education
 - ▶ PharmD for Pharmacists is delivered primarily online while still providing a substantial experiential component

- ▶ Program is being compressed from four years to three without apparent loss of instructional weeks
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Faculty actively working to improve access and support for students from historically underserved communities, including Indigenous students, through targeted initiatives and inclusive practices
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Assessment modalities have been expanded, and a programmatic approach is actively being developed and implemented to enhance evaluation practices
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Faculty, in partnership with the Faculty of Nursing, has engaged a Wellness Counsellor, expanding mental health support options available to students
 - ▶ Appropriate resources are in place to support both students and faculty
 - ▶ Students benefit from a wide range of experiential opportunities, supported by precepting pharmacists in community and institutional settings whose strong engagement and enthusiasm are clearly evident
 - ▶ Students have access to wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including clubs, research, military service, and elite sports, which they view as important enhancements to their experience and beneficial for career advancement
 - ▶ Students have access to many research participation opportunities
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ PharmD for Pharmacists program continues to attract strong interest from the profession, with roughly 60 potential applicants for the upcoming intake
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Graduates secure employment across all areas of pharmacy, as well as in biotech, pharmaceutical industries, government, and other sectors, with many also pursuing further education such as MSc or PhD programs
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ Program is supported by a sufficient number of appropriately qualified instructional faculty

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Despite upcoming implementation of a new program and existing accreditation process for the Entry-to-Practice PharmD, there was too much focus on revisiting current program's quality assurance review, with insufficient attention given to broader strategic issues
 - ▶ Concerns surrounding compression of the Entry-to-Practice PharmD program from four years to three
 - ▶ Proposed compression of program, scheduled for 2025 implementation, lacked a detailed program outline at the time of review and had not yet received formal approval from the University
 - ▶ Reviewers did not find a strong academic or business case for the program compression

- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Process for managing student accommodations, both centrally and within the Faculty, appears overly bureaucratic and strained, and students who do not meet assessment expectations seem to receive a relatively high number of reassessments opportunities
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Feedback from students, alumni, staff and faculty, on the program compression was mixed, and many individuals not directly involved expressed confusion or limited awareness among those not directly involved regarding both the rationale for the changes and the details of the program
 - ▶ Undergraduate students expressed concern that proposed condensed 3-year PharmD program may limit access to opportunities to participate in research
 - ▶ Concerns were raised about reduced time for extracurricular activities that students value for career advancement, particularly during the summer months
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Most observations for the PharmD for Pharmacists program mirror those identified for the Entry-to-Practice PharmD, and the inability to speak with students or graduates of the program limits further insight

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Consider assessing viability of a distributed PharmD model that introduces student cohorts at campuses such as Scarborough and Mississauga, supported by a robust business case
 - ▶ Give careful consideration to the implications of the imminent major changes to the PharmD program and ensure they are managed effectively in the short, medium, and long terms
 - ▶ Explore opportunities that exist for delivering academic programs at other sites in the tri-campus system
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Determine appropriate timeline for concluding the PharmD for Pharmacists program by assessing ongoing student interest and evaluating its financial sustainability

2. Graduate Program(s)

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Popular and well-regarded graduate academic programs
 - ▶ Mature MSc and PhD programs offering specialized training in key pharmaceutical sciences fields

- Objectives
 - ▶ MScPhm is a two-year full-time (or up to 4-year part-time) program designed to produce advanced pharmacy practitioners through a combination of coursework, a research project, and clinical practicum training
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Culture among graduate students, faculty, and staff appears very positive, with students expressing enthusiasm and general satisfaction with their programs
 - ▶ Enhanced infrastructure and highly regarded Graduate Office supporting graduate education and research
- Student funding
 - ▶ Minimum stipends have increased

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

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Reviewers were unable to speak with students or graduates from the Entry-to-Practice PharmD program, limiting direct feedback, though no quality assurance concerns were identified regarding its design, assessment, or student support
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ MScPhm program faces uncertainty due to low interest from potential students, reflecting broader changes in pharmacist training pathways such as the widespread adoption of the PharmD, expanded residency options, and numerous postgraduate research opportunities
 - ▶ Students expressed concern about the limited range of course options within the Faculty and the need to take courses offered by other units
 - ▶ Students were concerned about the limited availability of experiential opportunities such as internships, even though these placements can extend program completion times
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ MScPhm program launched in 2020, has produced five graduates to date and currently has three students enrolled, raising concerns about its small scale
 - ▶ PhD completion times remain highly variable and, on average, are considered too long
- Student funding
 - ▶ Although minimum stipends have increased, graduate students are still required to pay tuition

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Consider suspending MScPhm program and repurposing course material for non-degree credentials such as diplomas or certificates that may offer greater financial sustainability

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Consider expanding availability of experiential opportunities such as internships, recognizing their value to students despite their impact on completion times
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ Develop and implement processes, policies, and procedures aimed at reducing the average time to completion for PhD students

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Research
 - ▶ Good facilities available for teaching and research
 - ▶ Faculty conducts high-level research across biomedical, clinical, and social and administrative sciences, comparable to leading peer institutions nationally and internationally
 - ▶ Faculty has appropriate facilities and resources to support research, with the Centre for Pharmaceutical Oncology serving as an excellent example of a valuable core resource and a model that could inform future research initiatives

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

- Research
 - ▶ Departure of two major research faculty members, whose ties to the Faculty are gradually diminishing, raises concerns about sustaining research capacity
 - ▶ Research grant funding levels are relatively low compared with the Faculty and University's ambitions and with national and international rankings
 - ▶ Faculty lacks a clearly defined identity, particularly in relation to its research focus, beyond its branding
 - ▶ Overall research grant funding does not align with the Faculty's ambitions or current status, with an over-reliance on CIHR funding and contributions from adjunct faculty, alongside variable research productivity among some faculty members
- Faculty
 - ▶ There is no clearly articulated or communicated plan for faculty renewal, including how upcoming retirements will be addressed
 - ▶ Faculty complement is heavily skewed toward individuals later in their careers.
 - ▶ There is a risk of reduced professional identity and limited pre-tenure teaching opportunities for faculty in the pharmaceutical and social science research stream
 - ▶ Faculty complement is top heavy, with a significant imbalance between the number of Full Professors and Assistant Professors in the tenure stream

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ Extend the model of Faculty-supported research centres, such as the Centre for Pharmaceutical Oncology, to additional research areas to further strengthen available facilities and resources.
- Faculty
 - ▶ Use the current period of increased faculty renewal as an opportunity to build research capacity, critical mass, and focus within the Faculty
 - ▶ Develop a clear plan to enhance and expand the quantity and quality of research enterprise through strategic hiring aligned with expected retirements

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
 - ▶ Faculty has enjoyed a very strong reputation over the decades
 - ▶ Faculty members, staff, and students were highly engaged in the review process and expressed strong enthusiasm and pride in their association with the Faculty.
 - ▶ Dean has provided strong leadership and is respected and valued by faculty, staff, and students within the Faculty, across U of T, and nationally
 - ▶ Students, faculty, and staff appeared highly engaged and appreciative of Faculty's physical and intellectual environment
 - ▶ Strong institutional support, with Faculty and Dean viewed as innovative and collaborative across Health Sciences
 - ▶ Faculty administrative support is highly valued, with particular recognition for the contributions of the Research Office
 - ▶ Exceptional alumni engagement that contributes meaningfully to the Faculty and University
 - ▶ Faculty has established wide range of productive and valuable relationships within U of T and with external organizations across Canada and internationally
 - ▶ Faculty has strong partnerships with other Health Sciences units at U of T, with representatives expressing appreciation for its innovative and collaborative approach
 - ▶ Valuable relationships with external Pharmacy sector partners that strengthen experiential education

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Faculty benefits from a relatively flat organizational structure, with the Dean supported by two Associate Deans and thematic leads for research and graduate studies
 - ▶ Expanded Research Office is well respected by faculty, staff, and students, offering proactive and wide-ranging support for research activities
- International comparators
 - ▶ Faculty is well regarded nationally and internationally

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

- Relationships
 - ▶ Internal and external communication require significant improvement during this transitional period
 - ▶ Faculty's role in supporting rural and remote communities is unclear, raising concern given the importance of advancing healthcare delivery and training in these areas within publicly funded programs in Canada
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Medium-term financial challenges exist due to declining provincial funding and tuition freezes
 - ▶ Central university administrative inefficiencies increase workloads for faculty and staff
 - ▶ Faculty's financial position appears precarious in the medium to long term, raising concern about the need for new revenue sources
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Strategic goals and implementation plans are not clearly defined or articulated

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Consider improving and expanding internal and external communications to better support the Faculty through this period of significant change
 - ▶ Build on existing partnerships with biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries to develop programs aligned with sector needs
 - ▶ Improve internal and external communications to better support planning and change management
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Explore opportunities for innovative, revenue-generating academic programming within Toronto's biosciences ecosystem
 - ▶ Consider strengthening and clarifying the Faculty's leadership structure by adding senior roles to support the Dean, such as an Associate Dean Students, an Associate Dean Graduate and Postdoctoral, and a Director of Administration to oversee support staff
 - ▶ Examine opportunities for long-term revenue generation through new academic programs leveraging the biotechnology sector in Toronto and Ontario

- ▶ Take steps to strengthen and expand leadership team to support the Dean
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Develop and implement a bold and forward-looking strategic vision for Faculty
 - ▶ Explore new avenues for revenue generation by developing innovative and attractive academic programs to improve Faculty's medium- to long-term financial sustainability
 - ▶ Consider focusing long-term planning on implementing a bold strategic vision to maintain institutional reputation and competitiveness
 - ▶ Consider prioritizing investment in a few key research areas by recruiting and supporting excellent early career faculty and developing innovative, revenue-generating academic programs. These efforts may also open opportunities for deeper engagement and financial partnerships with Toronto's strong biotechnology ecosystem.
 - ▶ Develop and implement a clear strategic plan for the Faculty

2 Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

February 20, 2026

Professor Nicholas Rule
Vice Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

Re: Administrative Response to 2024-25 External Review of the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy

Dear Professor Rule,

On behalf of the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, I would like to thank you and your team for all your support throughout the external review process.

I would also like to thank the reviewers, Michael Coughtrie, University of British Columbia, Jayanth Panyam, University of Washington and Cate Whittlesea, University of London for their thorough review and recommendations for the Faculty.

Overall, the reviewers had a very positive view of the Faculty, noting our excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, research, and alumni engagement. The reviewers' overall assessment of the faculty and programs was highly positive, noting our national and international recognition and the positive engagement of our students, faculty and staff. Additionally, they offered guidance on key challenges and opportunities, such as the potential development of a distributed PharmD model that could introduce a cohort of students at other U of T campuses to provide an opportunity for growth in the UTSC/Scarborough or UTM/Mississauga communities and leverage strengths, talent, and unique features of those communities, and create novel connections to first entry programs.

Following receipt of the final External Review Report, it was shared with the Self-Study Working Group and a meeting was convened to review the recommendations. An update was provided at Faculty Council on September 22, 2025, including an outline of the consultation process that would follow to inform the Faculty's response. Individual meetings were held with unit leaders and teams between October and November 2025 to review recommendations relevant to their areas and gather input to inform the responses. Input for each recommendation was incorporated into the draft responses and shared with the Self-Study Working Group for final review and additional input in January 2026. In February 2026, the updated response was posted on the internal LDFP SharePoint site for all faculty and staff to review and provide feedback prior to final submission.

This administrative response and implementation plan is the outcome of our consideration of the input and feedback for these groups.

Our current academic plan extends through 2027, and the External Review, along with this response and implementation plan, will be key inputs as we develop the next academic plan.

I look forward to any questions or suggestions from your team and the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

Sincerely,

Lisa Dolovich

Lisa Dolovich
Professor and Dean, Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy
University of Toronto

2024-25 Provostial UTQAP Review of the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy - Review Recommendations

Legend:

D = Dean
ADR = Associate Dean, Research
ADA = Associate Dean, Academic
ADSS = Associate Dean, Student Success
D-PharmD = Director, PharmD Program
D-PharmSci = Directors, Graduate Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences

D-PfP = Director, PharmD for Pharmacists Program
D-CPD = Director, Continuing Professional Development
D-Com = Director, Communications
CAO = Chief Administrative Officer
DAAS = Director, Academic Administrative Services

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Program and Dean’s Response	Actions and Timeline
The reviewers raised concerns, echoed by some faculty and students, regarding the planned compression of the PharmD program from four to three years, noting the potential impacts on student experience and professional development opportunities. They emphasized that careful consideration, strategic management, and communication around the implications of this change will be critical in the short, medium, and long term.	1.	“Give very careful consideration to the implications of the imminent major changes to the PharmD program and how they are managed in the short, medium, and long terms.”	The design and delivery of Canada’s first accelerated three-year PharmD program has required a deliberate, evidence-informed and principled rethinking of what future pharmacists need to learn. Although accelerated, the program includes one additional instructional week compared to the 4-Year program and has resulted in a design that aligns with national and international trends in health science education. Recognizing reviewers’ observations were made during the planning phase, now that the program has launched, early indicators have confirmed that student success rates in the first year of the program align closely with results in relevant courses in the 4-year curriculum. To manage transition from a 4 to 3 year PharmD program effectively, the Faculty established (1) robust governance and oversight mechanisms for curriculum renewal and designated course stream leads, (2) a new role of Senior Research Associate – Psychometrician, (3) a Student Progress Committee (SPC) to support the tracking of student progress and	Short Term [6 months] - Establish Catalyst week as a Year 1 course [D-PharmD] - Regular updating of communication plan based on experience during initial program rollout including providing regular updates on progress to internal and external interest holders [D-Com] Medium Term [1 year] - Regular monitoring of trends in student participation in components of student life. [ADSS] - Establish additional certificates to provide additional opportunities for students to pursue their interests. [D-PharmD]

			success within the Program, (4) a formal communication plan for key audiences, (5) focused messaging for students, faculty, preceptors and other stakeholders including a regular newsletter, (6) an academic lead in the area of program evaluation; (7) created the first week as a Catalyst Week to introduce the program to learn about the academic expectations and professional culture of pharmacy, (8) maintain a weekly 2-hour common block opportunity to encourage participation in student organizations and clubs, participate in co-curricular activities, and have opportunities for leadership development, (9) developed an Electives, Pathways and Certificates Working Group, (10) held regular faculty member retreats to share experiences to date and co-develop the next set of educational activities and (11) is regularly measuring student experience with the Program as part of the overall Program Evaluation plan.	
The reviewers noted consistently low enrolment in the MScPhm program since its establishment in 2020 and affirmed the Faculty's plans to consider appropriate future directions for the program, including the possibility of closure.	2.	"Suspend the MScPhm program. Course material could be repurposed for other non-degree credentials such as diploma/certificate that would likely provide greater financial sustainability."	Since receiving the reviewers' recommendation, admissions to the MScPhm program have been suspended, and we are undertaking a review of the program as part of a broader Graduate Programs Renewal initiative.	Short Term [6 months] - Administrative Suspension of Admissions - MScPhm Program [D] - Establish Graduate Program Renewal Committee [D] Short to Medium Term [6 months to 1 year] - Explore repurposing select courses into certificate, graduate diploma, and Continuing Professional Development programs with possible pathways to MScPhm program [D-PharmSci] Long Term [2-3 years] - Graduate Program Renewal Advisory Committee to make recommendations on redesign and/or closure of MScPhm program [D-PharmSci]
The reviewers noted that, although the PharmD for Pharmacists (PfP) continues to attract interest, the program will have a finite lifespan. They recommended that the Faculty	3.	"The Faculty will need to decide when it is appropriate to sundown the [PharmD for Pharmacists] program	As noted by the reviewers, admissions to the PharmD for Pharmacists program have remained relatively stable. While these numbers indicate continued interest in the near term, we recognize the importance of planning proactively for a time when demand may	Short to Medium Term [6 months to 1 year] Monitor annual admission rates and flag if they fall below a predetermined level for two consecutive years [D-PfP]

consider when it may be appropriate to sunset this program, based on student demand and financial sustainability.		based on the level of interest from potential students and financial sustainability considerations.”	decrease. The Faculty is developing a clear framework to guide any future decision to sunset the program which will incorporate efficient and flexible delivery models, repurposing and extending components of the PfP program to broaden impact and create new educational pathways, international partnership models, micro-credentials, certificate pathways, and integration with the three-year PharmD program.	Long Term [2-3 years] - Repurpose components of the PfP program to broaden impact and create new educational pathways including more efficient and flexible delivery models, bundling selected courses by shared themes and learning outcomes into micro-credentials and certificate pathways, and integration with the three-year PharmD program [D-PfP & D-CPD] - Develop and implement a communication plan for any changes made to the program. [D-Com] - Explore international partnership models for dual-degree pathways [D-PfP]
The reviewers recommended that the Faculty consider strategies to further strengthen processes and supports for students in the doctoral program, and work to reduce the average time to PhD completion.	4.	“Develop and implement processes/policies/procedures that result in a reduction in the average time to completion for PhD students.”	The Graduate Department is committed to improving these outcomes by using the School of Graduate Studies’ “Improving Doctoral Time to Completion: Best Practices for Doctoral Students” to guide accountability related to time to completion. We continue to strengthen monitoring and support mechanisms. In September 2024, we launched Prograds, an online platform accessible to students and faculty that tracks key program milestones such as committee meetings and completion of course requirements, enabling students and faculty to more easily monitor progress. We are working to enhance Prograds’ reporting capabilities and to integrate it into Academic Standing reviews so that emerging concerns can be identified earlier. In Fall 2025 we finalized new guidelines for addressing unsatisfactory performance at advisory committee meetings. The Faculty has also increased PhD stipends to \$40,000 and introduced Dean’s Fellowships and top-up awards to reduce financial pressures that can prolong time to completion. We actively connect students with university-wide resources such as the Centre for Graduate Mentorship & Supervision (CGMS), the Graduate Centre for Academic Communication (GCAC), and SGS writing groups, and we are raising awareness of these supports through targeted	Short Term [6 months] - Hire an Associate Dean, Student Success, to provide support in student progress; search underway December 2025 [D] - Review the School of Graduate Studies’ “Improving Doctoral Time to Completion: Best Practices for Doctoral Students,” identify additional strategies and develop an implementation plan [D-PharmSci] Short to Medium Term [6 months to 1 year] - Enhance reporting capabilities within Prograds [D-PharmSci] - Develop, implement, and regularly monitor aggregate reporting of student progress [D-PharmSci]

			communications. We will further strengthen our supports by working with the newly approved Associate Dean, Student Success role which will provide strategic oversight of graduate student progress.	
Noting several recent faculty departures and anticipated retirements, the reviewers recommended that LDFP engage in strategic and comprehensive complement planning. They highlighted the importance of affirming and refining the Faculty's research priorities when pursuing new appointments.	5. & 6.	“Develop a clear plan to enhance and expand the quantity and quality of the research enterprise through strategic hiring based on upcoming retirements.” “A higher pace of recent faculty renewal offers a once in a generation opportunity for renewal and building research capacity/critical mass/focus.”	Hiring priorities are guided by our Academic Plan, existing and planned research Centres of Excellence, and regular focused consultations with faculty members and external interest holders to identify specific areas of research expertise that would enhance and expand the quantity and quality of the research enterprise and ensure specific areas of expertise are present in the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy.	Short Term [6 months] - Complete hiring of an Assistant Professor, AI in Health Care [D] - Complete hiring of a Professor, AI in Health Care [D] Short to Medium Term [6 months to 1 year] - Participate in IMPACT+ Research Chair hiring opportunity [D and ADR] - Complete hiring of a scientist focused on Real World Evidence [D] Medium Term [1 year] - Carry out consultation on faculty member hiring priorities during development of the next Academic Plan [D and ADR]
The reviewers identified opportunities for the Faculty to strengthen connections and collaborations across the University's three campuses, such as exploring potential distributed models of PharmD delivery and other academic initiatives.	7. & 8.	“Explore the opportunities that exist for delivering academic programs at other sites in the University of Toronto tri-campus system.” “Distributed model for PharmD – introducing a cohort of students at other U of T campuses such as Scarborough and/or Mississauga (with associated robust business case development)”	The Faculty recognizes the potential benefits of a distributed model for PharmD delivery across the University of Toronto's tri-campus system, including the introduction of cohorts at Scarborough and Mississauga in enhancing accessibility, strengthening partnerships, and enriching experiential learning opportunities. We will continue and grow our pilot project started in 2024-25 in collaboration with experiential partner sites located in the Toronto East Region. This project allows students to complete APPE rotations and experience different aspects of the health care system within this geographical region. The Faculty has also initiated exploratory discussions with leadership at UTM and UTSC to identify and develop collaborative opportunities. These conversations have focused on entry-to-practice pathways (e.g. reserved seating), joint delivery of pharmaceutical sciences and other health-related courses across campuses, combined degree	Short to Medium Term [6 months to 1 year] - Grow Toronto East Region experiential education pilot program [D-PharmD] - Continue discussions with leadership at UTM and UTSC to identify and develop collaborative opportunities. [D] Medium Term [1 year] - Explore development of pre-admission agreements for students [D-PharmD] - Develop academic, operations and business plans for Bachelors of Pharmaceutical Sciences program [D, ADA, and DAAS] - Develop academic, operations and business plans for situating a cohort of PharmD students at UTSC and UTM [ADA and D-PharmD] Long Term [2-3 years]

			programs including leveraging the biotechnology sector in Toronto/Ontario, and hosting cohorts of PharmD students.	Explore pathways for combined degree programs with PharmD program [ADA and D-PharmD]
The reviewers recommended conducting an assessment of current leadership and organizational structures, to ensure that they optimally support the Faculty's objectives.	9. & 10.	“Given the size and complexity of the Faculty, we believe there is an opportunity to strengthen and clarify the leadership team through additional senior positions to support the Dean – e.g. Associate Dean Students, Associate Dean Graduate/Postdoctoral, Director of Administration (very recently hired) to oversee all support staff.” “Take steps to strengthen and expand the leadership team to support the Dean.”	Several steps are already underway to further enhance leadership capacity and organizational effectiveness. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) position changed in early 2025, prompting a comprehensive review of administrative staffing which resulted in the creation of the Director, Educational and Administrative Systems (August 2025), who has developed four major automation projects (automated systems for Academic PTR and workload administration, contract tracking, clinical instructor monthly hours tracking, and registrar petitions management). In addition, an Associate Dean, Student Success position has been approved by the Provost, with a search scheduled to launch before the end of 2025. The Faculty has implemented a series of professional development sessions to build leadership capability, for senior leaders and directors (October 2025 to January 2026). Additional realignment of academic and administrative leadership positions are under consideration and will be evaluated for implementation as part of consultation and development of the new Academic Plan	Short Term [6 months] - Implement major automation projects [CAO] - Hiring an Associate Dean, Student Success, to provide support in student progress; search underway December 2025 [D] - Evaluate leadership experience with leadership development sessions and identify further development opportunities [D&CAO] Medium Term [1 year] - Realignment of academic and administrative leadership positions [D&CAO]
Though recognizing the Faculty's current sound financial position, the reviewers acknowledged the potential for future challenges related to the funding landscape in Ontario. They highlighted opportunities to explore innovative new academic programming that engages Toronto and Ontario's vibrant biosciences ecosystem, noting the potential for revenue generation.	11, 12, & 13	The Financial position of the Faculty appears to be somewhat precarious in the medium to long term. Serious thought should be given to exploring new avenues of revenue generation through the provision of innovative and attractive academic programming.” “Examine the opportunities for long term revenue	Faculty acknowledges the reviewers' observations regarding potential medium to long term financial challenges and appreciates the recommendation to explore innovative academic programming as a means of revenue generation. While the Faculty is currently in a strong financial position with healthy reserves, we recognize the constraints imposed by the Ontario funding environment, including a tuition freeze in place since 2019 and ongoing annual increases in salary and benefit costs. The Faculty has maintained fiscal stability through sensible budgeting and prudent reserve management, however it is essential to diversify revenue streams in order to mitigate future risk.	Short Term [6 months] - Launch Graduate Program Renewal Advisory Committee [D] - Launch new graduate program courses in drug development (e.g. AI in Drug Discovery and 'target-to-hit') [D-PharmSci] - Develop a strategy to build on existing relationships and identify new relationships with pharmaceutical and biotechnology partners [D] Short to Medium Term [6 months to 1 year] - Monitor number of applications and acceptance of admissions for the PharmD program [D-PharmD]

		generation through new academic programs leveraging the biotechnology sector in Toronto/Ontario.” “The Faculty has good relationships with a variety of partners in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. There is an opportunity to build on these to develop innovative and relevant academic programming to support this important sector.”	Several initiatives are underway to strengthen financial resilience and to align with the reviewers’ advice to pursue innovative and attractive academic programming that engages Toronto and Ontario’s biosciences ecosystem: • Transition from a four-year (141 educational weeks) to a three-year (142 educational weeks) PharmD program is expected to be very attractive to students interested in health professions education, keeping our applicant pool strong and building opportunity for program expansion • Expansion of Continuing Professional Development offerings • Expansion of the International Pharmacy Graduate Program • Renewal of the Pharmaceutical Sciences graduate program with strong emphasis on streams that will leverage the biotechnology sector in Toronto/Ontario including AI, management/leadership/entrepreneurship, and preclinical translation We are exploring the opportunity to better support commercialization including a component of financial return to the Faculty. We are also examining internships and experiential learning opportunities as a mechanism to enhance professional development.	• Continue discussions with leadership at UTM and UTSC to identify and develop collaborative opportunities [D] Medium Term [1 year] • Develop academic, operations and business plans for Bachelors of Pharmaceutical Sciences program [D, ADA & DAAS] • Develop academic, operations and business plans to increase programs and enrolment in the Continuing Professional Development Program [D-CPD] • Develop academic, operations and business plans to increase in the International Pharmacy Graduate Program [D-IPG] • Develop academic, operations and business plans for renewed a graduate education program including streams such as Drug Development and Management program [D-PharmSci] • Prioritize new / revised academic program development based on planning groundwork [ADA] • Develop commercialization strategy [ADR] • Explore pathways for internships and experiential learning opportunities [D-PharmSci]
The reviewers observed that, although the Faculty has enjoyed a strong reputation over decades, maintaining and enhancing this standing in a competitive landscape will require the development and implementation of a “bold strategic vision.” They emphasized the importance of ensuring that the Faculty’s strategic planning exercises effectively guide priorities	14.	“Develop and implement a clear strategic plan for the Faculty.”	The Faculty appreciates reviewers’ observations and agrees that sustaining and enhancing our strong reputation in a competitive landscape requires a bold and forward-looking strategic vision. We will initiate planning for our next Academic Plan in 2026 which will provide a timely and structured opportunity to develop a clear strategic vision and plan. We expect the new Academic Plan will address expansion and diversification of our academic programs, continued excellence in research, and faculty and staff complement planning to support our mission.	Short Term [6 months] • Initiate development of the next Academic Plan [D] Medium Term [1 year] • Finalize Academic Plan [D]

related to research focus, faculty complement planning, and academic program development.				
The reviewers highlighted the need for clear communication of the Faculty's strategic priorities and any planned program changes, and broadly recommended that the Faculty explore ways to strengthen internal and external communications.	15.	"Improve external and internal communications, in particular to support strategic planning and implementation."	Over the past five years, substantial progress has been made to enhance our strategic communications, including the launch of a fully redesigned, secure, accessible, mobile-friendly website and an LDFFP-specific brand that cohesively aligns with the larger university brand identity. Since launching these key assets in 2020, we have seen marked improvement across a range of indicators, including significant increases in application rates for our professional pharmacy program, deepened engagement across all external communication channels as measured by growth and reach, and the successful launch event for our current Academic Plan in 2023 that attracted over 300 interest holders, leaders and alumni from across pharmacy practice, industry, government, and academia. Our publicly available annual digital Dean's Reports have earned more than 1,000 views per year since 2020. In the last year, our two primary social media accounts, LinkedIn and Instagram, have achieved follower growth of 28% and 40%, respectively. Total pageviews on our website pharmacy.utoronto.ca were over 1 million, and we earned 38,000 unique pageviews on LDFFP news stories. Several communications initiatives have recently been rolled out to support internal engagement with enterprise-wide change as we transitioned to a new three-year program structure for our Doctor of Pharmacy Program that launched in August 2025. These include a dedicated curriculum renewal newsletter, an enhanced resources hub hosted on SharePoint, Dean's Messages, faculty-wide town hall meeting, and open PharmD Program Committee meetings.	Short Term [6 months] - Consult with Dean's Advisory Committee on alignment of Faculty communications priorities with priorities of external stakeholders [D-Com] - Incorporate communication plans into major academic program change initiatives from the outset [D-Com] Short to Medium Term [6 months to 1 year] - Regular communication reports at Faculty Council and Faculty and Staff meetings [D-Com] - Continued regular monitoring of communication channel performance and engagement [D-Com]

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers observed that the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy (LDFP) is well-regarded nationally and internationally, and enjoys strong decanal leadership that is respected and valued by faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders across Canada. They noted that the majority of LDFP's programs are popular and highly respected, and that facilities for teaching and research are strong. They highlighted the engagement of students, faculty, and staff – who value the Faculty's intellectual and physical environment – and noted that LDFP is seen as an innovative and collaborative partner within the University. They also noted a positive culture within the graduate programs and commended the range of experiential and extracurricular opportunities available to students. Staff provide excellent support that is greatly appreciated throughout the Faculty, and LDFP benefits from strong relationships with partners in the pharmacy profession and the broader life-sciences sector. Finally, the Faculty demonstrates strong engagement with alumni, who value their ongoing connections to the University and contribute in a variety of ways.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: the need for careful consideration, strategic management, and communication regarding the planned compression of the PharmD program; determining appropriate future directions for the MScPhm program given its consistently low enrolment, including the possibility of closure; deciding when it may be appropriate to sunset the PharmD for Pharmacists program based on student demand and financial sustainability; strengthening processes and supports for doctoral students and reducing the average time to PhD completion; engaging in strategic and comprehensive complement planning in light of recent faculty departures and anticipated retirements, with attention to the Faculty's research priorities; exploring opportunities to strengthen connections and collaborations across the University's three campuses, including potential distributed models of PharmD delivery; conducting an assessment of current leadership and organizational structures; exploring innovative academic programming in the context of potential future financial challenges; developing and implementing a bold strategic vision to support the Faculty's priorities related to research, complement planning, and academic program development; and strengthening internal and external communications, including clear communication of strategic priorities and any planned program changes.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty's and program 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 will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs on the status of the implementation plans, due midway between the year of the last and next site visits.

The next review will be commissioned for a site visit to take place no later than eight years from March 2025.

6 Distribution

On August 15th, 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Canadian Studies (HBA): Specialist, Major, Minor Asian Canadian Studies (Minor) Certificate in Black Canadian Studies
Unit Offering Program(s):	University College, Faculty of Arts and Science
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Marie Carrière, Professor and Vice-Dean of Research, English & Film Studies Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta • David Massell, Director of Canadian Studies Program, Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of History, University of Vermont
Date of Review Visit:	March 21, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	July 23, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 20, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: April 26, 2017

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Program's profile reflects key and new areas in the field, including the innovative addition of the Asian Canadian minor
- High quality opportunities for student research and learning beyond the classroom
- Students and faculty have very positive experiences in the program

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Addressing reliance on cognate units to offer support courses, which creates potential for curricular gaps or unpredictable patterns in course offerings; strengthening partnerships with cognate departments as well as with OISE, UTM, and UTSC
- Strengthening connections between Indigenous Studies and Canadian Studies programs through course offerings
- Addressing declining enrolments and raising the program's profile
- Strengthening relationships with other universities and/or the national Canadian Studies organization to enhance the program
- Rebuilding the faculty complement as the current Director's term ends and teaching staff retire
- Building on fundraising success and working on attracting additional funding

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study; Previous review report including the administrative response(s); Access to all course descriptions; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty.

Consultation Process

Faculty, students, administrative staff and senior program administrators as well as members of relevant cognate units as determined by the commissioning officer including Vice-Dean, Academic Planning; Acting Vice-Dean, Undergraduate; Associate Dean, Student Affairs, Acting Principal and Vice-Principal of University College; Interim Director, Canadian Studies; Incoming Director, Canadian Studies; University College Chief Administrative Officer; Cognate Unit faculty from Department of History; Department of English; Department of Classics, and the Director of the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies; core faculty who teach in the program; 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
 - ▶ Canadian Studies appears to be a thriving undergraduate program
- Objectives
 - ▶ Program objectives are consistent with the vision statement of University College and the broader mission of the University of Toronto, while being specifically focused on the critical study of Canada
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Enrolments are reported to be relatively high for an area studies program; and courses are mostly full (with some waitlists, particularly for Asian Canadian Studies courses)
 - ▶ Program and course enrolments declined during the pandemic but are now both on the rise again; reviewers highlight an uptick in specialist enrolments
 - ▶ All Canadian Studies offerings are open enrolment, which reviewers note is appropriate
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ In collaboration with cognate units, the program offers a robust, engaging, popular and thematically coherent set of courses
 - ▶ Programs consist of required interdisciplinary core courses, complemented by humanities and social sciences electives, which is consistent with other Canadian Studies offerings
 - ▶ Canadian Studies offers a range of interdisciplinary core and elective courses across its Specialist, Major, Minor, and Certificate programs, covering topics such as nationalism, globalization, pluralism, borders, Black and Asian Canadian histories and cultures, media, literature, and truth and reconciliation
 - ▶ Available courses seem to be exciting, relevant and reflective of current directions in the field
 - ▶ New “Active Citizenship” course will present a good opportunity for community-based work
 - ▶ Anticipated development of a required Introduction to Truth and Reconciliation in Canada course in formal collaboration with the Centre for Indigenous Studies is a promising curricular development
 - ▶ Faculty-student ratios seem appropriate
- Innovation
 - ▶ Approach of program pathways and efforts to incorporate Indigenous perspectives are noted to be cutting-edge, and reflective of Canada’s and Ontario’s increasingly diverse student body

- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Program is moving in the direction of distinct pathways, such as Asian Canadian Studies and Black Canadian Studies
 - ▶ Program notes desire to collaborate with colleagues in Indigenous Studies and incorporate more Indigenous content and perspectives
 - ▶ Program responds distinctively to U of T commitments to removing barriers to access and increasing retention rates for Indigenous and Black students
 - ▶ Certificate in Black Canadian Studies “attracts a majority of Black Students as well as a diverse student body and steady enrolments”
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students interviewed appear happy and engaged
 - ▶ Research opportunities appear to be an important part of the student’s program experience, particularly the Canadian Studies Undergraduate Journal
 - ▶ Students praise the experiential aspects of the program and greatly appreciate community field trips and integrated work study
 - ▶ Experiential opportunities such as community-based engagement and organizing noted as a program strength
 - ▶ Student course evaluations from 2017-23 rate Canadian Studies courses on par with or higher than Arts and Science courses
 - ▶ Student interviews also indicate strong satisfaction; students describe small and interactive classes, continuity across courses, dedicated and engaging teachers and a diverse set of students with a strong sense of community
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ High school grade averages for students enrolling in the majors or minors have risen from approximately 85% to 90% between 2016 and 2023 (data for the Asian Canadian Studies minor and specialists are less reliable)

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Students noted concerns about limited and narrow exposure to Francophone Canadian issues that tends to “other” Quebec as regressive or conservative

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Reviewers recommend closely monitoring enrolments in CS majors, minors and certificates
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Students interviewed noted desire for more diverse course content and inclusion of opposing perspectives, and for guidance from instructors on how to mediate opposing or extreme views
 - ▶ Student surveys indicate desire for courses that address history, military history, world affairs, immigration and film

- ▶ Noting the deeply diverse and complex history of Francophone Canada, reviewers encourage the program to reflect this in course material, and potentially also with research events and invited speakers
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Consider establishment of a fund to support experiential opportunities and community engagement; this might provide modest funding to invite cultural advisors and support costs such as honoraria or travel

2. Graduate Program(s) – n/a

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Program “benefits from a small number of excellent faculty”
- Faculty
 - ▶ Two full-time faculty hold primary endowed appointments in Canadian Studies, with cross-appointments to other units; both are active and respected in their fields
 - ▶ Two additional Canadian Studies positions have been created since the previous review
 - ▶ Contributing faculty are from different disciplinary backgrounds, but share strong interest in the study of Canada

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

- Faculty
 - ▶ “[C]oncerns were repeatedly raised, by both students and full-time faculty, about an overrepresentation of precarious instructors in the Program, which results in a regular turnover and loss of excellent teaching staff and overall instability and inequity in the teaching body”

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ Consider a new hire in Indigenous research, cross appointed to Canadian Studies and the Centre for Indigenous Studies, which would potentially help deepen partnerships and further develop a crucial area in the Canadian Studies program

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
 - ▶ Faculty, leadership and staff express considerable pride in and dedication to the program
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Program appears to have a sound financial footing, with funding from various sources including the Dean's Office, University College, and designated trusts and donations that support key faculty positions
 - ▶ Incoming Director appointed for a 3-year term will bring leadership stability to the program
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Program appears to have addressed concerns raised in the previous review about low enrolments, and is working to address issues of program visibility
 - ▶ Program self-study describes "room for growth" in the Asian Canadian Studies Minor and the Certificate in Black Canadian Studies
- International comparators
 - ▶ Current panel agrees with previous reviewers' assessment that the Canadian Studies program is "is ideally positioned, within one of Canada's leading universities and in Canada's largest city, to compare with other programs in the country."
 - ▶ Program is moving to reflect and serve Toronto's multicultural community through deepening engagement with Asian Canadian Studies and Black Canadian Studies, and with its growing curricular coverage of Indigenous Canadian Studies

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

- Relationships
 - ▶ Faculty, leadership and staff note some concerns about the visibility and sustainability of the program
 - ▶ Previous review recommended strengthened engagement with cognate units; work appears to still be needed in this area
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Some faculty expressed concern that the new FAS budget model will result in the program losing "their incentive to cooperate instead of competing for students" (though reviewers note that their understanding is that the new model will not affect the program)

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Faculty connections to the Transitional Year Program, which consists primarily of Black and Indigenous students, presents a good opportunity for deepening the relationship and raising the profile and visibility of the Canadian Studies program
 - ▶ “As a college program, it will be important that the calendar continue to list CS as a ‘specific entry’”
 - ▶ Strengthening partnerships and collaborations in the areas of Asian and Black studies will be important for program growth
 - ▶ Additional formal agreements with cognate units and disciplines should be explored, in order to have more full-time faculty involved in Canadian Studies teaching
 - ▶ Developments in the areas of Indigenous knowledge, methods and land-based learning will require formal ongoing partnership with the Centre for Indigenous Studies
 - ▶ Reviewers broadly observe that partnerships with cognate units and potential cross-appointments are necessary for the visibility and sustainability of an interdisciplinary area studies program such as Canadian Studies; “CS must and will...need to continue to monitor and expand opportunities for cross-listings and joint appointments with departments including History, English, Religion, French, Italian and Political Science, and with programs in American Studies, Indigenous Studies, Jewish Studies, and African Studies”
 - ▶ Strengthening connections with the existing UC One Program could provide an entry way for some students into the Canadian Studies program
 - ▶ Monitor and expand on efforts to increase the program’s visibility and legibility among first-year students
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Some efforts have been made to mitigate challenges with program visibility and sustainability since the previous review, but “these remain areas that require watchfulness and maintenance”
 - ▶ “[T]he CS Program could turn its focus to stabilizing the Certificate in Black Studies and expanding it into a Minor – as justified by student interest”
 - ▶ Prioritize fundraising for a Chair in Black Canadian Studies
 - ▶ Consider the future development of a MOOC to respond to national interest in Black Canadian Studies
 - ▶ In considering enhanced coverage of Canada’s Francophonies for the program, reviewers highlight the geographical proximity of Toronto to the bilingual University of Ottawa, and to the province of Quebec



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

February 20, 2026

Professor Nick Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

RE: UTQAP cyclical review of the Canadian Studies programs (University College)

Dear Prof. Rule,

I write in response to your letter of October 22, 2025, regarding the March 2, 2025, UTQAP cyclical review of the Canadian Studies program housed in University College. The following programs were reviewed: Canadian Studies, HBA (Specialist, Major, Minor); Asian Canadian Studies (Minor); Certificate in Black Canadian Studies.

On behalf of the Faculty of Arts & Science, we would first like to thank the reviewers: Marie Carrière, Professor and Vice-Dean of Research, English & Film Studies Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta and David Massell, Director of Canadian Studies Program, Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of History, University of Vermont for their very comprehensive review of the Canadian Studies programs. We would also like to thank and acknowledge the University College leadership, program director, faculty, administrative staff, and all those who contributed to the preparation of the self-study. We also wish to thank the many staff, students, and faculty members who met with the external reviewers and provided thoughtful feedback. The UTQAP cyclical review process is an invaluable exercise that affords us the opportunity to take stock of our academic units and programs, to recognize achievement, and identify areas for improvement.

The review report was finalized on July 7, 2025, after which the College leadership shared it widely with stakeholders in the program. We are extremely pleased with the reviewers' positive assessment of the overall strength of the program and its outstanding, productive faculty members. The reviewers commended Canadian Studies as a thriving and innovative undergraduate program with strong enrolments and a clear sense of purpose. They praised its engaging, thematically coherent curriculum, which incorporates cutting-edge pathways in Black Canadian and Asian Canadian Studies and is moving to strengthen collaboration with Indigenous Studies. Students greatly value the program's small, interactive classes, experiential learning opportunities, and sense of community, describing faculty as dedicated and inspiring teachers. The reviewers noted that Canadian Studies responds distinctively to the University's commitments to equity, diversity, and access, and that its endowed chairs and cross-appointments provide important stability and visibility. Overall, they highlighted the dedication of faculty, staff, and leadership, and affirmed that Canadian Studies is well positioned within University College and the University of Toronto to serve as a leader in the field.

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

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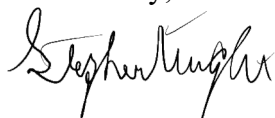
The review report also raised several issues and challenges and identified areas for enhancement, including those summarized in the accompanying Review Recommendations Table.

Each of these recommendations has been addressed in the attached Review Recommendations Table, which outlines the unit's response, the Dean's response, and an Implementation Plan identifying action items and timelines for each recommendation. My Administrative Response and Implementation Plan was developed in consultation with the Interim Chair and with the Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, and senior leadership within my office. The Implementation Plan provided identifies timeframes of immediate- (six months), medium- (one to two years), and longer- (three to five years) term actions and who (Faculty, Dean, unit) will take the lead in each area. I also identified any necessary changes in organization, policy, or governance, where appropriate, as well as any resources, financial or otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.

The next UTQAP Cyclical review of the Canadian Studies programs will take place no later than the 2031-32 review cycle. My office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with Chairs and directors, and through the unit's five-year unit-level academic planning process, which will begin at the conclusion of the cyclical review, if relevant. I also acknowledge that your office will request a brief Interim Monitoring Report midway between the March 2025 UTQAP cyclical review and the year of the next site visit in 2031-32 to report on progress made on the Implementation Plan as outlined in the accompanying Review Recommendations Table.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the review report. The reviewers' comments and recommendations will help inform the future priorities of the Canadian Studies programs.

Sincerely,



Stephen Wright
Interim Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Professor, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

cc.

Markus Stock, Principal, University College
Emily Gilbert, Vice-Principal, University College
Dimitry Anastakis, Director, Canadian Studies, University College
Gillian Hamilton, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Faculty of Arts & Science
Ebba Kurz, Interim Associate Dean, Unit-Level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science
Caitlin Burton, Senior Manager, Curriculum, Change & Reviews, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science

Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Amanda Pullan, Academic Planning & Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science

2024-25 UTQAP Review of the FAS Canadian Studies Program (University College) - Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, "it is important to note that, while the external reviewers' report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university's internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability" (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Program Response	Dean's Response
The reviewers observed student interest in broader and more diverse course content, and increased coverage in areas such as military history, world affairs, immigration, and film. They also noted that students would benefit from guidance on engaging constructively with differing and opposing viewpoints in the classroom.	1.	"Students in conversation suggested that improvements are needed in terms of allowing more space for diverse content and opposing (including conservative) perspectives in the classroom and for demonstration, by the instructors, of how to mediate opposing or extreme views. This echoes responses to the CS' fall 2024 survey results which are noted in the Self-Study: students' requests for courses that address history/military history, world affairs, immigration and film."	The UTQAP report offers a positive assessment of the Canadian Studies program, including the diversity of our course offerings. As a result of curriculum renewal, as of Fall 2026, students in Canadian Studies are now required to take at least one of three core courses, including CDN265H: Race and Racialization in Canada, CDN267H: Canadian Nationalisms, and CDN268H: Canada & Globalization, which individually and collectively address a diversity of subjects, from a range of viewpoints. Topics such as world affairs are covered extensively in CDN268H: Canada and Globalization and CDN368H: Canada's Borders—albeit from a Canadian perspective. Immigration is also a core focus of both these courses as well as many others that attend to diaspora and transnationalism. Canadian Studies students are encouraged to take courses in other units to supplement these interests, such as HIS312H: Immigration to Canada, or courses on military history (eg	Immediate to medium-term: The Dean's Office and Vice-Dean, Undergraduate support the continuation of these efforts to offer a diverse range of courses including promotion of cross-listed courses in the cognate disciplines. The Dean's Office commends the program for the initiative shown in submitting an application for a Learning & Education Advancement Fund Plus (LEAF+) grant for their project "A Civil Discourse Toolkit: Developing common frameworks for interdisciplinary research and collaboration in experiential learning (EL)." The Office of the Dean also encourages the review of the recommendations of the Working Group on Civil Discourse, in particular the section on the classroom environment https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/committees/working-group-on-civil-discourse/

			HIS356H: War in Canadian History) or film (eg CIN370H: Canadian Cinemas). We are committed to holding a Program Retreat 2026-7, to continue discussing these and other matters (curriculum, pedagogy, AI, etc.) among program faculty.	The Dean's office is pleased to note the unit's plan to engage in an upcoming faculty retreat on teaching, curriculum renewal and mapping. The ASDO offers matching funds to support unit retreats, including for retreats that address reviewer recommendations following cyclical review. The unit is encouraged to reach out to the ASDO to inquire about eligibility for reimbursement.
The reviewers noted student concerns about limited and narrow exposure to Francophone Canadian issues. They emphasized the importance of strengthening engagement and coverage in this area and ensuring that the diversity and complexity of Francophone Canada is reflected in course material, as well as in research and events.	2.	"We would encourage the CS Program to reflect [a] wider notion of Francophone Canada, not only in the course material but perhaps also with research events or invited speakers organized for students and faculty."	The Canadian Studies program has one course devoted to Quebec: CDN202H1: Aspects of Québec Culture. This course is paid for by Canadian Studies but is staffed by the Department of French. Students are encouraged to take other courses in A&S on Francophone Canada, such as HIS314H: Twentieth Century Quebec. We would welcome a partnership with the Department of French or other units to be able to offer more courses on Francophonies in Canada.	Immediate to Medium-term. The Dean's Office supports the Program's plan to consider opportunities to offer more courses on Francophonies in Canada through partnerships with their cognate units.
	3.	"more exposure for students to the plurality of Francophonies in Canada."		
The reviewers noted concerns about the precarity of instructional staffing in the program. They recommended strengthening partnerships and pursuing joint appointments with cognate units, in particular Indigenous Studies, to increase the involvement of full-time faculty in Canadian Studies and support program sustainability.	4.	"increased and tighter partnerships with cognate departments or units in order to have more full-time faculty involved in CS teaching."	Given the interdisciplinary nature of Canadian Studies, most of our faculty have joint or cross-appointments in other units; we gain the benefits of those relationships, but we also welcome the opportunity to further build our connections to cognate units. The resurrection of a multi-disciplinary academic advisory board will help build stronger relations with cognate units. Canadian Studies would be delighted to add an Indigenous faculty hire, cross-appointed or otherwise, and to increase and develop partnerships with the Centre for Indigenous Studies, and other units. To this end, in 2024, Canadian Studies submitted a request to partner with the Centre for Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies on an appointment on	The Dean's Office encourages the Program to continue identifying areas where collaboration with cognate units is mutually beneficial. All requests for faculty appointments are submitted through the Faculty Appointments Committee, which includes representation across its sectors (Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences) and from the Colleges. The FAC reviews all requests for new positions and makes recommendations to the Dean regarding which requests should be granted. In a given year, there are many more requests than available positions. We are pleased that the request for a prospective hire jointly between Canadian
	5.	"consideration of a cross-appointed Indigenous faculty hire."		

			settler colonial legalities and Indigenous land dispossession, but this request was not approved. In 2025, Canadian Studies has submitted a request to partner with the Department of English on an appointment in Indigenous literature and culture—we are awaiting the results of this request.	Studies and the Department of English is strongly supported by the ASDO, pending approval by the Provost's Office.
	6.	“Still in development in the CS Program is the area of Indigenous knowledge, methods and land-based learning, which will require a formal and ongoing partnership with the University's Centre for Indigenous Studies.”	As a result of curricular renewal, implemented for the 2026-27 academic year, Canadian Studies Specialists and Majors are now required to take the Indigenous Studies course, INS200H: Introduction to Indigenous Truth and Resilience. This arrangement is the result of an agreement with the Centre for Indigenous Studies. Consultations with the Centre for Indigenous Studies are ongoing and have strengthened the Canadian Studies program's connections to the Centre for Indigenous Studies and responded to the need for more and better education about Indigenous people, integrating more Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, and creating opportunities for students to learn from and with Indigenous knowledge experts. The Canadian Studies Program Director continues to consult with the Indigenous Academic Advisor in A&S to ensure that there is more Indigenous content in existing courses. In Fall 2024, core program faculty (and some sessionals) participated in a Workshop on Indigenizing the Curriculum, offered by the Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Curriculum & Education, Office of Indigenous Initiatives. Canadian Studies also prioritizes guest lectures by Indigenous faculty and visiting fellows.	Immediate: The Dean's Office recognizes the Program has considered this recommendation and is taking steps to address it by strengthening relationships across the faculty with the Centre for Indigenous Studies and other units/scholars who are engaged in Indigenous research and teaching.

	7.	“CS must and will, therefore, need to continue to monitor and expand opportunities for cross-listings and joint appointments with departments including History, English, Religion, French, Italian and Political Science, and with programs in American Studies, Indigenous Studies, Jewish Studies, and African Studies.”	As noted in the self-study, Canadian Studies already offers courses in partnership with the Departments of French, Italian Studies, and Religion as well as the Centre for Jewish Studies, and the Mark Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies. As noted above, in partnership with the Centre for Indigenous Studies, Canadian Studies Majors and Specialists must take INS200H: Introduction to Indigenous Truth and Resilience. Canadian Studies welcomes the opportunity to further partner with these units on complement planning and/or course offerings, and with other units in A&S, such as History, English, Political Science, and African Studies.	The Dean’s Office recognizes that the Program has considered this review report recommendation. The ASDO encourages the program’s engagement with additional cognate units with whom it may consider cross-listing courses and/or establishing teaching relationships with units willing to deploy their faculty to teach courses in the Canadian Studies program.
	8.	“monitoring and expansion of cross-listings in related/overlapping departments and programs including possibilities for joint hirings.”	Canadian Studies regularly monitors cognate courses offered in other units to ensure that there is no overlap with course content in other units. Where possible, Canadian Studies seeks opportunities to cross-list courses in other units for our students to take as electives towards their program completion. As noted above (#1), students are encouraged to take courses in other units on topics that are not expansively covered in Canadian Studies courses. Canadian Studies regularly updates its website which lists Courses Approved for Canadian Studies POSTs in other units in A&S https://www.utoronto.ca/canadian-studies/courses	See response above, #7.
The reviewers highlighted the program’s particular strength in experiential learning as well as its distinctive pathways in Black and Asian Canadian Studies. They encouraged	9.	“There is ‘room for growth’, as the Self-Study describes, in both the Minor in Asian Canadian Studies (launched in 2012; 13 students as of fall 2016, 12 as of fall 2024) and the Certificate in Black	We agree, and recent hires in both Asian Canadian and Black Canadian Studies have been made to strengthen these fields. We continue to work on other opportunities to	Immediate to medium term: The Vice-Dean, Undergraduate and the Vice-Dean, Academic Planning will work with the Canadian Studies program leadership to explore ideas and

continued support for these unique areas, and exploration of new initiatives to strategically develop them further.		Canadian Studies (launched in 2021; 12 students as of fall 2024). The CS Program could turn its focus to stabilizing the Certificate in Black Studies and expanding it into a Minor – as justified by student interest.”	build these programs, including a Chair in Black Canadian Studies (see #10). As part of their stated mandate, the new program director endeavours to expand the Certificate in Black Canadian Studies into a Minor, taking into account student interest, staffing, and course offerings.	opportunities for curriculum growth in the areas of Black and Asian Canadian Studies.
	10.	“carry out the fund raising needed to hire a Chair in Black Canadian Studies.”	Working with the UC Office of Advancement, fundraising and outreach in order to create a new Chair in Black Canadian Studies is a key goal of the program. Currently, there are no resources available to develop a Massive Open Online Course in Black Canadian Studies.	The Dean’s Office recognizes that the Program has considered this review recommendation and is working with Advancement on the establishment of a new Chair in Black Canadian Studies. The Dean’s Office recognizes that the Program has considered this review recommendation.
	11.	“With a Chair in place, the Program would be well placed also to develop a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), allowing the CS Program to be at the forefront of answering Canada-wide interest in Black Studies.”		
	12.	“consideration of the establishment of a fund to support community engagement to further links to the wider urban community and foster opportunities for experiential learning.”	We are developing experiential courses, such as CDN320H: Experiential Learning, which builds upon another course, CDN435Y: Active Citizenship in a Canadian Context. In conjunction with this new course, Canadian Studies faculty have applied for a Learning & Education Advancement Fund Plus (LEAF+) grant for the project, “A Civil Discourse Toolkit: Developing common frameworks for interdisciplinary research and collaboration in experiential learning (EL).” Canadian Studies continues to discuss additional opportunities for experiential learning with the Office of Experiential Learning and Outreach Support (ELOS) in A&S.	The Dean’s Office encourages the Canadian Studies leadership to continue working with the Office of Experiential Learning and Outreach Support to explore future offerings. The Arts & Science Teaching and Learning Team are also available to consult with the unit on funding opportunities.
The reviewers noted some challenges related to program visibility and enrolment fluctuation. They encouraged continued attention to outreach and promotion, and to	13.	“close monitoring of enrolments in CS majors, minors and certificates.”	We will continue to monitor enrollments in all of our streams, as well as course enrollments.	Immediate: The Dean’s Office recognizes that the Program is currently addressing this recommendation.

exploring the development of program entry pathways.	14.	“Building on the existing UC One Program offers some potential for earlier exposure to the CS Program. ... this could provide a distinct entry way into the Canadian Studies Program, perhaps with explicit involvement of CS faculty.”	Canadian Studies already has a range of small, first year courses. One stream of UC One is specifically related to Canadian Studies (UNI101H: Citizenship in a Canadian City) but courses in all four streams can be counted towards Canadian Studies program requirements, given that all of them are focused on Canadian content. Canadian Studies also offers a suite of First Year Foundation courses: CDN197H: Inventing Canada; CDN198H: Canada, Colonialism and Settler Relations, CDN199H: Canada-Hong Kong Migration, and JCI199H: Italians in Canada: Histories, Journeys, Struggles, Successes.	Immediate to medium-term: The Dean’s Office recognizes that the Program has considered this recommendation and encourages monitoring of student recruitment to the programs from UC One.
	15.	“monitoring/expansion of and experimentation with efforts to increase CS’s visibility/legibility among first-year students.”	We agree and have discussed visibility concerns with faculty as well as staff and consulted with the program student union, CANSSU, to develop social media and other outreach efforts. Events organized to recognize the 50 th anniversary of the program in Fall 2025, have helped bring publicity to the program and also build further connections with alum and community supporters. In addition, the program will use its undergraduate journal, ImagiNATIONS, and undergraduate conference to increase visibility. A national event is being planned for 2027 in conjunction with UofT’s 200 th anniversary.	Immediate: The Dean’s Office recognizes that the Program is currently addressing this recommendation. The Dean’s office can connect the Program Director to the Office of the Faculty Registrar to facilitate the Unit’s participation in the many events it offers to communicate program choice information to students, such as the following: Through the Sidney Smith Commons, the Faculty of Arts & Science offers a series of in-person and online events, workshops and resources through Program Exploration Days to support students as they prepare to make their program selection. The Program Exploration Fair, discussed in the Program Response, offers two full days for students to explore over 300 programs available to Arts & Science students and learn about experiential learning including research, internships and international opportunities.

				The weekly AMA (Ask Me Anything) event in February features upper year students talking about their experiences and offering tips for navigating program selection and learning about program options and experiential learning opportunities. Program Planning Days also offer students insight into how to choose a program of study and understand program requirements. Program student unions also participate in “Clubs Fair” held at the beginning of each academic year. The Dean’s Office also encourages the Unit to connect with the Advancement Office to discuss additional opportunities and mechanisms for connecting with program alumni.
	16.	“As a college program, it will be important that the calendar continue to list CS as a ‘specific entry’ which already ‘has helped’ according to faculty.”	Courses offered by Canadian Studies have the prefix CDN. There is no anticipated change to this designation.	We are pleased that Calendar entries for all College-led programs now have unique course codes reflective of each program. Canadian Studies courses are designated using the CDN prefix, making it easier for students to identify affiliated courses.

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers commended Canadian Studies as a thriving and innovative undergraduate program with strong enrolments and a clear sense of purpose. They praised its engaging, thematically coherent curriculum, which incorporates cutting-edge pathways in Black Canadian and Asian Canadian Studies and is moving to strengthen collaboration with Indigenous Studies. Students greatly value the program's small, interactive classes, experiential learning opportunities, and sense of community, describing faculty as dedicated and inspiring teachers. The reviewers noted that Canadian Studies responds distinctively to the University's commitments to equity, diversity, and access, and that its endowed chairs and cross-appointments provide important stability and visibility. Overall, they highlighted the dedication of faculty, staff, and leadership, and affirmed that Canadian Studies is well positioned within University College and the University of Toronto to serve as a leader in the field.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: exploring ways to address student interest in broader and more diverse content, and in receiving guidance on engaging constructively with differing and opposing viewpoints in the classroom; strengthening engagement with and coverage of Francophone Canadian issues; strengthening partnerships and pursuing joint appointments with cognate units, in particular Indigenous Studies, to increase the involvement of full-time faculty in Canadian Studies and support program sustainability; continuing support for the program's strengths in experiential learning and its distinctive pathways in Black and Asian Canadian Studies, and exploring new initiatives to strategically develop them further; and paying continued attention to program outreach and promotion, and to exploring the development of program entry pathways.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty 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 Arts & Science Dean's Office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with Chairs and Directors through regular governance and curricular oversight. The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than 2028-29 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in 2031-32.

6 Distribution

On July 15th 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Cognitive Science (HBA): Major - Language and Cognition Stream - Perception and Attention Stream - Thinking and Reasoning Stream Cognitive Science (HBSc): Major - Cognition and the Brain Stream - Computational Cognition Stream
Unit Offering Program(s):	Program only review (housed in University College)
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Professor Matthew A. Goldrick, Professor, Department of Linguistics, Director, Cognitive Science Program, Northwestern University • Professor Géraldine Legendre, Professor and Chair, Department Cognitive Science, Johns Hopkins University
Date of Review Visit:	April 4, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	June 20, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 23, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: March 23-24, 2017

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Ongoing, impressive work on curriculum building and curriculum renewal
- Strong enrolment growth
- Able and mostly enthusiastic students; strong support from student group
- Strong support from four supporting units: Psychology, Computer Science, Linguistics, Philosophy
- Dedicated support staff
- Strong support from University College

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Addressing difficulties in offering an integrated, well-rounded curriculum due to dependence on courses from other units
- Creating co-op or internship options and increasing the number of research opportunities to improve experiential learning and recruitment
- Making more faculty cross appointments to provide more academic advising and engage in alumni outcomes tracking
- Realizing untapped program potential, including more program visibility, undergraduate enrolment growth, and a graduate offering supported by the cognate units

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study; Previous review report including the administrative response(s); Access to all course descriptions; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty.

Consultation Process

Faculty, students, administrative staff and senior program administrators as well as members of relevant cognate units as determined by the commissioning officer including: Vice-Dean, Academic Planning; Acting Vice-Dean, Undergraduate; Associate Dean, Student Affairs, Acting Principal and Vice-Principal of University College; Cognitive Science Program Director; Cognate Unit leadership including: Chair and Associate Chair, Undergraduate (Philosophy); Chair (Computer Science); Associate Chair, Undergraduate (Linguistics), and Chair (Psychology); core faculty who teach in the program; 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
 - ▶ Program offers strong interdisciplinary training to hundreds of undergraduates annually
 - ▶ The program's stream-based approach reflects the strengths of the four contributing departments, is a fairly common structure for North American Cognitive Science programs, and appears to work well in University College
- Objectives
 - ▶ Program objectives are ambitious but realistic and provide excellent preparation for graduate study in Cognitive Science or a cognate discipline, as well as for a variety of careers in industry, government and academia
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Majors attract strong enrolments, and the most popular stream is Computation and Cognition
 - ▶ More stringent admission criteria in recent years appears to have resulted in higher graduating student GPAs
 - ▶ Program has balanced admissions with the level of faculty resources available; admission criteria were introduced in 2021 to lower the number of majors and reduce capacity bottlenecks in core courses
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Computer science and statistics program requirements reflect a fairly standard STEM-based approach to training
 - ▶ Students in all streams take an introductory Cognitive Science course; this course is consistently in high demand, indicating strong interest in the program
 - ▶ Curriculum includes seminars with capped enrolments, with the goal of integrating methods and findings across courses offered by cognate units
 - ▶ Current plan to rely largely on cognate units and the broader community for research opportunities makes sense given existing resources
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Program's self-study expresses a general commitment to incorporating Indigenous perspectives into undergraduate curriculum and research, and the program director has been actively involved in related training
 - ▶ Limited physical accessibility to University College has been addressed with significant renovations
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Course evaluations indicate strong and positive appreciation of the Cognitive Science program

- ▶ Reviewer discussions with students indicate that program quality is high
- ▶ Reviewers were impressed by the students they met with, in particular their commitment to the program and the seriousness of their reflections
- ▶ The student association (CASA) is a distinctive asset to the program; it organizes regular events and fosters a strong and inclusive sense of community
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Cumulative GPA of graduating students has steadily improved since 2016

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

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Current admission criteria may leave some students underprepared for their chosen stream, particularly in computation
 - ▶ Demands on faculty contributing to the Computational Cognition stream currently exceed what faculty affiliated with this stream can support
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Introduction to Cognitive Science course that is required for all program streams has a long waitlist every year; students and faculty also note concerns that the current course curriculum may not reflect the diverse range of perspectives in the field
 - ▶ Program relies heavily on courses in cognate departments to fulfil curriculum requirements
 - ▶ Students report feeling unprepared to navigate a disconnected array of courses from different unidisciplinary perspectives, and note that current efforts to integrate the curriculum have not been entirely successful
 - ▶ Reviewers assert that the program's reliance on advanced unidisciplinary courses in cognate units to meet curriculum requirements may create a disconnect that impacts student experience and performance
 - ▶ Despite improvements since the last review, significant enrolment issues remain that create long waitlists and capacity bottlenecks in core courses
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Reliance on cognate units for student research opportunities runs risk of “deepening the disconnect between the interdisciplinarity of Cognitive Science and the unidisciplinarity of its cognate departments”
 - ▶ Limited available faculty resources in the program present challenges for research-related initiatives
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Graduating student GPAs still appear somewhat low (though reviewers note lack of cumulative institutional GPAs for comparison)

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Assess admissions requirements and make adjustments as appropriate to ensure students have the necessary preparation for each stream
 - ▶ Explore revising admissions requirements to better balance enrolments across major streams with available faculty capacity, with particular attention to Computational Cognition
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ “Make the nature of cognitive science training explicit for students, teaching them (through both introductory and advanced classes) how to draw connections between multiple multidisciplinary courses.”
 - ▶ Reviewers note that investment of additional teaching resources in the Introduction to Cognitive Science course would have enormous impact
 - ▶ Reviewers endorse program leadership’s plans to make updates to the curriculum of the required introductory course
 - ▶ Strengthen efforts to integrate methods and findings across course subject areas, and create a more cohesive curriculum
 - ▶ More attention should be paid to the distinction between interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary when considering additional teaching resources for the Cognitive Science program
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Create regular, structured opportunities for students to engage in cognitive science research; approaches might include developing an event series to help advertise the research community in this area, and developing opportunities to link undergraduates with graduate student mentors
 - ▶ Explore the expansion of research mentorship of undergraduate Cognitive Science majors by graduate students (from cognate units), who would also need mentorship training from faculty
 - ▶ Explore the development of an organized mentorship program to encourage undergraduate student engagement in research, and by matching them with participating researchers
 - ▶ Investments in additional tenure stream appointments would alleviate challenges related to student research initiatives
 - ▶ Strengthen institutional data collection and analysis to capture how students engage in cognitive science research, including cases where a student’s research credit is granted by other units

2. Graduate Program(s) – n/a

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ “The faculty members involved in the Cognitive Science program are of the highest caliber”
- Research
 - ▶ New tenure stream faculty along with the program director help to engage undergraduate students in research
- Faculty
 - ▶ Since the last review, two tenure-stream faculty with partial appointments in cognitive science have been hired to complement two teaching stream faculty with long-term program affiliations, as well as one CLTA

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

- Faculty
 - ▶ Current faculty resources cannot support the demand for cognitive science teaching and research

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
 - ▶ Program’s success is grounded in a “remarkable collaborative effort” by the Departments of Computer Science, Linguistics, Philosophy and Psychology
 - ▶ Commitments from the four participating units are “strong and tangible” and impressive compared to those at other institutions, including financial and advisory components, joint appointments, research opportunities and course access; “[w]e were in fact surprised to hear that no one seemed interested in turning this highly successful program into a self-standing department”
 - ▶ Contributing faculty are impressively dedicated to the program
 - ▶ Program has strong ties with diverse U of T constituencies
 - ▶ Leadership acknowledges potential for external fundraising, leveraging connections established through the student association
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Partial cognitive science appointments of core faculty from each of the four main participating units, with active participation from other faculty across these units appears to be working well for the program, and supports its interdisciplinary nature

- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ University College's largest undergraduate program and possibly the oldest Cognitive Science program in North America
 - ▶ "Overall, the human component of the program is the greatest asset of the Cognitive Science program"
 - ▶ The stream-based major is highly successful overall; students are enthusiastic, enrolments are very high, cognate unit commitment and participation is "unsurpassed", and administration is proud and supportive of the program's success
- International comparators
 - ▶ Program compares favourably to similar offerings at leading international institutions, such as UC Davis, and enjoys advantages such as offering dedicated upper division courses in cognitive science, and having faculty appointed to program

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

- Relationships
 - ▶ Key challenge for the program is to "establish a stronger community that explicitly brings faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students together *specifically as cognitive scientists*, to make this engagement more visible and coherent across the program"
 - ▶ Undergraduate students appear to have very limited opportunities to contribute to program improvement discussions
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Computer lab size does not support student demand and has a sizeable average waitlist
 - ▶ "A potential downside of [the] strong investment by the participating departments is that University College may underestimate the value it receives from the substantial faculty teaching effort and research advising that is supported by other units"
 - ▶ Despite the size and complexity of the cognitive science major, just one staff member provides advising for cognitive science students, in addition to students in the UC One program
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Current faculty resources cannot support the demand for cognitive science teaching and research, especially in the area of artificial intelligence, and in the program's required introductory course
- International comparators
 - ▶ "[T]he lack of an explicit graduate student cognitive science community sets the Cognitive Science program apart from many peer institutions; [...] this may impede involvement of cognitive science majors in research"
 - ▶ The program has limited major-specific student advising resources compared to international competitors, such as Northwestern University

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Reviewers endorse plans to develop a local speaker series to help undergraduates connect with research groups, and facilitate connections between faculty and graduate student researchers
 - ▶ Efforts to increase faculty engagement in a coherent cognitive science research community should strengthen informal mechanisms for relevant constituencies to provide input to the program director
 - ▶ Explore ways to strengthen student engagement in discussions related to potential program improvements; “program administration should identify a way to regularly receive input on experiences in the major to inform curricular design and co-curricular activities”
 - ▶ With additional human resources, the program could build on solid connections with Toronto’s technology industry, which might result in the development of initiatives such as fellowships or internships
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ University College might consider additional investments to help build on substantial contributions to the program by other units
 - ▶ Strengthened advising for students to navigate the complexity of the cognitive science major might improve program administration; explore investments in this area
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Reviewers note that the majors could attract even stronger enrolments with additional teaching resources and a larger computer lab facility
 - ▶ Despite the program’s success, “additional resources are clearly needed for teaching, student research and outreach”
 - ▶ Reviewers note that investing in additional teaching stream and tenure stream faculty could address the program’s instructional needs and broader demand for more teaching and research in cognitive science, and enhance the student experience in University College
 - ▶ Of the program’s stated future goals, the reviewers note that revamping the large introductory course and expanding student research opportunities should be considered urgent priorities; they observe that the goals of increasing faculty engagement and administrative supports would likely naturally follow program development and growth
- International comparators
 - ▶ Many international comparators have dedicated programs to incentivize student research such as awards and summer fellowships, which could potentially serve as models to strengthen opportunities at U of T



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

February 20, 2026

Professor Nick Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

RE: UTQAP cyclical review of the Cognitive Science program (University College)

Dear Prof. Rule,

I write in response to your letter of October 30, 2025, regarding the April 4, 2025, UTQAP cyclical review of the Cognitive Science program housed in University College.

- HBA, Cognitive Science, Major:
 - Language and Cognition Stream
 - Perception and Attention Stream
 - Thinking and Reasoning Stream
- HBSc, Cognitive Science, Major:
 - Cognition and the Brain Stream
 - Computational Cognition Stream

On behalf of the Faculty of Arts & Science, we would first like to thank the reviewers: Matthew A. Goldrick, Professor, Department of Linguistics, Director, Cognitive Science Program, Northwestern University and Géraldine Legendre, Professor and Chair, Department of Cognitive Science, John Hopkins University for their very comprehensive review of the Cognitive Science programs. We would also like to thank and acknowledge the University College leadership, program director, faculty, administrative staff, and all those who contributed to the preparation of the self-study. We also wish to thank the many staff, students, and faculty members who met with the external reviewers and provided thoughtful feedback. The UTQAP cyclical review process is an invaluable exercise that affords us the opportunity to take stock of our academic units and programs, to recognize achievement, and identify areas for improvement.

The review report was finalized on June 19, 2025, after which the Program leadership shared it widely with stakeholders in the program. We are extremely pleased with the reviewers' positive assessment of the overall strength of the program and its outstanding, productive faculty members. The reviewers observed that the Cognitive Science program is "an impressive multidisciplinary endeavor." They highlighted its strong collaborative foundation across Computer Science, Linguistics, Philosophy, and Psychology, and noted the program's ability to attract large numbers of talented undergraduates to a rigorous and innovative curriculum. The stream-based structure provides students with both breadth and specialization, preparing them well for graduate study and a wide range of careers. Faculty commitment to the program is exceptional, and students benefit from engaged leadership and the contributions of the Cognitive Science student association, which fosters a strong sense of community. The program compares

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very favourably to international peers, and its quality of teaching and its research potential position Cognitive Science as a significant academic strength at the University of Toronto.

The review report also raised several issues and challenges and identified areas for enhancement, including those summarized in the accompanying Review Recommendations Table.

Each of these recommendations has been addressed in the attached Review Recommendations Table, which outlines the unit's response, the Dean's response, and an Implementation Plan identifying action items and timelines for each recommendation. My Administrative Response and Implementation Plan was developed in consultation with the Interim Chair and with the Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, and senior leadership within my office. The Implementation Plan provided identifies timeframes of immediate- (six months), medium- (one to two years), and longer- (three to five years) term actions and who (Faculty, Dean, unit) will take the lead in each area. I also identified any necessary changes in organization, policy, or governance, where appropriate, as well as any resources, financial or otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.

The next UTQAP Cyclical review of the Canadian Studies programs will take place no later than the 2031-32 review cycle. My office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with Chairs and directors, and through the unit's five-year unit-level academic planning process, which will begin at the conclusion of the cyclical review, if relevant. I also acknowledge that your office will request a brief Interim Monitoring Report midway between the April 2025 UTQAP cyclical review and the year of the next site visit in 2031-32 to report on progress made on the Implementation Plan as outlined in the accompanying Review Recommendations Table.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the review report. The reviewers' comments and recommendations will help inform the future priorities of the Cognitive Science program at University College.

Sincerely,



Stephen Wright
Interim Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Professor, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

cc.

Markus Stock, Principal, University College
Emily Gilbert, Vice-Principal, University College
Dirk Bernhardt-Walther, Director, Cognitive Science Program, University College

Gillian Hamilton, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Faculty of Arts & Science

Ebba Kurz, Interim Associate Dean, Unit-Level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science

Caitlin Burton, Senior Manager, Curriculum, Change & Reviews, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science

Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Amanda Pullan, Academic Planning & Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science

2024-25 UTQAP Review of the FAS Cognitive Science Program (University College) - Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, “it is important to note that, while the external reviewers’ report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability” (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Program Response	Dean’s Response
The reviewers observed that current faculty resources cannot support the demand for teaching and research in Cognitive Science. They noted persistent enrolment pressures in the large introductory course and in the Computational Cognition stream. They recommended that the program review admissions requirements to ensure students are adequately prepared and that enrolments in the Computational Cognition stream are balanced with available faculty resources.	1.	“Admission criteria were – rightfully – instituted in 2021 to lower the number of majors... In our view, this specific implementation might create issues whereby people don’t have enough background for the stream they choose, particularly in the case of computation. This should be addressed.”	The Program is currently working on a Major Modification, which will make the admission process stream-specific, requiring, e.g., at least one CSC course as a prerequisite for admission into the computational stream. This change will streamline the admissions process as students are unlikely to have the prerequisites to qualify for admission to all streams. This new process will allow for the adjustment of grade cutoffs separately for each stream, thereby enabling more fine-grained control of admissions into the five streams.	Immediate to short-term: In response to this recommendation, the Vice-Dean, Academic Planning and Vice-Dean, Undergraduate will work together with program leadership on their plans for a Major Modification to the admissions process for Cognitive Science streams.
	2.	“Admission requirements must accurately reflect demands on faculty resources within different streams... This principle should be extended to limit admissions to different streams in the major; in particular, the demands on the Computational Cognition stream currently exceed what faculty in this stream can support.”		
	3.	“[The introductory course] has a long waitlist year after year. This is clearly a sign of high interest in the program and a critical area where investment of additional teaching	The Program is currently working on a Major Modification that will split up the year-long “Introduction to Cognitive Science” (COG250Y1) course into a 100-level semester-long introductory course, offered in Fall and Winter, and a 200-level	Immediate to medium-term: The Dean’s Office will work with the Program on their plans for a Major Modification to address this reviewer report recommendation.

		resources (instructors and TAs) would have enormous impact.”	semester-long foundations course. Program admission will be based on the 100-level course, which will run in at least two terms, thereby easing pressures on enrollment. However, this restructuring will require additional teaching resources. The current teaching capacity consists of two teaching-stream faculty at 40% appointment to Cognitive Science and two tenure-stream faculty appointed at 49%. We currently also have a CLTA at 49% appointment, which expires in 2028. We will require additional teaching resources to fully cover teaching in our program. We would like to offer tutorials for some of our bigger classes but currently lack the teaching resources to do so.	The Faculty Budget, Planning & Finance Office can work with the program to explore how they may use the resources allocated to the unit under the FAS new budget model to consider resourcing of teaching activities.
The reviewers noted that many students face challenges navigating a curriculum drawn primarily from cognate departments, which can result in a fragmented learning experience. They recommended working with contributing units to clarify program expectations, strengthen coherence across courses, and ensure that program requirements more explicitly foster cross-disciplinary integration and skill development.	4.	“More attention should be paid to that distinction [between interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary] when considering additional teaching resources for the Cognitive Science program.”	The Program is currently working on a Major Modification that will include a restructuring of the Calendar entries for the five streams of the Cognitive Science Program. The new layout, developed in consultation with the office of the A&S Vice Dean, Undergraduate, will make the available pathways within the Program clearer to students. A new foundations course (COG200H1) will serve as a foundation for all Cognitive Science students, including to prepare them for the selection of course offerings across cognate departments. These students will bring back their own disciplinary learning to share with each other in the interdisciplinary senior capstone seminars (COG401H1, COG402H1, COG403H1, COG404H1). Together, these sets of courses bracket the Cognitive Science curriculum, thereby amalgamating the multidisciplinary course offerings across units into an interdisciplinary education in Cognitive Science.	Immediate to medium-term. The Dean’s Office will continue to work with the program to modify stream-specific program requirements to strengthen coherence across the years of study.
	5.	“The non-departmental nature of the program means that students will take mostly disconnected, unidisciplinary courses while	The Program is currently working on a Major Modification that will see a consolidated 200-level foundations course, which will be restricted to and	Immediate to medium-term. The Dean’s Office will continue to work with the Program to explore how to best integrate learning in

		pursuing their degree. The Introduction to Cognitive Science course should prepare students for this experience... Advanced courses should identify more ways to re-instantiate the cross-disciplinary connections established in the introductory course.”	mandatory for program students. This shared foundations course will better prepare COG students for the multidisciplinary pathways. We will continue to use the fourth-year capstone seminars (COG401, COG402, and COG403) as an opportunity to summarize and tie the diverse information that students learned across the various streams of the program to the concepts of Cognitive Science taught in the new 200-level foundations course.	the introductory levels with advanced learning in capstone courses.
	6.	“We were told by the core faculty and Director that the program is re-thinking [the] year-long introductory course, a plan we fully endorse.”	Indeed, the Program is currently working on a Major Modification, which will involve replacing the year-long COG250Y1 class with a semester-long 100-level introductory class and a 200-level semester-long foundations class.	Immediate: The Dean’s Office acknowledges that the Program is currently taking steps to address this reviewer recommendation.
	7.	“The key current challenge for the program is to establish a stronger community that explicitly brings faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students together specifically as cognitive scientists, to make this engagement more visible and coherent across the program.”	Faculty related to Cognitive Science have founded a new Cognitive Science Research Community (CoRC). CoRC serves as a major resource to connect faculty, graduate students, postdocs, and undergraduate students. CoRC has already organized two social events to connect the cognitive science community across campus, and more events are planned for Winter 2026. For details see: https://www.utoronto.ca/cognitive-science-research-community-corc	See #6 above.
The reviewers emphasized the importance of expanding and formalizing undergraduate research opportunities, noting strong student interest but limited existing structure. They recommended developing regular, organized mechanisms to connect undergraduates with faculty and graduate student mentors and observed that developing graduate mentorship training in cognitive science could further enrich the research environment.	8.	Students are clearly interested in research opportunities, and Toronto is internationally renowned for the strength of its cognitive science research. In addition to creating an event series that helps advertise this robust local research community, the program should create a regular structure for linking students to research. To keep pace with student demand without further straining faculty resources we recommend that the program develop opportunities to link undergraduate students with graduate student mentors. To ensure the success of	The above-mentioned CoRC serves as a connection between undergraduate students and faculty for research opportunities. The Program is currently working on updating its web presence. The new version will include explicit links to research opportunities for the Cognitive Science undergraduate students. This web page is being developed in consultation with the student organization CASA. To encourage more connections between undergraduate and graduate students, a dedicated joint research symposium, organized by the CoRC graduate students and the Cognitive	See #6 above The Program may consider participation in the Research Opportunities Program, administered through the Office for Experiential Learning and Outreach Support (ELOS). Graduate students often support supervision of ROP students, and the program provides opportunities for undergraduate students to build research experience for course credit.

		such efforts, this should be coupled with cognitive science specific mentorship training for graduate students.”	Science student organization CASA is planned for January 22 nd , 2026.	
	9.	“...a local speaker series (suggested by the program) could help undergraduates connect with research groups they are interested in, and help facilitate connections between faculty and graduate student researchers.”	The above-mentioned CoRC-CASA event will be a starting point for making these connections. In addition, a new graduate collaborative specialization in Cognitive Science is currently in the works. The introductory course of this new program will be a survey course with local and invited speakers. These presentations will be open to the entire Cognitive Science community, including undergraduate students in the Cognitive Science Program.	Immediate to medium-term: The Dean’s Office will work with the Program to explore the feasibility of a graduate collaborative specialization in Cognitive Science.
	10.	“An organized mentoring program, where undergraduates apply and are matched with participating researchers, would lower the barrier to entry for undergrads.”	We are currently working on such a matching procedure that will be manageable and sustainable in the long run. Three independent study course codes COG497Y1, COG498H1, and COG499H1 provide the structure for such research opportunities for students in the Cognitive Science Program.	The Dean’s Office acknowledges that the Program has considered the reviewer recommendation. See also #8 above regarding the Research Opportunities Program.
The reviewers encouraged the program to establish more regular opportunities for undergraduate students to provide feedback on curricular and co-curricular initiatives to ensure that student perspectives inform program planning and continuous improvement.	11.	“The program administration should identify a way to regularly receive input on experiences in the major to inform curricular design and co-curricular activities.”	The Program Director has specifically reached out to the Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence Student Association (CASA) for their feedback. He meets with CASA representatives twice per semester. Several events are organized in close partnership with CASA in the 2025/26 academic year.	Immediate: The Dean’s Office acknowledges that the Program is currently taking steps to address this reviewer recommendation.
The reviewers noted concerns about limited advising resources given the program’s size and complexity. They recommended exploring ways to expand major-specific advising capacity to better support students in navigating program requirements and opportunities.	12.	“The Cognitive Science major attracts many students, but it is quite complex relative to many other programs. There should be greater support for students navigating this complexity.”	Student advising in Cognitive Science is in keeping with levels of program support in Arts & Science. Student advising is undertaken by the program administrator, whose primary responsibility is for Cognitive Science. As noted in the report, the program administrator also provides some support to UC One, but UC One is not a program: it is a suite of first-year courses offered at University College. There is no student advising associated with UC One and only limited administrative support is needed to	The Dean’s Office acknowledges that the Program has considered the reviewer report recommendation.

			help host two in-course plenaries and one final research showcase.	
	13.	“One area where additional investments might improve program administration is in detailed major advising... a small investment in this area could have a major impact on the program.”	The Program has recently updated its website. Specifically, the admissions website now contains an FAQ section to explain the admissions process (https://www.uc.utoronto.ca/program-admission-0). Similar FAQ-style sections will be added to the website following the Major Modifications to make the new structure of the program as accessible as possible. In addition, the program administrator is available both in person and by email for students to respond to student inquiries. See line 12 above. The program director is available to interact with students at multiple faculty-student events each semester, including “Meet-the-Prof’s” even early in the fall, “CoRC Synapse” later in the fall, “Cognitive Science Open House” in January, the “Nexus” research symposium in February, and the “Mutual Relevance” seminar in March. He is also available for individual conversations by appointment.	Immediate to medium-term: The Dean’s Office acknowledges that the Program is currently taking steps to address this reviewer recommendation.
The reviewers broadly observed that sustaining the program’s growth and interdisciplinary reach will depend on continued collaboration among participating units and alignment with institutional planning priorities. They encouraged the program to build on its strong collaborative foundation and work with cognate units and University College to identify and pursue targeted investments to enhance teaching capacity, research engagement, and student experience.	14.	“Current faculty resources cannot support the demand for teaching and research in cognitive science... The need for more instructional resources could be addressed by additional teaching stream faculty; addressing both research and teaching requires hiring tenure stream faculty.”	University College is very supportive of creating more tenure and teaching stream positions in Cognitive Science. In partnership with the Department of Linguistics, the College has requested approval of a new endowed chair position for “Artificial Intelligence in Cognitive Science and Linguistics” as a target for advancement initiatives. This position would provide additional teaching capacity as well as research opportunity for Cognitive Science. The College would welcome other opportunities for creating more tenure and teaching stream positions.	Immediate to long-term: The Dean’s Office supports the Program’s plans to build partnerships with cognate departments. All requests for faculty appointments are to be submitted through the Faculty Appointments Committee, which includes representation across its sectors (Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences) and from the Colleges. The FAC reviews all requests for new positions and makes recommendations to the Dean regarding which requests should be granted. In a given year, there are many more requests than available positions. The Dean’s Office is pleased to confirm a new endowed chair position as an Advancement priority.

	15.	“The two majors attract a total of about 430 undergraduates and could attract more with additional teaching resources and a larger computer lab facility.”	The Program is planning to keep enrollments stable in the near future. In a climate of stable enrollments in Arts and Science overall, increasing enrollments in Cognitive Science would likely come at the expense of enrollments in the four cognate units, which would not be conducive to the long-term relationship with those units.	The Dean’s Office acknowledges that the Program has considered this reviewer report recommendation.
	16.	“...it may be worth considering how additional investments by the College might help build on the substantial contributions by other units.”	The above proposal to target a new faculty position as a priority for the UC Advancement Team is an example of how the College is investing in Cognitive Science, while also working collaboratively with other units (Linguistics). The College will also consult with A&S about opportunities for additional investments in Cognitive Science.	See # 14.
	17.	“...additional resources are clearly needed for teaching, student research, and outreach. Among the program’s future priorities as stated in the self-study and during exchanges on campus are (1) revamping their large introductory course, expanding its capacity, enhancing tutorial sections, and hiring more TAs, (2) expanding research opportunities for students by relying on cognate departments’ faculty mentors, (3) engaging the faculty at large and foster better collaborations, and (4) increasing administrative support. We agree that (1) and (2) are urgent priorities and (3) would grow over time, mediated by the students themselves, for example by setting up faculty co-supervisions.”	Point 1 will be addressed by the Major Modification that the Program is currently working on, as detailed in our response to recommendation #6. Points 2 and 3 are being addressed by the outreach through CoRC (see recommendation #7-8) and, in the future, close collaboration with the planned graduate collaborative specialization in Cognitive Science. See recommendations # 8-10 for details.	See responses in #6, 7, 8, and 10
	18.	“The Cognitive Science leadership acknowledge the potential for external fundraising, capitalizing on connections established through CASA. As it stands, with the limited resources the program has, it is not surprising that their foremost efforts have so far capitalized on establishing a high quality academic program. With additional manpower they certainly could build solid	The Program is currently mapping a strategy for fundraising opportunities, in collaboration with the Advancement Office at University College. As part of this strategy, we have requested approval for a new endowed chair position. Please see recommendation #14 for more details. The Program is reviewing opportunities to improve access to research opportunities within the University of Toronto as well as beyond the	An endowed chair in the area of Cognitive Science has been approved as an Advancement priority. The Dean’s Office encourages the Cognitive Science leadership to work with the Office of Experiential Learning and Outreach Support to explore experiential learning opportunities. See also #8 above.

		connections with high-tech companies, set up fellowships and internships, etc.”	university, including fellowships and internships at companies.	

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers observed that the Cognitive Science program is “an impressive multidisciplinary endeavor.” They highlighted its strong collaborative foundation across Computer Science, Linguistics, Philosophy, and Psychology, and noted the program’s ability to attract large numbers of talented undergraduates to a rigorous and innovative curriculum. The stream-based structure provides students with both breadth and specialization, preparing them well for graduate study and a wide range of careers. Faculty commitment to the program is exceptional, and students benefit from engaged leadership and the contributions of the Cognitive Science student association, which fosters a strong sense of community. The program compares very favourably to international peers, and its quality of teaching and its research potential position Cognitive Science as a significant academic strength at the University of Toronto.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: reviewing admissions requirements to ensure students are adequately prepared and that enrolments in the Computational Cognition stream are balanced with available faculty resources; working with contributing units to clarify program expectations, strengthen coherence across courses, and ensure that program requirements more explicitly foster cross-disciplinary integration and skill development; developing regular, organized mechanisms to connect undergraduates with faculty and graduate student mentors; establishing more regular opportunities for undergraduate students to provide feedback on curricular and co-curricular initiatives; exploring ways to expand major-specific advising capacity to better support students in navigating program requirements and opportunities; and working with cognate units and University College to identify and pursue targeted investments to enhance teaching capacity, research engagement, and student experience.

The Dean’s Administrative Response describes the Faculty 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 Arts & Science Dean’s Office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with Chairs and Directors through regular governance and curricular oversight.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than 2028-29 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in 2031-32.

6 Distribution

On August 15th 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Criminology and Sociolegal Studies (HBA): Specialist, Major Criminology and Sociolegal Studies: MA, PhD
Unit Reviewed:	Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Professor Simon A. Cole, Professor of Criminology, Law and Society, Department of Criminology, Law & Society, School of Social Ecology, University of California - Irvine • Professor Greg Ridgeway, Rebecca W. Bushnell Professor of Criminology, Professor and Chair, Department of Criminology, Professor, Department of Statistics and Data Science, University of Pennsylvania • Professor Kim Lane Scheppele, Laurance S. Rockefeller Professor of Sociology and International Affairs in the School of Public and International Affairs and the University Center for Human Values; Director, Program in Law and Normative Thinking (PLANT), University Center for Human Values, Princeton University
Date of Review Visit:	March 6-7, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	August 25, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 23, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: February 26-27, 2018

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Rigorous graduate programs and interdisciplinary undergraduate programs
- Impressive, diverse student population and evident collegiality among all members of the Centre
- High impact faculty scholarship
- One of the world's foremost research centres in criminology and sociolegal studies

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Increasing the faculty complement with consideration to striking a balance of appointment types
- Housing the Centre in one space to enhance undergraduate student involvement, while ensuring the new location maintains collegiality and provides space for graduate student offices and visiting scholars
- Appointing a dedicated communications administrator responsible for promoting the Centre on wide-scale
- Addressing graduate curricular issues, including providing graduate students with more exposure to a broader set of topics and perspectives in their core courses, and providing MA students with more seminar-style courses and increased exposure to tenure stream faculty
- Addressing constraints on teaching capacity, especially regarding the demand for undergraduate programs and in experiential learning opportunities
- Addressing undergraduate curriculum, including: increasing curricular focus on indigeneity and the law; adding an environmental justice course; ensuring availability of methods/statistics requirement; reconsidering the timing of final exams; and clarifying teaching assistant roles

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study; Previous review report including the administrative response(s); Access to all course descriptions; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty.

Consultation Process

Faculty, students, administrative staff and senior program administrators as well as members of relevant cognate units: including: Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science; Vice-Dean, Academic Planning; and Associate Dean, Student Affairs; Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies Director; Program Coordinators; Librarians; Chairs of Cognate Units including: Chair (Anthropology); Director, Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources; Director of the Ethics, Society, and Law Program, Trinity College; Director of Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies; faculty; administrative staff; and 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**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Program has expanded its curriculum since the last review by introducing a wider range of courses, including both breadth offerings and specialized electives
 - ▶ Undergraduate curriculum is well structured, with a clear progression from introductory courses to specialized electives and senior seminars
 - ▶ CrimSL has a strong foundation for advancing an evidence-informed curriculum that prepares students for careers in law and the criminal justice system
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ CrimSL has clear and appropriate degree-level expectations at both undergraduate and graduate levels, with program structures well aligned to achieving them, demonstrated strengths in application of knowledge, communication skills, and awareness of the limits of knowledge, and proactive steps to support professional capacity through dedicated graduate-level professional development
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Undergraduate students indicated that they felt welcomed and supported by the Centre
 - ▶ Program has diversified its offerings by expanding experiential and service-learning opportunities for undergraduates through internships, research excursions, a new Research Opportunities Program, field experiences, and engagements with working professionals

- ▶ High level of student engagement in research, with many undergraduates involved in research projects despite the low faculty-to-student ratio
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Undergraduate demand is exceptionally strong with approximately 700 majors and continued growth, as 600 new students compete annually for 250 major admissions

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

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Type 3 limited enrolment admissions are described by faculty as a “legacy policy” and not how the program would be structured if it were being designed now
 - ▶ Current admissions structure constrains the possibility of developing a full four-year undergraduate program unless additional faculty resources become available
 - ▶ Selective admissions model directs mid-level performing students into Type 1 programs where admission is not competitive, even when criminology may be their preferred major
 - ▶ Admissions structure discourages some first-year students from taking challenging courses because of concern that lower grades could disqualify them from admission, which faculty identified as not beneficial for students or the university
 - ▶ Capacity constraints force program to restrict course access to its own majors, limiting interdisciplinary exposure for the broader U of T student body and reinforcing the consequences of an undersized faculty relative to demand
 - ▶ Undergraduate demand for courses is substantial, but enrolment in the major is artificially constrained by an admissions threshold that limits intake to about 250 new students each year out of more than 600 applicants, resulting in many interested U of T students being redirected into other majors
 - ▶ Use of “Type 3” admission limits reflects a rationing response to faculty shortages rather than a pedagogical or academic rationale, artificially suppressing enrolment, disproportionately affecting mid-performing students, and limiting access to criminology courses for non-majors
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Course offerings are heavily weighted toward theory, history, critical criminology, and qualitative approaches, resulting in limited exposure for students to the quantitative and positivist traditions that characterize much of the criminology field, particularly in American programs
 - ▶ One reviewer expressed concern that CrimSL’s curriculum and special events tilt heavily toward philosophy, history, critical study, case studies, and social justice, with a limited presence of scientific approaches to criminology such as statistics, experimental methodology, causal inference, economics, data science, and computational methods, which the reviewer views as central to the field
 - ▶ A reviewer raised concern that aspects of the undergraduate curriculum may be perceived by some students as overly critical of the justice system, potentially discouraging engagement with justice system careers and limiting exposure to constructive, evidence-based research on effective justice system practices and crime reduction

- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Centre's assessment of undergraduate student achievement relies on individual- and course-level surveys, which are common in contemporary universities but do not necessarily address program-level learning outcomes
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Undergraduate students reported uneven access to CrimSL faculty, with some able to secure meaningful engagement through persistence while others, particularly in large upper-year courses or in comparison to their other social science programs, experienced limited faculty connection due to the Centre's small faculty size
 - ▶ CrimSL's listed events largely reflect the program's critical criminology orientation, with little representation of quantitative approaches, limiting student exposure to other major traditions within the field
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Student demand for CrimSL is being diverted into other departments due to scarcity in the program, potentially contributing to over-hiring elsewhere, while CrimSL's selective three-year structure limits its growth by turning away large numbers of students, with possible ripple effects across adjacent departments despite some flexibility in the new financial model

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Explore adopting a more appropriate enrolment strategy that expands access to the program by aligning faculty capacity with student demand.
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Evaluate the feasibility of expanding the Centre's undergraduate program by transitioning from a selective three-year mode to an open four-year program, contingent on sustained faculty growth and adequate resources to support the transition
 - ▶ Consider expanding CrimSL into a four-year undergraduate program and increasing staffing to align faculty capacity with student demand, using the flexibility of the new financial model to support this transition
 - ▶ Support the transition of CrimSL from a selective three-year undergraduate program to an open four-year program by increasing faculty lines in advance, as appropriate resources are required to staff new courses and ensure the existing faculty can manage the transition effectively
 - ▶ Increase representation of quantitative and positivist approaches within CrimSL by expanding faculty capacity to support additional courses, while maintaining the Centre's existing strengths in critical and contextual criminology
 - ▶ One reviewer suggested reviewing the undergraduate curriculum to ensure that critical analyses of the justice system are complemented by greater exposure to constructive, evidence-based research and practices, so that students are informed about opportunities to work within the justice system to improve outcomes through evidence-based approaches

- ▶ One reviewer recommended evaluating opportunities to enhance the curriculum to include content on high-quality experimental evidence showing the effects of policing, incapacitation, and sanctions, and to expose students to constructive, evidence-based approaches to improving the criminal justice system
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Consider broadening CrimSL events programming to include greater representation of quantitative approaches to criminology, so that students are more aware of major traditions in the field that are currently less represented at the Centre

2. Graduate Program(s)

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Program has expanded its course offerings since the last review, introducing new courses, ranging from breadth courses to specialized electives
 - ▶ Master's program is appropriately structured as a one-year full-time program with coursework and thesis streams, aligns with Canadian norms, and offers a multi-methods approach that allows students to adapt their methods training to their intended research
 - ▶ Doctoral program is appropriately structured, with admission requiring a master's degree and a clearly sequenced progression from coursework and comprehensive examinations to the dissertation proposal and dissertation
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Program has taken steps to better support methodological and professional preparation through the introduction of a specialized professional development course
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Graduate students indicated that they felt welcomed and supported by the Centre
 - ▶ Program has introduced a professional development course that strengthens doctoral students' preparation for academic and research careers
 - ▶ Most PhD students expressed strong satisfaction with faculty attention, mentorship, and the research skills they have developed, highlighting the effectiveness of Crim SL's graduate supervision and its distinctive critical approaches to training
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ Centre is highly respected for its socio-legal scholarship and attracts strong student demand for its courses
 - ▶ Graduate students appear to secure well-paying employment in the field outside the university while still enrolled, and the Centre has demonstrated flexibility in accommodating students who balance doctoral study with external work and teaching responsibilities

- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ PhD program has demonstrated strong outcomes, with recent graduates securing tenure-track positions at respected universities such as the University of Alberta, Texas A&M University, the University of Waterloo, and the University of Utrecht, as well as obtaining solid postdoctoral appointments that position them well for future success
- Student funding
 - ▶ Centre has taken initial steps toward a development and fundraising strategy through the appointment of a Communications and Events Coordinator

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

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Some students reported misalignment between their research interests and the department's expertise, particularly in topics such as Indigenous law enforcement or technology in criminal justice, raising concerns about fit given the Centre's limited number of tenure-line faculty and the expectations placed on students to navigate and shape their own scholarly direction
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Curriculum and scholarly activities tilt heavily toward qualitative research, history, and critical theory, with limited presence of quantitative, causal, economics, and computational methods common in North American criminology programs, which may constrain methodological breadth and PhD career options
 - ▶ PhD program provides limited structure at the dissertation stage, which may contribute to extended timelines to completion, particularly for students undertaking qualitative and critical research projects
 - ▶ Graduate methods training in CrimSL was perceived as offering only bare-minimum depth across both qualitative and quantitative tracks, largely due to faculty shortages that limit the number and specialization of courses, resulting in methods courses that cover too many areas without sufficient depth
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Required professional development course (CRI1010Y) covers many aspects of academic careers, but its broad scope may dilute attention to research and scholarly writing, leaving limited structured support for PhD students to develop ready-to-submit manuscripts
 - ▶ Some later-stage graduate students had not yet produced published or publishable work and showed limited engagement with planning publications or book outcomes from their dissertations, suggesting uneven understanding of the importance of early and consistent scholarly output
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Reported typical duration of the PhD program is over six years, placing the Centre on the longer side of average for time to degree, with many students remaining enrolled beyond the five years of guaranteed funding
 - ▶ Teaching assistantship workloads are substantial, with responsibilities that often exceed the nominal 13 hours per week due to large enrolment courses and labour-

- intensive grading, raising concerns about the impact of TA commitments on graduate students' time to degree completion
- ▶ PhD students were perceived to have limited engagement with scholarly publishing, professional networking, and departmental intellectual life, with low attendance at seminars beyond the first year, infrequent interaction with peers, and limited physical presence in the Centre, contributing to a graduate culture that does not strongly support informal scholarly exchange or early professional development
 - ▶ Graduate students face significant cost-of-living pressures in Toronto, leading many to pursue part-time employment or extend their time to degree, which in turn impedes scholarly productivity
 - ▶ Demanding external employment taken on before degree completion is making it difficult for some PhD students to finish their dissertations in a timely manner
 - Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ Time to graduation for PhD students appears to be relatively long

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Strengthen clarity and transparency in the admissions process by ensuring applicants clearly communicate their research interests and can assess in advance whether CrimSL offers an appropriate fit, while reinforcing expectations about student responsibility for shaping their own research agendas within the Centre's areas of expertise
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Expand representation of quantitative and positivist approaches in the graduate curriculum by adding courses in this area as faculty capacity allows, while maintaining the Centre's existing strengths in critical and contextual criminology
 - ▶ Explore ways to increase methodological depth by making strategic faculty hires and adding courses in quantitative empirical methods, so that CrimSL expands career options for PhD students and aligns more closely with North American criminology programs, while preserving its existing strengths in qualitative, historical, and critical approaches.
 - ▶ Consider introducing clearer structure and regular milestones at the dissertation stage of the PhD program to support progress and timely completion, particularly for students engaged in qualitative and critical research
 - ▶ Examine ways to strengthen graduate methods training by permitting CrimSL students to take advanced methods courses in other departments and by prioritizing faculty hires with diverse methodological expertise to broaden and deepen qualitative and quantitative course offerings
 - ▶ Refocus or supplement CRI1010Y with more targeted instruction on research and scholarly writing, potentially through an additional or redesigned course that guides PhD students toward producing ready-to-submit manuscripts, as faculty capacity permits

- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Consider incorporating clearer expectations around scholarly publishing in PhD annual reviews by requiring students to document their publication pipeline and by using completion of a publishable paper by the end of the second year as an informal indicator of appropriate progress in the program.
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Review teaching assistantship workloads in relation to graduate students' degree progress to ensure that teaching responsibilities do not unduly extend time to completion
 - ▶ Explore ways of encouraging PhD students to complete their dissertations in a more timely manner, particularly those balancing demanding external employment, in order to strengthen overall completion rates and further improve the program's already strong placement outcomes
 - ▶ Consider expanding faculty capacity to offer PhD students a wider range of methodological choices, building on the program's strong mentorship and distinctive critical approaches while broadening opportunities for graduate training
 - ▶ Examine ways to strengthen expectations and supports for graduate student engagement in scholarly publishing, seminars, and departmental intellectual life beyond the first year, and monitor whether improved physical space encourages greater in-person participation and professional interaction
 - ▶ Consider broadening and strengthening graduate methodological and professional training by expanding the depth and range of methods courses, exploring partnerships with allied departments to enhance quantitative and qualitative offerings, and incorporating structured research opportunities to help students build stronger publication records during graduate study
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ Assess options for broadening faculty representation as the program expands by strengthening expertise in quantitative criminology, economics of crime, and experimental approaches, in line with comparator programs, to enhance the program's visibility and impact in the field.
- Student funding
 - ▶ Consider introducing more structured financial planning and stronger incentives tied to full-time academic progress as a way to support improved program outcomes.

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Centre is a respected Canadian hub for critical, interdisciplinary work on crime, law, and social regulation
 - ▶ Faculty has long-running expertise in global justice, transnational law, and race and colonialism, supported by multiple book prize awards, positioning the Centre as one of the most distinctive socio-legal centres in Canada and competitive with its law and society peers

- ▶ Faculty and affiliated faculty are able to keep the Centre afloat and have produced an impressive amount of scholarship while carrying exceptionally heavy workloads
- Research
 - ▶ Program established a Research Cluster for the Study of Racism and Inequality, an effort that students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty find stimulating
 - ▶ CrimSL faculty are prominent in the field for their qualitative and critical scholarship, with strong representation in leading socio-legal and critical criminology journals and a record of award-winning books
 - ▶ CrimSL's most recently hired faculty are moving the Centre toward increased methodological diversity, with strong quantitative, causal, and quasi-experimental scholarship that is already well placed in the field and expands the Centre's global research profile
 - ▶ Faculty span a wide range of research topics and approaches, with expertise in comparative criminology and socio-legal studies and a broad scholarly portfolio that covers law, crime, justice systems, and governance across national and cultural contexts
 - ▶ Faculty have received an impressive number of awards and competitive grants, including major international prizes, prestigious fellowships, and Tri-Agency funding totaling \$389,000 in 2023
 - ▶ Faculty demonstrate strong scholarly productivity, with an especially impressive track record of book prizes in a highly competitive academic publishing landscape
- Faculty
 - ▶ Program has hired several new faculty members, including permanent, full-time, and tenure-stream appointments, and has made additional efforts to expand its faculty complement
 - ▶ CrimSL has a pool of excellent and impressive faculty currently serving in part-time or limited-term roles who may be strong candidates for permanent, full-time positions
 - ▶ CrimSL faculty demonstrate a high level of dedication, working extremely hard to keep up with overwhelming workloads and meet strong student demand for CrimSL courses

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

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Overwhelming faculty workloads raise concerns about burnout and delayed publications, with potential implications for both faculty well-being and the Centre's reputation.
 - ▶ Incredibly low faculty-student ratio substantially limits CrimSL's potential
 - ▶ Exceptionally heavy workloads carried by faculty and affiliated faculty limit how highly productive they can be while continuing to offer world-class mentoring and research opportunities to students
- Research
 - ▶ CrimSL faculty are less well represented in quantitative and experimental criminology journals that are characteristic of many American criminology programs

- ▶ CrimSL faculty have a modest footprint in areas of criminology that emphasize causal models, experimental design, and quantitative analysis that dominate many American criminology departments
- ▶ Pace of journal article publication is low compared to prominent U.S. criminology departments, a pattern that appears linked to heavy teaching and advising loads associated with small faculty size and high student volume, which limits faculty capacity to publish more extensively
- Faculty
 - ▶ Program's faculty-to-student ratio is an "order of magnitude worse" than comparable departments, with heavy reliance on limited-term instructors and recent senior departures placing pressure on supervision, research productivity, and coverage of advanced social science methods
 - ▶ Faculty complement too small relative to student demand, leaving faculty stretched by teaching and advising demands and contributing to delays in publication output
 - ▶ Faculty hiring efforts have had mixed results, with some unsuccessful searches and retention challenges, and have not been sufficient to address the unit's needs
 - ▶ Creation of the Research Cluster for the Study of Racism and Inequality added another administrative post for a tenured faculty member, further, drawing on a limited pool of such personnel within the Centre
 - ▶ CrimSL is severely understaffed relative to program demand, with only 11 faculty members available for instruction and mentoring despite very high student demand for CrimSL courses
 - ▶ U of T appears to have given limited attention to the 2018 review's conclusion that CrimSL required additional faculty resources, and a comparative review of student demand, major applications, and students per faculty member suggests that CrimSL continues to have a disproportionately small allocation of faculty positions relative to peer social science departments
 - ▶ Distance reported between students and CrimSL faculty suggests structural scale differences within the division, as several comparator units operate with substantially larger faculty complements relative to their student populations, limiting CrimSL's ability to respond proportionately to student demand
 - ▶ Current faculty complement is inadequate relative to CrimSL's scale, scope, and student demand, with the Centre operating with a small number of tenure-stream and teaching-stream faculty despite a large undergraduate enrolment and robust graduate programs, and with faculty-to-student ratios that are out of step with comparable units at U of T and peer criminology programs nationally and internationally
 - ▶ Recent hiring has largely offset retirements rather than expanded the faculty complement, leaving CrimSL insufficiently resourced to meet student demand and program needs and reliant on limited-term appointments that challenge instructional continuity and sustained mentorship

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ University may wish to consider investing in an expanded CrimSL faculty complement to support scholarly productivity, make teaching and advising loads more manageable, and allow faculty greater capacity for research and publication
- Faculty
 - ▶ Scale the faculty complement through a sustained expansion of approximately two new tenure-stream hires per year over the next review cycle to better align staffing with student demand and relieve teaching and advising pressures that contribute to delayed publications
 - ▶ Consider expanding CrimSL's scientific criminology capacity through targeted faculty hires in quantitative and empirical methods, supported by complementary coursework in areas such as statistics, causal inference, experimental methods, crime analytics, data science, and program evaluation, to strengthen research impact and policy-relevant training
 - ▶ Explore increasing faculty capacity so that undergraduate courses can be opened to non-majors, allowing more U of T students to take criminology courses without overwhelming the Centre's small faculty
 - ▶ U of T should undertake a basic comparison of student demand, major applications, and students per faculty member, with a view to reassessing the allocation of faculty positions to CrimSL
 - ▶ Examine options for prioritizing faculty hiring with a range of methodological expertise to broaden and deepen methods training, while explicitly supporting access to advanced methodology courses in other departments to supplement current faculty capacity and better prepare students for diverse academic pathways
 - ▶ Consider implementing a structured, multi-year hiring plan that adds net new tenure-stream faculty on a regular basis, supports continuity in instruction and mentorship, and deliberately builds on recent empirically oriented hires to strengthen methodological balance alongside the Centre's established critical and socio-legal strengths
 - ▶ Consider increasing CrimSL faculty capacity in advance of easing restrictive admissions and course access, so that criminology courses can be opened more broadly to U of T students while managing anticipated increases in enrolment under the new financial model

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
 - ▶ Centre leverages its strong reputation to sustain a highly active events program, hosting or co-sponsoring over 30 local and international academic and professional events in the past year that connect students and the wider community with leading scholars and cutting-edge research and practice
 - ▶ Centre has established regular monthly faculty meetings that effectively support communication within the Centre and provide a structured forum for faculty to engage with and respond to the needs of the CrimSL community, including graduate students
 - ▶ Centre is an interdisciplinary unit that grants undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees and has maintained its independence from large disciplinary departments for decades
 - ▶ Centre is highly valued across the campus, including by other interdisciplinary units and large disciplinary departments
 - ▶ Centre's integration of criminology and sociolegal studies complements the Faculty of Law and social science departments and aligns with the University's mission to support interdisciplinary teaching and research
 - ▶ Program hired a Communications and Event Coordinator who founded a biweekly CrimSL newsletter and introduced the use of digital communications tools to improve outreach and engagement
 - ▶ Students benefit from a wide range of external opportunities in Toronto, including connections with organizations such as the RCMP, Correctional Services, Indigenous communities, and sexual assault support organizations, which provide valuable applied experience, community-engaged scholarship, and strong professional pathways even prior to degree completion
 - ▶ Faculty demonstrate a strong sense of collegiality and "esprit de corps", working closely together with staff and showing shared pride in the program's history while banding together to meet the Centre's increasing demands
 - ▶ Faculty are well respected across cognate centres and departments and maintain a dense network of collaborative connections that support numerous interdisciplinary projects and initiatives
 - ▶ Faculty maintain a dense network of connections with government, academic, and professional organizations, both locally and internationally
 - ▶ Faculty and related projects are closely connected to local and national efforts, including examinations of correctional practices related to women and mental health, policing practices in Ontario, and youth victimization in Toronto

- ▶ Program is leveraging its Communications and Event Coordinator to support the development of a more robust donor development strategy, with potential opportunities for targeted engagement within the local legal community
- ▶ CrimSL's management and leadership have demonstrated resilience, collegiality, and commitment in sustaining the Centre's operations despite significant structural resource constraints and administrative burdens
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Program's organizational structure is appropriate, and staff are competent and well-educated
 - ▶ Program's financial structure is appropriate, with the budget managed annually by the Director and Centre Manager
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Centre is moving to a new space that better fits its needs and offers a more welcoming environment for students
 - ▶ CrimSL exemplifies the U of T FAS Academic Plan's emphasis on research excellence, equity, interdisciplinarity, and community engagement through scholarship focused on criminal justice reform, structural inequality, the defence of rights, and engagement with Indigenous communities, governments, and other partners
- International comparators
 - ▶ Graduate programs are top programs globally in qualitative research methods, history, and critical theory
 - ▶ In comparison with international peers such as the University of California, Irvine (UCI), the undergraduate program is more clearly structured, with a deliberate progression from broad introductory courses to advanced electives and senior seminars
 - ▶ CrimSL is an internationally respected criminology program with a long-standing history of importance in the field, oriented toward European and other non-U.S. criminological traditions and comparable to programs such as Irvine and Berkeley that combine criminology with critical and socio-legal approaches
 - ▶ CrimSL is among the top programs globally in criminology combined with critical criminology and socio-legal studies, with a distinctive orientation aligned more closely with European and non-U.S. traditions than with narrowly focused U.S. criminology-only programs

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

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Unclear rationale for the significant disparity in faculty staffing between CrimSL and other U of T social science departments and peer criminology programs, particularly given CrimSL's comparable responsibilities and scope as an EDU:A
 - ▶ Faculty morale is affected by heavy workloads, administrative demands, and stress related to balancing teaching, service, and research responsibilities, alongside concerns about sustainability and potential faculty attrition, with graduate student stress further compounded by the high cost of living

- ▶ Recent administrative staff turnover has created some transition challenges, and current staffing levels are stretched thin, limiting the program's capacity to manage existing responsibilities and support new initiatives as the Centre expands
- ▶ Program's budget allocations remain insufficient to meet its needs, despite recent increases
- ▶ Human resources for the CrimSL library have been reduced, with a full-time librarian now responsible for two libraries, limiting dedicated library support despite continued demand
- ▶ CrimSL's leadership capacity is stretched thin, with administrative roles rotated among a small faculty, creating ongoing pressure on faculty workload and sustainability
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Recent retirements, increasing administrative burdens, and a flat faculty complement place CrimSL's substantial reputation in the field at risk and indicate a need for additional resources to sustain it
 - ▶ Centre cannot sustainably rival the top North American criminology departments without meaningful investment in faculty growth and more diverse methods training
 - ▶ Centre's current space is not accessible for individuals with physical disabilities (although the reviewers acknowledge that a planned move is coming soon).
 - ▶ CrimSL's current trajectory is unsustainable without significant investment in tenure-stream faculty, revised enrolment practices, and expanded financial and administrative support
- International comparators
 - ▶ Capacity constraints and modest attention to the science of criminology limit the Centre's ability to compete with top North American criminology programs, such as the University of Maryland, UC Irvine, and Arizona State, keeping it just outside the first tier
 - ▶ CrimSL's breadth and small number of faculty make it difficult to compete directly with more narrowly focused, criminology-only programs in the United States, particularly those with a strong quantitative emphasis, highlighting the need for clearer strategic positioning within the field
 - ▶ Compared with peer and comparator criminology programs, CrimSL serves a substantially larger student population with significantly fewer tenure-line and full-time faculty, resulting in a markedly lower faculty-to-student ratio
 - ▶ Comparator data show that CrimSL has substantially fewer faculty than most Canadian criminology programs, which typically operate with significantly larger full-time faculty complements
 - ▶ Relative to international comparator programs, CrimSL has a substantially smaller faculty complement, placing it at a distinct disadvantage in meeting student demand and supporting the scope of its academic programs

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Consider elevating criminology at U of T to full departmental status, as is common at many universities in North America and the United Kingdom, while closely monitoring enrolment, wait lists for new CrimSL courses, and the implications of the new budget model to inform future decisions about program structure and faculty appointments
 - ▶ Assess approaches to supporting regular faculty hiring in CrimSL in response to student demand, with consideration given to impressive faculty currently in part-time or limited-term roles as potential candidates for permanent positions
 - ▶ Increase staff capacity to ensure adequate administrative support as the program continues to operate and expand
 - ▶ Ensure adequate human resource support for the criminology library by restoring dedicated librarian capacity to manage demand and support the Centre's teaching and research activities
 - ▶ Consider returning the criminology library to a full-time librarian
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Consider making meaningful investments in faculty growth and more diverse methods training to enable the Centre to compete more sustainably with top North American criminology departments while maintaining its critical and comparative strengths
 - ▶ Increase resources to support the faculty complement in order to sustain CrimSL's established reputation in the field
 - ▶ Revisit CrimSL's organizational status in light of the upcoming move to new space and transition to a new budget model, including consideration of elevating the Centre to full departmental status to better align academic contributions with institutional recognition and resource allocation
 - ▶ Consider making a sustained investment in CrimSL by increasing tenure-stream faculty, reforming enrolment practices, and expanding financial and administrative support to enable the Centre to realize its academic potential and meet institutional goals
- International comparators
 - ▶ Clarify the Centre's program identity through an intentional, strategic decision about the extent to which it seeks alignment with criminology-only programs versus maintaining its combined criminology and socio-legal focus



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

February 20, 2026

Professor Nick Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

RE: UTQAP cyclical review of the Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies (CrimSL)

Dear Prof. Rule,

I write in response to your letter of December 8, 2025, regarding the March 6-7, 2025, UTQAP cyclical review of the Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies (CrimSL) and its programs.

- Criminology and Sociolegal Studies (HBA): Specialist, Major
- Criminology and Sociolegal Studies, MA, PhD

On behalf of the Faculty of Arts & Science, we would first like to thank the reviewers: Simon A. Cole, Professor of Criminology, Law and Society, Department of Criminology, Law & Society, School of Social Ecology, University of California – Irvine; Greg Ridgeway, Rebecca W. Bushnell Professor of Criminology, Professor and Chair, Department of Criminology, Professor, Department of Statistics and Data Science, University of Pennsylvania; and Kim Lane Scheppele, Laurance S. Rockefeller Professor of Sociology and International Affairs in the School of Public and International Affairs and the University Center for Human Values; Director, Program in Law and Normative Thinking (PLANT), University Center for Human Values, Princeton University for their very comprehensive review of the Centre and its programs. We would also like to thank and acknowledge the Director, program coordinators, faculty, administrative staff, and all those who contributed to the preparation of the self-study. We also wish to thank the many staff, students, and faculty members who met with the external reviewers and provided thoughtful feedback. The UTQAP cyclical review process is an invaluable exercise that affords us the opportunity to take stock of our academic units and programs, to recognize achievement, and identify areas for improvement.

The review report was finalized on August 25, 2025, after which the Director shared it widely with stakeholders in the Centre. We are extremely pleased with the reviewers' positive assessment of the overall strength of the Centre and its outstanding, productive faculty members. The reviewers praised the Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies as a respected Canadian hub for critical and interdisciplinary work on crime, law, and social regulation, and highlighted its strong standing within socio-legal scholarship in Canada and internationally. They noted exceptionally strong undergraduate demand and commended the expansion of course offerings, along with the growth of experiential and service-learning opportunities. The reviewers observed that the graduate programs demonstrate solid outcomes and recognized

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the Centre's efforts to strengthen professional development through new coursework and enhanced support structures. They praised the Centre's impressive research profile, pointing to major distinctions, multiple book prizes, and strong levels of competitive grant success across the faculty. The reviewers also highlighted successful organizational initiatives since the previous review, including progress toward improved space, new faculty hiring, expanded graduate training and strengthened communications and outreach. Finally, they emphasized the Centre's strong relationships with cognate units, its extensive partnerships with government and professional organizations, and its active calendar of public events that bring prominent international scholars to the community. The review report also raised several issues and challenges and identified areas for enhancement, including those summarized in the accompanying Review Recommendations Table.

Each of these recommendations has been addressed in the attached Review Recommendations Table, which outlines the unit's response, the Dean's response, and an Implementation Plan identifying action items and timelines for each recommendation. My Administrative Response and Implementation Plan was developed in consultation with the Interim Chair and with the Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, and senior leadership within my office. The Implementation Plan provided identifies timeframes of immediate- (six months), medium- (one to two years), and longer- (three to five years) term actions and who (Faculty, Dean, unit) will take the lead in each area. I also identified any necessary changes in organization, policy, or governance, where appropriate, as well as any resources, financial or otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.

The next UTQAP Cyclical review of the Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies will take place no later than the 2031-32 review cycle. My office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with Chairs and directors, and through the unit's five-year unit-level academic planning process, which will begin at the conclusion of the cyclical review, if relevant. I also acknowledge that your office will request a brief Interim Monitoring Report midway between the March 2025 UTQAP cyclical review and the year of the next site visit in 2031-32 to report on progress made on the Implementation Plan as outlined in the accompanying Review Recommendations Table.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the review report. The reviewers' comments and recommendations will help inform the future priorities of the Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies and its undergraduate and graduate programs.

Sincerely,



Stephen Wright
Interim Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Professor, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

cc.

Scott Wortley, Acting Director, Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies

Kamari Clarke, Director, Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies

Gillian Hamilton, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Faculty of Arts & Science

Ebba Kurz, Interim Associate Dean, Unit-Level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science

Caitlin Burton, Senior Manager, Curriculum, Change & Reviews, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science

Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Amanda Pullan, Academic Planning & Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science

2024-25 UTQAP Review of FAS Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies - Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, “it is important to note that, while the external reviewers’ report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability” (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean’s Response
The reviewers noted that the undergraduate program’s competitive admission structure limits enrolment, pushes some students into other majors, and discourages others from taking challenging early coursework. They recommended considering adjustments to admission requirements to expand access while exploring ways to support a sustainable increase in enrolments.	1.	“Support the transition of CrimSL’s undergraduate program from a selective three-year program to an open four-year program by increasing faculty lines to staff the new courses that this transition would require. The resources need to come first or the small and overstretched existing faculty will not be able to manage the transition without being crushed. We do not support a transition to an open four-year program without appropriate resources.”	The Centre agrees, in principle, with the reviewers’ recommendation and with the faculty members’ strong view that a more open four-year pathway would bring clear pedagogical and equity benefits. Faculty members see value in engaging students from the first year, scaffolding criminological and socio-legal skills over a longer period, and aligning with other social science units that use large first-year courses followed by structured progression into majors and specialists. A four-year model would also help address inequities associated with competitive second-year entry, which can disproportionately disadvantage first-generation university students, commuters, and students who must work significant hours during their first year.	Immediate to medium-term: The Dean’s Office supports the Centre’s plan to align enrolments with existing resources to ensure a quality student experience. Currently the new first-year CRIM course is not a pre-requisite for upper-level CRIM courses. The Dean’s Office will continue to work with the unit to better integrate this first-year course with the Criminology program curriculum while at the same time remaining committed to a model emphasizing breadth in the first year of university study.
	2.	“The admissions cap artificially suppresses enrolment, disproportionately impacts mid-performing students, and limits access to criminology courses for non-majors. A more appropriate strategy would expand access by aligning faculty capacity with student demand.”	However, the faculty and staff concur with the reviewers that a transition under current conditions—severe faculty shortages, limited TA capacity, heavy reliance on sessional instructors, and constrained administrative staffing—would be unsustainable and would risk compromising both undergraduate and graduate programs. The faculty members therefore accept the recommendation only on the explicit condition that meaningful increases in tenure-stream lines, TA allocations, and staff resources are secured in advance of, or concurrent with, any substantial structural change.	

			In the short term, the Centre has already begun to move in the direction outlined by the reviewers while carefully monitoring impact. We have introduced a large first-year course (CRI100H1 <i>True Crime? The Myths and Realities of Media Depictions of Crime and Justice</i>; 0.5 FCE, with a cap of approximately 500 students) and modestly increased the size of the incoming major cohort (e.g., from ~220 to ~250 students). These steps allow us to test and refine first-year offerings, build early engagement, and assess the demands on teaching preparation, TA coordination, library support, and one-on-one advising. In parallel, we have increased interim teaching capacity (e.g., through a status-only appointment) to stabilize course delivery during this period of experimentation and growth. The Centre has underscored that any full transition to an open four-year program would require careful changes to workflows, systems, and capacity: revised advising materials and degree planning tools; earlier and more complex course scheduling; expanded TA hiring and training; enhanced communications with students; and increased pressure on the library and front-line support. The Centre will therefore use the current phase as a pilot period in which we: (1) continue offering the large first-year course, (2) incrementally adjust enrollments, and (3) develop a detailed resource-contingent plan for a four-year structure. In collaboration with the Faculty of Arts & Science, we will prepare scenario-based proposals that link any future move to a fully open four-year program to concrete commitments in faculty lines, TA allocations, and administrative staffing. Only once these conditions are met will the Centre recommend a formal structural shift from the existing selective three-year model to a fully open four-year program.	
The reviewers recommended having more representation of the quantitative side of the field of Criminology and Sociolegal Studies and expanding the faculty to introduce new courses in areas such as causal inference, economics, and computational methods; they also noted	3.	“Increase methodological depth. CrimSL’s curriculum and events tilt heavily toward qualitative research methods, history, and critical theory. In these fields, it is already one of the top programs in the world. Many North American criminology programs focus on quantitative criminology with an emphasis on	The Centre agrees with the reviewers on the need to broaden and deepen the methodological and professional training of graduate students, and has already taken concrete steps to implement this recommendation. In particular, the Centre has unanimously approved a motion to revise the PhD coursework and methods requirements with the dual aim of strengthening quantitative literacy and preserving the Centre’s methodological diversity.	Immediate to medium-term: The Dean’s Office applauds the Centre’s response and their detailed plan to address this recommendation. The Vice-Dean, Graduate Education will work with the unit throughout the academic change process as it proposes these curricular revisions.

concerns regarding a lack of depth of methodological training for graduate students in some areas. They recommended exploring enrolment arrangements with units offering methods courses in applicable subjects.		causal inference, economics, and computational methods, but those approaches have a limited presence in CrimSL. Strategic hires and new courses in quantitative empirical methods would bring CrimSL closer to North American criminology programs and expand the range of career options open to CrimSL's PhD students. That said, we also believe that it is crucial for CrimSL not to dilute its present strengths just to expand its range"	First, the existing required graduate methods course ("Methodological Issues in Criminology and Sociolegal Studies," or its successor) will be revised to focus primarily on quantitative literacy for all graduate students, while remaining the single shared core methods course for both MA and PhD cohorts. Second, all PhD students will be required to complete an additional 0.5 FCE methods course offered by the Centre, chosen from an approved list of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods offerings. This additional course will be a formal PhD requirement and will be recorded in the Graduate Handbook. Third, the minimum PhD coursework requirement will increase from four to five half-credit graduate courses, such that each PhD student must complete: (1) the revised quantitative-literacy methods course; (2) one additional methods course in the Centre; (3) the required "Law and State Power: Theoretical Perspectives" course (or its successor); and (4) two further graduate electives. These five courses will normally be completed over the first two years of the PhD, with at least four in Year 1 and the remaining course by the end of Year 2. In parallel with these structural changes, the Centre will expand the range of methods offerings and professional development opportunities available to graduate students. Methods breadth will be pursued both through new or revised courses within CrimSL (including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods options) and through partnerships with allied departments where appropriate. Professional skill development will be strengthened by embedding more systematic research opportunities, publication-oriented activities, and career preparation (academic and non-academic) within the graduate experience. The changes to PhD requirements will take effect for the cohort admitted in 2027–28 (subject to Faculty governance approval) and, once approved, will be fully reflected in the Graduate Handbook and program website.	The A&S Office of Graduate Professional Development & Student Success remains available to consult with and support the unit on graduate professional development training, as appropriate.
	4.	"...we suggest prioritizing new faculty hires with a range of methodologies with the goal of broadening and deepening methods offerings across the board."		
	5.	"...it was our impression that none of the methodology tracks offered more than bare-minimum training... We suggest that, for students who want more advanced statistics courses, one immediate fix would be to explicitly permit CrimSL graduate students to take such courses in other departments like sociology, pending the offering of more such courses in the Centre"		
	6.	"The Centre might explore increasing its quantitative course offerings by partnering with allied departments, like sociology, and by offering joint qualitative methods courses with departments like history and anthropology, as a		

		bridging strategy until CrimSL's faculty expands."		
The reviewers highlighted opportunities for the Centre to broaden graduate professional training, noting that some graduate students had limited engagement with scholarly publishing. They recommended setting clearer expectations and supporting students' development of publication pipelines, and exploring ways to offer more structured research opportunities to strengthen publication records.	7.	"Structured research opportunities might also be included along with methods training with the goal of encouraging students to develop better publication records while in graduate school."	The Centre agrees that structured research opportunities and intentional support for publication are essential components of high-quality graduate training. To this end, the Centre will more explicitly integrate research and publication pathways into its curriculum and supervisory practices. Graduate methods and theory courses will be expected to include opportunities for students to design and carry out research projects that can be developed into publishable manuscripts, and supervisors will be encouraged to involve students in research assistantship and co-authored outputs, where appropriate. As part of the annual review process, the Centre will adopt a publication-focused template in which all PhD students outline their publication pipeline, including working drafts, submissions, revise-and-resubmits, and acceptances. Supervisors and students will use this pipeline to set concrete goals, with a submission-ready paper by the end of Year 2 or 3 identified as a reasonable informal benchmark of progress, while allowing for disciplinary variation and individual circumstances.	Immediate to long-term: The Dean's Office supports the Centre's detailed plans to address this review recommendation. The unit is also encouraged to share with their graduate students the resources and opportunities provided through the Office of Graduate Professional Development & Student Success in the Faculty of Arts & Science and the Centre for Graduate Professional Development offered through the School of Graduate Studies.
	8.	"When PhD students are going through their annual review, an early section of their progress reports should detail the student's publication pipeline, including working drafts, submissions, revise-and-resubmits, and acceptances. A publishable paper by the end of the second year should be an informal benchmark of suitable progress in the program."		
	9.	"Perhaps a new course, or a redirection of CRI1010Y, could focus more directly on developing ready-to-submit manuscripts... Another course might be usefully added to the curriculum to permit more in-depth instruction in preparing scholarship for publication, though adding new courses is presently difficult to do with faculty stretched so thin."		

The reviewers noted that the labour-intensive nature of qualitative and critical research, as well as the impact of external work and substantial TA responsibilities, contributes to longer-than-average PhD time-to-completion rates. They recommended considering a more structured approach to students' dissertation work with clearer milestones to support timely completion, as well as a review of graduate students' TA workload in relation to degree progress.	10.	"...graduate students in CrimSL might benefit from more structure in the PhD program once they get to the dissertation stage so that they have regular targets to hit along the way toward completing a dissertation."	The Centre agrees that graduate students would benefit from more structure at the dissertation stage and a stronger culture of in-person engagement, networking, and participation in seminars and visiting scholar events. We understand that heavy TA workloads may contribute to increased time-to-completion for our PhD students. However, TA appointments fall outside of the purview of this program review as they constitute an employment relationship governed by the collective agreement between the University and CUPE 3902 Unit 1, which includes guaranteed minimum subsequent appointments, strict hiring criteria, and, in certain cases, preferential hiring for TAs with seniority and previous experience. While we will continue to address individual workload issues as they arise through the proper labour relations channels, we are unable to commit to any action that would limit workers' rights to take up TA appointments as covered by the Collective Agreement.	Immediate to long-term: The Dean's Office fully supports the Centre's plan to address the review recommendation pertaining to degree progression and to boost in-person graduate engagement on campus. The Vice-Dean, Graduate Education is available to meet with the Centre's leadership to support the development of clearer unit-level guidelines to formalize post-coursework milestones for PhD students.
	11.	"A review of TA workload in relation to degree progress is warranted."		
The reviewers highlighted concerns regarding graduate students' engagement with the CrimSL academic community, including limited interaction among students and infrequent participation in seminars and departmental events. They recommended encouraging stronger cohort engagement and more consistent involvement in shared academic activities.	12.	"We had the impression that students did not yet have essential networking skills and often did not regularly attend departmental seminars or meetings with visiting scholars."	To address these concerns that do fall within the purview of the review, the Centre is implementing a set of coordinated measures that clarify expectations, introduce regular milestones, and foster a more vibrant intellectual community for MA and PhD students.	
	13.	"The culture of CrimSL should include the expectation that the entire department community should gather regularly for the purposes of engaging with visiting guests."	The Centre will develop clearer advancement guidelines, formalize post-coursework milestones for PhD students, to be outlined in the Graduate Handbook and discussed during orientation, supervision meetings, and annual reviews. These milestones will include: (1) clear guidelines for the Ph.D. qualifying exam, the proposal defense, and a clear timeline for dissertation proposal submission and approval; (2) agreed-upon targets for chapter drafts or article manuscripts; and (3) an expected timeframe for a full dissertation draft. These targets will not be punitive but will serve as shared planning tools for students and supervisors, helping to break the dissertation into manageable steps and to identify at an earlier stage when additional support or adjustments are needed.	
	14.	"When we gathered to meet with some of the PhD students, it was apparent that many of them had not seen each other in many months. Each seemed to be working at home and only coming to campus when they absolutely needed something. This is an unhealthy graduate student culture that does not foster the important hallway	Additionally, the Centre will strengthen expectations and opportunities for seminar participation, networking, and community-building. Graduate program materials will clearly state that regular	

		conversations, after-seminar debates, and the professional networking skills that are an informal yet critical part of the graduate student experience.”	attendance at CrimSL seminars, visiting scholar talks, and selected “core community events” is a normal and expected part of graduate training. The Centre will sponsor a regular graduate colloquium or <i>brown-bag series</i> in which students present work-in-progress and receive peer and faculty feedback, and will encourage informal gatherings around these events (for example, post-seminar discussions or coffee sessions with visiting speakers). The Centre has also recently, in 2025, established CrimSL Alumni Awards (including a Distinguished Alumni Award and an Emerging Leader Impact Award), which highlight alumni who model scholarly excellence, community leadership, and justice-oriented practice; these awards will be used to showcase pathways for current students and to strengthen alumni–student connections. Finally, recognizing the concerns about isolation and limited on-campus presence, the Centre will use upcoming space planning and program activities to foster a more vibrant in-person graduate culture. Where possible, shared workspace and common areas will be designated for graduate use to return to norms of everyday interaction, “hallway conversations,” and spontaneous collaboration. Supervisors will be encouraged to hold some regular meetings on campus (rather than just on zoom), and the Centre will support student-led initiatives—such as reading groups or informal social gatherings linked to seminars—that help rebuild a sense of cohort and community. Taken together, these measures aim to provide clearer structure, more balanced workloads, and a richer, more connected intellectual environment for CrimSL graduate students.	
The reviewers raised significant concerns regarding CrimSL’s small faculty complement relative to its enrolments, noting that similar concerns were raised in the previous review. They observed that faculty workload limits undergraduate student access to advising, stretches capacity for graduate student supervision, and	15.	“Scale the faculty complement. We recommend a sustained expansion on the order of two new tenure-stream hires per year through the next review cycle to bring staffing in line with student demand. At present, the faculty is stretched thin given the teaching and advising demands they face, and this shows up in delayed publications.”	The Centre concurs with the reviewers’ assessment that the current faculty complement is significantly out of proportion to student demand and to peer criminology and sociolegal studies units. Ensuring program quality and sustainability requires a substantial, multi-year expansion of the tenure-stream faculty complement, rather than isolated or occasional hires. This work is also occurring within a broader university-wide context of strategic faculty recruitment. The University of Toronto has recently highlighted its participation in the federally supported	Immediate to long-term: The Dean’s Office recognizes that the Centre is prioritizing this recommendation and will work with the unit to explore their options through the faculty complement process. All requests for few positions across the Faculty are submitted to the Faculty Appointments Committee (FAC), which includes representation across its sectors (Humanities, Social Sciences,

can have an impact on research productivity and wellness. They further opined that the Centre's current reliance on limited-term faculty is unsustainable and risks compromising the quality of instruction and continuity of student mentorship. They recommended long-term faculty complement planning and sustained growth of tenure-stream positions, as opportunities permit.			Canada Impact+ / Canada Global Impact+ Research Talent Initiative, including the Canada Impact+ Research Chairs stream, which is designed to attract world-leading senior researchers whose work aligns with national priority areas (including democratic and community resilience, among others). In this context, CrimSL has already been approved for one strategic senior hire, and that process is currently underway. The Centre has also submitted two additional requests for strategic faculty hires to the Faculty Appointments Committee (FAC) and looks forward to the positive outcome of those requests and to pursuing further opportunities as they become available.	and Sciences). The FAC reviews all requests for new positions and makes recommendations to the Dean regarding which requests should be granted. In a given year, there are many more requests than available positions.
	16.	"One or two more hires is not a serious response to the student demand and the overextended faculty. A serious response would be a plan between now and the next external review to have a meaningful increase in the total number of faculty, on the order of two additional faculty (in addition to any hires to account for retiring or departing faculty) every year between now and the next external review."	In addition, and as an initial step, the Centre welcomed Dr. Emma Feltes on July 1, 2025, as a new tenure-stream faculty member. Dr. Feltes is a legal, political, and public anthropologist whose work engages colonial constitutionalism, Indigenous legal orders, environmental crisis, and climate justice. On August 29, 2025, the Centre also posted a tenure-stream search in Criminal Law, Sociology of Law, Empirical Legal Studies, and Social and Legal Theory, with an anticipated start date of January 1, 2027, to strengthen both teaching and research in core areas of the discipline.	
	17.	"While CrimSL has made recent hires, these efforts have barely replaced retiring faculty and have not meaningfully expanded the faculty complement, nor have they kept pace with student demand or program needs. The reliance on limited-term faculty is unsustainable and risks compromising the quality of instruction and continuity of student mentorship. Going forward, the Centre requires a structured, multi-year hiring plan that includes at least two net new tenure-stream appointments per year, in addition to backfilling for departures or retirements."	Going forward, the Centre will pursue a strategic, staged hiring plan that responds to topical areas raised by students and to the evolving field. Priority areas include: quantitative criminology and policing; criminology and criminal behaviour; technology, AI, and digital governance; property law and climate/environmental justice; Indigenous legal orders, migration and bordering, and regulatory regimes; health, disability, addictions, social welfare, and community safety; and media/visual criminology, critical theory, epistemology, and intellectual history. This portfolio reflects both student interests and the Centre's distinctive role as a leading criminology and socio-legal unit in Canada. Upon receiving relevant hiring approvals, expansion will be anchored in tenure-stream appointments in these core areas, complemented by a carefully limited use of teaching-stream positions where needed to stabilize large foundational courses and reduce reliance on precarious sessional instruction. The Centre emphasized that significant faculty growth has implications for TA coordination,	

			course scheduling, administrative workload, and student advising, especially as the undergraduate and graduate programs expand. Accordingly, the Centre will work with the Faculty of Arts & Science not only to advance a multi-year hiring plan roughly commensurate with the scale signalled by the reviewers, but also to secure corresponding administrative and TA support so that new hires can be integrated effectively and sustainably.	
	18.	“If U of T wants to have a criminology program that really is a premiere institution for criminology, it needs to seriously invest in increasing the number of faculty to make teaching and advising loads manageable, which in turn will give faculty the capacity to write more.”		
The reviewers observed that the upcoming move into new campus space and the Faculty of Arts & Science’s transition to a new budget model provide “an opportune moment to revisit CrimSL’s organizational status.” They recommended careful consideration of optimal administrative structures to support the Centre’s continued growth and to ensure alignment between its academic contributions and its recognition and resource allocation within the division.	19.	“In our view, it is well past time to elevate criminology at U of T to a department as it is in numerous other universities in North America and the United Kingdom.”	The Centre acknowledges the reviewers’ view and agrees that its size, scope, and contributions warrant a careful review of organizational status. In collaboration with the Dean’s Office, the Centre will prepare an analysis of possible models—including departmentalization—considering implications for governance, resource allocation, and alignment with comparator institutions. Any proposed change will be developed through consultation with faculty, staff, and relevant divisional bodies.	Immediate to medium-term: The governance structure, rights and responsibilities of an EDU:A are equivalent to a department at the University of Toronto. The Dean’s Office can support the Centre in reviewing its internal organizational structure to best support the work of the unit.
	20.	“CrimSL’s management and leadership have been resilient under difficult circumstances. Faculty and staff demonstrate collegiality and commitment despite structural resource constraints and administrative burdens. However, leadership capacity is stretched thin, with administrative roles rotated among a small faculty. The upcoming move to new space and the transition to a new budget model provide an opportune moment to revisit CrimSL’s organizational status. Elevating the	The Centre appreciates the reviewers’ recognition of its leadership under constrained conditions and agrees that organizational structure should support sustainable management. As part of the status review noted above, the Centre will assess how different models might ease administrative burden, clarify reporting lines, and better match its responsibilities with formal recognition and resources. This work will be timed to coincide with the move to new space and the implementation of the new budget model.	

		Centre to full departmental status may better align its academic contributions with institutional recognition and resource allocation.”		
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	21.	“Graduate students face significant pressures from Toronto’s cost of living. Many pursue part-time employment or extended time-to-degree, which in turn impedes scholarly productivity. More structured financial planning and stronger incentives for full-time academic progress would improve outcomes.”	The University of Toronto has recently implemented a significant, university-wide enhancement to doctoral funding. Beginning in the next academic year, all current and incoming PhD and SJD students in the funded cohort (typically the first four or five years of study, depending on the program) will receive a guaranteed base funding package of \$40,000 per year, inclusive of tuition. This institution-wide commitment is designed to ease financial pressures associated with the cost of living in Toronto, improve equity of access to doctoral studies, and enable students to focus more fully on their research and academic progress rather than on additional paid employment. Within this broader framework, the Centre fully recognizes that graduate students continue to face significant financial pressures that can encourage part-time employment, extended time-to-degree, and reduced scholarly productivity. In response, the Centre is working to provide clearer information for financial planning, to align expectations about timely progress with available supports, and to build in targeted incentives for full-time academic engagement at key points in the PhD. As part of this effort, the Centre introduced the First Year PhD Immersion Award in 2025 as a component of first-year funding packages. The intent of this award is to enable students to limit their hours of teaching assistant (TA) employment—in the first or second semester—without suffering a financial penalty, thereby freeing time to acclimatize to the program, focus on coursework, and engage deeply with intensive reading and the intellectual life of the Centre. Because financial circumstances vary, the award is offered regardless of a student’s intent to work as a TA, and it does not restrict students from taking TA appointments in CrimSL or other U of T units; all	Immediate to medium-term: The Dean’s Office fully supports the Centre’s plans to offer financial support to graduate students through awards, and providing information to students for better financial planning. The A&S New Budget Model also allows a unit greater autonomy in managing its budget, including financial support for graduate students.

			registered graduate students remain eligible to apply for CUPE 3902 Unit 1 positions. At the other end of the degree, the Centre makes use of the Doctoral Completion Award (DCA) to support students in the first year beyond their regular funded cohort. Eligible full-time CrimSL PhD students in Year 6, who remain within time limits and in good academic standing, may apply for this award, with the value determined by available funds. Together, the university-wide guaranteed base funding, the First Year PhD Immersion Award, and the DCA are designed to reduce financial pressures at multiple critical stages—entry, funded years, and completion—while the Centre also works to provide more structured financial planning information and to integrate discussions of funding, employment, and progress into annual reviews. These combined measures aim to incentivize full-time academic engagement and to support timely, high-quality completion of the degree.	
	22.	“Return the criminology library to having a full-time librarian... Given the number of people working in this area on campus, the library really should have its own librarian to manage the demand.”	The Centre wholeheartedly endorses the concern behind this recommendation and views full-time dedicated librarian coverage as a minimum requirement given current and projected enrolments and the expanding scope of criminology and the need to build the socio-legal collections. The Centre situates this recommendation within a broader vision of the library as a core teaching resource, a student study space, an archival repository, and, over time, a leading Canadian criminology and socio-legal collection. We are pleased to report that significant progress has already been made. As of December 1, 2024, Danielle Van Wagner assumed the role of Head Librarian of both the CrimSL and CIRHR libraries and with permanent status, providing sustained professional oversight and strategic leadership. On May 1, 2025, Julia Warren joined the CrimSL library as Cataloguing, Research, and Resource Services Library Assistant, offering day-to-day support to students, faculty, and researchers and enhancing access to collections and research assistance. Looking ahead to 2027, the CrimSL library is slated to be located in the new Woodsworth Common building, where the criminology	Immediate to long-term: The Dean’s Office supports the Centre in their plans to nurture library services and meet this review recommendation. The ASDO confirms that the CrimSL library is part of the new Woodsworth Academic building, which is on track for completion in late 2027. The ASDO Administrative HR team will work with the unit to assess the program library’s staffing needs.

			library will also serve as the primary library for not only our CrimSL students but also Woodsworth College students will have access to it. The Centre see this as an opportunity to secure a two-position model: a Head Librarian with responsibility for collection development, curation, and liaison work, and at least one additional librarian or professional staff member focused on front-line services, instruction, and research support for both CrimSL and the approximately 5,000 Woodsworth undergraduates. The Centre’s implementation strategy recognizes the library's dual role: as a specialized criminology and socio-legal research hub and as a high-volume undergraduate teaching and study space.	

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies as a respected Canadian hub for critical and interdisciplinary work on crime, law, and social regulation, and highlighted its strong standing within socio-legal scholarship in Canada and internationally. They noted exceptionally strong undergraduate demand and commended the expansion of course offerings, along with the growth of experiential and service-learning opportunities. The reviewers observed that the graduate programs demonstrate solid outcomes and recognized the Centre's efforts to strengthen professional development through new coursework and enhanced support structures. They praised the Centre's impressive research profile, pointing to major distinctions, multiple book prizes, and strong levels of competitive grant success across the faculty. The reviewers also highlighted successful organizational initiatives since the previous review, including progress toward improved space, new faculty hiring, expanded graduate training, and strengthened communications and outreach. Finally, they emphasized the Centre's strong relationships with cognate units, its extensive partnerships with government and professional organizations, and its active calendar of public events that bring prominent international scholars to the community.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: considering adjustments to admission requirements to expand access while exploring ways to support a sustainable increase in enrolments; having more representation of the quantitative side of the field of Criminology and Sociolegal Studies and expanding the faculty to introduce new courses in areas such as causal inference, economics, and computational methods, and exploring enrolment arrangements with units offering methods courses in applicable subjects; broadening graduate professional training, setting clearer expectations and supporting students' development of publication pipelines, and exploring ways to offer more structured research opportunities to strengthen publication records; considering a more structured approach to students' dissertation work with clearer milestones to support timely completion, and reviewing student TA workload in relation to degree progress; encouraging stronger graduate student cohort engagement and more consistent involvement in shared academic activities; conducting long-term faculty complement planning and pursuing sustained growth of tenure-stream positions, as opportunities permit; and carefully considering optimal administrative structures to support the Centre's continued growth.

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

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Arts & Science Dean's Office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with Chairs and Directors through regular governance and curricular oversight.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than 2028-29 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in 2031-32.

6 Distribution

On August 15th, 2026 the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of Faculty of Arts & Science, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Spanish (HBA) Specialist, Major, Minor Portuguese (HBA) Specialist, Major, Minor Latin American Studies (HBA) Major, Minor Spanish: MA, PhD
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• John Grinstead, Professor & Department Chair, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, The Ohio State University • Pedro Meira Monteiro, Arthur W. Marks '19 Professor of Spanish and Portuguese, Department Chair, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Princeton University • William Viestenz, Professor & Department Chair, Department of Spanish & Portuguese Studies, University of Minnesota Twin Cities
Date of Review Visit:	March 27-28, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	July 7, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 19, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: March 7-8, 2018

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Ranked as first in Canada and top ten in North America
- Excellent experiential learning opportunities available to students due to strong relationships with local community groups
- Large, diverse faculty complement, many of whom are leaders in the field and hold important administrative service roles
- Vibrant and healthy academic community

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Adding hires in Latin American and Portuguese literature to enhance the department's stature
- Addressing high administrative workload and providing staff resources to limit the amount of faculty time spent on administrative tasks
- Engaging in wider promotion of the Latin American Literature activities
- Reconsidering the use of continuing faculty resources in large language courses
- Increasing opportunities for students and faculty to interact through research activities in and outside the classroom
- Increasing international student admissions to the graduate programs

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study & Appendices; Previous review report including the administrative response; Access to all course descriptions; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty.

Consultation Process

Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Vice-Dean, Graduate, Associate Dean, Student Affairs, Faculty of Arts & Science; Department Chair, Associate Chair Graduate, Associate Chair Undergraduate; Junior and senior faculty; Graduate and undergraduate students; Administrative staff; Chairs of relevant cognate units (French, English, Comparative Literature, Linguistics, Germanic Languages and Literatures, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Medieval Studies, Caribbean Studies).

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**:

- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - Latin American Studies program is an essential hub for broader campus activity

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Two-day-per-week language class model differs from the three- and four-day structures used in Slavic and Italian
 - Language classes are currently capped between 25 and 40 students, which may not align with practices in peer institutions or with pedagogical best practices for language instruction
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - Assigning tenured faculty to teach language classes may compromise the quality and coordination of language instruction, potentially affecting students' experience and continuation in the sequence
 - Assigning tenured faculty to occasional language instruction may create an opportunity cost by reducing the frequency with which they can offer advanced-level courses

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Evaluate the possibility of adopting language sections capped at 25 students with more frequent weekly meetings, and seek support from the A&S Dean's Office for the additional contact hours through added teaching-stream positions
 - Reassess efficacy of the current two-day-per-week language class model in light of contemporary best practices in language teaching pedagogy
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - Support the department's efforts to minimize reliance on temporary, sessional instructors by providing necessary administrative backing to ensure stable and consistent instructional staffing

2. Graduate Program(s)

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Student funding
 - Department has taken extraordinary measures to provide additional financial support to PhD students, already exceeding the upcoming \$40,000 minimum support package through teaching opportunities, grants, and recruitment awards

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Uncertainty around why first-year graduate students cannot attend a short orientation followed by the required language teaching methodology course in their first semester, despite language program's transition toward more structured training
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - Supervision of graduate students teaching language appears ineffective, with reports of non-compliance and a lack of accountability among supervisors for mentorship
- Student funding
 - Graduate students cited Toronto's high cost of living and difficulty securing affordable housing as continuing barriers

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Integrate the Portuguese program into the MA/PhD program
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - Establish consistent leadership at the language-program level to improve supervision of graduate students teaching language, with future alignment through the planned amalgamation with Italian
 - Consider implementing annual evaluations of graduate students' teaching performance, alongside existing assessments of their research
- Student funding
 - Continue exploring competitive and sustainable models for graduate student funding

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - Department is intellectually robust with a prevailing collegial atmosphere
 - Committee observed strong intellectual vitality among students and faculty within a collegial and fundamentally cordial environment

- Research
 - ▶ Faculty are world-class researchers with publications in leading academic venues
 - ▶ Faculty have earned numerous prestigious national and international awards and grants, and department has shown significant improvement in rankings for externally funded research, both in quantity and average funding amounts
- Faculty
 - ▶ Large percentage of faculty hold significant administrative roles, maintain teaching ties with other units, and are actively involved in scholarly associations across the university and its colleges, exemplified by leadership in the Northrop Frye Centre, the Book History and Print Culture Collaborative Specialization, and Innis College

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

- Faculty
 - ▶ Imbalance exists in faculty composition, with too many full professors and too few assistant professors

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Create a more formalized mentoring structure for junior faculty in both teaching and research streams, especially in anticipation of the upcoming hires associated with the amalgamation plan
 - ▶ Provide clear guidance to junior faculty on evaluation and promotion processes, particularly concerning the 4th- and 6th-year milestones of the tenure track.
 - ▶ Explore use of “mentor maps” to identify mentors both within and outside the department who can regularly support mentees and connect them with resources needed for success
 - ▶ Extend mentoring support to associate professors to clarify expectations for promotion to full professor, potentially using same structure established for junior faculty
- Faculty
 - ▶ Submit requests for the two Tenure Stream positions to the Faculty Appointments Committee between 2026 and 2031, ensuring one is tied to a planned retirement or resignation and the other advances the growth of the new Department as a net new position
 - ▶ Address current faculty rank imbalance by prioritizing junior hires in upcoming recruitment efforts and planning around likely retirements
 - ▶ Reconsider proposal for tenured faculty to teach language classes

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
 - ▶ Department serves as an important scholarly and teaching hub within the institution, maintaining highly impactful and impressive relationships with a variety of centers and colleges and contributing intellectual vibrancy that benefits both faculty and students
 - ▶ Staff report that their input is valued and describe a workplace atmosphere characterized by mutual respect
 - ▶ Based on reviewers' observations, "the staff has been doing a great job"
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Administrative strengths are evident, and the department is moving in the right direction with the merger with Italian Studies
 - ▶ In light of U of T's new budgetary context, the merger is a wise and strategic move; increased autonomy over limited resources makes this combination of "forces and ideas" an important and auspicious step
 - ▶ If well managed and coordinated, the merger can strengthen the new unit by concentrating and optimizing resources and fostering fruitful partnerships through comparative and transdisciplinary studies
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Leadership has shown a strong commitment to fostering intellectual growth and demonstrates genuine concern for the unit's future, both institutionally and academically
 - ▶ Amalgamation with Italian Studies is a positive and innovative step, reflecting proactive decision-making by the departments during a time of scarcity
 - ▶ While challenges exist, the department is well positioned to evaluate potential pitfalls and make informed, accountable decisions
 - ▶ Integration of two units offers clear benefits, including more effective use of staff resources, streamlined committee work, and stronger alignment between disciplinary content courses and language teaching
 - ▶ Leaders of both departments appear well prepared and attuned to the complexity of the integration process
 - ▶ Shared history of collaboration in graduate studies, pedagogy, research, and administration between the two departments supports the likelihood of a successful integration; some faculty even reported more frequent engagement with Italian colleagues than with those in Spanish & Portuguese

- International comparators
 - ▶ Department is equipped to remain at the forefront of its field while addressing strategic curricular demands and strengthening U of T's global humanistic profile
 - ▶ Recognized as the best department of its kind in Canada, holding a prestigious position in English-speaking academia and serving as an international reference in Spanish and Portuguese literary, linguistic, and cultural studies

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

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Lack of clear leadership in the language program
 - ▶ Coordinators have experienced a gradual increase in responsibilities, including mentorship, training, and evaluation of graduate teaching assistants, made more challenging by the absence of a clear chain of authority
 - ▶ Implementation of a new budget model heavily reliant on student enrollment may lead to negative impacts
 - ▶ New department will have 5.5 staff positions, and it is understood that adjusting to the demands of the new structure will require time
 - ▶ Some staff reported having “out-sized” levels of responsibility
 - ▶ Provide the Portuguese section with either a dedicated language program director or course release for current faculty handling supervision and coordination
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Students and faculty with disabilities seem to face barriers that hinder full participation in academic life

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Staff well-being should remain a focus for the leaders of the new unit throughout the transition
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Clarify the leadership structure of the language program and assess whether a more solid administrative framework is needed
 - ▶ Consider appointing a tenured language-program director to establish a clear chain of authority, support coordinators, and lead the development and implementation of a long-term vision for the program
 - ▶ Consider appointing a tenured faculty member whose responsibilities include both language program administration and upper-division content teaching to help bridge the gap and strengthen integration between language and content courses
 - ▶ Consider appointing an additional administrative faculty member focused on the language program to help alleviate the considerable workload of the Undergraduate Associate Chair
 - ▶ Consider establishing a language program committee composed of tenured and tenure-track faculty to assume relevant administrative and leadership responsibilities

- ▶ Provide the Portuguese section with either a dedicated language program director or meaningful course release for current tenured faculty to support program supervision and coordination. Alternatively, consider appointing a new tenure-track or teaching-stream faculty member (ideally tenured and with expertise in L2 acquisition) to oversee coordination of Spanish, Portuguese, and possibly Italian
- ▶ Ensure appropriate workload balance among staff is established during the amalgamation process
- ▶ Establish a more robust administrative structure for the language program, potentially including a tenured language-program director and implementing annual evaluations of graduate student teaching
- ▶ Create a formalized mentoring structure for junior faculty, with consideration given to extending it to mid-career faculty as well
- ▶ Address need for a dedicated seminar room or common space to support department-specific activities and foster a sense of community among faculty, staff, and students



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

February 19, 2026

Professor Nick Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

RE: UTQAP cyclical review of the Department of Spanish & Portuguese

Dear Prof. Rule,

I write in response to your letter of November 27, 2025, regarding the March 27-28, 2025, UTQAP cyclical review of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and requesting our Administrative Responses. The programs reviewed were: Spanish, HBA: Specialist, Major, Minor; Portuguese, HBA: Specialist, Major, Minor; Latin American Studies, HBA: Major, Minor; Spanish: MA, PhD.

On behalf of the Faculty of Arts & Science, we would first like to thank the reviewers: John Grinstead, The Ohio State University; Pedro Meira Monteiro, Princeton University; William Viestenz, University of Minnesota Twin Cities, for their very comprehensive review of the Department of Spanish & Portuguese. We would also like to thank and acknowledge the Chair, program coordinators, faculty, administrative staff, and all those who contributed to the preparation of the self-study. We also wish to thank the many staff, students, and faculty members who met with the external reviewers and provided thoughtful feedback. The UTQAP cyclical review process is an invaluable exercise that affords us the opportunity to take stock of our academic units and programs, to recognize achievement, and identify areas for improvement.

The review report was finalized on July 2, 2025, after which the Interim Chair of the newly formed Department of Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies shared it widely with stakeholders in the department. We are extremely pleased with the reviewers' positive assessment of the overall strength of the former department and its outstanding, productive faculty members. The reviewers praised the Department of Spanish and Portuguese as the best of its kind in Canada, noting its international prominence and its reputation for excellence in literary, linguistic, and cultural studies in both Spanish and Portuguese. They commended the Department's intellectually vibrant and collegial atmosphere, and highlighted the world-class research profile of its faculty, whose scholarship is widely recognized through prestigious awards and substantial external funding. The reviewers applauded the Department's strong connections across the University, observing that its faculty hold significant leadership roles in colleges, centres, and interdisciplinary initiatives, and that the Latin American Studies program serves as an essential hub for campus-wide activity. They further praised departmental leadership for its commitment to fostering intellectual growth for all, and its genuine investment in the future of the Department. Finally, the reviewers observed

that the planned merger with the Department of Italian Studies represents a strategic and forward-looking initiative that promises to enhance collaboration, optimize resources, and create new opportunities for innovative comparative and transdisciplinary work.

Each of these recommendations has been addressed in the attached Review Recommendations Table, which outlines the unit's response, the Dean's response, and an Implementation Plan identifying action items and timelines for each recommendation. My Administrative Response and Implementation Plan was developed in consultation with the Interim Chair and with the Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, and senior leadership within my office. The Implementation Plan provided identifies timeframes of immediate- (six months), medium- (one to two years), and longer- (three to five years) term actions and who (Faculty, Dean, unit) will take the lead in each area. I also identified any necessary changes in organization, policy, or governance, where appropriate, as well as any resources, financial or otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.

Given the recent amalgamation of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese with the Department of Italian Studies, effective July 1, 2025, and that the next scheduled review of the former Department of Italian Studies is scheduled for 2028-29, the next UTQAP cyclical review of the new Department of Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies will take place no later than the 2028-29 review cycle. My office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with Chairs and directors. I also acknowledge that your office may also request a brief Interim Monitoring Report midway between the March 2025 UTQAP cyclical review and the year of the next site visit in 2028-29 to report on progress made on the Implementation Plan as outlined in the accompanying Review Recommendations Table.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the review report. The reviewers' comments and recommendations will help inform the future priorities of the Department of Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies and its undergraduate and graduate programs.

Sincerely,



Stephen Wright
Interim Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Professor, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

cc.

Luca Somigli, Interim Chair, Department of Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies, Faculty of Arts & Science
Gillian Hamilton, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Faculty of Arts & Science
Ebba Kurz, Interim Associate Dean, Unit-Level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science

Caitlin Burton, Senior Manager, Curriculum, Change & Reviews, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science

Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Andrea Benoit, Academic Planning & Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science

2024-25 UTQAP Review of FAS Department of Spanish and Portuguese - Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, “it is important to note that, while the external reviewers’ report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability” (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean’s Response
The reviewers raised pedagogical concerns regarding the Department’s language programs, including the two-day-per-week class model and a proposal for tenured faculty to teach language courses. They cautioned that these approaches may not align with best practices and recommended reviewing scheduling and teaching assignments to support quality and consistency. They also noted a lack of clear leadership in the language programs and recommended stronger oversight to ensure effective coordination and long-term planning.	1.	Recommendation: “Reassess the efficacy of 2-day per week language classes in the context of current mainstream language teaching pedagogy.”	The 2-day per week model is a recent implementation, and the department agrees that it should be reviewed to assess its effectiveness. We would also like to clarify that in the transition to this new model, there was not a decrease in course hours, since the new courses follow the flipped-classroom model that also includes a significant amount of online time (3 hours in person + 1 hour online). In other words, students are not working less, and course instructors report a considerable improvement in students’ preparation. Students also expressed satisfaction with the new course model. We plan to reassess this model of course structure in four years (academic year 2029-30), when we will have sufficient data to evaluate its efficacy.	Medium- Long-term: The A&S Dean’s office (ASDO) supports the department’s plan for addressing this recommendation. The department will review and reassess the current model of language course pedagogy over the next few semesters. The Dean’s Interim Monitoring Report, outlining progress on the Implementation Plan midway between UTQAP reviews, will offer an update on this matter.
	2.	Recommendation: “Reconsider the proposal that tenured faculty teach language classes.”	Unlike peer institutions in the United States, teaching- and tenure-stream faculty both do scholarly work and bring different competencies to the language classroom. In	Immediate- Medium-term: The ASDO supports the department’s plans for addressing this recommendation. The ASDO respects the ability of the ISPLAS Department

			particular, one of the aims of the language courses as currently structured is to prepare undergraduate students to take courses in literature, culture and linguistics in the target language. With that in mind, the department is in favour of an approach that ensures maximum flexibility as well as, whenever possible, participation of all faculty to first-year courses that constitute the entry point into our programs. While teaching in the language program should not be mandatory for tenured faculty, those who do want to teach language courses should be free to do so. Short- medium-term: The workload policy (currently under revision as a result of the merger of Spanish and Portuguese into ISPLAS) already provides for teaching a First-Year Foundation seminar as an alternative to language as a contribution to the first-year courses in the department.	to manage faculty workload within the framework of the University of Toronto Workload Policy and Procedures, and is available to consult, if needed.
	3.	Recommendation: “A more solid language program administrative structure, possibly including a tenured language-program director”	As a result of the creation of ISPLAS, the administrative structure of the department has changed. Currently, each of the four areas of ISPLAS (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies) has a program director. We aim to have a faculty member holding a continuing appointment or in a position leading to that (tenure-stream or teaching-stream) whenever possible, given our current staffing. In the case of Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, this person also has some responsibility for the language program, complementing the role of the course coordinators of multiple section courses. In addition, we created a language teaching committee to coordinate language	Immediate term: The ASDO supports the department’s plans for addressing this recommendation and notes that a language committee has already been struck.

			teaching across the three languages. We believe that this model ensures a good balance between the specific needs of the three individual language programs and the establishment of consistent practices across the programs. The effectiveness of this new administrative model can be reviewed in the context of the broader review of the new language model discussed in point 1 above. Short term: this recommendation has been implemented within the context of the needs of the new unit. Over the next few semesters, we will ensure that it works effectively in the administration of the language programs.	
	4.	“There might also be a language program committee filled with tenured and tenure-track faculty that could assume these responsibilities.”	A noted in section 3, a language committee has been implemented with the formation of ISPLAS.	See #3, above.
The reviewers noted concerns regarding the Department’s offerings in Portuguese language and Portuguese studies. They observed coordination and workload challenges in the undergraduate language program and recommended strengthening instructional and administrative supports to ensure sustainable oversight and consistent quality. They also observed the absence of graduate offerings in Portuguese, and suggested that the Department explore incorporating Portuguese into the MA and	5.	Recommendation: “The Portuguese section should have either a language program director or course release for the current faculty doing supervision/coordination.”	The Department of Spanish and Portuguese already had an associate chair for Portuguese, now replaced within ISPLAS by a program director for Portuguese (as noted in section 3). The workload committee is working on a workload policy that provides compensation for the program directors that is appropriate in relation to that of the other officers of the department.	Immediate term: The Vice-Dean, Faculty and Academic Life, and the Director of Academic Human Resources are available to discuss changes to the workload policy with the department leadership, as also outlined above (see #2) and in the FAS amalgamation proposal (“Proposal for Academic Restructuring of the Department of Italian Studies and the Department of Spanish & Portuguese,” approved by Faculty Council March 19, 2025).

PhD programs to better reflect the work of faculty specializing in this area.	6.	Recommendation: “The integration of the Portuguese program into the MA/PhD program.”	The department strongly supports the integration of the Portuguese program into the MA/PhD program. Opening a discussion with the School of Graduate Studies over how to implement a graduate program in Portuguese is a priority. Short/medium term: implementation of a Portuguese program within the MA/PhD program	Immediate- Medium-term: The Vice-Dean Academic Planning and Vice-Dean Graduate are available to discuss this recommendation. The first step for the department will be to prepare a proposal for the Dean’s Advisory Committee on Academic Change (DACAC), which comprises members of the Dean’s Leadership team and representation from all A&S sectors. The feasibility of this recommendation will be initially assessed through this process.
The reviewers noted challenges in the supervision and training of graduate students who teach language courses, including inconsistent mentoring and limited accountability. They recommended implementing more consistent structures for the supervision, training, and evaluation of graduate teaching assistants.	7.	“Supervision of graduate students teaching language is apparently not effective. Supervisors report non-compliance and report not feeling responsible for mentoring graduate students. Therefore, consistent leadership at the language program(s) level is called for and may take some years to be put into effect.”	As noted, as part of the new administrative structure, there are now program directors and a language committee to provide support and leadership for the supervision of graduate students teaching language. In 2023-24, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese implemented a new system to prepare first-year graduate students to serve as course instructors in subsequent years. In this model, they work as TAs under the supervision of the Spanish program director. We are currently assessing the best practices to ensure the effectiveness of this model, with the aim of extending them to the graduate students in both the Spanish and the Italian programs, thus ensuring consistency across the unit. Short/medium term: revision of current training of graduate students in language teaching; development of a consistent policy across the two programs, Spanish and Italian.	Immediate- Medium-term: The ASDO supports the department’s plans for addressing this recommendation. The Department may also wish to consult with the Centre for Graduate Supervision and Mentorship regarding available tools to support their efforts. The U of T’s Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation’s (CTSI) Teaching Assistants Training Program may also have appropriate resources to guide the Department in managing effective TA teams. The unit is also encouraged to consult with other departments offering language instruction to discuss best practices and/or share resources.
	8.	“Graduate students should be evaluated annually on teaching, in addition to being evaluated on their research.”	Graduate students who are employed as TAs or Course Instructors are already evaluated at least once annually through a classroom visit. After the course visit, the evaluator and the student fill out a form with the evaluator’s	Immediate term: The ASDO notes that the department currently follows the reviewers’ recommendations for evaluation of graduate student teaching.

			feedback and the student’s response to be added to the student’s file. This can be further formalized by making this procedure a requirement comparable to the annual (minimum) mandatory thesis progress report. Of course, any policy on this matter needs to be in compliance with the terms of supervision in the Collective Agreement. The policy on supervision of teaching already follows the procedures recommended by the reviewers.	
	9.	“...it is unclear why first-year graduate students could not simply attend a two-week orientation to teaching and then take the recently designed and required language teaching methodology/workshop course during their first semester”	We strongly believe that training is an ongoing process. A workshop at the beginning of the academic year is certainly very useful, and the department already offers a one-day introductory workshop as part of the graduate student orientation program at the end of August. In addition, the graduate program also offers a required graduate course, SPA1096H, specifically focused on language pedagogy, as the reviewers noted. The increased resources with the formation of ISPLAS make it possible to envision other training activities on language pedagogy throughout the year, and involving all the language streams in the department. This would provide further ongoing training as well as the opportunity for students to reflect and receive feedback on their teaching practices. As was the case with point 8 above, the implementation of this plan will require close compliance with the collective agreement. Short/medium term: in consultation with Labour Relations and with the graduate students, draft of a program of workshops	Immediate- Medium-term: The ASDO supports the ISPLAS Department as it assesses the feasibility of the recommendation, given the additional unit-level resources now available because of the July 1, 2025, amalgamation of two departments. See also #7, above.

			and other activities related to language training to be offered over the course of the academic year. See also point #7.	
The reviewers recognized the Department's efforts to enhance graduate funding, and noted ongoing challenges related to the high cost of living in Toronto and the limited availability of affordable housing. They recommended that the Department continue to explore ways to provide appropriate financial and other supports for graduate students.	10.	"Graduate students identified the relatively high cost of living in Toronto and the challenge of finding affordable housing as continuing barriers. We support and recommend that the department continue to think about competitive and sustainable models for graduate funding."	This is of course an ongoing concern for all graduate programs across the university. The faculty in the former Department of Spanish and Portuguese has been very successful in increasing the number of research grants that provide additional funding to support graduate students. This is especially important in the context of the new funding model, in which more responsibility is placed on units and individual faculty members to provide such support. The formation of ISPLAS offers new opportunities to improve our success rate in grant applications. One of the new staff positions that have resulted from the merger is a research officer who will support faculty in identifying research funding in Canada and abroad, in navigating the application process and more generally in increasing faculty access to external funding. Furthermore, the additional resources of the new unit can be used to increase our fundraising efforts, including in the area of new grants and scholarships for graduate students. To that aim, I plan to meet with the Office of Advancement to discuss an effective outreach strategy. Short term: hire a staff member to support faculty applications for external research	Immediate term: The new graduate funding commitment, effective September 2025, of \$40K will go some way in addressing the reviewers' observation that the graduate funding model in place at the time of the review was inadequate. Further, the A&S New Budget Model allows units greater autonomy in managing its budget, including allocation of funds for the financial support for graduate students. Immediate- Long-term: The Chair is encouraged to utilize existing research services available through the A&S Research Services Office. Through that office, the unit has access to a dedicated Funded Research Officer for help with grant applications, a dedicated Research Awards & Honours Coordinator, and a Research Partnerships Officer who supports grant application development for partnership grants specifically. The Jackman Humanities Institute also provides dedicated support for HUMA grad students, PDFs, and JHI affiliated faculty members. Immediate term: The ASDO can facilitate a meeting between the Department Chair and an Advancement representative to discuss how to develop a fundraising initiative to support graduate scholarships.

			grants that can be used in part to support graduate students. Medium/long term: work with the Office of Advancement to develop and implement an effective strategy for fundraising aimed at establishing new scholarships for graduate students.	
The reviewers highlighted the importance of strengthening mentorship opportunities for junior faculty. They recommended establishing a formal mentoring structure for both teaching- and tenure-stream faculty, including clear guidance on promotion and tenure expectations.	11.	“We recommend the creation of a more formalized structure of mentoring junior faculty for both teaching and research streams, particularly in light of the imminent hires promised as part of the amalgamation plan.”	The mentoring structure of the department can be improved, as currently formal mentoring is offered only to junior tenure-stream faculty. We propose creating an ad hoc committee to advise on a new mentoring plan. Measures to be considered might include: 1. Ensuring that junior teaching-stream faculty and CLTAs are assigned a formal mentor that can provide support and advice as needed. 2. Formalize the process of identifying the right mentor for new faculty and articulate clear guidelines of what to expect from the mentorship. 3. Create a mechanism of regular check-ins or other milestones to ensure a more “hands-on” mentorship relation. Establish a system of post-tenure/continuing appointment mentoring to ensure that mid-career faculty receive support and advice as needed. Short term: create an ad hoc committee to advise on the implementation of a new and	Immediate- Medium-term: The Department is encouraged to consult the new Faculty of Arts & Science Mentorship Guidelines available through the Office of the Vice-Dean Faculty and Academic Life, and to consult with the Vice-Dean for guidance on best practices for implementing processes that support mentorship and address the reviewers’ recommendations.

			more detailed policy of advice and support for pre-tenure and mid-career faculty.	
	12.	“We suggest that the department investigate the concept of “mentor maps” wherein various mentors are identified both inside the department and outside of the department, who can check in on a regular basis with the mentee and help them get the resources they need to succeed.”	The model of “mentor maps” can be considered in the context of the review and revision of the mentoring process, as discussed in point 11 above.	See #11, above.
	13.	“We feel clarity should be given to junior faculty about the evaluation and promotion processes regarding the 4th and 6th years of the tenure track”	With the support of the individual members and of the departmental staff, the chair will ensure that information on the interim/probationary review and on tenure/continuing appointment is circulated in a timely and effective fashion, and that faculty are made aware of the dedicated workshops organized by the Faculty of Arts and Science. Short term: provide more detailed information to junior faculty regarding interim and tenure review.	Immediate term: The Vice-Dean, Faculty and Academic Life and the Director of Academic Human Resources are available to discuss these issues with the department chair.
	14.	“...mentoring of associate professors could also be valuable in terms of knowing most explicitly what the expectations are for promotion to professor. This could be accomplished with the same structure that is created for junior faculty.”	As mentioned under point 11, the issue of mentoring associate professors should be considered in the context of a review and revision of the current mentoring practices. Specific practices to be considered include: 1. More feedback from the promotion committee to the newly-tenured faculty member. 2. An official post-tenure review conversation with the chair about	See #11-13, above.

			future mentorship by a full professor. The Chair can serve as mediator between the old and the new mentor, in case of a change.	
The reviewers encouraged the Department to engage in strategic complement planning that considers both long-term balance across faculty ranks and evolving instructional needs, as opportunities arise.	15.	“The current imbalance (too many full professors and too few assistant professors) can be addressed with junior hires and likely retirements.”	The imbalance identified by the reviewers was the product of patterns of hiring and enrollment over the last few decades beyond the department’s control. Natural faculty turn-over resulting from retirements will over time address this, as the reviewers also note. The formation of ISPLAS has also had a positive impact in this respect, as the new lines approved by the Dean in the context of the merger will increase the number of junior faculty over the next few years.	Immediate term: The ASDO supports the department’s assessment of this recommendation. As outlined in the amalgamation proposal, the Dean committed to new faculty streams, which will address the reviewers’ recommendation for more junior faculty. For any potential plans for future hires, the ASDO notes that all requests for new positions across the Faculty are submitted to the Faculty Appointments Committee (FAC), which includes representation across its sectors (Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences) and from the Colleges. The FAC reviews all requests for new positions and makes recommendations to the Dean regarding which requests should be granted. In any given year, there are many more requests than available positions.
	16.	“The committee encourages the department to evaluate the possibility of moving towards language sections that are capped at 25 with more frequent weekly meetings (similar to Italian) and recommends that the A&S Dean’s office provide support for the increased contact hours in the form of additional teaching-stream lines. The department historically has endeavored to avoid hiring temporary, sessional instructors and it is important that the administration back the unit’s attempts to better serve students	Class size is one of the elements to be reviewed in the context of the overall review of the language programs discussed under point 1 above. It should be noted however that in the context of the new budget model, fiscal prudence will also have to be a consideration as we find a balance between pedagogic effectiveness and budgetary necessities. A cap of 25 is relatively low, especially if one considers that there is always a physiological level of attrition that further reduces enrollment.	Immediate term: See #15, above, on the issue of any potential new hires. Regarding course caps, the Department can also speak to the Office of the Faculty Registrar for guidance with enrolment management or creating data dashboards that inform departmental decision-making.

		without having to rely on contingent instructional labor.”	Medium/long term: consider language course caps in the context of a broader review of the current language program, as per point 1, as well as of the budgetary needs of the department.	
The reviewers observed that a dedicated seminar room for department-specific activities would foster community and collaboration within the unit. As new departmental facilities are developed, they recommended incorporating space to support academic engagement and social connection among students, staff, and faculty.	17.	Recommendation: “The acquisition of a dedicated departmental seminar room.”	A seminar room is already planned for the new location of the department, which should be available by 2028.	The ASDO recognizes that space is an ongoing challenge for many units across the University. In the Medium- Long-term: As the department notes, the ASDO is pleased to confirm that, once the department is relocated to the Academic Wood Tower, a seminar room will be available. The fit-out of the space is anticipated to be completed in 2028.
The reviewers voiced support for the planned amalgamation with the Department of Italian Studies, noting that the merger offers opportunities to coordinate and optimize limited resources, strengthen comparative and transdisciplinary teaching, and enhance efficiency in staffing and committee work, building on the two units’ strong record of collaboration. They also encouraged continued attention to managing the complexity of the transition, including monitoring workload balance and staff well-being during the amalgamation process.	18.	“We see the amalgamation with Italian Studies as a positive, innovative idea, in that the two departments are determining their own destiny in a time of scarcity and not having it imposed upon them. There are many possible pitfalls, but they are in the best position to evaluate these and make decisions about them, for which they will ultimately be accountable. The ability to more effectively and efficiently assign staff resources, carry out committee work, and combine strengths on the integration of disciplinary content courses and language teaching are very clear benefits that will emerge from the integration of the two units. We feel the leaders of both departments are conscious of the complexity of the task, and well prepared for it. That the two departments already share a history of cooperation with graduate studies, pedagogy, and research and administrative committees speaks to the high probability of a successful integration and faculty reported, in the context of their support for the idea,	We fully agree with these reflections, which have guided the process leading to the merger of the two department and the formation of ISPLAS.	Immediate- Medium-term: The ASDO appreciates the reviewers’ assessment here about the merging of the two departments as positive and productive. The ASDO is available for consultation at any time for guidance in managing this transition. The search for a Chair of the new amalgamated department is underway, and installation of this leadership will offer the stability and continuity to the new department’s progress on these goals.

		that their activities with colleagues in Italian had at times been more frequent than with those in Spanish & Portuguese.”		
	19.	“Special care should be taken during the amalgamation to ensure that appropriate workload balance among staff be created. Some staff reported what appeared to be out-sized levels of responsibility. We recommend that the leaders of the new unit pay special attention to staff well-being.”	With the formation of ISPLAS, a new workload policy is in the process of being created that will address the concerns expressed here. Staff wellbeing is a priority. The new structure of the office and the appointment of a manager help balance the workload. As the needs of ISPLAS become clearer, we can better identify the specific needs in the area of staff support. We are currently considering requesting the change of a part-time staff position to full-time. Short term: as the needs of the new unit become clearer, we will be better able to assess the right size and portfolios of staff.	Immediate- Medium-term: The Vice-Dean Faculty and Academic Life and the Director of Academic Human Resources are available for consultation and guidance on managing workload issues within the newly amalgamed department and assessing where changes may need to be made as they come into focus over time.

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the Department of Spanish and Portuguese as the best of its kind in Canada, noting its international prominence and its reputation for excellence in literary, linguistic, and cultural studies in both Spanish and Portuguese. They commended the Department's intellectually vibrant and collegial atmosphere, and highlighted the world-class research profile of its faculty, whose scholarship is widely recognized through prestigious awards and substantial external funding. The reviewers applauded the Department's strong connections across the University, observing that its faculty hold significant leadership roles in colleges, centres, and interdisciplinary initiatives, and that the Latin American Studies program serves as an essential hub for campus-wide activity. They further praised departmental leadership for its commitment to fostering intellectual growth for all, and its genuine investment in the future of the Department. Finally, the reviewers observed that the planned merger with the Department of Italian Studies represents a strategic and forward-looking initiative that promises to enhance collaboration, optimize resources, and create new opportunities for innovative comparative and transdisciplinary work.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: reviewing scheduling, teaching assignments, and leadership arrangements within the Department's language programs to ensure alignment with best practices, support quality and consistency, and strengthen coordination and long-term planning; strengthening instructional and administrative supports for Portuguese language and Portuguese studies to ensure sustainable oversight and consistent quality, and exploring the incorporation of Portuguese into the MA and PhD programs to better reflect the work of faculty specializing in this area; strengthening structures for the supervision, training, and evaluation of graduate teaching assistants; continuing to explore ways to provide appropriate financial and other supports for graduate students in light of ongoing cost-of-living and housing pressures; strengthening mentorship opportunities for both teaching- and tenure-stream faculty through more formalized mentoring structures; engaging in strategic complement planning that considers both long-term balance across faculty ranks and evolving instructional needs; incorporating space to support academic engagement and social connection among students, staff, and faculty; and carefully managing the planned amalgamation with the Department of Italian Studies, with continued attention to the complexity of the transition, workload balance, and staff well-being.

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

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Arts & Science Dean's office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with chairs and directors and through regular governance and curricular oversight.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs midway between the March 2025 UTQAP cyclical review and the year of the next site visit in 2028-29 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned no later than the 2028-29 review cycle.

6 Distribution

On August 15th, 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Women and Gender Studies (HBA): Specialist, Major, Minor Women and Gender Studies, MA, PhD
Unit Reviewed:	Women and Gender Studies Institute
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Aren Aizura, Associate Professor Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies, Chair, Department of Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies, University of Minnesota • Priti Ramamurthy, Professor, Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies, Adjunct Professor, American Ethnic Studies, Department of Gender, Women, & Sexuality Studies, University of Washington
Date of Review Visit:	March 26-27, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	August 28, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 20, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: May 10-11, 2018

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Welcoming and inspiring environment at the Institute; faculty and staff have built a positive and respectful community
- Curricular content that matches students' interests and is directly relevant to their life experiences and concerns
- WGSi has maintained a healthy enrolment in programs despite trends in the field

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Engaging in curriculum review to enhance course offerings and adding new offerings in Indigenous Studies and/or South Asian/Diaspora Studies
- Expanding options for PhD comprehensive examinations to enable students to acquire expertise in their area of specialization
- Establishing clear lines of communication, in particular with graduate students regarding program requirements, procedures and timelines
- Establishing clear lines of communication across groups
- Working with cognate unit Chairs to support tenure and promotion to ensure faculty members' long-term success
- Engaging in academic planning, community-building, and internal communication efforts
- Reflecting the important role the Institute plays in the academic and social landscape of the Faculty in the Faculty's planning processes
- Addressing undergraduate students' concerns regarding the need for mentorship
- Addressing the limited number of faculty available to serve as graduate supervisors
- Stabilizing the Institute's faculty complement and addressing gaps in South Asian/Diaspora and/or Indigenous Studies
- Answering the question of which tenure stream faculty can serve as supervisors

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study & Appendices; Previous review report including the administrative response; Access to all course descriptions; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty.

Consultation Process

Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Associate Dean, Student Affairs; Director, Associate Director Undergraduate, Associate Director Graduate; Administrative staff and senior program administrators; Undergraduate and graduate students; Junior and Senior faculty members; Members of relevant Arts & Science cognate units (Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies; Centre for Caribbean Studies; Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies; Critical Studies in Equity and Solidarity program; Centre for Community Partnerships; Departments of Anthropology, History, English; Depart); Members of relevant UTM cognate units (Department of Historical Studies); Members of relevant UTSC cognate units (Department of Historical & Cultural Studies).

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
 - ▶ Undergraduate and graduate programs “deliver the highest quality of education”
 - ▶ Quality of WGSi instruction is excellent
- Objectives
 - ▶ Program’s thematic hubs all effectively meet degree-level expectations, program learning outcomes and FAS core competencies
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Enrolments in Specialists, Majors and Minors are healthy and have increased or held steady relative to the size of the faculty complement
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ WGSi has made progress in reviewing its undergraduate curriculum since the last review
 - ▶ Curriculum renewal process has led to innovative design of four thematic “hubs” as student pathways, which creates a dynamic yet carefully structured set of possibilities for students
 - ▶ Overall number of U of T students taking WGSi courses has increased in recent years
- Innovation
 - ▶ Many faculty have won awards and grants to develop transformative pedagogies
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ WGSi faculty express strong commitment to feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial pedagogy
 - ▶ Innovation Hub survey rated WGSi highly for fostering an inclusive learning environment

- ▶ “WGSi faculty and graduate instructor expertise in feminist pedagogy that fosters accessibility, and universal design is abundantly evident”; classroom experiences and assignments are designed to include a wide range of learners
- ▶ Women and Gender Studies students are often from marginalized backgrounds and as a result can include a larger number of students with accommodation needs
- ▶ “WGSi modes of learning are especially well-positioned to stand as an example of accessibility in course design and as innovators in experiential learning”
- ▶ There is much evidence that WGSi has created a community where Indigenous students congregate
- ▶ The unit has worked to remove barriers to access and has increased retention rates for Black students, staff and faculty
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Unit is taking a systematic approach to assessment of student learning, which reviewers note will provide useful feedback
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students appear confident and vocal
 - ▶ Progress has been made related to better preparing students for careers since the last review
 - ▶ Student assessment ratings are high
 - ▶ Students commend WGSi faculty for their innovative pedagogies, commitment to experiential learning and accountability to communities as sources of alternative knowledge
 - ▶ WGSi offers a wide range of resources to undergraduate students that go beyond the classroom, including an impressive undergraduate journal, the Feminist Sports Club and the Women and Gender Studies Student Union; these generate positive energy and provide opportunities to combine student wellness with formal and informal learning
 - ▶ Student career supports include workshops on applying for graduate school, as well as alumni profiles and panels
 - ▶ New student awards developed through advancement efforts will promote student excellence in academics and activism
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ “WGSi undergraduate students are exceptional in their commitments and aspirations to change the world”
 - ▶ Undergraduate students interviewed demonstrate a high level of competence in Critical and Creative thinking, and Communication skills
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Students’ post-graduation success appears strong
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ NSSE analysis and course evaluation data reinforce the high quality of instruction

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ WGSi appears to depend heavily on CLTA and sessional faculty to teach large undergraduate classes, including the foundational introductory course

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Core tenure and teaching stream faculty should rotate teaching the foundational introductory course, as well as any new 100 and 200 level courses
 - ▶ Reviewers recommend regularly offering a range of lower-division courses with permanent course numbers (rather than “special topics” courses); they note that this could increase enrolments and the number of WGSi majors and minors
 - ▶ WGSi encouraged to pursue their proposal to impart feminist frameworks for information literacy and quantitative reasoning through a new STEM course, engaging the Technoscience Research Unit and the Indigenous Environmental Data Justice Lab
 - ▶ Reviewers also note opportunities to strengthen connections with the School of the Environment to enhance student access to training in quantitative skills, data analysis and community engagement
 - ▶ Consider adding a thematic hub in Sexuality, Queer and Trans Studies in response to student interest and to correspond with faculty strengths
 - ▶ Consider forming hub subcommittees so that faculty can collaborate to define the curriculum’s conceptual focus, and share syllabi to strengthen course coherence and synergy
 - ▶ Prioritize the early development and publishing of course curriculum plans; reviewers note that this could strengthen student advising and planning, particularly for double majors
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Student career and wellness supports appear effective and should be continued; reviewers recommend that provision of non-curricular student supports by faculty and staff be recognized in annual performance review processes, and in promotion and tenure discussions
 - ▶ Ensure staff in advising roles are equipped to help students navigate WGSi hubs as guided pathways

2. Graduate Program(s)

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Undergraduate and graduate programs “deliver the highest quality of education”
 - ▶ WGSi graduate program is “dynamic and high-quality”

- ▶ Recent progress in the graduate programs includes new courses, clarification of degree requirements and supports for research and thesis writing
- ▶ Strong and growing enrolments in WGSi graduate courses by students in other programs noted as a marker of the graduate program's success and value to the broader university community
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ MA and PhD student numbers have increased significantly despite stringent admissions criteria; graduate program enrolments are robust and impressive in relation to comparator institutions
 - ▶ Admission acceptance rates are very high compared with those of the broader university
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ WGSi faculty deliver courses that are described as "innovative" and "groundbreaking"
 - ▶ Contributions of faculty from cognate units and other campuses provide graduate students with access to a dynamic range of expertise
 - ▶ PhD and MA curricula are comparable to those of peer programs at comparator institutions
 - ▶ WGSi has devoted significant efforts to strengthening the graduate curriculum in response to previous review recommendations, student surveys and a 2019-21 curriculum review process; "[t]hese transformations have honed excellence in graduate training at both the MA and PhD levels"
 - ▶ Eleven new courses have been added to the graduate curriculum, on topics that are essential to WGSi's transnational and intersectional approach to the field and respond to student demand
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Comprehensive examination process has been streamlined, adding more flexibility for students and advisors to develop individual reading lists
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Discussions with students indicate that graduate teaching and supervision in WGSi is exceptionally innovative and high-quality
 - ▶ Graduate student Innovation Hub survey indicates very high satisfaction with supervisory support and the quality of engagement with faculty, as well as with the program's strong commitment to accessibility, equity and inclusion, community, and student well-being
 - ▶ Unit has undertaken extensive efforts to improve communications with graduate students, and increase their involvement in WGSi activities
 - ▶ WGSi has expanded supports and opportunities for students related to comprehensive exam preparation, research and writing skill development, professionalization and pedagogical training
 - ▶ Support structures for MA and PhD in students in WGSi illustrate a holistic approach to graduate education
 - ▶ Graduate student community is collaborative and non-competitive, and conducive to high achievement and improved student wellness

- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ WGSi attracts accomplished and high-achieving graduate students who undertake original and award-winning research
 - ▶ Students demonstrate great success competing for external scholarships
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Strong MA and PhD outcomes illustrate the excellence of the graduate program
 - ▶ PhD graduates achieve outstanding placement outcomes, with 70% securing tenure-track offers in a challenging academic job market
- Student funding
 - ▶ Recent University-wide increases to graduate funding packages may help to address student concerns about funding in relation to the high cost of living in Toronto

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

- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ 2022 CPGSS data identified some concerns with graduate student satisfaction
- Student funding
 - ▶ Students note concerns about the available funding packages in relation to the high cost of living the GTA
 - ▶ WGSi supports a high proportion of students conducting international research, and available sources of fieldwork and travel funding are not sufficient

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ “Add a required feminist pedagogies half-course for PhD students to the graduate curriculum, offered to MA students as an elective and taught by a rotation of WGSi faculty”
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Reviewers recommend exploring ways to formalize recent improvements to graduate student supports for comprehensive exam preparation, research and writing skill development, professionalization, and pedagogical training, potentially by incorporating the content into required PhD courses; they suggest adding a required weekly for-credit research/colloquium seminar, potentially delivered as part of the Associate Director for Graduate Studies’ teaching load
 - ▶ Reviewers emphasize the importance of pedagogical training to the unit and to the field, and note its value as an asset for job placement; they recommend that WGSi consider a required feminist pedagogies course for PhD students (offered as an elective to MAs), and that they explore tri-campus collaboration to potentially expand teaching opportunities for WGSi students, address TA shortages at UTM and UTSC and strengthen funding packages for graduate students
- Student funding
 - ▶ Divisional and institutional leadership encouraged to approach funding for fieldwork and travel as a key element of a competitive graduate funding package, and explore

ways to make increases in this area to improve student scholarship and make the graduate program even more attractive

- ▶ “Offer a competitive multi year full funding package for incoming PhD students. This is in keeping with comparator schools, which all do so. It provides all students with stability, especially international students, to pursue their studies without anxiety.”

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Academic and pedagogical excellence in Black Feminist Studies, Feminist Science and Technology Studies, Indigenous Feminism, and Queer of Color Sexuality Studies have been strengthened or developed with new hires and successful promotions
 - ▶ WGSi faculty serve in graduate student mentorship and administrative leadership roles in cognate units
- Research
 - ▶ WGSi faculty are at the cutting edge of their field in research and scholarship, with notable strengths in transnational feminism and feminist science and technology studies
 - ▶ Emerging areas of distinction include Black Feminist Studies, Indigenous Feminism and Queer of Colour Sexuality Studies
 - ▶ Despite the complement’s small size, WGSi has a very impressive scholarly impact across the social sciences, humanities and sciences and across multiple professions
 - ▶ Faculty maintain an outstanding publishing profile with leading university presses across core and related fields
 - ▶ Faculty have won major book awards, publish in leading peer-reviewed journals across multiple disciplines, and serve as founders, editors, reviewers, and invited speakers in prestigious scholarly venues
 - ▶ Faculty have won major external awards and grants for their research
 - ▶ Faculty are remarkably active in public facing scholarship and community-based research
- Faculty
 - ▶ Recent and anticipated WGSi faculty promotions, a new senior hire and the promotions of several non-budgetary contributing faculty at UTM and UTSC leave these members well-positioned to take on more teaching, graduate mentorship and administrative service
 - ▶ The upcoming appointment of a new WGSi Director and an anticipated senior hire in Black Cultural Studies will position the unit well to distribute workloads more equitably
 - ▶ WGSi provides strong mentorship for junior faculty, reflected in a number of recent promotions

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

- Faculty
 - ▶ The majority of WGSi faculty have budgetary cross-appointments with a wide range of other units, resulting in uneven teaching, supervision, and service commitments; this may contribute to faculty feeling overextended and/or removed from WGSi planning and decision-making
 - ▶ Many WGSi faculty have significant administrative commitments, including leadership positions in cognate units, which can stretch their available time and capacity
 - ▶ WGSi will soon be a unit with no tenure stream faculty at the Assistant Professor rank

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ “FAS should consider encouraging and supporting WGSi faculty with cross-appointments to consider moving one hundred percent of their tenure lines into WGSi”
 - ▶ Explore the possibility of additional teaching stream faculty positions to ensure that undergraduate curricular needs are “met by faculty who have job security”
 - ▶ Reviewers encourage continued mentorship of mid-career faculty, and developing a more systematic approach to award nominations
 - ▶ Consider pursuing a tenure-stream hire at the Assistant Professor rank when hiring opportunities permit
 - ▶ WGSi Director and senior faculty encouraged to provide mentorship to mid-career faculty related to promotion and to teaching and research awards

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
 - ▶ WGSi maintains strong relationships across U of T’s three campuses and with external stakeholders
 - ▶ Participation in the tri-campus graduate program extends the reach of WGSi faculty
 - ▶ WGSi plays a central role in generating, supporting and participating in scholar-activist and artist communities across the University, the GTA, Canada and internationally

- ▶ WGSi is highly visible outside the university through public events and strong relationships with a variety of communities, including Indigenous communities in Canada, and diasporic communities in Toronto and beyond
- ▶ Administrative faculty team is excellent, committed and functions as a cohesive unit
- ▶ Tenured faculty express enthusiasm about creatively approaching future directions for the unit, to build on existing and develop new intellectual strengths, meet student demand and stay abreast of developments in the field
- ▶ Staff are excellent, committed and work well together
- ▶ New communications staff position has expanded WGSi's reach
- ▶ Faculty, staff and students speak very highly of the Communications and Outreach Coordinator's work to develop a communications and outreach strategy for the unit
- ▶ Several cognate units, in particular the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies, the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies, and the Critical Studies in Equity and Solidarity program, overlap with WGSi, and the relationships appear "synergistic and amicable"
- ▶ WGSi's 50th anniversary events demonstrated its strong community partnerships and enduring impact on Toronto's feminist networks
- ▶ WGSi's involvement with the Community Knowledge Alliance fosters impactful faculty-community research on a range of important issues
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ WGSi has been adequately supported by FAS in terms of finances
 - ▶ Ivey Library and Writing Centre in New College provide excellent academic services which contribute to the quality of undergraduate programs
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ WGSi is "a vibrant academic unit with excellent, productive, and engaged students, faculty, and staff"
 - ▶ WGSi has had broad and deep impact across the University of Toronto; students at all levels from many disciplines and majors enrol in WGSi courses
 - ▶ "[W]e assess WGSi as exemplary of the possibilities of doing anti-racist work within the University of Toronto and Canadian higher education in general"
 - ▶ Reviewers highlight that it is "remarkable" that WGSi has expanded enrolments in recent years, given global economic uncertainties following the pandemic and recent backlash against gender studies worldwide; "this is a sign of WGSi's outstanding contributions to the field and of its importance as the flagship women and gender studies department in Canada"
 - ▶ WGSi has strengthened its undergraduate and graduate curricula since the previous review, and continued to grow despite challenges posed by the pandemic and broader funding constraints
- International comparators
 - ▶ WGSi is widely recognized as one of the oldest and a leading unit of its kind in Canada and North America
 - ▶ Unit is internationally significant with a "venerable reputation" related to particular strengths in transnational feminism

- ▶ Unit compares remarkably well with similar departments at significant research-intensive universities across North America, in terms of faculty scholarship and productivity, the strength of its undergraduate and graduate education and community engagement success
- ▶ “WGSi, with its outstanding faculty scholars and students, enhances the international reputation of the University of Toronto as a top-ranked university in North America and globally”
- ▶ WGSi is one of few units in North America offering a comprehensive range of undergraduate and graduate degrees in Women’s and Gender Studies
- ▶ WGSi compares strongly with peer institutions, with widely cited faculty research in leading presses and journals and recognized strengths in Transnational Feminism, Science and Technology Studies, and related fields
- ▶ WGSi’s distinctive strength lies in its community-engaged and activist scholarship, exemplified by initiatives such as the Indigenous Environmental Data Justice Lab and the Caribbean Community Study Circle

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

- Relationships
 - ▶ Pandemic and uncertain global environment have taken a toll on the unit; some faculty report feelings of exhaustion, hurt, and invisibility
 - ▶ Reviewers note the substantial service and mentorship responsibilities of the Associate Directors
 - ▶ Faculty members expressed the need for more equitable sharing of undergraduate teaching across all faculty levels, and report feeling that graduate mentorship work is unevenly distributed
 - ▶ “Sessional faculty expressed concern over their precarity, despite carrying a high instructional workload”
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Reviewers observe that the commitment of time required for advancement efforts is particularly difficult for small units such as WGSi
 - ▶ Reviewers note potential challenges for WGSi with the upcoming FAS transition to an activity-based budget model, given the unit’s small size, enrolments, and large number of cross-appointed faculty

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Reviewers recommend retreats for WGSi members to collectively and creatively engage in strategic planning for the future
 - ▶ Reviewers encourage incoming leadership to facilitate open discussion among WGSi faculty to ensure clarity around administrative roles, responsibilities, and term expectations
 - ▶ Reviewers emphasize the importance of supporting and retaining experienced staff to sustain institutional knowledge and administrative excellence

- ▶ Reviewers note opportunities to strengthen collaboration with cognate units on matters of graduate curriculum and funding, and community engagement
- ▶ Opportunities also noted for WGSi to strengthen and clarify relationships with the Technoscience Research Unit and the Indigenous Environmental Data Justice Lab
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ FAS leadership encouraged to provide advancement supports to WGSi, for student scholarships, awards and research funding
 - ▶ Reviewers recommend that WGSi continue to receive strong divisional support under the new FAS budget model, reflecting its scholarly and institutional importance
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ “Once WGSi develops a strategic hiring plan, a tenure-line hire at the Assistant Professor level will address the gap of WGSi soon being a unit with no tenure-track assistant professors. As importantly, it would demonstrate FAS Dean’s support for a vibrant, reputed, and vitally important department. For the University of Toronto, to be a flagship university in North America, investing in the continued excellence of WGSi is a priority.”
 - ▶ Reviewers encourage the new Director to lead a collaborative strategic planning process, bringing faculty together to envision and plan for WGSi’s future over the next 7-8 years
 - ▶ Reviewers encourage long-term planning that addresses curriculum and hiring priorities, funding strategies, and initiatives (such as oral histories and archival projects) that sustain WGSi’s institutional memory and impact



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

February 20, 2026

Professor Nick Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

RE: UTQAP cyclical review of the Women and Gender Studies Institute (WGS)

Dear Prof. Rule,

I write in response to your letter of November 27, 2025, regarding the March 26-27, 2025, UTQAP cyclical review of the Women and Gender Studies Institute (WGS) and requesting our Administrative Responses. The programs reviewed were: Women and Gender Studies, HBA: Specialist, Major, Minor; Women and Gender Studies: MA, PhD.

On behalf of the Faculty of Arts & Science, we would first like to thank the reviewers: Aren Aizura, University of Minnesota; and Priti Ramamurthy, University of Washington for their very comprehensive review of the WGS. We would also like to thank and acknowledge the Director, program coordinators, faculty, administrative staff, and all those who contributed to the preparation of the self-study. We also wish to thank the many staff, students, and faculty members who met with the external reviewers and provided thoughtful feedback. The UTQAP cyclical review process is an invaluable exercise that affords us the opportunity to take stock of our academic units and programs, to recognize achievement, and identify areas for improvement.

The review report was finalized on August 27, 2025, after which the Director shared it widely with stakeholders in the Institute. We are extremely pleased with the reviewers' positive assessment of the overall strength of the WGS and its outstanding, productive faculty members. The reviewers praised the Women and Gender Studies Institute (WGS) as a vibrant, collegial, and internationally recognized unit offering programs of exceptional quality and demonstrating a deep commitment to accessibility, equity, inclusion, community, and student well-being. The undergraduate curriculum's distinctive thematic "hub" structure supports innovative and accessible pathways for students; and the graduate programs are dynamic and distinguished by strong student outcomes, award-winning research, and exemplary mentorship. Faculty are internationally recognized for research leadership in transnational feminism and emerging strengths in Black Feminist Studies, Indigenous Feminism, Feminist Science and Technology Studies, and Queer of Colour Sexuality Studies, and are noted for their innovative, inclusive pedagogy and community-engaged scholarship. Reviewers further commended WGS's effective leadership, dedicated staff, and strong internal and external partnerships, which together affirm its standing as a flagship centre for feminist and interdisciplinary education and research.

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

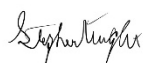
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Each of these recommendations has been addressed in the attached Review Recommendations Table, which outlines the unit's response, the Dean's response, and an Implementation Plan identifying action items and timelines for each recommendation. My Administrative Response and Implementation Plan was developed in consultation with the Director and with the Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, and senior leadership within my office. The Implementation Plan provided identifies timeframes of immediate- (six months), medium- (one to two years), and longer- (three to five years) term actions and who (Faculty, Dean, unit) will take the lead in each area. I also identified any necessary changes in organization, policy, or governance, where appropriate, as well as any resources, financial or otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.

The next UTQAP cyclical review of the WGSi will take place no later than the 2032-33 review cycle. My office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with chairs and directors and through the WGSi's five-year unit-level academic planning process, which will begin at the conclusion of the cyclical review. I also acknowledge that your office will request a brief Interim Monitoring Report midway between the March 2025 UTQAP cyclical review and the year of the next site visit in 2032-33 to report on progress made on the Implementation Plan as outlined in the accompanying Review Recommendations Table.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the review report. The reviewers' comments and recommendations will help inform the future priorities of the Women and Gender Studies Institute and its undergraduate and graduate programs.

Sincerely,



Stephen Wright
Interim Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Professor, Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

cc.

Kerry Rittich, Director, Women and Gender Studies Institute, Faculty of Arts & Science

Gillian Hamilton, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Faculty of Arts & Science

Ebba Kurz, Interim Associate Dean, Unit-Level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science

Caitlin Burton, Senior Manager, Curriculum, Change & Reviews, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science

Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Andrea Benoit, Academic Planning & Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science

2024-25 UTQAP Review of the FAS Women and Gender Studies Institute - Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, "it is important to note that, while the external reviewers' report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university's internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability" (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
The reviewers noted that WGSi's reliance on sessional and CLTA instructors for key undergraduate courses may contribute to instability in program delivery. They encouraged the Institute to consider approaches that strengthen curricular continuity, including rotating foundational teaching among core faculty, expanding 100- and 200-level offerings, and increasing the use of permanent course numbers to support recruitment and retention.	1.	"Consider offering a broad range of new introductory, 100 and 200, level courses. This will interest first and second year students who may then pursue more WGSi courses or degrees over their remaining college careers. This could increase overall enrollments."	In conjunction with New College's Graduate Teaching Fellowship initiative, starting in the 2025-26 academic year WGSi expects to offer a new 100-level seminar, capped at 20, to introduce the many NC students in STEM-related concentrations to the questions of equity, justice and inclusion that relate to these fields. Our acknowledged focus and expertise in transnational and interdisciplinary analytics should prove particularly useful in this venture, The 200 level courses that we now offer will serve as gateway courses to the newly constructed curricular hubs. In conjunction with the introduction of the hubs, we have converted Radical Relationalities, a special topics course on activism, to a 200-level course.	Immediate- Medium term: The Arts & Science Dean's office (ASDO) supports the unit's plans for addressing this recommendation, noting that both WGS130H1 and WGS277H1 were approved January 19, 2026, by Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The governance and curriculum services team is available to assist with remaining courses and accompanying calendar changes. See #16, below, for details regarding considerations in new faculty hiring.

			We will pilot a new 200 level course to provide the foundations to the <i>Land, Labor, Law</i> hub. Further expansion of 200-level courses will require more teaching resources devoted to the undergraduate curriculum; given our ongoing teaching commitments to both our own graduate students and those in our collaborative program, any expansion will require another faculty position, tenure or teaching stream.	
	2.	“Core tenure-track and teaching-track faculty members rotate the teaching of the foundational introductory course and the new 100 and 200 level courses.”	Historically, these courses have been delivered consistently, and most successfully, by tenure and teaching stream faculty who have devoted considerable resources to ensuring the success of this course on a long-term basis year over year. We are committed to returning to this model as soon as we have adequate teaching and tenure stream faculty. We are already prioritizing the return of core faculty to the teaching of these courses.	Immediate- Medium term: Deploying core faculty to teach foundational courses is an approach followed successfully by some units. We note that WGSJ is prioritizing a return to this approach. The ASDO is confident the unit will identify the most appropriate allocation of faculty to their courses. The unit is best placed to identify this.
	3.	“Offer more courses with permanent course numbers and descriptions. Currently, fourteen undergraduate courses (Appendix H) are listed as ‘Special Topic’ courses with ‘subjects of study [which] vary from year to year.’ This helps students find courses which interest them more easily and increases enrollments.”	Course descriptions for special topics courses are already available and accessible to students at the point of course selection. We are already in the process of converting several of the most popular and central special topics courses to courses with permanent course codes: one is WGS377: Playing Sports Cultures. We contemplate putting several other courses through governance in the 26-27 academic year. Retaining special topics courses has enabled us to pilot new courses; we expect to continue to use them for this purpose.	Immediate term: The ASDO supports the unit’s plans for addressing this recommendation, noting that WGS377 has already been approved by Undergraduate Curriculum Committee in January 2026. The Governance and Curriculum Services team is available to assist with the task of remaining courses and accompanying calendar changes.
	4.	“Offer a new STEM course and make closer connections with the School of the Environment, for	In addition to the new 100-level course offered through the New College teaching	See #3, above, regarding a proposal for a new course in STEM.

		undergraduate students to get more training in quantitative skills, data analysis, and community engagement. The Technoscience Research Unit and the Indigenous Data Justice Lab offer exciting possibilities for these forms of student training and engagement.”	fellowship which is directly exposing students in STEM concentrations to core concepts and intellectual resources of WGSJ, we have already introduced one such course WGS333: Feminist Mathematics, in Winter 2026. We are also working on further collaborations with academic units within and beyond FAS. We already offer places in WGS390 to students in the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, and we will look to add more. The instructor in WGS377 is looking to extend collaboration with faculty in Kinesiology. We now have one WGSJ faculty member whose primary appointment is in the School of the Environment; their presence in that unit should facilitate the development of new courses and connections for both students and faculty.	Immediate- Medium term: The ASDO supports the unit’s plans to explore possible connections with new partners in Arts & Science, which could increase students’ exposure to, and experience, in quantitative work. Courses offered in other units, such as statistical sciences and computer science, and particularly courses that are part of the Applied Data Science minor recently created as an accessible data science program for non-STEM students for example, may fill part of the course requirements for WGSJ’s programs.
The reviewers praised WGSJ’s recent renewal of the undergraduate curriculum through the thematic “hub” model and encouraged continued attention to strengthening coherence and clarity across the hubs. They suggested enhancing faculty collaboration in curriculum planning, strengthening supports for students navigating the hub structure, and considering the development of an additional hub in Sexuality, Queer, and Trans Studies to reflect student interest and faculty strengths.	5.	“The faculty responsible for offering courses in each hub could form subcommittees to develop cogent conceptual descriptions of the curriculum in each and share syllabi so the connections across courses and the recommended sequence of courses is clear and builds synergy.”	The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee has already undertaken the task of conceptualizing curricular hubs. Faculty have been involved in the final determination about both hubs and keystone courses. We have already set up a teaching resource site on Quercus, and we already have a mechanism in place to share syllabi and other course resources among faculty.	Immediate term: The ASDO notes that the WGSJ’s Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and supportive teaching resource sharing practices will help to ensure continuous engagement with their new hub model.
	6.	“Train Advisors to help students navigate the hubs as guided pathways.	The Undergraduate coordinator and faculty currently do this advising; as described above, they have been intimately involved in the construction of the hubs. TAs and staff will be trained to assist in this advising.	Immediate term: The ASDO is pleased that the unit has a clear plan to address this recommendation with training of staff and TAs.

	7.	“Course curriculum plans at least two years out would help students, especially double majors; they could be shared on the WGSi website and used for student advising.”	We are currently engaging in multi-year course planning and have initiated a new faculty course survey to enable this. We will develop a method for communicating the projected curriculum over the next two years to students in conjunction with the student-facing launch of the hubs in the fall of 2026. The lead TA has a plan in place to train student advisors.	Immediate term: The ASDO notes that the unit is currently addressing this recommendation.
	8.	“The hub idea is distinctive and innovative. Consider adding a hub in Sexuality, Queer, and Trans Studies which are topics of high student interest. There are many courses already on the books which speak to these topics and this hub corresponds with WGSi faculty strengths.”	WGSi already centres Sexuality, Queer and Trans issues through their use as analytic frames within virtually all of our courses. As noted in the self-study, “the program explores topics across <i>Gender, Sexuality, Queer Studies</i> ; Cultural Studies; Feminist Science Studies; and Transnational Political Economy, and <i>offers analyses grounded in</i> postcolonial theory, Black feminist thought, Indigenous feminist perspectives on knowledge and being <i>and critical queer and trans studies</i> .”	Immediate term: The ASDO notes that the unit has already incorporated this recommendation into curricula.
The reviewers highlighted the success of recent enhancements to graduate mentorship and professionalization, and encouraged WGSi to consider formalizing these supports through structured mechanisms (such as a regular colloquium or pedagogy course) to help ensure consistent access to research, writing, and teaching development across the graduate program. They also noted opportunities to explore broader collaboration across campuses in support of graduate teaching and training.	9.	“Formalize the existing innovations in graduate student support via adding a required weekly research/colloquium seminar for credit through the first two years. This could count as part of the Associate Director for Graduate Studies’ teaching load.”	We have already done this via WGS3000 and WGS3001 which is now reflected in the Graduate Coordinators role and duties.	Immediate term: The ASDO notes that the unit has already addressed this recommendation; requisite changes went through FAS governance in 2024-25.
	10.	“Add a required feminist pedagogies half-course for PhD students to the graduate curriculum, offered to MA students as an elective and taught by a rotation of WGSi faculty.”	We’ve already added more graduate courses in recent years (see above). Our one teaching stream faculty is planning to introduce precisely such a course as soon as resources permit. The main teaching priority within WGSi at this point is staffing the undergraduate curriculum. We expect to hold off adding further graduate courses until WGSi has more teaching resources.	Immediate- Medium term: The ASDO supports the unit’s plans for exploring this recommendation. The Governance and Curriculum Services team is available for consultation with the unit on the scope and logistics of this change, as is the Vice-Dean Graduate, once the unit is ready.

	11.	“Approach graduate teaching as a tri-campus initiative, providing WGSi PhD and MA students with opportunities to TA WGS undergraduate courses at UT Mississauga and UT Scarborough.”	In practice, graduate students already have opportunities to teach at Mississauga and Scarborough. The Undergraduate Coordinator always informs incoming graduate students about these opportunities, and the majority of students take them up.	Immediate term: The ASDO notes that this recommendation is already in place.
The reviewers noted that graduate students undertaking international research often face challenges securing sufficient supports for fieldwork and travel. They encouraged continued attention to ensuring that students have access to the resources needed to pursue their research effectively, and to sustain the competitiveness and overall quality of WGSi’s graduate programs.	12.	“FAS increase graduate funding for fieldwork and travel, particularly for international students or students undertaking international research, and include this as a key part of a competitive graduate funding package.”	We would welcome this.	Immediate term: The new graduate funding commitment effective September 2025 of \$40K will go some way in addressing the reviewers’ observation that the graduate funding model in place at the time of the review was inadequate. The Dean’s Office encourages the unit to explore the School of Graduate Studies’ Research Travel Grants as a possible source for additional financial supports for PhD students within the Humanities and Social Sciences pursuing research travel required for their program.
	13.	“Offer a competitive multi year full funding package for incoming PhD students. This is in keeping with comparator schools, which all do so. It provides all students with stability, especially international students, to pursue their studies without anxiety.”	Graduate funding levels are fundamentally a question under FAS jurisdiction. FAS did in fact recently increase the funding package to \$40,000 per annum.	See #12, above.
The reviewers observed that WGSi’s small faculty complement and extensive cross-appointments may contribute to uneven distribution of teaching, mentoring, and service responsibilities. They encouraged continued attention to complement planning, equitable workload distribution, and long-term strategies for faculty development and renewal within the context of WGSi’s interdisciplinary profile.	14.	“Faculty members voiced the need for more equitable sharing of undergraduate teaching across faculty levels. They felt graduate mentoring labor is unevenly distributed.”	See recommendation 2 above. The distribution of faculty teaching resources is a key consideration in our multi-year undergraduate course planning. We instituted a new faculty wide admissions meeting this year to better ensure an equitable distribution of supervision among faculty. The meeting included significant numbers of graduate faculty from UTSC and UTM as well as St. George and proved to be an efficient way to resolve outstanding	Immediate- Medium term: The ASDO acknowledges the unit’s plans for addressing this recommendation. Following governance, the unit will undertake a five-year unit-level academic plan (ULP), and such planning can also be incorporated into that forward-looking plan. The Vice-Dean Graduate Education is also available to discuss mentoring of graduate students.

			questions about supervision and a useful and efficient forum for the discussion of general policy questions. We plan to continue this practice going forward.	
	15.	"FAS should consider encouraging and supporting WGSi faculty with cross-appointments to consider moving one hundred percent of their tenure lines into WGSi."	At least one cross-appointed faculty member has expressed in interest in a 100% appointment. We are amenable, and indeed would welcome, this arrangement if it can be arranged to the satisfaction of the other unit and FAS.	Immediate- Medium term: Individual faculty members who are interested in moving their appointment to another unit can seek guidance from the Vice-Dean, Faculty and Academic Life and the Director of Academic Human Resources.
	16.	"FAS should authorize at least one, and possibly two, teaching track positions to ensure that undergraduate curricular needs in gateway courses to the BA are met by faculty who have job security."	WGSi applied to the Faculty Appointments Committee for a teaching stream position in November 2025, detailing the teaching demands on the undergraduate program and the heavy reliance on sessional and contract faculty given the paucity of teaching and tenure stream faculty available to teach courses.	Medium- Long term: All requests for new positions across the Faculty are submitted to the Faculty Appointments Committee (FAC), which includes representation across its sectors (Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences) and from the Colleges. The FAC reviews all requests for new positions and makes recommendations to the Dean regarding which requests should be granted. In any given year, there are many more requests than available positions.
	17.	"FAS should consider authorizing a tenure-line hire at the Assistant Professor level, based on WGSi's strategic hiring plan. This will address the gap of WGSi soon being a unit with no tenure-track assistant professors."	See above re: current request for a teaching stream position. We expect to seek further appointments at the Assistant Professor level in future years.	See #16, above.
	18.	"We recommend that, since they take significant faculty and staff time, non-curricular support for students' academic well-being be recognized in annual reviews and promotion and tenure discussions."	Faculty are encouraged to, and do in fact, regularly report on extra-curricular forms of support they provide to students. The Graduate Curriculum Committee has just appointed a faculty member expressly devoted to the question of graduate student wellness. This labour of course will be recognized by WGSi.	Immediate term: The ASDO is pleased that this recommendation has already been integrated into the unit's administrative practices. The ASDO notes that recognition for non-curricular support and other service tasks is also accounted for in the annual PTR (Progress Through the Ranks) process in May of each year.

	19.	“WGSI Director and senior faculty should mentor mid-career faculty for promotion to Full Professor and for teaching and research awards.”	The previous WGSI Director was extremely attentive to career-building opportunities for faculty; for this reason, WGSI has an excellent record of attaining faculty awards. We fully intend to build on this legacy and are actively promoting the nomination of faculty for university awards. One faculty member was recently nominated for the Ludwik and Estelle Jus Memorial Human Rights Prize in recognition of their outstanding work in the promotion of Indigenous knowledge and practices, both within the University and beyond. We have a significant number of Associate Professors who have recently been successfully tenured and one Assistant Professor achieved Continuing Status in December. These colleagues benefitted significantly from supports implemented by the previous Director since the last review process designed to demystify the tenure and promotion process. They include: support by senior faculty on the preparation of PTR and the documentation required for third-year review, tenure and continuing status reviews, in particular the compiling the research and teaching dossiers. The latter two issues are of continuing relevance to promotion and awards. Because of the work of the previous Director, WGSI mentorship of young faculty has already been recognized as best practice within other university divisions. These practices provide a strong basis of support for faculty; it will be continued, and indeed expanded, for faculty at the mid-career stage	Immediate- Long term: The ASDO is extremely pleased to hear this response from the unit. WGSI is encouraged to utilize the support services available from the Arts & Science Research Services team for Research Awards and Honours, noting there is a dedicated Research Awards & Honours Coordinator for WGSI. Immediate term: The unit is also encouraged to consult the new Faculty of Arts & Science Faculty Mentorship Guidelines available through the Office of the Vice-Dean Faculty and Academic Life, and to consult with the Vice-Dean for guidance as needed for faculty mentorship.

			as well. At present, a number of faculty at the Associate Professor level are heavily committed on the supervisory front and/or in administrative roles. Supporting their research activities and positioning them for promotion will require relief on this front. To further assist faculty development, we are currently expanding support for faculty research initiatives through, for example, the revival of ‘Rough Cuts’ devoted to the discussion of faculty research in progress. These initiatives are designed to: provide feedback on current work prior to publication; to showcase the research accomplishments of faculty; forge connections among WGSi faculty and researchers in cognate University units and those in other institutions; and to enable new research collaborations, including those that lead to grant applications.	
The reviewers noted that sustained growth and administrative demands may be contributing to faculty fatigue and reduced opportunities for collective planning. They encouraged exploring collaborative mechanisms (such as faculty retreats) to strengthen community engagement and to develop and clarify priorities that can guide the Institute’s long-term planning.	20.	“WGSi faculty should consider holding a series of retreats to open the space to collectively and creatively imagine what directions it should take moving forward. This should be the basis of developing WGSi’s strategic hiring plan.”	WGSi holds full-day retreats every year. We held a retreat in May of 2025, in which hiring priorities were a central topic of discussion. In addition, we regularly hold consultation meetings with faculty on these questions. Since the last (2018) UTQAP review, WGSi has identified as priorities the hiring of tenure stream faculty in the areas of South Asian studies, political economy, community engagement and Indigenous Studies. While Indigenous Studies has emerged as a central and exciting strength and we are expanding community engagement via multiple routes, we have still not been able to address the longstanding recommendation to secure a tenure track appointment in South Asian	Immediate term: The Dean’s office is pleased to note the unit’s activities regarding faculty retreats; the ASDO offers matching funds to support unit retreats, including for retreats that address reviewer recommendations following cyclical review. The unit is encouraged to reach out to the ASDO after its recent retreat to inquire about eligibility for reimbursement. Medium term: As a follow-up to the UTQAP process, all units subsequently develop a five-year unit-level plan (ULP) in consultation with the ASDO. Developing a five-year ULP, which will be presented to the Dean and senior leadership, is an appropriate and productive venue for outlining a strategic plan and

			Studies; nor have we hired in the areas of political economy. It has also become apparent that we must hire a faculty member who specializes in Trans studies, given the number of students now centrally engaged in these questions.	receiving immediate feedback from leadership. See #16, above, regarding new faculty appointments process.
	21.	“We recommend that the new Director schedule a series of retreats for faculty to develop a strategic plan for the next 7-8 years.”	See number 20, above.	See #14 and #20, above.
The reviewers commended the contributions of WGSJ’s staff and noted that administrative continuity and institutional knowledge are vital to the Institute’s stability. They emphasized the importance of maintaining adequate supports for student advising, communications and outreach, and encouraged long-term planning to ensure that the unit has the administrative and advancement capacity to sustain its programs and advance its strategic priorities.	22.	“We recommend FAS recognize that advancement takes a commitment of time, which is difficult for small departments, by offering WGSJ Advancement support staff to continue these good efforts.”	The WGSJ Director agrees that advancement is of growing interest to the unit and will be of ongoing importance going forward. We welcome FAS support in these efforts.	Immediate term: The A&S Advancement team oversees the Faculty’s advancement efforts, and the unit is encouraged to coordinate with that office to further its strategic plans and outreach.
	23.	“FAS should support WGSJ as a ‘strategic academic priority’ under the new partial ABB model.”	WGSJ is already highly active in the promotion of innovative curricular and extra-curricular activities. We are well-positioned to support these endeavours, given our established strengths in community-engagement and experiential learning, and we would welcome more significant FAS support for further initiatives on this front.	Immediate- Medium term: The search is underway for a new Dean of FAS. It is anticipated that the new Dean will engage in strategic planning and the setting of new key priorities for the Faculty.
	24.	“FAS should support fund raising efforts by WGSJ for student scholarships, awards, and research funding.”	See also 22 above. We have a fairly healthy award pool, with some recent additions, and we have internal awards and workshops for students in which we constantly encourage them to apply. The Director will reach out to Advancement to increase the endowment of these awards.	Immediate- Medium term: The ASDO supports the unit’s plans for addressing this recommendation and potential fundraising efforts.

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the Women and Gender Studies Institute (WGSi) as a vibrant, collegial, and internationally recognized unit offering programs of exceptional quality and demonstrating a deep commitment to accessibility, equity, inclusion, community, and student well-being. The undergraduate curriculum's distinctive thematic "hub" structure supports innovative and accessible pathways for students; and the graduate programs are dynamic and distinguished by strong student outcomes, award-winning research, and exemplary mentorship. Faculty are internationally recognized for research leadership in transnational feminism and emerging strengths in Black Feminist Studies, Indigenous Feminism, Feminist Science and Technology Studies, and Queer of Colour Sexuality Studies, and are noted for their innovative, inclusive pedagogy and community-engaged scholarship. Reviewers further commended WGSi's effective leadership, dedicated staff, and strong internal and external partnerships, which together affirm its standing as a flagship centre for feminist and interdisciplinary education and research.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: considering approaches that strengthen curricular continuity, including rotating foundational teaching among core faculty, expanding 100- and 200-level offerings, and increasing the use of permanent course numbers to support recruitment and retention; paying continued attention to ensuring coherence and clarity across the unit's thematic "hubs", and enhancing faculty collaboration in curriculum planning, strengthening supports for students navigating the hub structure, and considering the development of an additional hub in Sexuality, Queer, and Trans Studies to reflect student interest and faculty strengths; formalizing graduate mentorship and professionalization supports and exploring broader collaboration across campuses in support of graduate teaching and training; ensuring that graduate students have access to the resources needed to pursue their research effectively, and to sustain the competitiveness and overall quality of WGSi's graduate programs; devoting continued attention to complement planning, equitable workload distribution, and long-term strategies for faculty development and renewal; exploring collaborative mechanisms (such as faculty retreats) to strengthen community engagement and to develop and clarify priorities that can guide the Institute's long-term planning; and maintaining adequate supports for student advising, communications and outreach, and engaging in long-term planning to ensure that the unit has the administrative and advancement capacity to sustain its programs and advance its strategic priorities.

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

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Arts & Science Dean's office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with chairs and directors and through regular governance and curricular oversight.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs midway between the March 2025 UTQAP cyclical review and the year of the next site visit in 2032-33 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned no later than the 2032-33 academic year.

6 Distribution

On August 15th 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Aerospace Science and Engineering: MEng, MSc, PhD
Unit Reviewed:	University of Toronto Institute for Aerospace Studies (UTIAS)
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering (FASE)
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• William Crossley, Professor and Urrig & Vournas Head of Aeronautics and Astronautics, School of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Purdue University • Ellen Longmire, Professor, Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics, Department of Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics, College of Science and Engineering, University of Minnesota Twin Cities • Siva Nadarajah, Professor, Mechanical Engineering and Director, McGill Institute for Aerospace Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, McGill University
Date of Review Visit:	February 10-11, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	June 19, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 26, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: September 30 – October 1, 2015

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Excellent institute, with outstanding students and professors and strong leadership and administrative support staff
- Programs are effective and well-balanced
- Significant number of recent hires and expansion of the faculty complement
- Excellent record of publications; major increases since the last review
- Significant research strengths in multiple areas
- Extensive industry involvement

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Enriching the MEng program to better reflect graduates' career objectives
- Supporting consistent admission and qualifying exam processes for the PhD program
- Improving recruitment of graduate students, including women and international students
- Addressing PhD students' time-to-completion
- Finding the balance between fundamental and high-risk research versus industry-driven research
- Upgrading and staffing UTIAS's unique facilities to support ongoing research activities

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; self-study, including faculty curricula vitae; previous review report (2015-2016), including the administrative response; access to all graduate and undergraduate (Aerospace Engineering Major offered through the Division of Engineering Science, reviewed separately) course descriptions; Faculty academic plan and annual impact report; Dean's presentation on the Faculty; and University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP).

Consultation Process

Faculty, students, administrative staff and senior program administrators in the University of Toronto Institute for Aerospace Studies, as well as members of relevant cognate units as determined by the commissioning officer, which included chairs from Applied Science & Engineering's departments of Mechanical & Industrial Engineering, Chemical Engineering & Applied Chemistry, Civil & Mineral Engineering, Electrical & Computer Engineering, and Materials Science & Engineering, and directors from its Division of Engineering Science and the institutes of Studies in Transdisciplinary Engineering Education & Practice, and Biomedical Engineering.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program(s)

***Note:** Reviewer comments regarding the undergraduate program fall outside the scope of this review, as undergraduate programs were not included in the Terms of Reference.*

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Students viewed the undergraduate program with high regard prior to applying
 - ▶ Admission requirements are very competitive, ensuring students in the program are of high caliber
 - ▶ Program maintains clear, high admission standards
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Program requirements are clear
 - ▶ Thesis requirement in addition to Aerospace Design course provides experience with open-ended design projects and in-depth research, aligning with University's mission
 - ▶ Curriculum reflects the current state of the discipline
- Innovation
 - ▶ Aerospace major includes a unique thesis requirement, providing both research and design projects, an uncommon feature in most aerospace programs
 - ▶ Program benefits from structured course progression and robust experiential learning opportunities, including a 12–16-month co-op, summer research positions, and a strong connection to faculty-led projects
 - ▶ Distinctive feature of allowing undergraduates to explore Engineering Science before specializing in Aerospace after second year
 - ▶ Program allows students to declare the Aerospace major after the second semester, offering flexibility not typically seen in similar North American programs
 - ▶ Students appreciated breadth of courses and unique individual courses offered
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ UTIAS has increased its advertising of the availability of mental health services
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Institute and faculty attract some of the strongest undergraduate students in Canada
 - ▶ Approximately 50% of the class (10-15 students) participates in summer research, an “impressive statistic compared to similar institutions”, providing excellent preparation for thesis work and encouraging interest in graduate study
 - ▶ Applicants into the Engineering Science program are “some of the best” in Canada
 - ▶ Faculty are especially pleased with the “extremely talented”
 - ▶ Combined aerospace engineering major and robotics major provide a solid pipeline of graduate students to the program

- ▶ There was insufficient information to assess student achievement in the self-study
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Alumni are highly sought after both in Canada and internationally

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

- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Faculty must commute to downtown campus to teach, impacting accessibility for students
 - ▶ Students reported limited access to UTIAS campus courses due to scheduling conflicts caused by the commute
 - ▶ Department heads noted location is an impediment to collaboration and awareness of UTIAS seminars
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Drop in number of students in Aerospace compared to those who initially expressed interest
 - ▶ Some students with initial interest in Aerospace may shift to the robotics program, where UTIAS faculty play leading roles
 - ▶ Enrolment in the Aerospace program accelerated in 2021/22 but has stalled since
 - ▶ Unclear whether there is a target number of students for the program or what role UTIAS, through the Chair of the Major, plays in maintaining program size
 - ▶ Insufficient information to assess student achievement

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Consider conducting a strategic study to determine target enrolment numbers

2. Graduate Program(s)

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Admission requirements align well with program's objectives and intended learning outcomes
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ In response to a previous recommendation, UTIAS introduced two new professional courses (AER 1601H Aerospace Engineering and Operations Management and AER1604H Air Accident Investigation) to strengthen the MEng professional program and provide industry-relevant learning
 - ▶ "Healthy" number of graduate level courses offered
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ UTIAS has increased its advertising of the availability of mental health services

- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students are supported through an orientation in September and have access to graduate program coordinators for advising and mentoring
 - ▶ MASc and PhD students expressed strong satisfaction with the sense of community at UTIAS, their classes, and level of research they can pursue
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ Institute and Faculty attract some of the strongest graduate students in Canada
 - ▶ Quality of incoming MASc and PhD students appears very high, as indicated by publications and citations
 - ▶ Faculty were generally very pleased with the quality of the incoming MASc and PhD students
 - ▶ Admitted students are of the highest quality, as reflected in their research output
 - ▶ Faculty are especially pleased with the quality of graduate students they recruit and mentor
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Alumni are highly sought after both in Canada and internationally
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ Number of PhD stream students per faculty is higher than the FASE average and comparable to other high-performing programs in Canada and the US

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

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Absence of certain courses may negatively impact university admission, as students often choose or enrol in programs based on interest in a particular field
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ MEng program faces issues with course availability, faculty advising, and lack of structured internships, despite its growth
 - ▶ Absence of sustainability-focused courses, despite housing the Centre for Sustainable Aviation, is a “missed opportunity”
 - ▶ Students have expressed concerns about course scheduling inconsistencies, including courses being unavailable across multiple semesters, making timely program completion difficult
 - ▶ Despite hosting the Centre for Sustainable Aviation, UTIAS offers no active courses in this field, representing a missed opportunity to align with industry’s growing focus on sustainability
 - ▶ MEng program shows signs of limited course offerings, with some courses not offered for several semesters or years, posing challenges for students completing the degree on full-time, extended full-time, or part-time basis
 - ▶ Some courses have not been offered or made available for MEng students, particularly in the field of Sustainable Aviation.
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Faculty must commute to the downtown campus to teach some graduate courses, which may impact accessibility and student-faculty interaction

- ▶ MEng students noted a lack of awareness that UTIAS is not located at the downtown campus until after their arrival
- ▶ Students felt somewhat isolated from other U of T opportunities downtown due to the difficulty in traveling between campuses
- ▶ MEng students found it challenging to shuttle between the downtown campus for most classes and the UTIAS location for other interactions
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Despite introduction of a structured PhD qualifying examination, students reported issues with the DEC process, including inconsistent scheduling, unclear expectations, and limited preparation time
 - ▶ Students and graduate program secretaries reported unclear expectations, requirements and inadequate preparation time for the doctoral qualifying exams, indicating a need for clearer communication
 - ▶ Students noted that faculty-assigned readings for the DEC meeting at the 1.5-year mark are sometimes not relevant to the qualifying exam
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ MEng students expressed a need for co-op opportunities and more support in securing internships
 - ▶ Doctoral students noted need for greater mentorship in early years of the program, particularly regarding scheduling and expectations for DEC meetings
 - ▶ MEng students require more advising and feel disconnected from UTIAS, as their only point of contact in the graduate program coordinator, who may require additional support
 - ▶ MEng students feel under supported in comparison to students in other graduate programs
 - ▶ MEng students are typically not involved in research activities at UTIAS, leading to limited integration into the UTIAS environment and social activities
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ Reviewers noted that, while self-study indicates a steady increase in graduate admissions and enrolment, this trend is not clearly reflected in the data provided
 - ▶ MEng program saw fluctuations in enrolment, with a peak of 185 applicants and 58 offers accepted in 2021/22, dropping to 93 applicants and 52 offers in 2023/24
 - ▶ MASc enrolment has remained consistent, and PhD enrolment has gradually increased
 - ▶ Data provided in self-study does not include sufficient information to assess student completion; while data on “emphases completed” were included, the meaning of this term was unclear
 - ▶ There was insufficient information to assess student achievement for MEng students; however, MASc and PhD student achievement may be inferred from publication metrics, which suggest strong contributions to knowledge advancement
 - ▶ Insufficient data for the MEng program, particularly regarding graduation rates and post-graduation placement
 - ▶ Reviewers were unable to comment on student completion due to lack or insufficient data

- ▶ Data was provided only for doctoral students, with little change in the time-to-completion over the past ten years, a point also noted in the previous program review
- ▶ Current graduate coordinator for MEng is only at 60% capacity
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Reviewers were unable to comment on post-graduation employability due to lack or insufficient data
- Student funding
 - ▶ MEng students do not receive any funding, unlike thesis-based students who are guaranteed minimum funding. Approximately 20% of MASc students receive external scholarships, twice that of FASE, while doctoral student rates are equivalent at 20%.

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Consider strengthening and expanding the MEng program by building on the two new professional courses, Aerospace Engineering and Operations Management, and Air Accident Investigation, and further integrating industry elements, such as co-op opportunities, to enhance the program's appeal
 - ▶ Reintroduce and expand sustainability-focused course offerings for MEng students to align with industry trends, better reflect the current state of the discipline, and leverage the Centre for Sustainable Aviation to strengthen the program's position as a leader in aerospace education
 - ▶ Improve course availability and faculty advising to better support MEng students, particularly in light of recent enrolment fluctuations
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Standardize the PhD qualifying exam (DEC) process where possible, and improve communication with students regarding scheduling and expectations, ensuring adequate preparation time and alignment with the process outlined in the self-study
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Enhance support for MEng students by incorporating co-op opportunities and providing assistance with securing internships; assigning a teaching-stream faculty member to advise MEng students may help address these needs
 - ▶ Strengthen mentorship for doctoral students in the early stages of the program, particularly around DEC meeting scheduling and expectations
 - ▶ Improve advising for MEng students by increasing support for the graduate program coordinator and consider additional advising resources
 - ▶ Provide MASc students with written feedback following their Master's review
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ Set up a process to systematically track student outcomes, such as graduation rates, employment statistics, and exit feedback, to inform continuous program improvement

- ▶ Reflect on the causes of recent fluctuations in MEng program enrolment, particularly the drop in applicants and offers from 2021/22 to 2023/24, to better understand and address trends
- ▶ Develop and monitor specific metrics for the MEng program, such as graduation rates, exit interviews, and post-graduation placements, to address current data gaps and support program evaluation
- ▶ Consider increasing the graduate coordinator's appointment for the MEng program beyond the current 60% to enhance student support and advising capacity

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Multiple UTIAS faculty are leaders in the interdisciplinary Centre for Computational Science and Engineering, providing opportunities to synergize and leverage numerical expertise across multiple research domains
 - ▶ Experimental research facilities are of very high international quality and include a large-scale flight simulator, multiple wind tunnel and combustion facilities, a new anechoic wind tunnel, and a new high pressure combustion facility nearing completion
- Research
 - ▶ Citation statistics per faculty and per paper have increased substantially since the previous review, highlighting significant research impact across multiple subfields
 - ▶ Faculty demonstrate significant expertise and activity in experimental, computational, and analytical research, representing an excellent balance.
 - ▶ Interest in robotics, autonomy, and artificial intelligence applied to aerospace and transportation has grown substantially since the last review, with UTIAS faculty establishing a strong and internationally recognized academic and research presence in these areas
 - ▶ Faculty are key members of the University of Toronto Robotics Institute, leading research and in autonomy and autonomous field robotics
 - ▶ The Centre for Sustainable Aviation brings together UTIAS faculty with external academic and industrial collaborators to focus on mitigating issues related to aircraft noise and emissions
 - ▶ Newer facilities, with few academic counterparts in North America, offer important opportunities for fundamental research relevant to multiple aerospace applications and challenges
 - ▶ UTIAS also valuable larger-scale indoor (Mars dome) and outdoor spaces for field testing related to UAVs, autonomous robotics, and other applications
 - ▶ Experimental research activities are well supported by state-of-the-art diagnostics and instrumentation
 - ▶ Faculty focused on computational research have access to state-of-the-art high-performance computing facilities through Compute Canada and the UT SciNet Consortium

- ▶ Research funding has remained steady over the past decade and appears healthy, with extensive government support evidenced by 14 UTIAS faculty holding NSERC Discovery Grants
- ▶ Faculty maintain strong connections and collaborations with a range of industrial partners
- ▶ Some teaching stream faculty also make contributions to research
- ▶ Remote location provides physical space to explore new research opportunities, exemplified by the autonomous ground vehicle initiatives
- Faculty
 - ▶ Faculty are well regarded within the community, contributing to the intellectual quality of the student experience
 - ▶ TTS faculty maintain a substantial teaching load of 3 courses per year, deliver rigorous and relevant graduate programs, are well-supported financially, and are very productive in generating high-impact publications and advising graduate students to completion
 - ▶ Teaching-stream faculty maintain a load of 5 courses per year, and, including two recently hired Assistant Professors, demonstrate impressive knowledge in their areas of specialization while making important contributions to the undergraduate and MEng programs
 - ▶ Vast majority of research faculty are tenured and well established, with only one Assistant Professor
 - ▶ Teaching stream faculty are regarded as integral members of UTIAS and are valued equally alongside their tenure stream colleagues

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ Explore ways to increase research expenditure for faculty to strengthen competitiveness in academic rankings and align with metrics valued by organizations such as the American Association of Universities
 - ▶ Increase recognition of UTIAS by posting more about research accomplishments on social media platforms such as LinkedIn
- Faculty
 - ▶ Hire multiple new tenure-stream faculty in the near future to maintain balance and vitality across the department, using broad searches open to multiple research fields to attract the strongest candidates

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
 - ▶ Physical separation of UTIAS from the main campus leads to a positive collaborative research culture
 - ▶ Students benefit from the highly cooperative atmosphere and high level of intellectual engagement fostered by UTIAS leadership and faculty
 - ▶ Faculty collaborate internally and externally through Centres, including the internationally recognized Space Flight Laboratory, to address strategic research themes relevant to the future of air and space industries, enhancing UTIAS visibility and its ability to attract graduate students, industrial collaborations, and government support
 - ▶ UTIAS is home to the Centre for Aerial Robotics Research and Education (CARRE), which brings together faculty from multiple disciplines, including material science, aerodynamics, computer science, robotics and flight dynamics and control
 - ▶ Faculty, staff, and students noted the strong collegiality, cooperative atmosphere, and high level of intellectual engagement at UTIAS
 - ▶ Both junior and senior faculty feel well supported and are generally pleased with the institute's environment
 - ▶ Staff feel appreciated and well supported by the Director and faculty, enjoy their work, and value collaborating to solve problems, noting the atmosphere superior to that in other departments they have experienced
 - ▶ UTIAS offers a spacious cafeteria for socializing and recreational activities, along with an exercise room and nearby outdoor recreational facilities enhancing social interactions and fostering a sense of community
 - ▶ Aerospace Students Association organizes events for students, and UTIAS hosts an annual Industry-Alumni dinner that fosters networking between alumni, students and faculty
 - ▶ Large-scale and unique experimental facilities support outreach activities with high school students and the public, with numerous tours offered annually
 - ▶ UTIAS supports multiple student groups and competitive teams, such as the SAE AutoDrive Challenge, solar care, and space design teams
 - ▶ UTIAS faculty have excellent collaborations with numerous Canadian industrial partners, as well as with faculty in other UT departments through Centres and individual projects
 - ▶ Administrative staff describe UTIAS as a “cottage life university,” with its physical separation from the main campus fostering a close-knit community among faculty,

- staff, and students, contributing to strong collaboration, productivity, and positive workplace interactions
- ▶ Students, faculty, and staff, expressed numerous compliments about the UTIAS Director and about the FASE dean, indicating that current management and leadership are functioning well
 - Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Organizational structure of UTIAS is effective, though very lean
 - ▶ Despite being housed in some older areas of the building, the experimental research facilities remain suitable for conducting top-level research
 - ▶ Faculty members, graduate students, and in some cases postdoctoral researchers or research staff, are making effective use of the available physical space
 - Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ UTIAS mission aligns with University's commitment to being an internationally significant research university with high-quality undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs
 - ▶ UTIAS offers a world-class aerospace education with a strong research foundation, unique program features, and a reputation for excellence
 - ▶ Clear intent to align FASE and UTIAS with the University of Toronto's strategic plan, supported by the addition of a Vice-Dean for Strategy to the FASE academic leadership team, providing a resource for UTIAS in this alignment
 - International comparators
 - ▶ UTIAS is recognized globally for its strong academic and research excellence, particularly in the MASc and PhD programs, which have high research output, impact, and top-tier student quality
 - ▶ With high publication and citation rates, it ranks among the top 20 aerospace programs worldwide and benefits from leading experimental facilities and field-testing capabilities

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

- Relationships
 - ▶ Physical separation of UTIAS from the main campus hinders interaction and collaboration, as faculty must commute downtown for teaching, reducing accessibility for students. This logistical challenge, which multiple MEng students were unaware of before enrolment, can lead to a disconnect between student expectations and reality
 - ▶ Larger scale interdisciplinary collaborations with other UT departments appear limited, likely hindered by UTIAS's relatively isolated location compared with the location of other FASE departments on the St. George campus
 - ▶ Colleagues from the main campus reported not receiving UTIAS seminar announcements
 - ▶ Feedback from cognate dean suggested that UTIAS is perceived primarily as working on projects with Bombardier or Pratt & Whitney, with less visibility of the broader skills and interests of its professors among University of Toronto engineering colleagues

- ▶ Growth in student numbers has not been matched by an increase in support staff
- ▶ Physical separation from the main campus can result in faculty and staff missing informal communication channels, leaving them unaware of policy changes discussed within other University of Toronto FASE units
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Building housing UTIAS requires significant renewal to address space needs and support academic program delivery
 - ▶ UTIAS appears to have insufficient administrative staff to handle business and financial operations, resulting in faculty and staff spending time on operational tasks, such as travel and expense reimbursements, instead of research and teaching
 - ▶ Limited university support for building and facility upgrades has left many areas looking dated, with the cafeteria cited as an example, taking 20 years to renovate
 - ▶ Resource allocation to UTIAS is constrained by tuition freezes and limits on international student enrolment, making it difficult to expand faculty and staff, improve physical infrastructure, or facilitate a move to Downsview
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Departure of Bombardier from Downsview has reduced the appeal of relocating UTIAS to the DAIR complex
 - ▶ Uncertainty about UTIAS's location has led to limited enthusiasm for improving current infrastructure and a lack of clarity about long-term facility plans
 - ▶ Limited support for expanding undergraduate enrolment despite growing demand in the US for aerospace engineering degrees, with many leading programs reaching record-high enrolments
 - ▶ Self-study on Future Directions does not directly reference the university's academic plan, though it includes a link to the University of Toronto's Academic Plan 2017-2022
 - ▶ Faculty age distribution is becoming "top heavy," which may impact long-term sustainability of UTIAS's activities and productivity
 - ▶ Long-term sustainability of the program is uncertain without additional revenue sources, overlapping with concerns about student support
 - ▶ MEng program relies largely on international students, a potentially diminishing pool, and lacks development of alternative revenue sources such as distance learning

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Reestablish an Industrial Advisory Board to provide guidance, networking, and fundraising support, review programs from an industry perspective, and offer feedback on academic content, research funding strategies, and long-term planning
 - ▶ Engage industry partners through the MEng program to explore opportunities such as co-operative education, work placements, and practicum-like projects
 - ▶ Involve alumni as members of the Industrial Advisory Board to support networking between industry, alumni, and UTIAS faculty, staff, and students

- ▶ Share UTIAS seminar announcements more broadly to inform colleagues at the St. George campus, even if commuting challenges may limit their attendance
- ▶ Establish a dedicated “landing pad” downtown to enable UTIAS faculty to work there for a full day, helping to mitigate the challenges of commuting between the downtown campus and the UTIAS facility during the workday
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Decide on UTIAS's permanent location and invest in infrastructure
 - ▶ Use MEng program as an opportunity for generate additional revenue and engage with industry partners
 - ▶ Decide on the future location of UTIAS to enable realistic planning and investment in academic and research efforts requiring dedicated space and facilities
 - ▶ Allocate dedicated investment in physical infrastructure at the chosen location to maintain and promote unique facilities and support all UTIAS programs
 - ▶ Renew the UTIAS building to provide needed space and improve delivery of academic programs, either through relocation to the Downsview location or additional renovation of the current facility
 - ▶ Increase administrative staff to support UTIAS operations, reducing time faculty spend on business and financial tasks and allowing more focus on research and teaching
 - ▶ Engage alumni base to form or re-engage an industry or stakeholder advisory council to identify opportunities for UTIAS to support stakeholders while generating revenue, such as through a distance MEng degree or short courses
 - ▶ Explore industry-funding research and engagement with Canadian defense organizations to broaden the research portfolio and increase research-related revenue
 - ▶ Consider a prudent expansion of the undergraduate aerospace options to leverage budget model that allocates more resources to units with increase enrolment, thereby generating additional revenue for UTIAS
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Continue addressing MEng program challenges, PhD qualifying exam issues, and the decision on UTIAS's future location and related infrastructure funding, while strengthening engagement and leadership with aerospace companies
 - ▶ Increasing the MEng enrolment, while ensuring that MEng student needs are met, presents an opportunity to bring additional revenue to UTIAS
 - ▶ Hire multiple tenure-stream faculty members at the Assistant Professor level to ensure continuity and success in all academic programs going forward, conducting broad searches across multiple research areas to identify and recruit the best candidates
 - ▶ Continue to support and expand the MEng program as potential revenue stream for UTIAS, introducing a structured co-op option to strengthen industry connections
 - ▶ Improve course availability and faculty advising to better support MEng students, particularly in light of recent enrolment fluctuations
 - ▶ Make a timely decision on UTIAS's future location, either DAIR or the current Dufferin Street site, and clearly communicate it. If remaining the Dufferin Street,

provide increased investment to demonstrate support, as faculty have expressed a desire for closure on this long-standing discussion

- ▶ Explore the potential for a dedicated undergraduate aerospace engineering program in light of the rapid growth in such programs across North America, particularly in the US, where many leading programs have record-high enrollments
- ▶ Examine the potential benefits and impacts of expanding undergraduate enrollment in aerospace engineering
- ▶ Consider hiring additional tenure-stream and teaching-stream faculty to support the continued delivery of high-quality graduate aerospace engineering education and research at UTIAS
- ▶ If increased enrollment (particularly in the MEng program) is required for UTIAS's financial sustainability, continue hiring faculty in both streams, with a greater proportion of teaching-stream faculty focused on the MEng program
- ▶ Consider hiring younger tenure-stream faculty through a bridge program to support a smooth transition in faculty age distribution and maintain UTIAS's activities and productivity at a high level
- ▶ If the MEng program grows, consider introducing teaching assistantships for classes with large numbers of MEng students alongside other UTIAS graduate students, funded by MEng program revenue, to provide an additional mechanism for financially supporting UTIAS graduate students
- ▶ Explore ways to make the MEng program more appealing to Canadian students working in the aerospace industry and engage their employers to create additional revenue opportunities.
- ▶ Consider developing distance learning options, which have been a significant revenue source in other institutions



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

February 25, 2026

Professor Nicholas Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto
27 King's College Circle, Room 225
Toronto, ON M5S 1A1
vp.academicprograms@utoronto.ca

Dear Professor Rule,

I write in response to your letter of December 23, 2025 regarding the February 2025 external review of the University of Toronto Institute for Aerospace Studies (UTIAS) and its graduate programs.

On behalf of the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, I would like to thank the reviewers, Professors William Crossley, Purdue University; Ellen Longmire, University of Minnesota Twin Cities; and Siva Nadarajah, McGill University for their very comprehensive review of the institute. I would also like to thank the institute's director, Chris Damaren, and the UTIAS faculty, administrative staff and all those who contributed to the preparation of the self-study, as well as the many staff, students and faculty members who met with the external reviewers and provided thoughtful feedback.

The external review process is a valuable exercise that affords us the opportunity to take stock of the state of our academic units and of the Faculty as a whole. We are extremely pleased with the reviewers' favourable comments on the institute's global reputation, exceptional research output, outstanding faculty, and professional and dedicated administrative staff.

The quality of the unit and its program notwithstanding, the review report raises a number of issues and challenges. These have been addressed in the attached table, which was developed in consultation with the director of UTIAS. For each area addressed, an implementation plan is provided that identifies actions to be accomplished in the short (six months), medium (one to two years) and longer (three to five years) terms, and who will take the lead.

Comments on the draft *Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan Summary* were provided by my office on December 12, 2025.

I anticipate the next review of the University of Toronto Institute for Aerospace Studies will be commissioned in 2029-2030 with a visit to be scheduled for 2030-2031. This will coincide with the end of the director's term.

Chairs and directors in FASE are required to submit to me a written update on progress made toward the goals in their implementation plans on an annual basis. I will provide you with an interim report on the status of the institute's implementation plans no later than 2027-2028, the mid-point between the institute's last and next reviews.

I will attend the March 31, 2026 meeting of the Committee on Academic Policy & Programs along with Professor Damaren to answer any questions that may arise regarding this review.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the report of the external review team. Their comments and recommendations will help inform the vision and future priorities for the University of Toronto Institute for Aerospace Studies.

Sincerely,



Chris Yip
Dean

cc:

Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance (OVPAP)
Emma del Junco, Academic Reviews & Planning Specialist (OVPAP)
Stephanie Machado Fernandes, Administrator, Academic Programs (OVPAP)
Prof. Chris Damaren, Director, University of Toronto Institute for Aerospace Studies (UTIAS)
Caroline Ziegler, Governance & Programs Officer (FASE)

Attachment

2024-25 UTQAP Review of University of Toronto Institute for Aerospace Studies - Review Recommendations

Submitted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs on February 25, 2026.

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short-term [6 months], medium-term [1-2 years], long-term [3-5 years]) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, “it is important to note that, while the external reviewers’ report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability” (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean’s Response
The reviewers observed an opportunity to expand course offerings in sustainable aviation, noting that greater integration of this topic would align well with UTIAS’s research strengths and growing industry focus on sustainability.	1.	“...despite UTIAS hosting the Centre for Sustainable Aviation, no active courses exist in this field, representing a missed opportunity to align with the increasing industry focus on sustainability. Addressing this gap by reintroducing relevant courses would strengthen the program’s position as a leader in aerospace education.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> The course AER1315 “Sustainable Aviation” was offered in Fall 2025 after several years of not being offered. The MEng emphasis in Sustainable Aviation has also been reinstituted.	The Dean’s Office supports the Institute’s efforts in expanding course offerings in sustainable aviation.
			<i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> A new graduate course in aerospace propulsion that targets many aspects of sustainability will be offered in 2026-27.	
			<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	

The reviewers highlighted concerns regarding PhD qualifying examination procedures, noting variability in scheduling, expectations, and preparation time. They recommended standardizing processes and communications to ensure clarity, fairness, and student preparedness across cohorts.	2.	“Standardize the PhD qualifying exam process to the degree possible and ensure that students receive adequate preparation time to alleviate student concerns and improve their academic experience.”	PhD students currently receive the syllabus for their qualifying exam after their first DEC meeting (one year before the qualifying exam). <i>Short-term (six months):</i> Faculty will be reminded to deliver the syllabus to the student within one week of the conclusion of the first DEC meeting. <i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> Faculty will be reminded to respond to scheduling polls for DEC meetings as soon as possible (the qualifying exam occurs during the second DEC meeting). However, there will always be variability in dates for the qualifying exam given the required availability of faculty members for each DEC meeting. <i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	The Dean’s Office broadly recognizes the need for stronger, more cohesive communications with graduate students. Efforts are underway to develop stronger partnerships with student organizations, such as the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECoS) including monthly meetings to better understand graduate student needs.
The reviewers noted challenges related to the structure and delivery of the MEng program, including limited course availability, scheduling inconsistencies, and the lack of structured experiential learning opportunities. They encouraged the Faculty to continue expanding the program while exploring ways to enhance flexibility, course access, and industry alignment through expanded experiential components.	3.	“Continue to support the MEng program and its expansion since this program could provide an important revenue stream for UTIAS. The introduction of a structured co-op option for MEng students would help bridge the gap between academia and industry, making the program more competitive. Additionally, improving course availability and faculty advising for MEng students would provide much-needed support”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> An MEng co-op option (organized at the Faculty level) will begin in 2026-27. A teaching stream faculty member currently acts as an advisor for MEng students. <i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> We will try to schedule faculty study leaves in such a way as to avoid several faculty from the same discipline being on leave at the same time. This will have a positive effect on graduate course availability. Faculty-wide MEng recruitment strategies will inform a UTIAS-specific approach. <i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	We recognize both the challenges and opportunities presented by an enhanced and scaling MEng program and will work with UTIAS to enhance its program offerings and delivery in this strategic area. We completed the final governance and approval step for the MEng co-op option in April 2025. The first cohort will be admitted in Sept 2026. We are coordinating with our Engineering Career Centre (ECC) to hire an additional staff member to support graduate student internships. With our Institute for Studies in Engineering Education & Practice (ISTEP), we have created a for-credit graduate course, core in the co-op option, to help students transition to industry. We encourage UTIAS’ efforts to try to schedule faculty study leaves to be minimally

				disruptive to graduate course availability.
	4.	“...if the MEng program is to grow, perhaps teaching assistants for classes with large numbers of MEng students alongside other UTIAS graduate students would be needed. These teaching assistantships, if funded by revenue from the MEng program, would then provide another mechanism to financially support UTIAS graduate students.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> UTIAS graduate courses with large enrolments (typically many MEng students) currently receive TA support. This practice will be continued which has benefits for the financial support of doctoral-stream students. UTIAS (unlike other Engineering units) does not include TA work as part of the guaranteed stipend. It is over and above that. <i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> n/a <i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	The Dean’s Office is supportive of UTIAS’s approach towards providing TA support (and broadly supports TAs for courses). This is part of a broader Faculty-wide engagement around TA support and funding.
The reviewers observed that MEng students would benefit from more consistent advising and greater access to program support. They encouraged the Faculty to strengthen communication with students and ensure adequate advising resources for the MEng program.	5.	“[MEng students] require a greater amount of advising and there are indications that the graduate program coordinator requires additional support. MEng students feel most disconnected from UTIAS as their only point of contact is the graduate program coordinator.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> Financial incentives to faculty which encourage them to supervise MEng projects will be continued. This will increase faculty interactions within UTIAS. The current MEng Program Administrator works three days per week but additional hours are allocated at busy times of the year. <i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> The current administrative structure of the MEng program will be revisited. <i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	As these new MEng programs scale, the Dean’s Office will work closely with all units, and especially UTIAS, to help ensure robust and proactive supports for these students. We are closely examining roles across the Faculty that support graduate students to assess needs and the potential for improved resource sharing. Further, we are creating best practices to facilitate more consistency in resources, processes and graduate student experiences Faculty-wide; for example, the Vice-Dean, Graduate Studies office periodically meets with graduate administrative staff to discuss current challenges. We are also developing resources for graduate students to support their student experience. This includes an onboarding resource for first-year graduate students with

				information about timelines, policies, services/supports and more. In collaboration with the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECoS), we have created student handbooks (Grad Maps) with resources for MEng, MASc and PhD students and their supervisors, which have been posted on our graduate studies web site.
The reviewers highlighted a need for systematic tracking of student outcomes, including graduation rates, employment statistics, and exit feedback. They recommended implementing consistent data collection processes to inform program improvements.	6.	“Set up a process to track student outcomes more systematically, including graduation rates, employment statistics, and exit feedback. This process would provide valuable data for continuous improvement.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> n/a	This continues to be an active area for the Faculty and indeed the Institute. The Dean’s Office continues to collect, review and analyze demographic and survey data from graduate students to better understand their experience and how it is changing over time, and adjust accordingly. For example, we have frequently promoted the GradSERU 2025 survey in order to reach a target of at least 30% responses across our students. We are also working with Engineering Alumni Relations and the Engineering Career Centre (ECC) to track both recent and past graduates and ECC has recently created a data analyst position to assist in this regard.
			<i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> A process will be established to track student movements after graduation. Also, an exit survey will be developed to gain feedback on the effectiveness of the graduate programs. Graduation rates are currently tracked.	
			<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	
The reviewers observed the need for faculty renewal to maintain balance across career stages and research areas. They emphasized the importance of strategic complement planning to sustain UTIAS’s vitality and continued excellence in aerospace research.	7.	“Hire multiple tenure-stream faculty members at the Assistant Professor level to ensure continuity and success in all academic programs going forward. As multiple hires are needed, it is recommended to search broadly across multiple research areas to identify and recruit the best candidates.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> A search is currently under way to find one new Assistant Professor.	The Dean’s Office encourages UTIAS to plan its faculty complement to ensure continuity and success in all its academic programs. A Faculty-level Strategic Academic Plan 2025-2030 was approved by FASE Council in December 2025 and is currently going through university governance. It will help provide a framework for UTIAS and other academic units to identify priority areas for development and hiring.
			<i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> Multiple retirements are envisaged in the near future. Our impending searches will seek multiple Assistant Professors and conduct the search broadly across multiple research areas. A strategic planning exercise will identify priority areas for hiring.	
			<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	

	8.	“If financial sustainability for UTIAS will require increased enrollment, particularly in the MEng program, continuing to hire faculty in both streams, with perhaps an increased fraction of teaching stream who can focus on the MEng program is a logical approach.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> n/a <i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> When current teaching-stream faculty retire, they will be replaced with new faculty members in the teaching stream. MEng teaching will be prioritized. <i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	As above.
The reviewers noted that UTIAS’s administrative and technical staff are highly effective but that the complement has not grown relative to increases in student enrolment and program activity. They suggested reviewing administrative capacity to ensure adequate operational support and to enable faculty to focus more fully on research and teaching priorities.	9.	“One might expect that a program of UTIAS’ size—measured by student enrollment and number of faculty—could have additional administrative staff to address business and financial issues.... additional staff dedicated to support operations of UTIAS would return some of the time individual faculty members are spending with these operational tasks to allow them more time for tasks where they are better suited—like research and teaching tasks.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> A new financial assistant role will be filled shortly. <i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> A new position to handle oversight of the UTIAS IT systems will be established. <i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	The Dean’s Office supports UTIAS’ plans to increase its administrative staff capacity. The Faculty’s Chief Administrative Officer and its Human Resources Office are available to provide advice and guidance with staffing requirements and job descriptions. The Institute is encouraged to work with these resources to ensure they maintain the proper staffing levels and to utilize the Faculty-level shared services to maximize efficiencies. Further, leadership in the Dean’s Office and academic units are reviewing shared services, including IT, to centralize and bolster common approaches where possible for the benefit of the entire Faculty.
The reviewers noted that UTIAS’s physical separation from the St. George campus presents challenges for collaboration, accessibility, and long-term planning. They encouraged the Faculty to review the Institute’s space and infrastructure needs, and to consider ways to strengthen collegial engagement and faculty connections across campuses.	10.	“Make a decision on the future location of UTIAS, whether it be the current location at Dufferin Street or somewhere else. This would enable improved and realistic planning and investment going forward toward all academic and research efforts requiring dedicated space and facilities.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> The current Director and the next Director (once known) will develop a strategy to determine the future location of UTIAS. <i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> A decision on the future location of UTIAS will be made. The financial requirements of a potential move need to receive special attention.	We recognize the challenges inherent to the Institute’s physical separation from the St. George Engineering precinct. This continues to be an active area of engagement for the Faculty and UTIAS for a number of reasons. Proactive efforts are indeed underway to help identify timely opportunities. We are committed to working with chairs and directors on innovative solutions for the

			<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	Faculty's space needs and have developed a Facilities Master Plan to inform a sustainable and strategic future for engineering teaching and research spaces. The document is being summarized and implementation of near-term priorities (along with those identified in the Strategic Academic Plan) will begin in 2026.
11.	“...the uncertainty of a future home seems to result in a position where there is limited excitement about improving the current infrastructure but also limited clarity about where UTIAS will be located in the not-too-distant future. If DAIR is the location where UTIAS will be located, a decision sooner rather than later would benefit UTIAS. If the current Dufferin Street location will be the future UTIAS location, a clear announcement of this and some level of increased investment would send a message of support to the faculty members and staff.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> n/a	As above.	
		<i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> Given the decision above, the financial consequences for UTIAS need to be carefully considered and communicated clearly to faculty members and staff.		
		<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> Significant renovation of the current site needs to occur (if remaining at Dufferin Street location) or detailed planning for the move to a different location.		
12.	“A point of discussion that seemed to have some merit to help balance the separation of the UTIAS facility from the campus downtown is to have some form of dedicated “landing pad” so that UTIAS faculty members could make the decision to be downtown for an entire day, because travel between downtown and Dufferin Street appears to be essentially impossible as an additional commute during the workday.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> Office space downtown for use by faculty when they are downtown was recently refurbished.	Many UTIAS faculty are already using shared spaces, especially those associated with the Robotics Institute. It would be good to work proactively with FASE leadership to identify better opportunities for UTIAS faculty hotelling spaces.	
		<i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> Current utilization of downtown spaces (including laboratory spaces) needs to be surveyed and optimized. Impacts on the UTIAS budget in the form of space taxes needs to be considered.		
		<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a		

The reviewers highlighted the importance of maintaining UTIAS's specialized research facilities and technical infrastructure. They encouraged the Faculty to explore ways to support physical infrastructure to sustain research excellence, enable future growth, and promote continued innovation across UTIAS's academic and research programs.	13.	"The building housing UTIAS (infrastructure) certainly requires a renewal... A case to move to the new Downsview location should be made. Otherwise, investment in additional renovation of the current building is recommended."	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> Within the next six months the current UTIAS Director will finish his term and a new Director will be appointed. They will need to chart a course for the current building with consideration of the future role of the space occupied by the Microsatellite Space and Technology Centre (the current home of the Space Flight Laboratory).	These are active discussions points at the moment. See also responses to recommendations 10 and 11, above.
			<i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> n/a	
			<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	
	14.	"For whatever location is chosen, the committee recommends dedicated investment in physical infrastructure to help maintain and promote unique facilities and to support academic efforts in all UTIAS programs."	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> n/a	Institutional and Faculty-level efforts are underway to develop a more robust plan for UTIAS infrastructure and planning. See also responses to recommendations 10 and 11, above.
			<i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> The status of current experimental facilities needs to be gauged and sources of capital identified for possible replacement or refurbishment.	
			<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> As new faculty are hired and on-boarded, their needs for research equipment will be identified and supported by robust start-up funding.	
The reviewers recommended reestablishing an Industrial Advisory Board to enhance networking, alumni engagement, and industry connections, and to provide strategic advice on research, funding, and long-term planning.	15.	"Reconstitute the Industrial Advisory Board. This Board could serve multiple purposes in helping UTIAS. In addition to helping with fundraising, this Board would be very useful for promoting networking between industry, alumni, and UTIAS faculty, staff, and students. Members of the Board could provide useful ideas and feedback related to academic program content (MSc, PhD and	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> The current UTIAS Director in consultation with the next one (once identified) will determine members for an Industrial Advisory Board. It will first meet during the current calendar year (2026).	The Dean's Office recognizes the value of input from industry and alumni and is pleased to see UTIAS reconstituting its Industry Advisory board. We encourage the Institute to consult with the Faculty's offices of Engineering Alumni Relations and Engineering Advancement on best practices for engaging alumni and potential donors.
			<i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> n/a	

		MEng), future funding strategies for research, and long-term planning. Engaging alumni as members of the board also aids identification and cultivation of potential future donors to UTIAS.”	<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	
The reviewers identified opportunities to expand collaboration and interdisciplinary engagement between UTIAS and other FASE departments. They encouraged exploring mechanisms to build stronger research and teaching partnerships, increase participation in shared initiatives, and raise the visibility of UTIAS’s expertise across the Faculty.	16.	“Larger scale interdisciplinary collaborations with faculty in other UT departments seem relatively few. Developing such collaborations is likely hindered by the relatively isolated location of UTIAS compared with the location of other FASE departments on the St. George campus. During a discussion with heads of cognate units, there was evidence of interest in collaboration with UTIAS, including mention of a potential joint appointment between Civil Engineering and UTIAS focused on airports and airport operations. The robotics efforts seem to be an example of additional collaborations across academic departments. At the same time, the colleagues from the main campus mentioned that they do not see UTIAS seminar announcements; recognizing the commute challenge for someone from St. George to travel to UTIAS during a work day might preclude regular attendance at UTIAS seminars, but sharing the information more broadly might provide a simple way to inform colleagues at the St. George campus about the UTIAS engagements.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> Special lectures held at UTIAS will be better promoted using our website and that of the Faculty. UTIAS faculty members will be encouraged to apply for special funding initiatives which encourage collaboration with other departments. This has been heavily exploited by robotics faculty at UTIAS.	We encourage UTIAS to promote its events and raise its visibility throughout the Faculty by collaborating with the Faculty’s Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC) office, among other methods. Leadership in the Dean’s Office and academic units are reviewing shared services, including a fuller service unit for Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC), to centralize and bolster common approaches where possible for the benefit of the entire Faculty. ECS has had a number of meetings with the academic units to align internal communications. It will be important to strengthen bidirectional communications to optimize resources at both UTIAS and downtown. Synergies work well when open lines of communication are in place.
			<i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> n/a	
			<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	17.	“While the review panel did not explore this during the on-site visit, a quick scan of social media suggests that posting more about research accomplishments on social media such as LinkedIn is a potentially lower-effort way to increase recognition of UTIAS.”	<i>Short-term (six months):</i> The UTIAS Communications Assistant will begin to advertise UTIAS research accomplishments on social media including LinkedIn.	Proactive and engaged communications is key. UTIAS is encouraged to be much more proactive in their efforts and to align with both the Faculty- and university-level communications. As in our response to recommendation 16, we encourage UTIAS to consult with the
			<i>Medium-term (one to two years):</i> n/a	

			<i>Long-term (three to five years):</i> n/a	Faculty’s Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC) office where feasible.

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised UTIAS as a world-class centre of excellence distinguished by its exceptional research output, outstanding faculty, and global reputation. They highlighted the MAsc and PhD programs for their rigorous scholarship, high-impact publications, and international standing among the top twenty aerospace programs worldwide; and recognized the MEng program as a valuable professional offering that provides opportunities for skill development and stronger connections with industry partners. Reviewers also applauded UTIAS's significant contributions to the undergraduate Aerospace Engineering program, noting its distinctive thesis requirement and strong emphasis on experiential, research, and co-op learning. They noted the Institute's strong sense of collegiality and collaboration, supported by state-of-the-art experimental and computational facilities that foster cutting-edge research and interdisciplinary innovation. They commended the tenure-stream faculty for their international research leadership, strong publication record, and success in competitive funding; and the teaching-stream faculty for their pedagogical innovation and commitment to providing exceptional learning experiences for students. Finally, the reviewers praised the professionalism and dedication of UTIAS's academic and administrative staff, whose collective efforts support an outstanding student experience and reinforce UTIAS's standing as a national and international leader in aerospace education and research.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: expanding course offerings in sustainable aviation to better align with UTIAS's research strengths and the growing industry focus on sustainability; standardizing PhD qualifying examination procedures to address variability in scheduling, expectations, and preparation time and to ensure clarity, fairness, and student preparedness across cohorts; reviewing the structure and delivery of the MEng program in light of limited course availability, scheduling inconsistencies, and the lack of structured experiential learning opportunities, and exploring ways to enhance flexibility, course access, and industry alignment through expanded experiential components; strengthening advising and communication to ensure more consistent program support for MEng students; implementing systematic processes to track student outcomes, including graduation rates, employment statistics, and exit feedback, to inform program improvements; reviewing faculty complement planning to maintain balance across career stages and research areas; reviewing administrative and technical staffing capacity in relation to growth in student enrolment and program activity; reviewing UTIAS's space and infrastructure needs in light of its physical separation from the St. George campus; supporting the maintenance of specialized research facilities and technical infrastructure; reestablishing an Industrial Advisory Board to support

networking, alumni engagement, and industry connections; and exploring opportunities to expand collaboration and interdisciplinary engagement between UTIAS and other FASE departments.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the 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

Chairs and directors are required to submit to the Dean each year a written update on progress made toward the goals in their implementation plans.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than the end of the 2027-2028 academic year on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in 2028-2029 for a visit in 2029-2030.

6 Distribution

On August 15th, 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Computer Engineering, BASc Electrical Engineering, BASc Electrical and Computer Engineering: MASc, MEng, PhD
Division/Unit Reviewed OR Division/Unit Offering Program(s):	The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Ryan (Yunwei) Li, Professor and Department Chair, Electrical & Computer Engineering, University of Alberta • Derek Oliver, Professor and Department Head, Electrical & Computer Engineering, University of Manitoba • Arijit Raychowdhury, Professor and School Chair, Electrical & Computer Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology
Date of Review Visit:	April 8-9, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	May 15, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	March 3, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: June 18 – 19, 2018

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths:

- High quality of students with strong academic records
- Flexible undergraduate curriculum
- High level of faculty research activity with strong individual areas of expertise
- Impressive sense of community throughout the department

Opportunities for program enhancement

- Refine the department's mission and take "calculated risks" on how education and research are delivered and conducted
- Explore untapped potential opportunities for new areas of research collaboration and expansion
- Address lengthy time-to-completion for PhD students and the need for supervisory committee meetings
- Clarify expectations for faculty performance
- Refresh faculty complement and balance full professors with junior faculty
- Engage in a review of the undergraduate curriculum that emphasizes "modes of thought" rather than "information transfer"
- Consider whether it still makes sense to offer both the MASc and MEng programs, given the programs' flexibility; track employment and salary outcomes to help in this determination

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; self-study, including faculty curricula vitae; previous review report (2017-2018) including the administrative response; access to all graduate and undergraduate course descriptions; Faculty academic plan and annual impact report; Dean's presentation on the Faculty; and University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP).

Consultation Process

ECE faculty, students and administrative staff, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering dean and vice-deans as well as chairs and directors of the Faculty's cognate units (Aerospace Studies, Biomedical Engineering, Chemical Engineering & Applied Chemistry, Civil & Mineral

Engineering, Engineering Science, Materials Science & Engineering, Mechanical & Industrial Engineering, and Transdisciplinary Engineering Education & Practice).

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
 - ▶ Strong undergraduate programs are well-established and effectively meet the broad intended outcomes
 - ▶ Department size and academic excellence allow for a broad and in-depth range of subject offerings
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Undergraduate programs consistently admit students with exceptionally high entrance averages, exceeding 96% from high school in recent years
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Strong interest in evolving the highly flexible undergraduate curriculum; students view the flexibility as a major strength, and department members value the intent behind offering this level of choice
 - ▶ Draft proposals for “guided flexible programs” demonstrate a thoughtful evolution of the curriculum, preserving its original intent while offering clearer pathways and maintaining flexibility for interdisciplinary specializations and exceptional cases
 - ▶ Proposed undergraduate program revisions honour the original vision while enhancing student guidance across program offerings
 - ▶ Newly introduced 2nd-year design course received strong positive feedback from students as a valuable and engaging experience
 - ▶ Mode of delivery of the programs is appropriate
 - ▶ Program curricula appropriately address the current state of the discipline and suit their respective program levels
 - ▶ Reopening of the undergraduate thesis course provides added opportunities for student research and experiential learning
 - ▶ Flexibility of the Computer Engineering and Electrical Engineering programs has served the department well over many years
 - ▶ Highly flexible undergraduate curriculum and focused foundational research portfolio have effectively served the department
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Since 2020, the proportion of women in ECE programs has doubled, reaching 40% in Computer Engineering and 34% in Electrical Engineering
 - ▶ Various FASE committees and advisors actively address barriers and promote an inclusive, welcoming culture

- ▶ Information on accessibility and accommodation support is easily accessible to students via the university website
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Undergraduate clubs cover diverse activities, supported by USRA allocations and the recently reopened ECE Thesis Undergraduate Course
 - ▶ Undergraduate clubs demonstrate strong inter-departmental collaboration
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Graduates achieve employment rates that are on par with or exceed the Engineering average

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Students reported feeling intimidated by the senior-level curriculum, citing an overwhelming degree of flexibility and difficulty navigating course choices
 - ▶ High degree of flexibility has resulted in significant class size imbalances across subdisciplines, making it difficult to manage resource allocation due to the numerous student pathway permutations
 - ▶ Strong interest in computer engineering, software engineering, and AI/ML has led to significant enrollment imbalances across ECE subdisciplines; the program's flexibility limits the department's ability to manage this, creating challenges in resources, class sizes, workload, and student experience
 - ▶ Curriculum initiatives largely stem from course-based improvements and individual instructor efforts
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Uncertainty in the number of "Track One" and "Core 8" students electing ECE at the start of second year creates significant resource planning challenges for the department, compromising the ability to refine and enhance the quality of 2nd year core courses

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Collaborate with FASE to review admissions and transfer processes to better anticipate resource impacts
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Continue developing the proposed "guided flexible programs," which maintain the spirit of the current curriculum while offering clearer pathways within ECE, including shared specializations and flexibility for exceptional cases
 - ▶ Investigate the reasons behind low uptake of the reopened undergraduate thesis course to support increased participation and maximize experiential learning opportunities
 - ▶ Complete the undergraduate program review and implement its recommendations

- Innovation
 - ▶ Consider the development of online programs or certificates, in line with emerging trends at other major universities
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Strengthen collective processes to review teaching and learning success through the revised undergraduate curriculum framework

2. Graduate Program(s)

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ MEng, MAsC, and PhD programs are well-established and meet the broad intended outcomes
 - ▶ Research requirement for degree completion in the PhD (including direct entry) and MAsC programs is suitable
 - ▶ MEng program generates significant revenue and benefits from financial incentives encouraging its growth
 - ▶ ECE has well-established MAsC and PhD research programs, alongside a rapidly growing MEng program
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Department demonstrates consistent attention to international trends, especially in graduate recruitment and program competitiveness, which is key to attracting top research students and refining the MEng program's goals and structure
 - ▶ Ongoing high demand for admission across all graduate programs
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Mode of delivery of the programs is appropriate
 - ▶ Good range of graduate course offerings, with efforts underway to formalize special topic courses
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Strong engagement with experiential learning, with all faculty supervising capstone projects and encouraged to propose projects for MEng students
 - ▶ Graduate students are involved in diverse research projects and receive positive supervision
 - ▶ The optional MEng project promotes increased engagement with PIs and helps bridge the gap between PI research focus and the professional goals of the MEng cohort
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ Although time-to-completion in the PhD program is longer than desirable, the review panel is pleased with the development of a program aimed at addressing this challenge
 - ▶ Implementation of a Time-to-Completion Tracking System has led to a significant increase in annual supervisory committee meetings and provides advisors with a comprehensive dashboard to support timely graduate student progress

- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Graduates achieve employment rates that are on par with or exceed the Engineering average
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ Supervisory loads appear to be appropriately distributed based on faculty qualifications and appointment status
 - ▶ Faculty possess recent research or professional/clinical expertise that sustains the program, promotes innovation, and fosters a strong intellectual climate
- Student funding
 - ▶ Minimum PhD funding of \$40,000/year is a strong level of support and sets a positive example for U15 institutions; ECE's plan to guarantee TA allocations for incoming PhD students reinforces this commitment.

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Requiring 8 courses for direct entry PhD may be uncompetitive; current course load expectations could limit flexibility
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ MEng students have limited on-campus space for group work, relying mostly on the library
 - ▶ Lack of dedicated space hinders collaboration and weakens the optional project component compared to undergraduate capstone support
 - ▶ Current TA performance assessment is limited by union constraints, lacks connection to future TA assignments, and may negatively affect undergraduate learning and graduate TA training, especially as guaranteed TA positions for PhD students are introduced
 - ▶ With the rapid increase of MEng students and their specific needs, there is demand for more dedicated, MEng-oriented courses
 - ▶ Graduate students desire more opportunities to connect beyond their immediate research groups and department; addressing this would foster multidisciplinary collaboration and expand local research networks
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ PhD time-to-completion remains longer than desirable
 - ▶ Time to completion for MASc remains static or slightly increasing
 - ▶ PhD completion times are increasing, influenced by subdisciplinary factors, advising cultures, industry involvement, and post-pandemic work patterns, complicating efforts to improve completion timelines

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Balance further expansion of the MEng program with considerations of sustainability and program quality to ensure long-term success

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Develop the MEng program's identity beyond revenue generation by establishing international benchmarks for pedagogical innovation, distinct from PhD and MASc courses
 - ▶ Explore online delivery options to enhance the flexibility of the MEng program
 - ▶ Consider developing standalone, application-focused courses specifically for the MEng program to better distinguish it from MASc and PhD offerings, while also establishing enrolment guidelines to avoid replicating resource imbalances seen in the undergraduate programs
 - ▶ Re-evaluate the requirement of 8 courses for direct entry PhD to ensure competitiveness, and consider expanding initiatives like Flexible Summer Graduate Course Options to support greater flexibility in degree completion
 - ▶ Continue efforts to convert special topic courses into formal graduate courses and consider developing more dedicated, application-focused courses to meet the specific needs of the growing MEng student population
 - ▶ Develop MEng-specific courses carefully to avoid replicating the undergraduate program's resourcing challenges
 - ▶ Develop and promote the MEng program as a world-class, professionally focused postgraduate option for motivated professionals seeking advanced learning, helping to mitigate uncertainties in IRCC regulations
 - ▶ Further develop the MEng program structure and courses to clearly differentiate from MASc and PhD offerings, enhancing quality and establishing international leadership
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Extend the collective processes used at the undergraduate level, such as CEAB-defined graduate attribute monitoring and coordinated curriculum initiatives, to the MEng program, as the outcomes and needs of this cohort parallel those of undergraduate students
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Provide dedicated on-campus group workspaces for MEng students, comparable to those available for undergraduate capstone projects, to enhance the optional project component
 - ▶ Create more opportunities for graduate students to connect beyond their immediate research groups and areas to foster multidisciplinary collaboration and enhance local research networks
 - ▶ Establish a more robust Teaching Assistant performance review process that complies with collective agreements while enhancing consistency in quality and performance

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Excellent faculty and scholarship contribute to high-quality teaching and training for both undergraduate and graduate students
 - ▶ Faculty leadership roles in Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), including two society presidents, highlight the department's strong global reputation in engineering
- Research
 - ▶ Department has a strong research portfolio with upcoming hires positioned to support strategic renewal efforts
 - ▶ ECE professors demonstrate diverse, interdisciplinary engagement and maintain strong productivity in research input and output
 - ▶ ECE receives the highest total funding among all FASE departments and institutes
 - ▶ Annual publications, citations, and patent disclosures are impressively high
 - ▶ ECE includes many renowned researchers holding nationally and internationally recognized fellowships
 - ▶ Researchers address significant problems, producing high-impact publications, patents, and successful commercialization outcomes
 - ▶ ECE researchers actively participate in multidisciplinary projects within U of T research centres and institutes, as well as external collaborations
 - ▶ Initiatives like the Distinguished Lecture Series and cross-appointed faculty foster academic engagement and collaboration
 - ▶ Non-teaching research space is managed through a senior committee with representation from major subdisciplinary groups, operating under well-established guidelines
- Faculty
 - ▶ Recently developed ECE workload policy enhances coordination and transparency in teaching load assignments, supporting improvements in the overall teaching and learning experience
 - ▶ Sufficient number and quality of core faculty to support program goals and foster a strong academic environment, with over 70% of courses currently taught by core faculty
 - ▶ Transparency and thoroughness of initiatives like the new academic workload guidelines effectively address operational complexity and support improved transparency and morale
 - ▶ Department leadership's systematic development of a mentorship program and Progress Through the Ranks scheme are commendable initiatives that should be expanded with incoming junior faculty
 - ▶ Centralized teaching assignments paired with workload guidelines are effective; extending this model to multidisciplinary research collaborations and supporting Teaching Stream professors' pedagogical scholarship will enhance departmental impact

- ▶ Supported by world-class faculty, including 17 new hires since the last review; upcoming hiring cycle offers a chance to balance subdisciplines and advance the department's global leadership in foundational and future ECE areas

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

- Research
 - ▶ Senior committee managing non-teaching research space may become misaligned with evolving and expanding research group portfolios, potentially limiting effective oversight
- Faculty
 - ▶ Faculty composition is heavily weighted toward senior ranks, with over 70% Full Professors and only 13% Assistant Professors, which may limit opportunities for renewal and innovation in teaching and research
 - ▶ Faculty composition remains senior-heavy, though planned junior hires over the next five years aim to improve balance following retirements
 - ▶ Institutional policy restricting teaching relief for prestigious research chairholders limits their ability to pursue large-scale, multidisciplinary research

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ Investigate the decline in tri-agency funding despite high total funding and consider incentives to encourage researchers to combine industry support with tri-agency grants like NSERC Alliance to maintain Research Support Fund allocations
 - ▶ Encourage ECE researchers to take on greater leadership in large multidisciplinary research initiatives nationally and internationally, leveraging funding from industry and government agencies (e.g., NSERC Alliance, CREATE, CFI Innovation Fund, NFRF) to boost tri-agency support and address lab renovation challenges
 - ▶ Maintain and support diversity of research expertise within ECE to preserve breadth despite short-term fluctuations in program demands
 - ▶ Strengthen links and collaboration between ECE and peer departments within the Faculty to complement existing industry and external academic partnerships, addressing perceived gaps in interdepartmental connectedness
 - ▶ Reimagine and enhance the public-facing description of the research portfolio to improve communication beyond technical audiences and increase broader public recognition
 - ▶ Define a strategic vision to guide the renewal and evolution of the department's research portfolios
 - ▶ Develop international benchmarks for research performance to clearly demonstrate the department's leadership and stature
- Faculty
 - ▶ Prioritize junior-rank hiring to balance the currently senior-heavy faculty composition, supporting continued innovation in teaching and research

- ▶ Provide targeted seed funding to teaching-stream professors to support collaborative studies demonstrating international pedagogical impact, potentially leveraging MEng project involvement and industry partnerships as stepping-stones
- ▶ Recruit teaching-focused personnel, especially teaching-stream professors, to support increased undergraduate and graduate enrollment by delivering courses and supervising MEng student projects
- ▶ Allocate teaching relief to prestigious research chairholders (CRC/CERC holders and PIs of large grants) within departmental workload guidelines to support large-scale research without reducing undergraduate access to their expertise
- ▶ Continue building and expanding the mentorship program and Progress Through the Ranks scheme to support the integration and development of junior faculty members
- ▶ Extend the centralized teaching assignment approach to support multidisciplinary research collaborations and provide opportunities for Teaching Stream professors to highlight their pedagogical scholarship
- ▶ Use upcoming faculty hires to strategically balance subdisciplinary expertise and strengthen the department's position as a global leader in foundational and emerging areas of ECE
- ▶ Create seed grants to support teaching-stream professors in developing and showcasing their pedagogical impact internationally

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 sense of community and clear commitment to student success, with opportunities to strengthen internal communication and further engage the Industry Advisory Board
 - ▶ Good staff support for students and researchers, with undergraduate and graduate students expressing strong appreciation for advising availability and quality
 - ▶ Students across all programs experience a strong sense of community, well supported by student-facing administrative staff
 - ▶ Numerous departmental initiatives foster student engagement and feedback, including the ambassador program and student councils
 - ▶ Department leadership shows a determined and collegial approach to tackling departmental challenges
 - ▶ ECE maintains strong relationships with external government, academic, and professional organizations

- ▶ Department's Communications and Marketing Strategy is effective and well-executed
- ▶ Department delivers content with high production quality and strong viewership, distinguishing its online presence from peer departments in Canada
- ▶ Strong commitment to engagement and outreach shown through initiatives like the ECE Amplifier Series and ECE Industry Days
- ▶ Smooth coordination between Faculty-level and departmental student support, as reported by students and staff
- ▶ ECE's active communication team produces high-quality videos that effectively support a strong social media presence and actively promote the department and student activities
- ▶ Strong advancement, philanthropy, and industrial partnerships position the department well to capitalize on emerging opportunities amid uncertainties in international university support
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Department's use of human resources is appropriate
 - ▶ Proactive approach to administrative staff development, including dedicated resources for professional growth and encouragement for advancement into senior departmental roles
 - ▶ Current organizational and financial structure effectively supports the ECE department
 - ▶ FASE financial model offers adequate financial stability for large departments like ECE
 - ▶ Despite budget constraints, the ECE department has effectively streamlined support services and centralized IT
 - ▶ Students and researchers generally find support levels appropriate, and staff report satisfaction with workload despite a 20% reduction in non-academic staff in recent years
 - ▶ ECE has sufficient lab space for teaching and multidisciplinary research, including redeveloped and new facilities
 - ▶ ECE's diverse initiatives in recruitment, market expansion, domestic outreach, and alumni engagement support program success and financial sustainability, with confidence in continued budget management through streamlined support and fundraising
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Department has developed its internal mission and vision to a point of maturity
 - ▶ Strategic plan aligns well with University and Faculty priorities; while not behind institutional progress, the department is well-positioned to lead more explicitly on Decolonization and Reconciliation
- International comparators
 - ▶ Department remains Canada's leading and internationally respected department; despite pandemic disruptions, it holds both opportunity and obligation for leadership

- ▶ ECE programs are highly regarded nationally and internationally, with a strong reputation compared to peer institutions
- ▶ Department ranks consistently first in Canada and within the top 20-30 internationally, positioning it to lead the discipline's evolution and pedagogical innovation

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

- Relationships
 - ▶ Large student cohort limits elected representatives' ability to gather widespread feedback, though strong confidence exists in responsive department leadership
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Infrastructure resources are mixed; while some spaces have been refreshed, the age and condition of buildings present significant challenges, with costs for major renewal being prohibitive
 - ▶ Recent administrative reconfiguration has helped address budgetary challenges, but current staff, especially student-facing roles, are operating near capacity given existing enrolment levels
 - ▶ Department's distributed building layout presents significant challenges, including convoluted accessibility, outdated lab infrastructure, and limited potential for meaningful upgrades without major institutional investment
 - ▶ Reduction of non-academic staff by 20% in recent years may impact support capacity and workload sustainability
 - ▶ Efficiency improvements noted, but senior admin staff report diminishing capacity to manage ongoing budget pressures
 - ▶ Aging buildings and high maintenance costs pose ongoing financial challenges for maintaining teaching and research lab facilities
 - ▶ Some research and teaching labs lack adequate accessibility, presenting challenges that require prioritized institutional support for renovations despite building age constraints

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Build on the department's strong sense of community by enhancing internal communication and developing a more overt and engaged role for the Industry Advisory Board
 - ▶ Further develop the Industry Advisory Board to integrate its perspectives on broad curriculum goals and graduate success beyond academia, enhancing considerations of student success in Undergraduate and MEng programs
 - ▶ Develop a more transparent and direct feedback process to better capture student perspectives
 - ▶ Strengthen communication channels between department leadership and the wider student body to improve feedback collection beyond elected representatives

- ▶ Improve communication and visibility of departmental connectivity to external stakeholders to address challenges posed by the department's large size
- ▶ Further integrate the Industry Advisory Board by defining clearer portfolios and sub-group activities, ensuring specific aims and measurable outcomes are established before the next review
- ▶ Expand efforts to engage alumni and promote philanthropy to further enhance the department's impact and support
- ▶ Continue expanding pathways for students to share feedback on their departmental experiences
- ▶ Expand the Industry Advisory Board's roles to include advisory groups focused on undergraduate and MEng programs
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Monitor and balance incentives created by MEng tuition revenues to ensure equity across units, especially those without graduate programs
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Build on alignment with institutional strategic plans by developing more explicit consideration of Decolonization and Reconciliation, positioning the department to take a leadership role in this area
 - ▶ Republish the 2023 strategic plan's action items, indicating which are completed or in progress, outlining short-term implementation plans, and documenting steps for addressing longer-term or more complex challenges
 - ▶ Encourage greater integration and coordination among autonomous research groups to enhance department-wide optimization of teaching, research collaborations, and initiatives
 - ▶ Publish strategic plan action items with clear indicators of completed tasks and timelines for those still in progress
 - ▶ Prioritize infrastructure renovations to improve accessibility of research and teaching labs, such as wheelchair access, despite challenges posed by building age and history
- International comparators
 - ▶ Leverage the department's top national and strong international ranking to take a leadership role in advancing the discipline and innovating pedagogy



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

March 3, 2026

Professor Nicholas Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto
27 King's College Circle, Room 225
Toronto, ON M5S 1A1
vp.academicprograms@utoronto.ca

Dear Professor Rule,

I write in response to your letter of August 20, 2025 regarding the April 2025 external review of The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering (ECE) and its undergraduate and graduate programs.

On behalf of the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, I would like to thank the reviewers, Professors Ryan (Yunwei) Li, University of Alberta; Derek Oliver, University of Manitoba; and Arijit Raychowdhury, Georgia Institute of Technology for their very comprehensive review of the department. I would also like to thank the ECE chair, Deepa Kundur, and the department's faculty, administrative staff and all those who contributed to the preparation of the self-study, as well as the many staff, students and faculty members who met with the external reviewers and provided thoughtful feedback.

The external review process is a valuable exercise that affords us the opportunity to take stock of the state of our academic units and of the Faculty as a whole. We are extremely pleased with the reviewers' recognition of ECE's strong national and international reputation and its favourable comments on the department's quality of faculty and students, excellence in research, transparent and collegial leadership, and strong sense of community.

The quality of the unit and its program notwithstanding, the review report raises a number of issues and challenges. These have been addressed in the attached table, which was developed in consultation with the ECE chair. For each area addressed, an implementation plan is provided that identifies actions to be accomplished in the short (six months), medium (one to two years) and longer (three to five years) terms, and who will take the lead.

I also attach comments on the draft *Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan Summary*.

I anticipate the next review of The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering will be commissioned in 2028-2029 with a visit to be scheduled for 2029-2030.

Chairs and directors in FASE are required to submit to me a written update on progress made toward the goals in their implementation plans on an annual basis. I will provide you with an interim report on the status of the department's implementation plans no later than 2027-2028, the mid-point between the department's last and next reviews.

I will attend the March 31, 2026 meeting of the Committee on Academic Policy & Programs along with Professor Kundur to answer any questions that may arise regarding this review.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the report of the external review team. Their comments and recommendations will help inform the vision and future priorities for The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering.

Sincerely,



Chris Yip
Dean

cc:

Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance (OVPAP)
Emma del Junco, Academic Reviews & Planning Specialist (OVPAP)
Stephanie Machado Fernandes, Administrator, Academic Programs (OVPAP)
Prof. Deepa Kundur, Chair, The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering (ECE)
Caroline Ziegler, Governance & Programs Officer (FASE)

Attachments

2024-25 UTQAP Review of The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering - Review Recommendations

Submitted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs on March 3, 2026.

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, “it is important to note that, while the external reviewers’ report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability” (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean’s Response
The reviewers noted emerging concerns related to the flexible nature of ECE’s undergraduate program structure, including enrolment and resource imbalances across subdisciplines, as well as student uncertainty regarding program pathways. They expressed support for in-development proposals aimed at balancing the spirit and intent of the programs’ flexibility while enhancing their structure, sustainability, and student experience.	1.	“The review panel noted the resource pressures that have, in part, encouraged a review of the highly-flexible undergraduate program structure. The proposals for the next evolution of this program structure appear to honour the spirit and intent of the original vision, while providing students with greater (and desired) guidance for navigating the breadth of offerings and opportunities within the department.” “Complete the review of the undergraduate programs and implement the results of this process.”	Short-term (six months) ECE has already approved a major update to the undergraduate curriculum that directly addresses the concerns raised by the review. The revised curriculum was approved at Faculty Council in December 2026 following extensive consultation with students, faculty members, and the Industry Advisory Board, and incorporates input from both the ECE external review and the CEAB accreditation visit. The updated curriculum introduces clearer Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering course groupings, strengthened kernel and depth requirements, and a revised EE/CE transfer policy. These changes are designed to improve program quality, ensure a sustainable critical mass of students in each degree, and reduce enrolment volatility that has historically created resource challenges.	As the department notes, ECE has addressed the concerns raised by the review team by updating its undergraduate curriculum.

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
			The revised curriculum will take effect for the incoming cohort starting in Fall 2026. Medium-term (1-2 years) n/a Long-term (3-5 years) n/a	
The reviewers noted that although the Faculty's TrackOne and Core 8 frameworks support student flexibility in program choice, they also create unpredictability and pose significant challenges for planning class sizes, allocating resources, and providing student support. They recommended that the Department explore ways to mitigate these impacts in collaboration with decanal leadership.	2.	"As the precise numbers of 'Track 1' and 'Core 8' students electing to enter ECE at the beginning of their second year are not known until the end of the academic year, resource planning for the shared core courses in the ECE second year is compromised. The department acknowledges the wider goals of these programs and the student-centred aspects of the frameworks, but highlighted the planning challenge as being significant, and a barrier to refining and enhancing the quality of student experience in the 2nd year core courses." "Collaborate with the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering to review the admissions/transfer processes so that the resource impacts can be better-anticipated"	Short-term (six months) ECE acknowledges the reviewers' observations regarding the planning challenges created by the Faculty's TrackOne and Core 8 frameworks. While these frameworks were designed to support student flexibility and choice, they have introduced uncertainty in enrolment forecasting that complicates class-size planning, resource allocation, and student support within ECE. In response, TrackOne admissions have been paused at the Faculty level, which is expected to reduce enrolment volatility and improve planning predictability. ECE will continue to work with decanal leadership to mitigate any residual impacts and to improve alignment between admissions pathways and program capacity, while supporting the broader student-centred goals of these frameworks. Medium-term (1-2 years) n/a Long-term (3-5 years) n/a	The Faculty's Track One program has been placed on hiatus with admissions suspended for the 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 cycles while its future is assessed. This undeclared pathway traditionally allows first-year students to decide on and transfer into the Core 8 discipline of their choice starting in Year 2 (subject to meeting a GPA threshold) which makes managing enrolment difficult for departments. This is especially true for ECE, which is a popular destination for many Track One students. During the hiatus, the 90-100 students who might have been admitted to Track One each year will instead enter directly into a Core 8 program, thus ensuring more certainty, stability, and balanced enrolments.

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The reviewers recommended that ECE continue to develop the MEng program as a professionally focused offering with a pedagogical identity distinct from the MAsC and PhD programs. They noted opportunities to enhance program quality and emphasized the need for careful strategic planning around program enrolments and resources.	3.	“Continue to develop the MEng program structure and course offerings to be distinct from those provided for MAsC and PhD students – enhancing the program quality and developing identifiable international leadership in this domain”	Short-term (six months) ECE currently maintains partial differentiation between the MEng and research programs through MEng-only courses. In the short term, the department will conduct an internal review of existing MEng offerings to assess whether the current level of distinction is sufficient and to identify areas for further enhancement. This review will be led by the ECE Graduate Matters Committee. Medium-term (1-2 years) ECE will consult industry stakeholders through surveys and targeted engagement to evaluate how well the MEng curriculum aligns with professional and industry needs. Findings will inform curriculum refinements and the potential expansion of experiential learning opportunities, including applied projects, internships, or co-op pathways, reinforcing the professional identity of the MEng program. Long-term (3-5 years) n/a	Reviewing existing offerings and consulting with industry stakeholders will allow the department to best align the MEng program with professional and industry needs. At the Faculty level, the Dean's Office is strengthening graduate programs, including the MEng, by developing stronger partnerships with student organizations such as the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECOS). We are meeting monthly with GECOS to better understand the needs of graduate students and to ensure resources are allocated to support their professional needs. We have created an MEng co-op option with the first cohort to be admitted in Sept 2026, bringing a professional, work-integrated component into the program. To further support this initiative, we are coordinating with our Engineering Career Centre (ECC) to hire an additional staff member to support graduate student internships. We will also explore the role of the Institute for Studies in Transdisciplinary Engineering Education & Practice (ISTEP) as a service provider within the Faculty to support enhanced teaching practice and pedagogy. We recognize the value of input from industry and alumni and encourage the department to consult with the Faculty's Engineering Alumni Relations office on best practices for engaging alumni.
	4.		Short-term (six months)	

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
		“While there is a demonstrable need for MEng-specific course offerings, the review panel notes that care will be required to avoid replicating the resourcing challenges evident in the undergraduate program.”	n/a Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will implement a targeted set of cross-listed senior undergraduate courses that have appropriate depth and professional relevance for MEng students, following the required Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering curriculum approval processes. This approach will enhance MEng offerings while minimizing additional instructional and staffing demands, thereby avoiding replication of the resourcing challenges observed in the undergraduate program. Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will evaluate the effectiveness of cross-listed courses in meeting MEng professional learning objectives and will assess their impact on program quality and resource sustainability through student feedback and enrolment data. Findings from this evaluation will inform future curriculum planning and resourcing decisions for the MEng program.	We support ECE's plans to enhance MEng offerings while minimizing the replication of resource challenges. Broadly, the Faculty is working strategically with all departments and institutes around alignment and complementarity of MEng offerings.
The reviewers noted concerns regarding the performance assessment process for Teaching Assistants, observing an apparent disconnect between evaluations and future assignments that may result in uneven teaching quality. They recommended exploring ways to ensure teaching consistency to support strong undergraduate learning experiences and graduate training opportunities.	5.	“Develop a more robust approach to reviewing the performance of Teaching Assistants that conforms to the appropriate collective agreement, but provides the department with greater consistency of quality/performance”	Short-term (within six months) ECE will undertake a structured review of Teaching Assistant assignments and workload distributions over the past five years to identify patterns that may affect teaching quality and graduate training, including excessive total hours, multiple concurrent appointments, or uneven allocation across courses. In parallel, the Department will continue active consultation with union	The Dean's Office supports the department's plans to increase consistency of quality and performance of its Teaching Assistants within the parameters of the relevant collective agreement. We encourage ECE to draw upon the expertise of the Teaching Methods and Resources Committee, a standing committee of Faculty Council that develops criteria for recognizing outstanding TA performance while reflecting evaluation norms such as impact on student learning, quality of

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			representatives to ensure that any planned evaluation processes are aligned with the Collective Agreement and grounded in collaborative, early intervention approaches to supporting TA performance.	instruction, and constructive feedback practices.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) Building on the findings of the workload and assignment review, ECE will implement measures to promote more equitable and transparent TA allocation practices, taking into account TA experience, training needs, and program requirements. Actions may include discouraging assignments exceeding 240 hours per year, improving coordination between the Graduate Office and course instructors, and formalizing mechanisms for identifying and addressing performance concerns early in the term. During this period, the Department will design a structured TA evaluation framework, developed in consultation with union representatives, that supports teaching consistency while remaining fully compliant with the Collective Agreement.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will implement the TA evaluation system, and will assess its impact on undergraduate learning experiences, TA development, and graduate training outcomes. The Department will use evidence from this assessment to refine TA allocation practices and evaluation processes over time, ensuring sustained teaching quality and consistency within the	

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			constraints of existing policies and collective agreements.	
The reviewers noted opportunities to strengthen communication with students through more transparent and direct feedback mechanisms; they also observed that ongoing revisions to undergraduate programs present an opportunity to strengthen processes related to program-level review of teaching and learning.	6.	“Continue to develop pathways for students to provide feedback on their experiences within the department”	Short-term (six months) ECE will create a working group to develop diverse pathways for students to provide feedback on their experiences within the department. These pathways will span in-person, online, written, and oral formats, ensuring accessibility and multiple points of engagement. In parallel, ECE will launch a targeted communications initiative to raise awareness of existing feedback channels, including the Student–Staff Committee, Hot Chocolate with the Chair, and ECE Open Houses, and to make it easier for students to share their experiences.	We encourage ECE to strengthen communication pathways with their students. As stated in recommendation 3, the Dean’s Office is developing stronger partnerships with student organizations such as the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECoS) and are meeting with them monthly to better understand their needs. We will share relevant information with the department. We also encourage the department to draw upon the expertise of the Faculty’s Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC) office where feasible and appropriate.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will implement the new communication pathways developed by the working group, alongside enhanced versions of existing mechanisms. The Department will also introduce a content series highlighting changes made in response to student feedback, reinforcing transparency while supporting student engagement and recruitment.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
	7.	“The development of a revised undergraduate curriculum framework is an important opportunity for the department to strengthen collective processes that review	Short-term (within six months) ECE will reinforce and formalize existing student feedback mechanisms to strengthen program-level review of teaching and	We are pleased that ECE has increased undergraduate student participation in the department’s curriculum governance. They can also encourage interested ECE students

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		the success of their teaching and learning. Judicious extension of these processes to the MEng program is encouraged as the outcomes/needs of this cohort parallel the needs of the undergraduates.”	learning. This includes strengthening the role of the MEng Student Advisory Group as a structured forum for collecting and communicating student feedback on teaching and learning outcomes. In parallel, as part of the recent undergraduate curriculum renewal, ECE has embedded student participation more directly into curriculum governance through a voting student member on the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and continued engagement through the Student–Staff Committee. Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will expand the Graduate Management System (GMS) portal to support more structured collection and review of feedback from students and Teaching Assistants in graduate courses, including extending GMS functionality to MEng students. This will enable more systematic analysis of teaching and learning experiences and support judicious extension of undergraduate review processes to the MEng program. Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will use the GMS portal to support coordinated course assignment and program-level monitoring of course content, alignment, and overlap across undergraduate and MEng programs. These capabilities will strengthen ongoing review of teaching and learning and support continuous curriculum improvement informed by student feedback.	to seek nominations to the Faculty-level undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees. As stated in recommendations 3 and 6, we are strengthening partnerships with student organizations such as the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECoS) and will share relevant information with the department. In addition, the Vice-Dean, Graduate supports a recent GECoS initiative to create a Graduate Experience advisory group and we will monitor this progress. The Faculty is also building upon the current practices of the Teaching Methods and Resources Committee, a standing committee of Faculty Council responsible for teaching methods, resources/aids, evaluating and rewarding teaching effectiveness, to communicate teaching and experiential learning best practices with academic units.
	8.		Short-term (six months)	

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The reviewers recommended exploring ways to support and showcase the pedagogical impact of teaching-stream faculty members, potentially through collaborative initiatives or engagement with industry-facing projects.		“Develop seed grants to enable teaching-stream professors to develop and showcase their pedagogical impact on the international stage.”	ECE currently provides an annual allocation of \$3,000 to each teaching-stream faculty member to support pedagogical development and, where appropriate, supplements this support for dissemination activities. In the short term, the Department will focus on leveraging philanthropic opportunities and existing initiatives, such as summer workshops, to support pedagogical impact projects, and will identify a teaching-stream faculty lead to support industry-funded MITACS initiatives aligned with teaching-stream expertise.	We encourage ECE to explore ways to increase support of pedagogical impact projects and suggest they consult with the Faculty’s offices of Engineering Alumni Relations and Engineering Advancement on best practices for engaging alumni and potential donors. The Faculty is exploring other approaches to help teaching-stream faculty secure support for their initiatives, including working closely with our Partnerships Office. We will also explore the role of the Institute for Studies in Transdisciplinary Engineering Education & Practice (ISTEP) as a service provider within the Faculty to support enhanced teaching practice and pedagogy.
			Medium-term (1-2 years) ECE will further advance MITACS partnerships, supported by the identified faculty lead, to create clearer pathways for teaching-stream faculty to secure external funding for pedagogical and applied scholarly activities. In addition, the Department will develop a more mature and targeted portfolio of pedagogically focused initiatives that can be shared with alumni and donors, with the aim of supporting high-impact teaching innovation and international dissemination.	
			Long-term (3-5 years) ECE will work toward establishing a small, sustainable seed-grant framework for teaching-stream faculty, supported through a combination of philanthropic contributions, industry partnerships, and external funding programs. These seed grants would enable teaching-stream faculty to develop, evaluate,	

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			and showcase pedagogical innovations on the international stage through conferences, collaborative projects, and scholarly dissemination, reinforcing ECE’s leadership in engineering education.	
The reviewers broadly recommended that ECE develop a strategic plan for the renewal and evolution of its research portfolios. They encouraged the Department to pursue strategic faculty complement planning aligned with research goals, explore strategies for increasing tri-agency funding support, and articulate international benchmarks to highlight its status as a global leader. They also identified opportunities to enhance public-facing communication about ECE’s research excellence and to expand graduate student engagement in multidisciplinary research initiatives.	9.	“Articulate a strategic vision for renewal and evolution of the research portfolios of the department”	Short-term (six months) ECE will update its research themes to better reflect current strengths, emerging areas, and interdisciplinary connections. The Department will hold a department-wide faculty consultation, including a summer research retreat led by the Associate Chair, Research, centred on the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Intelligent Digital Infrastructures and the Department’s thrust in Compute Acceleration, to identify priority research areas and a shared strategic vision. Key outcomes will be discussed at ECE Advisory Committee meetings and summarized by the Chair.	The department is encouraged to consult with the Vice-Dean, Research in furthering the renewal and evolution of its research portfolios. These efforts can also be informed by the Faculty’s Strategic Academic Plan 2025-2030, which was approved by Council December 2025, and was recently reviewed by Planning and Budget and Academic Board. The department is encouraged to work closely with other Engineering departments and institutes to identify new collaborative and complementary research strategies and opportunities.
			Medium-term (1-2 years) ECE will establish a representative working group drawn from across research areas and career stages to translate the agreed strategic vision into actionable research themes. This group will recommend updates to the ECE Strategic Plan, including refinements to research priorities and mechanisms for implementation. In parallel, the Department will develop a clear “research themes playbook” to support faculty in aligning funding applications, industry partnerships, and collaborative	

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			initiatives with the identified strategic priorities, including guidance on leveraging tri-agency programs and industry-matched funding opportunities. The updated ECE Strategic Plan will be finalized and communicated to internal and external stakeholders.	
			Long-term (3-5 years) ECE will implement the updated strategic vision through coordinated faculty complement planning, targeted industry partnerships aligned with priority research areas, and sustained investment in those areas. Emphasis will be placed on fostering a collaborative research ecosystem that connects senior and junior faculty, bridges traditional subdisciplines, supports co-development with industry where appropriate, and enables engagement by faculty whose primary appointments lie outside ECE but whose research aligns with departmental priorities. These efforts will support the continued renewal and evolution of ECE’s research portfolios, strengthen international visibility and competitiveness, and reinforce the Department’s position as a global leader in electrical and computer engineering research.	
	10.	“...the profile of the department shows that a number of hires can be anticipated in the forthcoming cycle. This opportunity for evolution of the department’s research	Short-term (six months) ECE will explicitly incorporate faculty hiring considerations into department-wide discussions on research priorities, focusing on	As above, the department is encouraged to consult with the Vice-Dean, Research as it discusses research priorities. These efforts can also be informed by the Faculty’s

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		portfolio provides an opportunity to strike balances between subdisciplines that honour the department’s desire to achieve global stature in all foundations of ECE, while leading the discipline into the future.”	how upcoming hiring opportunities can help rebalance strengths across Electrical and Computer Engineering while maintaining excellence in core areas. Input from these discussions will be reviewed by the ECE Advisory Committee to inform near-term hiring decisions.	Strategic Academic Plan 2025-2030, which is expected to approved by university governance in 2025-2026.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will develop clear guiding principles for faculty hiring as part of updates to the ECE Strategic Plan. These principles will emphasize balance across subdisciplines, support for interdisciplinary and emerging research areas, and alignment with long-term research and educational priorities, while retaining flexibility to respond to exceptional opportunities.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will implement these hiring principles across multiple recruitment cycles, supporting a balanced and forward-looking faculty complement that sustains global leadership in foundational areas and enables growth in emerging and convergent fields.	
	11.		Short-term (six months) ECE will continue the development of a research data analytics system to analyze historical patterns in tri-agency funding applications and outcomes across research disciplines and individual principal investigators. Using this system, the Department will examine trends over time to identify potential drivers contributing to the	We support the department’s plans to investigate reasons behind the trend of decreased tri-agency funding, and to support researchers in strengthening future applications and diversity of applications. We also encourage ECE to expand its analytics system to support more advanced analysis across research themes and collaborative networks, and to explore opportunities to

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean’s Response
		“The panel also noted that, although the total funding of ECE is high and steady, the portion of funding received from tri-agencies is decreasing over the past few years. As this directly influences departmental Research Support Fund allocations, it is recommended that the drivers underpinning this are investigated, and incentives considered to encourage researchers to leverage industry support with tri-agency funding such as NSERC Alliance.”	recent decline in tri-agency funding, and will share insights with faculty through department-wide discussions to inform strategies for strengthening future applications. In parallel, it is noted that ECE maintains active industry engagement through monthly ECE Industry Days, which are fostering early-stage relationships that can seed future industry–tri-agency collaborations.	share relevant tools and insights with the Faculty as this system matures. The department is also encouraged to consider existing institutional resources. It is important to compare and contrast both industry-specific, industry-leveraged, and tri-council only funding. Diversity of funding resources is an important consideration when the overall funding envelope from the tri-council has not changed significantly.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will evolve the research data analytics system into a continuous monitoring tool capable of identifying gaps and opportunities, including cases where industry-funded research could be more effectively leveraged alongside tri-agency programs such as NSERC Alliance. As new industry partnerships emerge, the Department will use this lens to encourage and support strong participation in appropriate matched funding programs. Findings from this monitoring will be discussed at the ECE Advisory Committee level, including consideration of incentives or supports to encourage principal investigators to pursue aligned industry and tri-agency funding opportunities.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will expand the analytics system to support more advanced analysis across research themes and collaborative networks. The platform will be used to identify emerging funding opportunities aligned with faculty expertise and strategic priorities and	

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			will operate as a standing departmental resource, with regular dissemination of insights to all principal investigators. As the system matures, ECE will explore opportunities to share relevant tools and insights with the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering.	
	12.	"Consider how it can articulate international benchmarks for research performance to unequivocally demonstrate the leadership and stature in this domain"	Short-term (six months) ECE will conduct an in-depth analysis of influential research performance indicators used by major international ranking systems, including QS and Shanghai Rankings, such as citations per publication, research awards, and measures of research impact. The Department will identify areas of strength and opportunity when assessed against these indicators, and will contextualize ECE's performance relative to leading international peer institutions to clarify where the Department already demonstrates global leadership.	We encourage the department to collaborate with Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC) to further develop ways to strengthen its international visibility and impact. We are working with our academic units to review shared services, including a fuller service unit for ESC, to centralize and bolster common approaches where possible for the benefit of the entire Faculty.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will add new features to the research data analytics system to continuously compute and monitor key research performance indicators using public data sources and, where appropriate, machine learning tools. These indicators will be organized by research theme and career stage to provide a more nuanced view of departmental performance. The ECE Advisory Committee will regularly review these data and use them to inform	

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
			strategic discussions on research investment, collaboration, and dissemination practices that can further strengthen international visibility and impact.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will use these benchmarks to inform targeted measures that strengthen research performance while remaining aligned with the Department's values and research culture. The Department will monitor outcomes over time and use this evidence to support clear, data-informed communication of ECE's research standing to external audiences.	
			Short-term (six months) ECE will rework its public-facing presentation of research through a redesigned website hub and expanded video and social media content that highlight the impact of its research portfolios. This includes coordinated communications campaigns such as ECE × Industry, ECE × Excellence, and ECE × Research Chairs, aimed at making ECE's research strengths more visible and accessible beyond the technical community.	
	13.	"In the research domain, the department has an opportunity to re-imagine its public-facing description of the research portfolio. This will help the department communicate its standing beyond the technical community and enhance broader public recognition of its standing."	Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will expand and refine its digital storytelling to communicate research impact more effectively and position its portfolios relative to international benchmarks. Content will be developed in clear, non-technical language and adapted for different audiences, including prospective	As above, we encourage ECE to collaborate with Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC) to further develop ways to strengthen its visibility and impact beyond the department and Faculty. We are encouraged by the department's efforts to date and look forward to seeing the fruits of these new approaches.

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			undergraduate and graduate students, industry partners, alumni, and the broader public.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
	14.	“...graduate students expressed interest in having more opportunities to connect with others outside of their immediate research group, area cluster of research groups, and the department. A positive response to this will contribute to a culture of multidisciplinary research and collaboration from the bottom-up approach, in addition to adding opportunities for PIs to deepen their local networks.”	Short-term (six months) n/a	We applaud ECE’s plans to enhance interdisciplinary engagement among graduate students. As mentioned above, we are working to strengthen partnerships with student organizations such as the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECoS) to better understand graduate student needs and we support the creation of graduate experience advisory committee. We will share relevant information with our academic units, including ECE. The Faculty’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office can also be a resource to explore and mitigate barriers to student participation in research and other initiatives.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will assess opportunities to enhance interdisciplinary engagement among graduate students, including gathering input from students and research units to better understand current practices, barriers to participation, and interest in structured cross-group activities. Based on this input, the Department will explore the feasibility of periodic research-focused activities, such as a departmental research day or graduate student-focused seminar series, designed to foster broader interaction across research areas while respecting confidentiality, intellectual property, and any applicable non-disclosure requirements.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will use feedback from these activities to inform ongoing decisions about how best to support interdisciplinary engagement within the graduate student community, with the aim of strengthening research culture and collaboration in ways that are sustainable and aligned with departmental priorities.	

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
The reviewers observed that recent increases in undergraduate and graduate enrolment have resulted in challenges meeting teaching obligations. They recommended that ECE's strategic faculty complement planning ensures appropriate instructional support across its programs.	15.	"The student population in both undergraduate and graduate programs has increased in the past few years, resulting in challenges meeting teaching obligations. In the short term it is appropriate to recruit teaching focused personnel (e.g. teaching stream professors), particularly to support the MEng program, who will provide relevant courses and MEng student project supervision."	ECE acknowledges the reviewers' observations regarding enrolment growth and instructional demands. The Department has been able to meet its teaching obligations through a combination of existing faculty resources and the appropriate use of qualified sessional instructors. In addition, ECE has appointed two teaching-stream faculty members whose primary responsibilities include delivering MEng-focused courses, particularly in areas such as AI and software. The principal challenge has not been overall enrolment growth, but a temporary misalignment between student demand in Computer Engineering-focused areas and historical instructional capacity in traditional Electrical Engineering areas. This imbalance placed pressure on certain courses while capacity remained available in others. The approved undergraduate curriculum changes, taking effect for the incoming cohort in Fall 2026, are expected to significantly improve alignment between enrolment patterns and instructional resources by limiting EE/CE transfers and rebalancing program requirements. In parallel, ECE has implemented revisions to its workload policy, including compensation for instructors teaching very large sections, supporting sustainability and fairness. As enrolments become more balanced, reliance on sessional instructors is expected to decrease, while retaining flexibility to address	A proposal to update the transfer regulations between the electrical and computer engineering programs was approved by Faculty Council in December 2025. This will help balance enrolment between the programs. The Faculty acknowledges the proactive approaches taken by the department to better balance and grow their teaching stream complement to help address these imbalances. In addition to this measure, further balance of enrolment will be achieved by the Faculty's move to place the Track One program on hiatus with admissions suspended for the 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 cycles. This undeclared pathway traditionally allows first-year students to decide on and transfer into the Core 8 discipline of their choice starting in Year 2 (subject to meeting a GPA threshold) which has made managing enrolment difficult for departments. This is especially true for ECE, which is a popular destination for many Track One students. During the hiatus, the 90-100 students who might have been admitted to Track One each year – many of whom would ultimately transfer into ECE – will instead enter directly into a Core 8 program, facilitating enrolment planning and balance across our programs.

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			temporary factors such as retirements or leaves. Short-term (six months) n/a	
			Medium-term (1–2 years) n/a	
			Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
The reviewers noted concerns related to the condition of ECE’s spaces and physical infrastructure, including aging equipment, awkwardly configured teaching lab spaces, and a lack of spaces for students to engage in group work. They recommended working with decanal and institutional leadership to explore opportunities to update facilities.	16.	“Infrastructure resources are mixed. While the department has refreshed certain spaces, the age and condition of the buildings makes it challenging to undertake major renewal as the required costs to bring infrastructure to contemporary standards are prohibitive. ...To go beyond cosmetic upgrades (e.g. equipment) requires considerable infrastructure upgrades which are beyond the scope of the department/Faculty and require institutional support in order to meet contemporary standards.”	Since 2021, ECE has made significant investments to modernize undergraduate teaching laboratories and expand experiential learning within existing resources. At the same time, the age and configuration of departmental buildings limit the scope of renewal achievable without Faculty- and institution-level capital support. Short-term (six months) n/a	We recognize the challenges inherent in ECE’s space and physical infrastructure. We are committed to working with chairs and directors on innovative solutions for the Faculty’s space needs and have developed a Facilities Master Plan to inform a sustainable and strategic future for engineering teaching and research spaces. The document is being summarized and implementation of near-term priorities (along with those identified in the Strategic Academic Plan 2025-2030) will begin in 2026.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will continue a phased approach to infrastructure improvement by prioritizing high-impact upgrades within existing resource constraints. This includes establishing a rolling equipment replacement plan for key teaching laboratories, focusing on areas such as Robotics and Control Systems, Microwave, and Advanced Analog labs. The Department will also pursue external partnerships, including industry sponsorships, equipment donations, and collaborative research and teaching initiatives, to supplement internal resources	

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean’s Response
			and support targeted modernization of teaching spaces that serve both undergraduate and MEng programs.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will work closely with Faculty and institutional leadership to position infrastructure renewal as a strategic capital priority. This will include advocating for a comprehensive facilities master plan aligned with broader institutional renewal efforts, developing integrated, multi-use learning spaces that combine laboratory instruction with collaborative project environments, and establishing a sustainable approach to maintaining facilities at contemporary standards once upgraded.	
	17.	“MEng students would benefit from more space to support group work... The optional project component would be enhanced if they had access to a space equivalent to that available to undergraduate capstone projects.”	Short-term (six months) n/a	The Faculty broadly has been working to develop a Faculty Space Master Plan and student spaces, including collaborative work spaces, is of keen interest. Limited collaborative MEng workspaces are available in the Myhal building for use by students; however, there is clearly a need for more spaces. The Faculty will work with all departments to help address these needs.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will explore ways to better support MEng project work within existing space constraints, including reconfiguring select multipurpose spaces and teaching laboratories during off-hours when not scheduled for instruction. The Department will also assess mechanisms, such as shared-space booking systems and modest investments in flexible, portable infrastructure, to improve access to collaborative workspaces in a fair and efficient manner.	
			Long-term (3–5 years)	

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
			ECE will advocate for the inclusion of dedicated MEng collaboration space in future Faculty- or institution-level capital projects, comparable in function to undergraduate capstone facilities. The Department will work to ensure that MEng project needs are considered in broader facilities planning and will pursue the development of flexible, multipurpose project hubs that can serve both graduate and undergraduate students.	
The reviewers highlighted opportunities for ECE's recently formed Industry Advisory Board to provide valuable external perspectives on matters such as undergraduate and MEng program objectives and student success after graduation. They recommended that ECE continue to engage with the Board and further develop its role over time.	18.	"Further develop the roles of the Industry Advisory Board and, specifically, include groupings that provide counsel with regard to the undergraduate programs and the MEng program"	Short-term (six months) ECE will actively engage the Industry Advisory Board to provide structured input on undergraduate and MEng program objectives, with particular emphasis on graduate outcomes, skills alignment, and preparation for professional practice. Discussions will focus on identifying competencies valued by employers, emerging technical and professional skill needs, and opportunities to strengthen experiential learning, particularly within the professionally oriented MEng program. Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will establish program-focused subgroups within the Industry Advisory Board, including a dedicated subgroup for the MEng program. These subgroups will provide ongoing counsel on curriculum relevance, professional skill development, and student success after graduation, and will support industry-connected activities such as applied projects, guest lectures, mentorship, and experiential	The Dean's Office recognizes the value of input from industry and alumni and is pleased that ECE has recently formed an Industry Advisory Board. We encourage the department to consult with the Faculty's Engineering Alumni Relations office on best practices for engaging alumni and industry. With regard to the MEng program, the creation of a FASE MEng co-op option was approved in April 2025 with a first cohort to be admitted in September 2026. This option will offer a formal for-credit pathway for MEng students to develop a career strategy and workplace skills, make industry contacts, and obtain significant professional experience prior to graduation. We are coordinating with the Engineering Career Centre (ECC), who manages this and the undergraduate Professional Experience Year (PEY) Co-op Program, to hire an additional staff member to support graduate student internships.

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			learning pathways that reinforce the distinct professional identity of the MEng program. Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
The reviewers noted opportunities for the Department to provide more explicit consideration of Decolonization and Reconciliation in its strategic planning and encouraged ECE to position itself as a leader within the University in advancing this work.	19.	“While the department’s strategic plan is well-aligned with strategic planning documents from the University and Faculty, the department will have to develop some more explicit consideration of Decolonization and Reconciliation in the coming years. The review panel notes that the department is not lagging the institutional position in this regard, but points to the opportunity for the department to lead in this domain.”	Short-term (six months) ECE will support the Faculty’s ongoing efforts to recruit a new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Director and acknowledges that the EDI portfolio within the Faculty is currently undergoing transition. During this period, the Department will take a measured approach, allowing new leadership and structures to be established before advancing additional initiatives. Medium-term (1–2 years) Once the Faculty-level EDI office is in place, ECE will work collaboratively with the new leadership to identify appropriate, discipline-relevant ways to integrate considerations of Decolonization and Reconciliation into departmental activities. This collaboration will help ensure that any actions taken are informed by appropriate expertise and aligned with University and Faculty priorities. Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	The Faculty’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office is being reviewed and restructured as part of a broad examination of shared services throughout Faculty, and a job ad for the now vacant director position has been posted. Although the function of professionalism in the engineering community will be transferred to the vice-deans, and student career preparation to the Engineering Career Centre, the EDI office will continue to support and lead initiatives regarding equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility for engineering students, faculty and staff.
Noting that ECE’s internal mission and vision have reached a point of maturity, the reviewers highlighted the importance of developing an external-facing vision for the future of the discipline. They also	20.	“This review panel finds that the department has developed its internal compass and mission/vision to a point of maturity that the next step is the development of an external-facing vision for the future of the discipline.”	Short-term (six months) ECE will establish a small working group to define the scope, audiences, and key messages of an external-facing vision for the future of the discipline, grounded in the	We commend ECE for having a mature mission/vision and strategic plan and encourage them to consult resources such as the Faculty’s Engineering Alumni Relations office, the Vice-Dean, Strategic, the Strategic

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recommended that ECE provide an update for its stakeholders and the community regarding progress on their existing strategic plan, highlighting successes and discussing outstanding priorities.			Department’s mature internal mission and strategic priorities. This work will draw on existing engagement activities already underway, including the ECE Critical Connect conference, ECE Industry Days, alumni engagement initiatives, guidance from the ECE Industry Advisory Board, and student-focused forums such as Hot Chocolate with the Chair. Together, these inputs will inform a coherent framework for informing and communicating ECE’s role in advancing research, education, and industry engagement to external audiences.	Academic Plan 2025-2030, Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC), and representatives from student groups such as the undergraduate Engineering Society and the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECoS) as they develop an external-facing vision for the future of the discipline. At a broader level, the Faculty actively establishes partnerships with universities, companies and research institutions worldwide to create rich opportunities for engineering students to build their global fluency through study, work and research abroad.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) As departmental strategies in research, education, and professional programs mature and deliver tangible outcomes, ECE will develop a concrete external-facing vision. This vision will emphasize the integration of research excellence, innovative pedagogical ecosystems, and sustained industry partnership, supported by coordinated communications efforts. During this period, ECE will also reinforce this vision through leadership in large-scale collaborative research initiatives, including pursuing major network grants with universities across Canada and internationally, leveraging the Canada Excellence Research Chair and anticipated outcomes of the Canada Impact+ Research Chair programs.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) Over the longer term, ECE will sustain and refine its external-facing vision as a defining	

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			expression of the Department’s impact and leadership. Through continued prominence in collaborative research networks, ongoing innovation in professional education, and deep engagement with industry, alumni, and community, ECE will position itself as a visible and influential contributor to shaping the future direction of electrical and computer engineering. Strategic communications will ensure that this vision remains current, credible, and clearly aligned with the Department’s evolving contributions at the national and international levels.	
	21.	“Publish the action items from the strategic plan showing which have been completed, and outline the timelines to completion for those that are still in progress”	Short-term (six months) ECE will publish an initial consolidated progress summary against the action items outlined in the ECE Strategic Plan (July 2023) on an internal departmental planning site. This summary will identify actions that have been completed, those currently underway, and those scheduled for future implementation, with indicative timelines and responsible leads. The short-term focus will be on establishing a clear baseline rather than exhaustive reporting.	The Dean’s Office supports ECE’s plans to communicate progress on the implementation of its strategic action items. As appropriate, the Dean’s office will help to promote these changes to the broader community.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will update the internal action-item tracker as key milestones in the Strategic Plan are reached, including implementation of the revised undergraduate curriculum, evolution of the MEng program, progress on research portfolio initiatives and faculty complement planning, and advancements in infrastructure and student support. During this period, ECE	

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			will also publish periodic high-level progress summaries on the public ECE website. Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will embed regular review and reporting of Strategic Plan action items into its ongoing governance and planning processes. This will ensure that the Strategic Plan remains a living document, supporting continuity across leadership cycles and enabling transparent communication with Faculty leadership, students, alumni, industry partners, and the broader community.	
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	22.	“The panel note that more major universities are offering online programs or certificates and suggest that this is something that the department can consider in the near future.”	Short-term (within six months) ECE will initiate internal discussions to identify which courses, if any, may be suitable for online or hybrid delivery and to assess the potential impact of such offerings on student experience, community cohesion, and alumni engagement, which are core values of the University of Toronto. In parallel, ECE will continue to evaluate the pilot online offering of <i>ECE472 Engineering Economic Analysis & Entrepreneurship</i>, with particular attention to student feedback, learning outcomes, and academic integrity measures. Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will monitor developments and best practices at peer institutions, including evidence related to educational quality, student outcomes, and the resource implications of online graduate courses and certificate programs. Findings from the	The Dean's Office is exploring the role of the Institute for Studies in Transdisciplinary Engineering Education & Practice (ISTEP) as a service provider within the Faculty to support enhanced teaching practice and pedagogy. Increased use of technology, including on-line delivery and better strategic use of in-person time and scheduling, is an area of active development by the Faculty as a whole for its MEng offerings.

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			ECE472 pilot and peer benchmarking will inform departmental discussions, in consultation with students and Faculty leadership, about whether additional online or hybrid offerings are appropriate.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
	23.	“...the panel suggest that the department might consider online options as a development to the flexibility of the MEng program in the near future.”	ECE acknowledges the panel’s suggestion to consider online options as a means of increasing flexibility in the MEng program. At present, the Department views in-person delivery as a core strength of the MEng degree, supporting hands-on learning, peer interaction, and strong engagement with faculty and the campus community. Given the availability of fully online MEng programs at other institutions, ECE considers its in-person model to be a distinguishing feature rather than a limitation.	The Faculty acknowledges that MEng course delivery could be accomplished in a number of ways, including in-person, on-line or hybrid, and that course scheduling could also be better optimized to meet the collective objectives of the department, learners and instructors. We will work with ECE to identify appropriate strategies to accomplish the appropriate learning objectives and outcomes.
			Short-term (six months) n/a	
			Medium-term (1–2 years) n/a	
	24.	“The panel noted that initiatives such as... a structured month-long summer course for full course credit could provide students with additional flexibility in completing their degrees.”	Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
			Short-term (six months) n/a	
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will assess the feasibility of offering intensive, month-long summer courses for full course credit, particularly within the	The Faculty is actively working with all departments, including ECE, around alternative delivery plans such as summer courses. Regarding Faculty resources, ECE, like all FASE academic units, has been asked to review and revise its five-year workload

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			MEng program, with attention to faculty availability, instructional workload, laboratory capacity, and administrative and financial requirements. This assessment will build on ECE’s existing experience with summer offerings, including APS105 <i>Computer Fundamentals</i> and ECE110 <i>Electrical Fundamentals</i>, which support student progression and program mobility. In parallel, the Department will continue to explore the potential introduction of additional summer offerings in selected undergraduate courses with historically higher failure rates, subject to resource availability. Long-term (3–5 years) Based on the outcomes of feasibility assessments and any pilot offerings, ECE will determine whether intensive summer courses should become a regular component of its programs. In doing so, the Department will explicitly consider equity implications, recognizing that expanded summer offerings may advantage some students while posing challenges for others who rely on the summer term for employment.	policy. We will work with ECE, linking in the Teaching Methods and Resources Committee, to better identify strategies and approaches that optimize course delivery and outcomes.
	25.	“...the panel suggests that certain level of teaching support can be allocated to CRC/CERC holders and/or PIs of significantly large grants (similar to the previous NSERC industrial research chairs) without compromising these principles. If undertaken, this ought to be framed within the	Short-term (six months) ECE will review existing workload guidelines to identify transparent mechanisms for supporting CRC/CERC holders and principal investigators of large research programs while maintaining meaningful engagement in teaching.	As above, all academic units in the Faculty have been asked to review and revise their workload policies. In particular, the Faculty’s Teaching Methods and Resource Committee will be consulted to help develop and identify best practices.

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		department's workload guidelines document."	Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will formalize a set of teaching-support options within the Department's workload guidelines for CRC/CERC holders and principal investigators of major grants. These options may include structured co-teaching arrangements, enhanced TA allocations for large or research-intensive courses, temporary instructional assistance during peak research periods, or flexibility in course sequencing, while ensuring continued faculty involvement in core teaching activities. The Department will apply these supports selectively and transparently, tied to the scale and scope of research leadership responsibilities. Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
	26.	"The panel noted that the implementation of the centralized approach for teaching assignments in conjunction with the workload guidelines is working well. The review panel encourages the extension of this approach to initiatives encouraging multidisciplinary research collaboration with other units."	Short-term (six months) ECE will extend the principles underlying its centralized teaching-assignment approach to the research domain by enhancing the research data analytics system currently under development. In the short term, the Department will add functionality to identify existing and past multidisciplinary research collaborations with other units, including successful, unsuccessful, and pending funding applications. ECE will also examine the relationship between faculty-level seed funding and subsequent collaborative funding outcomes to better understand	The Faculty is encouraged by ECE's proposed strategies for analysing its efforts around research collaborations and coordination. ECE is encouraged to work closely with the Teaching Methods and Resources Committee, Vice-Dean Research, Vice-Dean Strategic, and other members of the decanal offices on how to leverage opportunities in a way that minimizes duplication of effort.

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
			effective pathways to multidisciplinary engagement.	
			Medium-term (1–2 years) Building on these insights, ECE will implement a centralized, data-informed process to support multidisciplinary research collaboration when new funding opportunities arise. Using historical data and strategic priorities as guides, this process will help identify potential principal investigators and collaborators across units and reduce the coordination burden on individual faculty members.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	

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

This section will be inserted after AP&P by the VPAP office using language verbatim from the approved Report of the meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised ECE as Canada's leading electrical and computer engineering department, with a strong international reputation and well-regarded programs. They commended the highly flexible undergraduate curriculum, the breadth and depth of subjects covered, and recent efforts to enhance experiential learning and research opportunities. They highlighted the Department's competitive graduate programs, the wide range of research projects that graduate students pursue, and promising new initiatives aimed at improving PhD students' time-to-completion. The reviewers applauded ECE's excellence in research, noting the faculty's diverse and interdisciplinary output, and emphasizing the impressive numbers of publications, citations, and patent disclosures. They commended the Department's leadership for its transparency and collegiality, and praised the staff for the strong support they provide to students and researchers. Finally, the reviewers highlighted the Department's strong sense of community, its commitment to engagement and outreach, and the productive, collaborative relationships it maintains with external partners, including industry, government, and alumni.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: pursuing proposals aimed at balancing the spirit and intent of the programs' flexibility while enhancing their structure, sustainability, and student experience; addressing unpredictability and challenges related to planning class sizes, allocating resources, and student support in the Faculty's TrackOne and Core 8 frameworks; continuing to develop the MEng program as a professionally focused offering with a pedagogical identity distinct from the MASc and PhD programs; addressing concerns regarding the performance assessment process for Teaching Assistants and exploring ways to ensure teaching consistency to support strong undergraduate learning experiences and graduate training opportunities; strengthening communication with students through more transparent and direct feedback mechanisms; exploring ways to support and showcase the pedagogical impact of teaching-stream faculty members, potentially through collaborative initiatives or engagement with industry-facing projects; developing a strategic plan for the renewal and evolution of ECE's research portfolios; ensuring appropriate instructional support across programs through strategic faculty complement planning; working with decanal and institutional leadership to explore opportunities to update facilities; continuing to engage with ECE's Industry Advisory Board and further developing its role over time; including more explicit consideration of Decolonization and Reconciliation in strategic planning; and developing an external-facing vision for the future of the ECE discipline.

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

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

Chairs and directors are required to submit to the Dean each year a written update on progress made toward the goals in their implementation plans.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs on the status of the implementation plans no later than 2027-2028, the mid-point between the department's last and next reviews.

The next review will be commissioned in 2028-2029 with a visit to be scheduled for 2029-2030.

6 Distribution

On August 15th 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Physician Assistant (BSc)
Unit Offering Program(s):	Program only review
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Temerty Faculty of Medicine and Vice Provost, Relations with Health Care Institutions, University of Toronto
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Professor Shaun Grammer – Chair, Department of Medical Sciences, University of Nebraska Medical Center • Professor Rebecca Mueller – Program Director & Academic Coordinator, Master of Physician Assistant Studies, Department of Family Medicine, University of Manitoba
Date of Review Visit:	February 24, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	September 4, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 26, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: March 26, 2018

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Thriving, small program supported by the Temerty Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Family and Community Medicine
- Successful streamlining of program administration and human resources
- Tight knit program enables good communication
- Proactive mentoring of student progress, and ample supports available through the Office of Health Professions Student Affairs
- Program aligns with the objectives of the 2015 national CanMEDS-PA document of the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA)
- Innovative program design is working well and is good for accessibility
- Minimal program attrition and high pass rate for National Qualifying exam

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Addressing difficulties in placing students in clinical sites
- Consider reinstating prior paid health care working experience for applicants
- Monitoring the transition from Blackboard to Quercus
- Using Entrustable Professional Activities to enhance the breadth and depth within the program
- Connecting the program to the Faculty's research mission
- Engaging in fundraising for scholarships in response to student concerns about financial aid
- Considering outlining an agreement regarding sessional space needs

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Confirmation/agreement letters; terms of reference; self-study report (including faculty CVs, course descriptions, accreditation documents); schedule; 2017-18 UTQAP review documents (reviewers' report and Director's and Dean's responses), FAR-IP; Dean's Report 2024; Temerty Faculty of Medicine's Strategic Plan (2018-23); University of Toronto Towards 2030; University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process.

Consultation Process

- Dean, Temerty Faculty of Medicine and Vice Provost, Relations with Health Care Institutions
- Vice Dean, Clinical & Faculty Affairs, Temerty Faculty of Medicine
- Director, BSc, Physician Assistant Program

- Research & Scholarship Lead, BSc, Physician Assistant Program
- Academic Coordinator, BSc, Physician Assistant Program
- Clinical Course Director, BSc, Physician Assistant Program
- Program Director, BSc, Physician Assistant Program
- Consortium of PA Education – Senior Leadership
 - University of Toronto
 - Director, Enrolment Services & Faculty Registrar, Temerty Faculty of Medicine
 - Associate Dean, Office of Learner Affairs, Temerty Faculty of Medicine
 - Vice Chair, Operations, Department of Family & Community Medicine, Temerty Faculty of Medicine
 - Northern Ontario School of Medicine
 - Provost & Vice President Academic
 - The Michener Institute of Education at UHN
 - Head of Academic Affairs & Operations, The Michener Institute of Education at UHN
- Course Directors, BSc, Physician Assistant Program
- Students, Years 1 & 2 Students, BSc, Physician Assistant Program
- Alumnus, BSc, Physician Assistant Program
- Administrative Staff

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
 - ▶ Consortium of PA Education, consisting of the University of Toronto, Northern Ontario School of Medicine University (NOSM U) and Michener Institute of Education at UHN is a well-established and expanding program that provides a rigorous, competency-based education to prepare physician assistants for diverse clinical settings
- Objectives
 - ▶ Program aligns well with the strategic goals of the Temerty Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Family & Community Medicine
 - ▶ Guiding strategies emphasize collaboration, innovation, and equity, fostering a strong and well-structured program that reflects national healthcare priorities and the evolving role of PAs in the healthcare system
 - ▶ Transitioning to a Master's level program may prove beneficial towards recruitment and retention, aligning with the direction of PA education across Canada

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Program uses a structured admissions process that ensures fairness and transparency, requiring healthcare experience and incorporating a virtual Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) to assess candidate suitability
 - ▶ Program follows a standardized and transparent admissions process that ensures fairness and alignment with program objectives
 - ▶ Admissions criteria are well-defined and ensure a fair, transparent process that assess both academic and professional readiness
 - ▶ Use of a virtual MMI ensures consistency and objectivity in candidate selection
 - ▶ Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) trainees are admitted through the same process as civilian applicants but follow a modified curriculum, allowing for specific electives
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Program has maintained strong virtual curriculum components and high-quality education as class sizes have increased
 - ▶ Transitioning to a Master level program will incorporate a formal research and scholarship component, and will enhance scholarly output and strengthen program's research reputation
- Innovation
 - ▶ Program incorporates a range of innovative approaches, including virtual patient cases, ePBL assignments, and a restructured in-person campus block
 - ▶ Successful expansion of virtual components has enhanced accessibility and flexibility, distinguishing the program with a student-centred and adaptive approach to learning
 - ▶ Program effectively integrates advanced online tools with hands-on clinical experiences and uses innovative instructional strategies, such as case-based and problem-based learning, to support critical thinking and clinical reasoning
 - ▶ Program is the only one in Canada to balance academic and clinical training through a blended model, setting the national standard for virtual learning
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Program demonstrates a strong commitment to equity and diversity through initiatives aimed at increasing access for Indigenous, rural, and underserved student populations, further reinforcing its national significance
 - ▶ Program supports Indigenous learners through targeted recruitment in rural and Indigenous communities, contributing to a more diverse and representative student body
 - ▶ Targeted outreach and support mechanisms ensures that students from underrepresented backgrounds have the necessary resources to succeed
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Curriculum integrates virtual OSCEs, clinical rotations, and structured learning outcomes aligned with national PA competencies, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for clinical practice
 - ▶ Program employs a robust assessment framework that incorporates continuous feedback from students, faculty, and alumni

- ▶ Regular curriculum reviews and enhancements along with continual assessment of clinical placement processes, support the program's evolution and optimize student experiences
- ▶ Faculty and staff address student concerns by refining assessment methods and adding feedback mechanisms to ensure the program remains responsive to learner needs
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Program benefits from a strong faculty base and a well-developed support infrastructure
 - ▶ Faculty provide active student mentorship, and the hub-based clinical placement structure supports diverse training experiences while accommodating program growth
 - ▶ Northern and Southern Ontario Clinical Training opportunities, PA Mentors, and strong core faculty further enrich student learning
 - ▶ Program has a strong clinical placement structure
 - ▶ Planned relocation to UTSC will provide dedicated space for PA students
 - ▶ Hub model has alleviated some of the strain associated with securing clinical placements near students' home communities
 - ▶ Upcoming relocation to the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) is expected to improve access to facilities and resources for students and faculty
 - ▶ Program has a well-structured student support system
 - ▶ Faculty members are highly engaged and responsive to student needs
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Program maintains a strong track record in student outcomes
 - ▶ Performance metrics indicate that students excel academically, are well-prepared for their clinical roles, and achieve pass rates consistent with national averages.
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Program maintains a strong track record in graduate success
 - ▶ Program is exceptionally strong, clearly producing highly competent graduates who are well-prepared for clinical practice
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ Program maintains a strong track record in faculty quality
 - ▶ Program benefits from high faculty engagement, with faculty actively contributing to both didactic instruction and clinical supervision
 - ▶ Faculty demonstrate strong engagement through active involvement in student learning and mentorship
 - ▶ Faculty expertise is well-integrated into the program, with many instructors drawing on direct clinical experience to their teaching

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Program faces ongoing challenges in securing preferred clinical placements
 - ▶ Student research opportunities are limited, as it is not a required component of the curriculum

- ▶ Program's structure provides limited dedicated time for students to engage in scholarly activity
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Some applicants face financial barriers to entry, particularly those pursuing PA as a second-entry degree
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Recent program expansion has placed additional demands on faculty, staff, and clinical placement resources
 - ▶ Program expansion, in tandem with growth in other medical training programs, has further strained the availability of quality training sites
 - ▶ Securing adequate placements—especially in students' home regions, Northern Ontario, and other rural areas—remains difficult, and limited rural housing further restricts placement options and affects overall placement viability
 - ▶ Limited physical space presents logistical challenges for in-person learning sessions and OSCEs
 - ▶ Relocation to the UTSC campus raises concerns about space availability for faculty and students, including offices, student support, and OSCE facilities
- Student funding
 - ▶ Limited financial support for students completing rotations in rural or northern locations creates potential barriers to placement opportunities
 - ▶ Insufficient travel stipends for students in rural and northern placements create potential financial barriers to completing rotations

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Objectives
 - ▶ Ensure transition to the Master's level aligns with national standards and maintain program excellence
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Review and adjust Master's program entry requirements to ensure accessibility for northern and rural candidates who may face financial or academic barriers
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Expand financial aid options to reduce potential barriers for applicants, particularly those pursuing program as a second-entry degree
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Continue to strengthen efforts to mitigate placement shortages and ensure equitable distribution of clinical training opportunities, building on NOSM U's key role in developing and aligning clinical sites with curricular needs
 - ▶ Enhance collaboration with NOSM U to expand placement opportunities and address housing challenges in rural areas, supporting student satisfaction and maintaining placement quality amid increasing demand
 - ▶ Continue monitoring availability and quality of clinical placements and refine partnerships with NOSM U to expand student opportunities and addressing placement limitations

- ▶ Ensure adequate classroom, clinical, and faculty space at UTSC to address current scheduling challenges and support effective delivery of in-person learning and OSCEs
- ▶ Ensure adequate space resources for faculty offices, student support, and OSCE facilitation during the relocation to UTSC
- ▶ Continue efforts to secure adequate clinical placements as program expands
- Student funding
 - ▶ Continue conversations with the Ministry of Education to explore increased financial supports for the development of NOSM U sites and for ensuring adequate faculty and staff positions to support program's clinical year
 - ▶ Continue conversations with MCURES/MOH to explore additional financial support for strengthening NOSM U's Northern Ontario training stream

2. Graduate Program(s) N/A

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Research
 - ▶ Faculty actively engage in research aligned with program themes, contributing to the advancement of PA education and clinical practice
 - ▶ U of T's dedicated full-time faculty position focused on research strengthens the program to advance research and scholarly success
- Faculty
 - ▶ Program's well-respected core faculty play a crucial role in maintaining high educational standards and supporting a smooth expansion process
 - ▶ Established faculty development programs support ongoing professional growth, and recruitment efforts have successfully brought in experienced clinical educators
 - ▶ U of T offers structured faculty development programs that support ongoing professional growth
 - ▶ Faculty bring significant real-world clinical experience that strengthens quality of teaching in the program
 - ▶ Program benefits from a strong and engaged faculty that includes both full-time and adjunct members
 - ▶ Faculty play an active role in both the didactic and clinical components of the curriculum, contributing significantly to the program's high academic standards
 - ▶ Active recruitment efforts have brought in qualified educators
 - ▶ Program has a structured faculty development plan
 - ▶ Core faculty and leadership have shown innovation managing workloads during expansion, particularly in transitioning to a hub-based clinical site model
 - ▶ Program successfully expanded faculty and administrative support during its recent growth phase

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

- ▶ Program expansion has substantially increased workloads for faculty and administrative staff, including those managing clinical placements, with larger cohorts and the need to maintain high educational standards contributing to concerns about strain on existing resources
- ▶ Burnout remains a significant concern across didactic and clinical faculty and staff, especially during the clinical year

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ Consider additional hiring or workload redistribution to address increased demands on clinical faculty, administrative staff, and those managing clinical site placements resulting from program expansion
 - ▶ Consider increasing clinical faculty and administrative staff resources to help manage larger cohorts and maintain high educational standards during program expansion

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
 - ▶ Program leadership is widely praised by students, preceptors, faculty, and administrators for its responsiveness, strategic vision, and commitment to excellence
 - ▶ Strong relationships and collaboration with the PA Consortium, CAF, and related health science programs, support program's ongoing continued growth and development
 - ▶ Program benefits from strong administrative support for faculty hiring and academic growth
 - ▶ Program leaders support PA faculty movement and advancement
 - ▶ Faculty, students, and administrative teams demonstrate strong morale, with faculty highly engaged and responsive to student needs
 - ▶ Faculty and students report a strong sense of community and mentorship
 - ▶ Administrative staff maintain effective communication and provide strong support for students
 - ▶ Program maintains productive partnerships with NOSM U

- ▶ Program has established advocacy efforts at the government level to support PA role expansion and funding
- ▶ Program benefits from strong leadership, with highly respected figures guiding its expansion and academic success
- ▶ Faculty and staff widely recognize the contributions of the directors in shaping the program's growth and structure
- ▶ Highly regarded leadership, particularly from the directors has been instrumental to program's success
- ▶ Leadership shows clear commitment to supporting faculty and students by addressing challenges proactively
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Program's operational budget has successfully sustained recent growth, supporting faculty hiring, curriculum development, and student resources
 - ▶ Program has effectively managed its growth within existing financial structures
 - ▶ Program's governance structure, shared between UofT, NOSM U, and the Michener Institute of Education at UHN within the Department of Family and Community Medicine, functions effectively and is well understood by faculty and staff
 - ▶ Program's governance framework supports program stability and strategic planning
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Recent program expansion has increased in funding and enabled additional faculty and staff hiring
 - ▶ Facility expansion, including a new building at UTSC, supports program's continued growth
 - ▶ Program has a well-defined academic plan focused on leadership development, program expansion, and enhanced clinical training
 - ▶ Program has clear strategic goals for academic growth
 - ▶ Program has a strong focus on developing future PA leaders
 - ▶ Program expansion aligns with broader healthcare workforce needs
 - ▶ Planned 2026 relocation to UTSC will provide dedicated program space and enhanced access to clinical training facilities
 - ▶ Relocation to UTSC will address some space constraints
 - ▶ Plans are in place to enhance student and faculty resources
 - ▶ Program is well positioned to transition to a Master level, with most applicants already holding bachelor's degrees and faculty pursuing advanced qualifications
 - ▶ Planned relocation to the UTSC campus positions program for improved long-term sustainability
- International comparators
 - ▶ Program's strong certification pass rates, comparable to national and international PA programs, demonstrate its effectiveness and competitiveness
 - ▶ Program is recognized nationally and internationally for its leadership in blended learning models, including virtual OSCEs and electronic problem-based learning (ePBL)

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

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Ongoing difficulties in scheduling physical space have led to the use of small offices for teaching physical exam skills
 - ▶ Program faces challenges related to faculty workload and burnout, particularly among clinical faculty, administrative staff, and clinical students managing increased responsibilities amid program expansion
 - ▶ Burnout remains a pressing concern despite additional administrative hires and may require further faculty expansion or workload redistribution
 - ▶ Physical space scheduling also presents logistical challenge, especially in preparation for the move to UTSC, where adequate classroom, faculty office, and clinical skills lab availability will be critical
 - ▶ Staff and faculty, especially in the clinical year, are experiencing strain due to the demands of program expansion
 - ▶ Administrative and teaching staff face a significant workload in supporting second-year clinical placements, creating strain that affects placement management and student experiences
 - ▶ The sharing of facilities at UTSC with other disciplines will contribute to uncertainty around priority space access as well as potential resource and accessibility risks, if not addressed institutionally
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ The upcoming relocation to the UTSC campus raises concerns about faculty and staff retention, as the move may worsen accessibility for clinical faculty currently based near the Toronto hospital district.
 - ▶ Physical space limitations remain a significant challenge, intensified by recent program expansion as well as uncertainty about whether the new UTSC space will fully meet program needs.
 - ▶ Planned transition to a Master's-level program presents challenges related to required structural and regulatory adjustments
 - ▶ Ongoing burnout among administrative staff and clinical faculty reflects dependence on institutional support for additional hiring, funding, and resource allocation, with risks of continued workload pressures and retention challenges if not addressed
 - ▶ Leadership succession planning is critical, as the Program Director's term is nearing its end, the program lacks a clear leadership pipeline, and university limits on extensions heighten uncertainty around continuity and long-term planning.
 - ▶ University policies governing leadership appointments create external dependencies that may delay succession planning and limit opportunities for qualified PAs to assume administrative roles, posing risks to the program's long-term stability

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Strengthen relationships with NOSM U to expand clinical placement opportunities in rural and underserved communities

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Increase faculty and staff support for second-year clinical placements to alleviate workload pressures and enhance student experiences
 - ▶ Improve coordination of physical space scheduling to ensure appropriate facilities for teaching activities such as physical exam skills
 - ▶ Continue conversations between the MCURES/MOH and to strengthen financial sustainability, particularly for Northern Ontario sites and student travel and accommodations
 - ▶ Coordinate with UTSC administration and other health science programs to secure dedicated space for classrooms, faculty offices, study areas, student housing and transportation options, and access to simulation facilities to support program delivery and student success
 - ▶ Engage external stakeholders to establish priority access for the PA program to simulation labs and shared learning spaces to support faculty availability, student preparedness, and curriculum effectiveness
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Develop and implement a structured leadership succession plan that ensures continuity, prioritizes PA representation, and enables qualified PAs to assume future administrative roles
 - ▶ Establish a clear and sustainable leadership structure to support program's continued growth and long-term success
 - ▶ Plan for faculty succession by addressing leadership transitions and developing future hiring strategies to manage increasing responsibilities.
 - ▶ Consider hiring additional faculty and staff to address workload pressures and support the increasing demands of clinical placements.
 - ▶ Implement cross-training faculty in administrative and leadership roles to ensure continuity during absences or leadership transitions.
 - ▶ Assess and adjust clinical skills lab and OSCE scheduling to ensure sufficient hands-on training, anticipate space and scheduling conflicts explore alternative strategies to optimize space use
 - ▶ Review workload distribution for clinical students to balance campus block intensity and travel demands, and identify internal strategies to streamline administrative workflows such placement coordination and admissions
 - ▶ Work with university to secure additional institutional support for hiring, funding, and resource allocation to address staff and faculty burnout and enhance financial support for student travel and rural placements
 - ▶ Develop an internal plan for relocating faculty offices, equipment, and course schedules, ensuring clear communication of timelines and expectations, and review OSCE and simulation scheduling to align with the new environment
 - ▶ Seek continued support from university leadership and secure higher-level backing from MCURES/MOH to facilitate the transition to a Master's level program, aligning with national and international standards for PA education

- ▶ Distinguish between internal priorities and areas requiring external institutional support to guide sustainable program growth, promote faculty and student well-being, and maintain program excellence
- ▶ Prioritize space and infrastructure planning for the 2026 relocation to UTSC to secure dedicated PA space and improved access to clinical training facilities
- ▶ Improve coordination of physical space scheduling to ensure suitable facilities are available for teaching activities such as physical exam skills
- ▶ Encourage greater PA representation in leadership discussions to support effective preparation for future leadership transitions
- ▶ Provide faculty with opportunities to gain experience in curriculum planning, accreditation processes, and administrative oversight to enhance long-term program stability and continuity



February 26, 2025

Professor Nicholas Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Division of the Vice-President & Provost
University of Toronto

Dear Professor Rule,

[UTQAP Review of the BSc Physician Assistant Program | Dean's Cover Letter](#)

On behalf of the Temerty Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, we would first like to thank the external reviewers—Prof. Shaun Grammer and Prof. Rebecca Mueller—for their constructive review of the BSc Physician Assistant (BScPA) program a year ago. We would also like to thank the faculty and administrative staff who contributed to the preparation of the self-study report; the many staff, students and faculty who met with the external reviewers; and the PA Consortium leadership: Fiona Cherryman, Vice Principal, Academic, The Michener Institute of Education at UHN and Dr. Céline Larivière, Provost & Vice President Academic, Northern Ontario School of Medicine; at Temerty Medicine, Dr. Jeff Golisky, Director, BScPA, Dr. Danielle Martin, Chair, Department of Family & Community Medicine, Dr. Lynn Wilson, Vice Dean, Clinical & Faculty Affairs and Dr. Patricia Houston, Vice Dean, Medical Education.

The reviewers described the BScPA as a “*well established and inspiring program*” and “*the only PA program in Canada to balance academic and clinical training through a blended model, setting the national standard for virtual learning.*” Indeed, the UTQAP review process has highlighted the strengths of the valuable program and potential for growth. With clear goals, inter- and intra-institutional governance and its upcoming relocation to UTSC, as part of the Scarborough Academy of Medicine & Integrated Health (SAMIH), the program is well positioned to align with health care workforce needs. As identified by the reviewers, challenges related to space, faculty and staff workloads and succession planning require thoughtful solutions. Many of the priorities identified by your office are addressed, to varying degrees, by the move of the PA program to SAMIH; additional efforts, moreover, are underway to ensure the program is well supported during the transition. These measures are delineated in the accompanying table’s Program Response and Dean’s Response columns.

For over 15 years, the BScPA has laid a solid foundation for transformation and growth. Temerty Medicine has recently submitted a proposal for a new graduate program for institutional and provincial review and governance: Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS). The MPAS reflects Temerty Medicine’s adoption of the WHO’s definition of the principles of equity and social accountability for medical schools in its promotion of PA practice in rural, remote and underserved communities—to increase quality health care access. The program’s innovative hybrid model would attract a more diverse student body and expand reach, thereby enhancing health care availability across the province; evidence shows that health professionals typically choose to practice where they train. At the graduate level, the program is designed to prepare future PAs to contribute to the scholarship and academic leadership of health care and health education—advancing and integrating scientific knowledge and scholarship with professional practice.

We are deeply proud of the success and stature of the PA program as a leader in Canada, and celebrate the collaboration that made this possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lisa A. Robinson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Lisa A. Robinson, MD, FRCPC, FASN, FCAHS
Dean, Temerty Faculty of Medicine
Vice Provost, Relations with Health Care Institutions

cc: Lisa Richardson – Vice Dean, Strategy & Governance
Fiona Cherryman – Vice Principal, Academic, The Michener Institute of Education at UHN
Céline Larivière – Provost & Vice President Academic, Northern Ontario School of Medicine
Lynn Wilson – Vice Dean, Clinical & Faculty Affairs
Patricia Houston – Vice Dean, Medical Education
Shirley Lee – Acting Chair, Department of Family & Community Medicine
Jeff Golisky – Director, Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant Program
Anastasia Meletopoulos – Academic HR Officer, Office of the Dean
Lachmi Singh – Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice Provost, Academic Programs

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, “it is important to note that, while the external reviewers’ report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability” (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Program Response	Dean’s Response
The reviewers noted concerns related to student workload and stress, particularly during clinical placements and travel to remote sites. They recommended improving communication around placement expectations, reviewing workload distribution for clinical students, and expanding supports to enhance accessibility and student well-being.	1.	“Additionally, better communication regarding placement expectations and locations is needed, as multiple second-year learners have expressed concerns about placement clarity and scheduling, contributing to burnout and stress.”	A plan is currently in place to add an administrative role that will help clarify and enhance clinical placement responsibilities. (See Recommendation #7 for more information on administrative organization.) This role will contribute to the development of a structured plan by Fall 2026 focused preceptor recruitment, maintenance of preceptor relationships and continued liaising with NOSM University for northern placements. This new role will also enhance communication with students about placement expectations and locations.	Temerty Medicine is confident that the integration of the BSc Physician Assistant (PA) program into the Medical Education portfolio (from the Department of Family & Community Medicine) will bring about improvements by virtue of the sharing of resources and best practices. When the proposed Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program will be onboarded, Medical Education program leadership will continue to assess the effectiveness of the administrative staff complement and roles to ensure alignment with operational needs. <i>SHORT TERM</i>
	2.	“Financial support for students completing rotations in rural or northern locations is currently limited, creating potential barriers for placement accessibility”	The Physician Assistant (PA) program is currently assessing and documenting existing needs to inform future financial planning, including financial support for students. Once this information has been collected, we will collaborate with Temerty Medicine Advancement to set up bursaries to provide financial support to students during their clinical rotations. <i>1-2 YEARS</i>	Further to the Program Response (to the left), findings from the assessment of student financial needs will inform fundraising and philanthropic opportunities with Temerty Medicine Advancement, with the aim of establishing dedicated MPAS scholarships and bursaries. Temerty Medicine also encourage joint fundraising strategies among the spectrum of Medical Education programs (MD Program,

				Postgraduate Medical Education, BScPA), Scarborough Health Network and the new Scarborough Academy of Medicine & Integrated Health (SAMIH). <i>MEDIUM TERM</i>
The reviewers highlighted challenges in securing sufficient clinical placements and student housing, particularly in northern and rural regions. They recommended continued collaboration with NOSM University and external partners geared toward expanding placement availability and financial supports for students completing remote rotations.	3.	“Continued conversations with the Ministry of Education are encouraged to increase financial supports to ensure development of NOSM U sites as well as adequate faculty and staff positions supporting the clinical year of the program.”	The program leads from Canadian Physician Assistant programs meet quarterly to discuss shared challenges such as financial pressures and issues related to securing clinical placements. The PA leads have met with the Ministry of Health and will continue to advocate for enhanced clinical preceptor support and increased resources for student accommodations. Furthermore, clinical placement challenges remain a standing agenda item on internal PA committee meetings to ensure ongoing attention and strategic planning. <i>ONGOING</i>	With a distinct external review of a new MPAS proposal having been completed in January 2026, it is presently being considered by institutional and provincial governing bodies for an anticipated start date of September 2027. As the proposal proceeds to the Ministry of Education, Temerty Medicine will renew discussions about appropriate provincial resourcing of the PA program. At a recent presentation to the Temerty Medicine Hospital University Education Committee, which comprises leadership from over 30 health care institutions that accept our health professional learners for clinical placements, many signalled their preparedness to accept the expanded cohort of MPAS learners. <i>MEDIUM TERM</i>
	4.	“The demand for quality placements has intensified due to the expansion of other medical education programs. Housing accommodations in rural areas also present a logistical challenge, affecting student experience and placement viability.”		
The reviewers highlighted potential challenges arising from the program’s upcoming relocation to UTSC, noting the need for careful coordination to ensure adequate classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices, and scheduling systems. They emphasized the importance of maintaining communication and program continuity during this transition.	5.	“The university and UTSC administration must ensure that faculty have dedicated office space, students have adequate housing and transportation options, and simulation facilities are available for PA students... Without proactive external support, faculty may lack necessary resources, students may face accessibility barriers, and the quality of training could be affected.”	At UTSC, the administrative team will have five offices that can accommodate six people. In addition to the offices, there will be an open area with three hotelling workstations to be shared with other programs. In anticipation of limited student housing near SAMIH during campus blocks, there exist several viable hotel housing options in Pickering and Markham; dedicated shuttles to the campus from these sites during campus blocks is possible. All faculty and staff are well informed about the physical move of the BScPA to UTSC	The Vice Dean, Medical Education is an active participant in discussions with the academic and administrative leadership of all the programs that will be located at SAMIH. They are committed to ensuring that the MPAS receives scheduling and space priority for those times when its students are on site at SAMIH. The Dean’s Office will continue to engage with partners at UTSC to identify resources to support students’ relocation for their studies. <i>SHORT-MEDIUM TERMS</i>

	6.	“The program can internally plan for the logistical transition of faculty offices, equipment, and course scheduling. Ensuring that students, faculty, and staff have clear timelines and expectations for the move will be essential for minimizing disruptions. Faculty can also begin evaluating how OSCE and simulation scheduling might need to be adapted to the new environment.”	through committee meetings and presentations. The move will not impact the faculty delivering the online components of the program. The faculty involved in the in-person campus block components are committed to deliver this curriculum at UTSC. <i>MOVE TO UTSC ANTICIPATED IN 6 MONTHS</i>	With the transition of the BScPA to the Medical Education portfolio and the²³⁴ upcoming move to UTSC, the SAMIH Operations Manager now oversees the administration of the BScPA. Through this role and through open communication channels between the Dean’s Office and the programs moving to SAMIH, timely updates will be provided to the BScPA program.
The reviewers noted that program expansion has increased teaching, supervision, and administrative demands across faculty and staff, and raised concerns regarding workload and potential burnout. They recommended strategic complement planning, careful consideration of optimal staffing levels, and improvements to placement coordination and administrative processes to ensure sustainability and support well-being.	7.	“Addressing burnout for administrative staff and clinical faculty will require additional institutional support for hiring, funding, and resource allocation. The university must approve additional staffing for clinical placement coordination”	A revised organizational structure for the PA program, informed by its relocation to SAMIH at UTSC, has been developed to incorporate new roles related to clinical placement coordination. These positions are designed to operate with increased autonomy and enhanced capability, with the goal of improving efficiency and streamlining key processes. As part of this revised organizational structure, new roles such as Program Manager, PA Clinical Placements Coordinator and Administrative Coordinator – Learner Experience are being introduced to support the expanding size and scope of the PA program. The program will continue to assess the effectiveness of these positions to ensure they align with operational needs and fulfill their intended purpose. <i>POSITIONS TO BE FINALIZED BY MAY 2026 AND FILLED IN SUMMER 2026</i>	Medical education leaders from UofT and McMaster University co-chair a provincial committee to review and create a strategic plan to ensure clinical training capacity, which is an ongoing discussion and formal process for all health professions education programs. Temerty Medicine Administrative Human Resources has already been engaged to develop these new roles in support of clinical placement coordination. Temerty Medicine is undertaking a review and renewal of faculty appointment processes, beginning with the process of applying for a clinical faculty appointment. As the PA program looks to expand its complement, new candidates for faculty appointments will benefit from streamlined processes. <i>SHORT-LONG TERMS</i>
	8.	“faculty can internally identify strategies to streamline administrative workflows, such as improving the efficiency of placement coordination and admissions processing.”	As part of an ongoing endeavour, current efforts include conducting team-based exercises to streamline workflows such as grading, developing a responsibility matrix to enhance efficiencies and integrate evaluation mechanisms, and undertaking a continuous review of the admissions process.	Sharing of practices between the BScPA program and other programs within the Medical Education portfolio will yield insights about effective placement administration. The seasoned Enrolment Services team (housed within the MD Program) is well-positioned to both support and enhance admissions administration for the PA program.

			Additionally, admissions will be transitioning to Enrolment Services to further support operational alignment and effectiveness. <i>TRANSITION EXPECTED MAY 2026</i>	<i>SHORT TERM</i> 235
The reviewers noted national trends toward Master’s-level Physician Assistant programs and expressed support for the program’s plans to pursue this transition to maintain competitiveness and align with professional standards. They recommended that a Master’s-level program include a formal research and scholarly component to strengthen academic quality and professional recognition.	9.	“The PA program is already well positioned to transition to a Master level program... University leadership is already aware and in support of this transition. However, ensuring higher level support from the MCURES/MOH be crucial for a successful transition.”	Review and approval of the proposed MPAS is currently underway, with an anticipated start date of fall 2027. An external review took place in January 2026; we have received the external reviewers’ report and the administrative responses have been prepared. As proposed, the MPAS curriculum is grounded in competency frameworks, degree-level expectations and program learning outcomes that emphasize research and scholarly activities, including ongoing contributions to the creation, dissemination, application and translation of clinical knowledge, as well as leadership as integral to PA education and practice. The MPAS curriculum includes a dedicated research unit and all students in the program will be required to complete a capstone research project. A bridging program for BScPA graduates is anticipated to be developed in the next 2-5 years. <i>MEDIUM TERM</i>	The Dean’s Office, together with the BScPA team and the Institute of Medical Science leadership, have fully supported the review and submission of the MPAS proposal. We will continue to support its movement through governance, including to the Ministry. <i>SHORT TERM</i>
	10.	“If this program transitions to a Master level program, it will include incorporation of a formal research and scholarship component in the program, which will enhance scholarly output and further strengthen the program’s research reputation.”		Temerty Medicine is supportive of the research and scholarly components of the MPAS curriculum as outlined in the proposal. With academic appointments to be in the Institute of Medical Science and the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), research projects will be consistent with SGS Graduate Faculty Membership requirements. A portion of the SAMIH Program Implementation Fund is dedicated to advancing and supporting faculty development for MPAS faculty. The MPAS leadership and faculty delivering curriculum can avail themselves of graduate teaching faculty resources—including the Graduate Centre for Academic Communication, Centre for Graduate Mentorship & Supervision and Centre for Graduate Professional Development—to support their development as educators. <i>SHORT TERM</i>

The reviewers noted the need for a structured approach to leadership transition as the Program Director’s term concludes. They recommended formal succession planning to ensure program stability, leadership continuity, and appropriate inclusion of PAs in administrative roles.	11.	“The Program Director is approaching the end of their second 5-year term. University policies typically do not allow a third term, necessitating a transition plan. Faculty and leadership recognize the need to develop a pipeline of PA leaders to fill these roles.”	Currently, negotiations are underway for the BScPA Program Director’s 3-year contract renewal. The program recently completed its first CPD accredited faculty development (FD) program with four sessions specifically designed for PA educators. The FD program will resume upon the return of the Research and Scholarship Lead from sabbatical. In anticipation of the physical move of the BScPA program to SAMIH in July 2026, decanal oversight of the undergraduate PA program shifted on October 1, 2025 to Dr. Patricia Houston, Vice Dean, Medical Education. With the shift, leadership, faculty and administrative staff in the PA program now have access to operational supports provided through the Medical Education portfolio, such as program evaluation and clinical teacher assessment advice and guidance. FD will be supported by the Director, Faculty Development, Medical Education and the Centre for Faculty Development, both of which focus on FD for clinical faculty in health professions education programs. Faculty will also continue to access all resources offered through U of T’s Centre of Teaching Innovation & Support. At SAMIH, a Program Implementation Fund has been established through the Garron Foundation to ensure that the capital, and its income, are used to successfully launch SAMIH and to support the development and engagement of health professionals. It is expected that the SAMIH Program Implementation Fund will be expended over approximately 5 years, recognizing that the	In collaboration with Temerty Medicine Academic HR, the Vice Dean, Medical Education²⁸⁶ will work in partnership with the Director, Institute of Medical Science (which will function as the graduate unit for the MPAS) to recruit a Director for the MPAS, pending approval of the MPAS proposal. Work is underway to map out next steps to ensure a smooth transition from the BScPA to the MPAS.
	12.	“The program can internally focus on developing a leadership pipeline by identifying faculty members interested in administrative roles and mentoring them for future leadership positions. Encouraging greater PA representation in leadership discussions will also help prepare the program for a smooth transition when leadership changes occur. Additionally, cross-training faculty in administrative and leadership roles can help ensure continuity when faculty are unavailable or transitioning out of their positions. Providing faculty with opportunities to gain experience in curriculum planning, accreditation processes, and administrative oversight will strengthen the program’s long-term stability and ensure that critical functions continue without disruption.”		

			annual expenditure may vary depending on demand and opportunity. A portion of the SAMIH Program Implementation Fund will support a 0.2 FTE FD role. This role is intended to provide experienced support to PA faculty, with an eye to teaching and learning—and a clear path for PAs to continue their training of future practitioners. This individual will join the team by the end of 2026.	237

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers found the University of Toronto's Physician Assistant program to be exceptionally strong, producing highly competent graduates who are well prepared for diverse clinical settings. They commended the program's rigorous, competency-based curriculum, its innovative use of virtual and blended learning, and its well-structured clinical placement model supported by strong partnerships with NOSM University, the Michener Institute, and the Canadian Armed Forces. The upcoming move to the University of Toronto Scarborough was recognized as a promising opportunity to enhance dedicated space and infrastructure for teaching and clinical training. The reviewers also highlighted the program's dedication to equity, diversity, and inclusion, particularly its recruitment and support of Indigenous, rural, and underserved students. Finally, they praised the program's leadership for its responsiveness, strategic vision, and commitment to excellence, noting the faculty's collegiality, mentorship, and adaptability amid expansion. Overall, the program was described as a national leader that combines academic rigor, innovation, and a strong culture of mentorship and collaboration.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: strengthening communication around clinical placement expectations, reviewing workload distribution for clinical students, and expanding supports to enhance accessibility and student well-being; continuing to work collaboratively with NOSM University and external partners to address challenges related to the availability of clinical placements and student housing, including the expansion of placement opportunities and financial supports for students completing remote rotations; ensuring careful coordination and clear communication to support program continuity during the upcoming relocation to UTSC, including planning for adequate classrooms and laboratories, faculty offices, and scheduling systems; engaging in strategic complement and giving careful consideration to optimal staffing levels, and improvements to placement coordination and administrative processes to ensure sustainability and support well-being; advancing plans to pursue a transition to a Master's-level program in response to national trends, including the incorporation of a formal research and scholarly component to strengthen academic quality and professional recognition; and developing a formal succession plan to ensure program stability, leadership continuity, and appropriate inclusion of PAs in administrative roles.

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

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

With a distinct external review of a new Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) proposal having been completed on January 21, 2026, it is being considered by institutional and provincial governing bodies for an anticipated start date of September 2027. If the MPAS proposal is successful, the BScPA would suspend admissions effective Fall 2027 and continue to be offered until the final cohort graduates. Should the MPAS be approved, neither an interim monitoring report nor a future review of the BScPA would be applicable; otherwise the next review would be commissioned in 2032-33 with an interim monitoring report anticipated in 2028-29.

6 Distribution

On August 15th, 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Temerty Faculty of Medicine, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Programs Reviewed:	Astronomical Sciences (HBSc): Specialist Astronomy (HBSc): Major Biological Chemistry (HBSc): Specialist Biomedical Physics (HBSc): Specialist Chemistry (HBSc): Specialist, Major, Minor Earth Science (HBSc): Specialist, Major, Minor Environmental Geosciences (HBSc): Specialist Geology (HBSc): Specialist Physics (HBSc): Major, Minor
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, University of Toronto Mississauga
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Professor Stephen Bearne, Professor, Department of Chemistry, Dalhousie University • Professor Mark Leake, Professor and Anniversary Chair of Biological Physics, School of Physics, Engineering and Technology, University of York • Professor James Farquhar, Distinguished University Professor and Chair, Department of Geology, University of Maryland
Date of Review Visit:	April 3-4, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	June 13, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 23, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: February 27 – 28, 2017

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Impressive delivery of quality programs across disciplines
- Innovative Research Opportunity Program (ROP) and advanced interdisciplinary research laboratory (AirLAB), which enhance student experience
- Successful recruitment of faculty, staff and graduate students to support increased enrolments
- Impressive quality and quantity of faculty research, and strong leadership within the department
- State of the art renovations to the Chemistry and Physics teaching laboratories

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Increasing focus on designing learning outcomes and course objectives to ensure that students can better appreciate program expectations, can understand which programs are associated with specific pathways, and receive sufficient preparation to succeed in their chosen pathway
- Designing programs to allow students to take all their courses at UTM
- Having the Curriculum Committee review admissions criteria to ensure similar standards for entry into equivalent programs
- Ensuring that TAs have sufficient educational background, training, and feedback to ensure an optimal learning environment and experience for undergraduate students
- Developing a long term hiring plan to support the programs with the appropriate mix of tenure-and teaching-stream faculty and disciplinary expertise
- Continuing to prioritize the planned renovations to the Earth Science teaching laboratories, to address a range of space concerns

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study; Previous review report including the administrative response(s); Access to all course descriptions; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty.

Consultation Process

Faculty, students, administrative and technical staff and senior program administrators.

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
 - ▶ Department has delivered quality programs, supported increased enrolments, and maintained state-of-the-art teaching laboratories since previous review
 - ▶ With the department's largest contingent of professors, graduate students, and staff, the chemistry programs are well supported and well-run, affording students excellent opportunities to study a variety of subjects within chemistry and gain valuable research experiences
- Objectives
 - ▶ All programs are consistent with the University Mission and Departmental academic plans, including the implementation plans developed following the previous review
 - ▶ Program objectives all support excellence in education and research, provide a unique set of programs that make UTM and the Department distinctive, and furnish students with a broad set of options to ensure their individual educational endeavors are supported and achieved
 - ▶ Overall course requirements for each discipline align with the UTM Undergraduate Degree-Level Expectations (UDLEs) and program learning objectives (PLOs)
 - ▶ Department is meeting its mandate, as described in the self-study, to deliver education and training in the physical sciences, provide training in advanced data collection, analysis, and communication skills, and challenge students "to master a broad base of theoretical and empirical knowledge about the natural world"
 - ▶ Commitment to maintaining and growing the Astronomy program is appropriate given recent developments in the discipline
 - ▶ Chemistry, Biological Chemistry, and Forensic Chemistry Specialist programs are all accredited by the Canadian Society for Chemistry
 - ▶ Earth Scientist Specialist Program meets "Knowledge Requirements" for registration the Professional Geoscientists of Ontario
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Admission requirements are appropriate and aligned with UTM norms, in which students apply to general admission categories in their first year and enter a specific subject program of study after completing 4.0 FCE of introductory courses
 - ▶ Appropriate entry requirements across program levels
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Existing chemistry course offerings support all subdisciplines very well, providing students with options to concentrate in a subdiscipline if desired

- ▶ Astronomy division offers 11 courses, including two Research Opportunities Program (ROP) courses and a number of popular courses for students with no prior background in astronomy
- ▶ All programs' completion requirements are in line with expectations for similar programs at other institutions
- Innovation
 - ▶ Experiential learning opportunities through the Advanced Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory (AirLab) offer unique opportunities to initiate and strengthen interdisciplinary collaborations within the Department and facilitate resonance between research and teaching
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ A number of courses have incorporated specific activities to help improve inclusivity and awareness of diversity in the learning environment, focusing on a variety of issues such as combating tendencies towards stereotyping students from underrepresented groups, avoiding microaggressions, respecting the differing backgrounds of all students, and highlighting impactful scientists from marginalized and underrepresented groups
 - ▶ Department has been proactive in the creation of the UTM STEM Scholars program, which seeks to lower structural and systemic barriers to STEM education that have persistently faced members of under-represented communities
 - ▶ UTM STEM Scholars program currently offers full tuition support and access to a range of mentorship and support structures for Black students, with intentions to extend the program to remove barriers to access and improve retention rates for Indigenous students
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Department completed an extensive curriculum mapping exercise after the previous review; the resulting curriculum map is reviewed and updated annually and indicates how each of the CPS specialist programs (and courses therein) fulfill the CPS Degree Learning Outcomes and Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Faculty members and Lab Coordinators are passionate about the student experience and dedicated to ensuring student success; particularly evident in their commitment to providing experiential learning opportunities including internships, Co-op placements, ROPs, and AirLab experiences
 - ▶ Undergraduate and graduate students seemed satisfied with their programs and courses, expressing genuine pride in their sub-disciplines
 - ▶ Directed reading courses often serve as a good alternative when students are unable to secure research opportunities in a lab
 - ▶ Undergraduate students have opportunities to build community relationships through the CPS Internship course, a 200-hour unpaid internship placement in a variety of settings including hospitals, biotechnology and pharma industries.
 - ▶ Research and Development in Science Education, an experiential course, has built relationships with local schools

- ▶ CPS actively pursues outreach activities through interactions with local high schools, open house events, and interactions with members of the local Royal Astronomical Society of Canada; these events highlight the unique interdisciplinary nature of CPS and serve as a key medium for recruitment of undergraduate students
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Astronomy program has produced competitive graduates, with some alumni having gone on to prestigious graduate programs

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

- Objectives
 - ▶ Development of an Astronomy minor may negatively impact recruitment of students into the major and specialist programs
 - ▶ Introduction of a new undergraduate program in Planetary Sciences may warrant further consideration given current challenges related to human resources and capacity
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Students expressed concern regarding variability of content in courses shared between programs, noting that they did not feel adequately prepared for their specific program when taught by instructors from another discipline
 - ▶ Students felt in some cases that upper level course instructors had unclear expectations of what had been covered in earlier courses
 - ▶ Students expressed concern regarding variable rigor in courses taught by sessional instructors, suggesting that some sessional instructors may deliver less rigorous material in order to receive more positive teaching evaluations
- Innovation
 - ▶ AirLab opportunities appear underused, with a relatively small number of students participating each year
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Astronomy students expressed a desire for more meaningful interactions with TAs beyond grading of assignments
 - ▶ Students noted regret at having been unaware that taking a non-calculus-based physics course could leave them without appropriate prerequisites for higher-level physics and chemistry courses; reviewers were informed that waiving the prerequisites often results in students struggling with higher-level course material
 - ▶ Students described challenges selecting required courses for degree completion
 - ▶ Students noted concerns regarding course sequencing, observing in some cases that concepts learned in one course may not be reinforced until much later
 - ▶ Students expressed a desire for a more defined order for taking pre-requisite courses for Earth Sciences
 - ▶ Reduction in per-student funding to support research opportunities places additional burden on faculty research grants to cover expenses associated with quality undergraduate research experiences
 - ▶ Students expressed a need for more ROP experiences, and a desire that more professors make ROP applications, particularly in Chemistry and Earth Sciences.

- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Reviewers note a general downward trend in enrolments across several areas in the previous five years

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Objectives
 - ▶ Nurture and support greater cross-disciplinarity and overlap into teaching programs between Earth Sciences, Astronomy and Chemistry; Physics and Biology; and Physics and Computer Science
 - ▶ Move forward with the introduction of a program in Computational Physics at the Specialist level, or whichever level is felt to be most appropriate
 - ▶ Computational Physics program is a worthwhile initiative that should be attractive to students who share interests in computing and physical sciences, or those that change their interests once enrolled in computer science; program has potential to form a “bridge” between Chemistry and Astronomy depending on future recruitments
 - ▶ Create small group ROPs to nurture disciplinary overlaps with Astronomy and other CPS programs
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Consider harmonizing Astronomy and Earth Sciences program entry requirements with Chemistry and Physics entry requirements
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Expand educational opportunities modelled on the AirLab concept to leverage its unique multidisciplinary nature and establish a greater pool of small group ROP courses
 - ▶ Grow research interdisciplinarity into teaching programs with faculty co-supervision of both individual and small group ROPs, with a view to adding value via student cohort training and encouraging student peer-to-peer learning within and across different programs
 - ▶ Consider being more prescriptive in essential content of specific courses, pre-requisite requirements, and links to other specific courses both within the same program and across different programs where appropriate in order to provide students with foundational concepts for the various disciplines within CPS
- Innovation
 - ▶ Pursue efforts to conduct ROPs that are co-supervised by CPS faculty across all disciplines, and make targeted efforts to engage with establishing ROPs that are co-supervised by CPS faculty and faculty beyond CPS such as Biology and Computer Science, and other appropriate programs beyond UTM
 - ▶ AirLab small group/ROP framework could serve as a useful model for potential interactions among the CPS disciplines and act to catalyse constructive links with the UofT campuses beyond UTM
- Student engagement, experience and program support services

- ▶ Develop a faculty-driven mentoring program to help students navigate course selections aligning with potential career pathways, ensure that they obtain appropriate pre-requisites, and proceed through their program efficiently
- ▶ Encourage more direct and coordinated input from faculty into course content, timetabling, and career guidance that cuts across different programs
- ▶ Establish guidelines and structures to enable all faculty to engage directly with students in year 1 to articulate the excitement of future learning routes in years 2-4 relating to different career opportunities and course options
- ▶ Explore ways to provide appropriate financial support for field trips for the Earth Science Specialist program, as well as sufficient physical and human resources for chemistry labs
- ▶ Enhance communications regarding NSERC USRAs and UTEA opportunities, including through brief in-class presentations
- ▶ Continue providing support for students to participate in community outreach opportunities, activities, and events

2. Graduate Program(s) N/A

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ CPS faculty are enthusiastic, dedicated, and accomplished; many members run thriving research programs with significant funding levels
 - ▶ Faculty have been recognized by prestigious national and international awards
 - ▶ Faculty members within all four CPS disciplines publish in high-impact and well-respected journals in their respective fields
 - ▶ Impressive level of recognition and output given the CPS's small size; strong performance relative to other similarly sized departments in Canada
- Research
 - ▶ Quality and quantity of CPS research activities is impressive, with faculty members holding ~\$15m in active grant funding and supporting 86 graduate students and 27 post-doctoral fellows
 - ▶ Since previous review in 2017, CPS faculty have received \$16.5m in individual PI grants, \$25.9m in collaborative grants, and ~\$333k to support curriculum development and pedagogy
- Faculty
 - ▶ Undergraduate teaching loads of 2.5 FCE for teaching stream faculty and 1.0 FCE for tenure stream are on par with teaching loads at other institutions

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

- Faculty
 - ▶ Faculty complement is “barely sufficient to the task of delivering the existing programs, achieving the program learning outcomes, and enabling students to meet their degree-level expectations across the 4 divisional programs without support from 2–3 limited-term appointments per year and 10-20 sessional instructors”
 - ▶ Delivery of undergraduate programs is highly vulnerable to faculty leaves of absence
 - ▶ Problematic reliance on sessional instructors, with limited term appointments (LTA) and sessional instructors delivering ~25% of courses; particularly pressing in Astronomy with only one tenure-stream faculty member and one LTA
 - ▶ Sporadic faculty engagement in mentorship for sessional instructors
 - ▶ Sessional instructors and LTAs appear to have limited interaction with faculty, with the only formative evaluation of their teaching occurring when they seek promotion
 - ▶ Sessional instructors appear to receive no formal recognition of other roles they often take on, including participating in ROPs, outreach activities, open houses, preparing materials for TAs

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ Maintaining vibrant faculty research programs is critical to ensuring undergraduate students’ access to high-caliber research training experiences, and furnishing teaching assistants to support formal undergraduate laboratories and evaluation exercises
- Faculty
 - ▶ Explore ways to ensure a sufficient and sustainable faculty complement to support the undergraduate Astronomy program
 - ▶ Consider future opportunities to increase cross-disciplinary overlap between Astronomy and other CPS disciplines through strategic faculty hires
 - ▶ Reduce high dependence on sessional instructors to enhance educational rigor
 - ▶ Explore ways for permanent faculty to become more engaged in mentorship roles for sessional instructors and LTAs
 - ▶ Improve communication and collaboration between faculty and sessional/LTA instructors to ensure quality delivery of courses
 - ▶ Explore mechanisms for providing greater job stability for sessional instructors, including longer, more equitable employment contracts which include admin and academic citizenship duties in addition to teaching responsibilities
 - ▶ Provide more advance notice of teaching commitments for sessional instructors
 - ▶ Consider recruitment of a teaching stream “hard rock” geology position as a future priority

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
 - ▶ CPS holds several department-wide events each year to support communication and develop equitable relationships among members of unique interdisciplinary department
 - ▶ CPS engages with faculty and students through “town hall” discussions, including sessions to prepare and collect input for 2024-25 external review; self-study noted that “the process of holding student town halls is both highly appreciated by the students and very informative for [the Department]”
 - ▶ CPS faculty and staff are extremely dedicated to delivering quality undergraduate programs, and work well with each other to obtain that goal
 - ▶ Existing Academic Advisor/Undergraduate Program Coordinator has a wealth of knowledge regarding departmental history and processes, and plays an instrumental role in advising students
 - ▶ Dedicated Laboratory Coordinators and staff contribute to the success and efficient operation of CPS programs; CPS Chair and faculty “were unanimously complimentary of the dedication and hard work exhibited by the individuals holding these positions”
 - ▶ Lab Coordinators ensure that laboratories run exceptionally smoothly; labs are among students’ favourite aspects of their programs
 - ▶ CPS has developed important and constructive relationships and collaborations with other units at UTM including the Departments of Biology and Computer Science, as well as the Forensic Sciences program
 - ▶ CPS and the UTM Department of Biology jointly host the only Canadian site for the Amgen Biotechnology Experience
 - ▶ CPS has an important relationship with the Centre for Medicinal Chemistry and is a major participant in the Interdisciplinary Science Program in Research and Entrepreneurship (INSPIRE) Scholars program for undergraduate training
 - ▶ Partnership with University College London affords a research exchange opportunity for ~2-4 CPS students/year
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Issues of physical space within CPS did not seem to be a major concern
 - ▶ The Department has done an excellent job renovating and equipping undergraduate Chemistry and Earth Science labs
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ CPS has implemented most recommendations from previous review in 2017, including improving facilities, expanding computational training, strengthening TA

preparation, and hiring new faculty; while some recommendations have been adapted or deferred the reviewers commend the Department's progress overall

- ▶ Recent initiatives to enhance the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning include, curriculum mapping, conducting an EDI climate survey regarding the departmental community and its degree of inclusivity and safety, holding town hall meetings to obtain direct feedback from students, inclusion of a required writing course at the first year, development and distribution of guidance to CPS course instructors with regard to best practices for Teaching Team Engagement and Management, creating a new workshop-format training event that is specific to CPS TAs, and developing and implementing a Peer Teaching Evaluation program for faculty
- ▶ Unique combination of disciplines presents opportunities and challenges for interdisciplinary pedagogy and research; CPS has responded admirably by adopting several strategies that positively impact undergraduate educational and research opportunities including joint courses with other departments, efficiently utilizing courses with the requisite material for several programs, effective use of teaching stream faculty, and recruitment of faculty with complementary research interests
- ▶ CPS fosters an equitable, diverse, and inclusive teaching and learning environment, reflecting the values articulated in existing institutional documents
- ▶ CPS has developed a set of values centered around "safety, respect, and professionalism" and a personalized land acknowledgement
- ▶ Department's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee serves to identify ways in which an EDI lens can be applied to all Departmental committees and communities within CPS; committee is responsible for suggesting alterations to CPS policies and procedures, planning and implementing EDI-related events within the Department, conducting an annual climate and demographic survey, and identifying actionable examples of inequity that need to be addressed within the CPS community
- ▶ Various EDI training sessions are offered, including mandatory annual training workshop for all CPS teaching assistants; unconscious bias training workshops are required for all participants in hiring and promotion decisions; and bi-annual "Topical Training" sessions are offered on topics such as Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism, and anti-Black racism
- International comparators
 - ▶ CPS has internationally recognized strengths in Biophysics research

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

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Current levels of administrative staff and laboratory coordinators are sufficient to maintain the status quo "although there is little robustness"
 - ▶ With rising enrollments, office staff and Laboratory Coordinators are approaching maximum workload capacity
 - ▶ Reviewers note low morale among technical staff due to concerns related to workload and compensation; a potential retention issue that could dramatically and unfavorably impact the existing undergraduate laboratory experiences

- ▶ Reviewers observe that compensation for laboratory coordinator role may not be “congruent with the expectations in knowledge, the assumed flexibility in creating and delivering new labs, and the general time requirements accompanying ‘behind the scenes’ work”
- ▶ Chemistry team is currently understaffed and faced with time management and workload challenges
- ▶ Facility Manager & Lab Coordinator is facing an increased workload as new equipment is obtained and aging equipment requires more maintenance
- ▶ Growing pressure on Chemistry program to meet high demand for introductory classes; Department is unable to accommodate expanding enrolments due to the lack of available physical space for lab sections
- ▶ High demand for introductory Chemistry courses “places additional strain on the limited number of available Lab Coordinators and raises serious concerns about maintaining laboratory safety”
- ▶ Increasing enrollments, growing waitlists for introductory classes, and dependence on sessional instructors for course delivery raise concerns regarding capacity of CPS’s current faculty and staff complement to sustain the quality of undergraduate program delivery
- ▶ While dedicated study space exists for Physics students, a similar space to gather and study is not available for Chemistry students
- ▶ Reviewers highlight major challenges to effective undergraduate program delivery including increasing costs for field work and the need for additional faculty and staff
- ▶ Reviewers note current CPS budget carry-forward is the lowest among Arts & Science divisions at the University
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ CPS continues to face major challenges arising from less than optimal numbers of faculty, staff, and graduate students

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Develop a more robust culture of mentorship for all staff groups, including both tenured faculty and short-term staff of technical support, TAs, and sessional instructors
 - ▶ Continue engaging faculty, technical and administrative staff, and students through regular town hall meetings, which are fully inclusive of all stakeholders; these events serve to alert the Department to undergraduate program issues and build a sense of community
 - ▶ Continue to support engagement and involvement of all stakeholders through Department-wide events including awards celebrations, open houses, etc.
 - ▶ Appraise mechanisms to improve morale where appropriate of dedicated laboratory coordinators and their important role in delivering rewarding undergraduate laboratory experiences

- ▶ Explore opportunities to increase engagement with relevant programs across the other UofT campuses, e.g., through proactively encouraging cross-campus small group ROPs which capture balanced levels of student academic attainment
- ▶ Where appropriate, seek to establish greater dialogue with the other UofT campuses, and with central University administration, to establish greater financial parity across the three campuses in regard to annual budget carry forward levels, greater clarity and transparency in central UofT finance guidelines, and greater autonomy in expenditure decisions relating to undergraduate teaching programs.
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Careful and strategic faculty and staff complement planning will be essential to maintaining the quality and breadth of the undergraduate educational programs offered by the Department
 - ▶ Consider hiring an additional Laboratory Coordinator to provide the necessary level of redundancy, especially for safety, and to meet the growing student enrollment in the labs (i.e., the Senior Lab & Safety Coordinator) in the Chemistry program
 - ▶ Ensure adequate resources for the Earth Sciences field component of the Earth Sciences program, to ensure safety and training at a high level
 - ▶ Consider changing the name of the “Laboratory Technicians” role to that of “Laboratory Coordinators” to recognize their contributions and educational level
 - ▶ Considers appropriate and constructive regrading of technical support staff in light of the actual range of tasks they perform and their enhanced levels of qualifications
 - ▶ Explore opportunities to have technical support staff included on both faculty and support staff job recruitment panels, to provide expertise relevant to activities which interface technical support within CPS
 - ▶ Develop structures to encourage technical support across different teaching programs to regularly discuss challenges and opportunities as a single group and to share ideas and details for implementing good practice across different programs in a coordinated way
 - ▶ Identify suitable safe communal study space for chemistry students
 - ▶ Prioritize replacing Chemistry Senior Lab and Safety Coordinator to maintain safety in the undergraduate laboratories and ensure adequate coverage
 - ▶ Consider additional staff role supporting outreach and alumni engagement efforts as appropriate given available resources and other priorities
 - ▶ Explore ways to afford the Department some autonomy related to TA budgeting
 - ▶ Establishing set job descriptions for required TA positions would help alleviate repetitive confirmation of details regarding TA workloads
 - ▶ Consider identifying a common space for all students to gather and study, to foster interactions among students that capitalize on the unique interdisciplinary nature of CPS
 - ▶ Maintaining equipment for continued delivery of undergraduate chemistry will be essential
 - ▶ Ensure adequate funding for Earth Science field trips, to ensure that undergraduate students obtain important field experience

- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ CPS will need to recruit both faculty and staff strategically and take advantage of their unique interdisciplinary nature in order to maintain quality undergraduate education and research opportunities
 - ▶ Establish the Quantitative Biosciences graduate program
 - ▶ Ensure that Departmental, Divisional, and University leadership recognize the unique interdisciplinary nature of CPS, the appeal of its interdisciplinary educational programs to undergraduate students, and the need to maintain “critical mass” in each of the sub-disciplines
- International comparators
 - ▶ Explore ways to feature CPS’s unique interdisciplinary research opportunities more prominently in new faculty recruitment and co-supervision of students in small group ROPs
 - ▶ Encourage Biophysics faculty to take an ambassadorial lead in offering a range of small group ROPs, co-supervised by faculty from other disciplines within CPS and beyond, to capitalize upon internationally recognized strength in Biophysics research to embolden CPS’s teaching opportunities



Office of the Vice-Principal,
Academic & Dean

February 23, 2026

Professor Nick Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

RE: UTQAP cyclical review of the Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences and its programs

Dear Professor Rule,

Thank you for your letter of December 8, 2025 requesting the decanal administrative response to the April 3-4, 2025 review of the Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences and its programs: Astronomical Sciences, BSc (Specialist), Astronomy, BSc (Major), Biological Chemistry, BSc (Specialist), Biomedical Physics, BSc (Spec), Chemistry, BSc (Spec, Major, Minor), Earth Science, BSc (Specialist, Major, Minor), Geology, BSc (Specialist), Physics, BSc (Major, Minor), and Environmental Geosciences, BSc (Specialist).

On behalf of the University of Toronto Mississauga, we would first like to thank the reviewers, Stephen Bearne, Professor, Department of Chemistry, Dalhousie University, Mark Leake, Professor and Anniversary Chair of Biological Physics, School of Physics, Engineering and Technology, University of York, and James Farquhar, Distinguished University Professor and Chair, Department of Geology, University of Maryland for their comprehensive review of the Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences and its programs. We would also like to thank the Interim Chair, Prof. Claudiu Gradinaru, who launched the process, and Chair Prof. Joshua Milstein who saw it through, as well as faculty, administrative staff, and all those who contributed to the preparation of the self-study. We also thank the many staff, students, and faculty members who met with the external reviewers and provided thoughtful feedback.

In their report, the reviewers noted the unique pedagogical opportunities presented by, while also recognizing the challenges that come with, operating a unique combination of disciplines. As such, they commended the unit for adopting effective strategies and efficiently utilizing resources to meet these challenges. The reviewers also commended the new and existing faculty for their accomplishments, dedication, and enthusiasm, as well as the staff for their operational excellence.

In their report, the reviewers recommended strategically recruiting additional faculty and staff, with emphasis on teaching-stream faculty. They also recommended that the unit leverage that it is cross- and interdisciplinary to more deliberately strengthen programs and research, especially, pertaining to new program creation and faculty co-supervision of ROPs. The reviewers also recommended enhancing student support through mentorship and courses. Lastly, they recommended fostering engagement across the U of T campuses while advocating for greater departmental autonomy.



Office of the Vice-Principal,
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The reviewers' recommendations have been addressed in the enclosed Review Recommendations Table that outlines the department's response, the decanal response, and the Implementation Plan identifying action items and timelines for each recommendation (immediate, medium, or long term). This administrative response was developed in consultation with senior leadership in my office and the Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences' Chair.

Progress checks and monitoring of the implementation plan will occur through the Chair's Annual Report to the Dean. We also acknowledge your office will request a brief Interim Monitoring Report midway between the April 2025 review and the next cyclical review, which is scheduled to take place in the 2032-33 academic year.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the review report. The reviewers' comments and recommendations will help inform the future priorities of the Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences and its programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al. Syme".

Alison Syme
Acting Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean

Encl.: 2024-25 UTQAP Review of the UTM Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences – Review Recommendations (table)

CC: Joshua Milstein, Chair, Department of Chemical & Physical Sciences, University of Toronto Mississauga
Bryan Stewart, Vice-Dean, Academic Programs, University of Toronto Mississauga
Ferzeen Sammy, Manager, Academic Programs & Quality Assurance, University of Toronto Mississauga
Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance
Emma del Junco, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist
Stephanie Machado Fernandes, Administrator, Academic Programs

2024-25 UTQAP Review of UTM Department of Chemical and Physical Sciences- Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, "it is important to note that, while the external reviewers' report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university's internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability" (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response & Implementation Plan
The reviewers recommended that the Department continue to nurture cross-disciplinary integration among Astronomy, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, and Physics, and explore	1.	Reviewers recommend "that the Department nurtures and supports greater cross-disciplinarity and overlap into teaching programs between Earth Sciences, Astronomy and Chemistry; Physics and Biology; and	Our curriculum incorporates a number of interdisciplinary measures including numerous Joint Chemistry Physics courses (JCP), interdisciplinary research course JCB487Y5: The Advanced Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory (AIRLab), a fourth-year research course CPS489Y5, and the	OVPAD will support the Department's curricular development through the Vice-Dean, Academic Programs and Vice-Dean, Undergraduate. Immediate; Vice-Dean, Undergraduate and Vice-Dean, Academic Programs

opportunities for expanding its academic programming at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.		Physics and Computer Science”	Astronomy program is largely composed of physics courses. To further strengthen cross-disciplinary integration, as suggested, the department has begun promoting co-teaching of new undergraduate courses (this is new for our department). The first of these is a joint Earth Sciences/ Astronomy course (CPS352H5 How to Build a Habitable Planet) taught by two faculty (one in each discipline) in 2026/2027. Furthermore, the development of our Computational Physics Specialist program will build closer links with the Computer Science department.	
	2.	“An opportunity exists to develop a ‘bridge’ between Earth Sciences and Astronomy... The reviewers noted interdisciplinary opportunities to improve the overlap with the Astronomy program in the area of exoplanets and planetary science...One route to begin to nurture these overlaps could be to create new small group	While we agree that the opportunity exists, at the moment our Astronomy program solely consists of a single CLTA Teaching Stream faculty member (our Research Stream Astronomer recently left UTM). We are currently doing a search for a Teaching Stream position in Astronomy, but without additional Astronomy faculty it is not currently possible for us to take advantage of this opportunity.	OVPAD will continue to work with CPS and all academic departments to advance faculty hiring through our established faculty complement planning process. Immediate; Vice-Dean, Faculty

		ROPs which cover these areas"		
	3.	Reviewers recommend "that the Department moves forward with the introduction of a Program in Computational Physics as a Specialist"	The Computational Physics Specialist program is in its final round of preparation with a targeted start date of Fall 2027.	Program proposal is in development, with planned launch in Fall 2027. Immediate to medium-term; Vice-Dean, Academic Programs
	4.	Reviewers recommend "that the Department establishes the Quantitative Biosciences graduate program"	We are currently working on the outline with the Dean's office. An assembled group of 4 faculty members from CPS and Biology have committed to participate in this effort.	The Proposal Outline has been started and initial consultation phases with the department for developing this new graduate program. Medium-Long term; Vice-Dean, Academic Programs; Vice-Dean, Graduate
The reviewers noted concerns about variability in course content and expectations for shared foundational courses taught across disciplines. They recommended that the Department consider being more prescriptive in defining essential content, prerequisites, and learning outcomes to	5.	Reviewers recommend "that the Department considers being more prescriptive in the essential content of specific courses, the pre-requisite requirements, and the links to other specific courses both within the same program and across different programs where appropriate, that provide students with foundational	The content, prerequisites and learning outcomes are all clearly stipulated in the UTM Academic Calendar. Since students have expressed these concerns, that indicates a failure in messaging on our part. To rectify this, we propose to improve our messaging in the following ways: 1. Improvement to the CPS website	OVPAD will support the department with updating course descriptions, course syllabi, and in developing or updating curriculum maps for each program area. Immediate to medium-term; Vice-Dean, Undergraduate and Associate Dean, Teaching & Learning

ensure alignment and consistency.		concepts for the various disciplines within CPS”	2. Update handouts for students within each discipline that clearly map the course/degree requirements. 3. In-class reminders provided to students regarding these handouts, particularly in our larger courses, and encouragement to annually book consultations with their discipline specific Faculty Advisor to review progress and pathways toward degree completion.	
The reviewers observed that students would benefit from more structured academic and career advising, particularly in navigating prerequisites and program sequences. They recommended that the Department establish a formal mentoring framework to support early and ongoing student guidance.	6.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department develops a student mentoring program driven by faculty members... to assist students in navigating their course selections in aligning with different potential career pathways and ensuring they obtain the appropriate pre-requisites, thereby proceeding through their program in an efficient manner”	CPS currently employs an administrative Undergraduate Coordinator to assist students in course selection. We also assign a faculty member as an Undergraduate Advisor within each of the 4 CPS disciplines, to further guide our students. The challenges indicated likely stem, in part, from students being unaware of this support. Again, this issue can be improved through improved messaging as indicated in the response to point 5 above.	Since this recommendation pertains largely to advising, OVPAD will ensure the department is linked to the UTM wide 3AP academic advising project. Medium: Assistant Dean and Registrar; Vice-Dean, Undergraduate
	7.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department establishes guidelines and structures to enable all faculty to engage	CPS intends to explore team-teaching of our first-year courses. CHM110H5/120H5 Chemical Principles 1 and 2 is perhaps our largest introductory Chemistry course. In	OVPAD will support the department through its curriculum development and help navigate any issues that arises with the redeployment of faculty to a co-

		directly with students in year 1 to articulate the excitement of future learning routes in years 2-4 relating to different career opportunities and different course options”	2028 we intend to pilot having 2-3 faculty co-teach CHM120H5. For our smaller Earth Science and Physics Introductory courses, we will develop a plan to rotate faculty through select 1 st year courses. PHY146H5/147H5 would be selected for Physics, while the Earth Science courses are under discussion with further faculty consultation.	teaching model. In addition, OVPAD can support with liaison to educational developers in the RGASC Medium: Vice-Dean, Undergraduate; Associate Dean, Teaching & Learning
	8.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department encourages more direct and coordinated input from faculty into course content, timetabling, and career guidance that cuts across different programs”	Faculty are directly involved in all course development and timetabling by participating in the curriculum committee and through discipline specific faculty retreats.	OVPAD supports the departments effort and also notes that timetabling is a UTM-wide matter coordinated out by the offices of the Assistant Dean and Registrar and that matters relating to advising are in #6
The reviewers noted that reduced funding has limited access to undergraduate research and experiential learning opportunities. They recommended that the Department and Dean’s Office explore ways to enhance support for ROPs, field courses, and	9.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department expands educational opportunities modelled on the AIRLab concept to leverage its unique multidisciplinary nature and to establish a greater pool of small group Research Opportunity Program (ROP) courses”	The external reviewers mention group ROPs multiple times as a means to provide more interdisciplinary research opportunities. However, the ROP program is not administered by CPS, and faculty volunteer to supervise ROP students (i.e., they are not assigned ROPs within their workload). A consistent complaint faculty express with the ROP program is the inconsistency of funding to support research projects that, if alleviated, may	OVPAD recognizes and applauds the largely volunteer work that faculty do to support ROP and CPS489 students. ROP funding is provided by OVPAD among competing priorities for limited resources and OVPAD will consult with faculty who are interested in offering ROP opportunities about their budgetary needs.

undergraduate research experiences across disciplines.			motivate more CPS faculty to take on ROP students. CPS489Y5, the 4th year supervised research course in our department, is an alternative to ROPs. Still, faculty cannot be assigned to participate in this course, and it is not reflected in their workload. What could promote increasing the number of supervised projects and/or the creation of joint interdisciplinary projects would be if, like the support provided by an ROP, funding was made available for increasing the number of CPS489Y5 projects. CPS400Y5 is our recently added 4th year internship course. This is another venue for providing interdisciplinary research experience. Participation in this course will, likely, increase with time as we further develop successful industrial partnerships. Another way for CPS to expand interdisciplinary research opportunities is through AIRLab (JCB487Y5). Currently, AIRLab hosts approximately 2 sets of 3-5 students on interdisciplinary research projects led by faculty across CPS. AIRLab, however, has been unable to expand	The current ROP structure does not support the kind of small group projects the reviewers recommend, as they are a 1 student:1 credit opportunity. Should the department wish to expand its small group research opportunities, OVPAD is available to and advise. OVPAD will connect the department to other units that offer year-long research courses to share best practices on supporting such research opportunities Medium: Vice-Dean, Undergraduate; Associate Dean, Academic Experience



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			because there is no base budget funding for the program, and each year the budget is uncertain. We will work to secure funding for AIRLab so that we can provide more of the interdisciplinary research opportunities suggested by the external reviewers. We will also explore attributing workload to participation in AIRLab, particularly as the offering expands with budgetary supports in place. Currently, faculty support for AIRLab is voluntary which, in addition to the lack of base budget support, is not a sustainable model and does not support growth. Finally, we are working on introducing a 4th year Advanced Physics lab that will support teams of students working on advanced instrumentation. This will provide research experience to many of those students unable to find a research supervision. While we are already investing in the development of this course, it will require further funding through the Dean's office to be realized.	
	10.	Reviewers recommend "that the Department grows research interdisciplinarity	We have addressed the issues with the suggestion to develop small group ROPs in #9 and our efforts to expand AIRLab,	Replied in #9 above.

		into its teaching programs with faculty co-supervision of both individual and small group ROPs, with a view to adding value via student cohort training and encouraging student peer-to-peer learning within and across different programs”	mentioned in #9 as well, also address this suggestion. Further efforts to provide more engagement in research for undergraduates will come through the Course Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) initiative. With a pilot program within Chemistry scheduled for the Fall of 2027, CURE will provide 1 st and 2 nd year students with the choice to participate in research-based practicals in place of the current junior-level Chemistry Labs. If successful, this program will be expanded to our Physics and Earth Science disciplines in 2027-2028.	OVPAD will work with the department to ensure any curricular changes necessitated by the CURE proposal are properly approved. Vice-Dean, Undergraduate; Vice-Dean, Academic Programs
	11.	“...the reviewers concluded that it is critical to ensure that appropriate financial support for field trips for the Earth Science Specialist program and sufficient physical and human resources for the chemistry labs are available”	Earth Science field trips are supported through a combination of ancillary fees, from the CPS operating budget, and Priority Funding from OVPAD. The two-year Senior Chemistry Laboratory term position in the Chemistry teaching labs has had a significant positive impact on both operations and safety. Physical resources for Chemistry are reviewed annually to identify needs for replacement and new purchases, which are incorporated into a dynamic three-year plan. Equipment and Priority Funding opportunities through	OVPAD will work with the department to determining a more appropriate timeline for the funding of field trips Immediate: Assistant Dean Two-year Senior Chemistry Laboratory Coordinator has been renewed for a further two years.

			OVPAD have been essential in supporting this process.	
	12. OVPA	“With respect to NSERC USRAs and UTEAs, students mentioned that they sometimes miss e-mails announcing such opportunities. A more proactive approach could be taken by instructors to advertise these research opportunities in classes.”	An announcement will be sent to all course instructors asking them to promote/advertise these programs in their courses.	Complete
	13.	“CPS actively pursues outreach activities through interactions with local high schools, open house events, and interactions with members of the local Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. The Department should ensure that undergraduate students continue to have the opportunity to participate in such events.”	Undergraduate students will continue to have the opportunity to participate in such events. This will be included in the Terms of Reference defining the expectations for the Chair of the Outreach Committee.	Complete
The reviewers noted ongoing faculty complement pressures,	14.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department reduces its currently very high	Faculty members who serve as course mentors to sessional instructors are encouraged to be actively engaged in	OVPAD will continue to work with CPS and all academic departments to advance faculty hiring through our

including reliance on sessional and limited-term instructors and the need for additional capacity and mentorship to support program continuity and instructional quality. They recommended that the Department and Dean's Office consider strategies to strengthen complement planning, reduce reliance on temporary appointments, and enhance mentorship and support for teaching staff.		dependence on sessional instructors so that educational rigor may be enhanced or faculty become more engaged in their roles as mentors of sessional appointments"	providing teaching guidance to maintain the Departmental course learning outcomes. All faculty mentors are provided with access to a the "UTM Mentorship Program" course on Quercus, which has been developed by the Vice-Dean-Faculty and outlines best practices for faculty mentors. A more formalized /structured mentoring system would help and is in development. In response to our reliance on Sessional instructors, our faculty have a fixed teaching workload. In addition, each academic year many are approved for various leaves including sabbaticals, administrative leaves, and other absences. The result is that we must overly rely upon Sessional Instructors to deliver many of the courses. The only viable solution to increasing the number of courses taught by our faculty, and rectifying this challenge, is to hire more faculty, which will be a strategic goal of CPS moving forward.	established faculty complement planning process, as well as hiring of LTA/CLTA faculty and sessional lectures. Ongoing; Vice-Dean, Faculty
	15.	Reviewers recommend "that the Department explores mechanisms to give greater job stability for sessional	UofT Sessional Instructors are represented by the Union – CUPE 3902 (Units 1 & 3). Once Teaching assignments for CPS Faculty are finalized for the upcoming	OVPAD welcomes the recommendation from the reviewers but also notes that the terms of hiring and work for sessional instructors are largely set

		instructors through more advance notice of teaching commitments and longer, more equitable employment contracts which include admin and academic citizenship duties in addition to teaching responsibilities”	academic year (typically completed by the first week of May), the remaining courses available for delivery by Sessional Instructors are advertised. CPS has always adhered to the timelines stated in the CUPE 3902 collective agreements for advertising the identified vacant positions. It is therefore not possible to provide more advance notice than what is stated in the collective agreements. Furthermore, assignment of additional workload such as admin and academic citizenship duties is not specified in CUPE 3902 Union agreement and therefore cannot be included in the Sessional Instructor contracts.	through the collective bargaining process and apply across the entire bargaining unit. OVPAD will continue to work with the department to hire instructors according to the terms of the negotiated agreements. Ongoing; Vice-Dean, Faculty
	16.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department establishes/recruits a permanent teaching-stream faculty member in Astronomy to ensure the viability of the undergraduate Astronomy program”	A search for a permanent teaching stream faculty member was approved for the Fall 2025. The search is ongoing at present.	Search is currently underway and the position expected to be filled with a start date of July 1, 2026 Immediate: Vice-Dean, Faculty
	17.	“While sessional contracts apparently state that a faculty mentor is assigned to each sessional instructor,	We will use several measures to improve mentoring of sessional/LTA instructors (starting 2027):	OVPAD will continue to work with department as it seeks to improve the mentoring relationship with sessional instructors

		the reviewers heard that, in practice, mentors seldom engage with the sessional instructors except in some cases when it is a first-time sessional appointment. Similarly, LTAs seemed to have limited interaction with faculty. The Department should explore ways of building communication “bridges” between faculty and sessional/LTA instructors to ensure quality delivery of courses.”	1. <u>Regular Check-Ins</u>: Mentors will be required to fill out a simple form, signed by both themselves and the mentee, confirming that they have met a minimum of 3 times each term. This should roughly correspond to an initial meeting, a mid-term meeting, and an end of term meeting. This will be trialed in the Fall 2026 term and revised if necessary. 2. <u>Terms of Reference (TOR)</u>: TORs will be developed explicitly describing the expectations of all mentors and will be shared with mentors each term upon accepting the positions. 3. <u>Formalized Workload</u>: Mentor responsibilities will be formally included in faculty workload letters each year, which is something that has not consistently been done in previous years.	Ongoing; Vice-Dean, Faculty
The reviewers observed increasing pressure on study spaces and on laboratory and field resources, particularly in Chemistry and Earth Sciences, noting implications for safety, access, and student	18.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department adequately supports Earth Sciences field component of the Earth Sciences program to ensure safety and training at a high level”	Field trips are staffed with at least two faculty or staff members to ensure both safety and high-quality training. In addition, Teaching Assistants support field work where needed. At least one member of the teaching team is required to be first aid certified. In the past year, TAs were encouraged to obtain first aid certifications as well.	OVPAD will continue to work with the department to ensure safety and training of faculty Staff and TAs for Earth Sciences Field trips Ongoing: Assistant Dean; Vice-Dean, Undergraduate

experience. They recommended that the Department and Dean's Office review laboratory staffing and space needs and explore opportunities to identify dedicated communal study areas to support safe, high-quality learning environments.			Students are encouraged to consult with the Accessibility Office to receive necessary accommodations during the field trips. Field trips are conducted in accordance with established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), risk assessments, and pre-trip student briefings and training. The department continues to invest in essential field equipment such as satellite phone, handheld GPS units, and compasses to support safe and effective training. Smaller equipment used in the field are funded through the department's operating budget. The department has recently developed a 3-year plan for equipment funding.	
	19.	Reviewers recommend "that the Department considers hiring an additional Laboratory Coordinator to provide the necessary level of redundancy, especially for safety, and to meet the growing student enrollment in the labs (i.e., the Senior Lab & Safety Coordinator) in the Chemistry program"	Funding for the Senior Laboratory and Safety Coordinator position was approved from May 2024 through April 2026. This role has been instrumental in providing critical redundancy (particularly in safety), facilitating staff scheduling for lab coverage, accommodating increasing student enrollment, delivering advanced laboratory courses, and supporting the ever-expanding core instrument facility. We have submitted a request to make this	This position has been approved for an additional two-years of funding, through the 2027-28 academic year. Due resource limitations this position has not yet been approved for ongoing funding. OVPAD will continue to work with the department to address staffing needs through existing mechanisms

			position permanent beyond April 2026, as it is essential to maintaining the department's teaching and research operations, as well as ensuring the safety of both students and staff. A decision regarding the request is expected in early 2026. Even with stabilizing this position, we agree that we are still short staffed (<i>i.e.</i>, this is not a redundancy position). An additional Laboratory Coordinator is needed, and we will work with the administration to realize this hire.	Ongoing: Assistant Dean
	20.	Reviewers recommend "that the Department identifies suitable safe communal study space for chemistry students, e.g., focusing on computational chemistry and/or drug design potentially in the New Science Building."	This is an important point as our Chemistry students, which are the largest proportion of CPS students, do not have a communal work/study space. Communal working space is provided for both Physics and ERS students and it has been integral in developing a strong sense of community amongst that portion of our undergraduate population--providing a safe space for social and extra-curricular science themed activities For a number of years now, we have been following protocol, working with FMP to find a space within either Davis or NSB, with little progress. A challenge is that the	Recently the Dean met with all academic units to assess space needs as part of the UTM Capital Projects and Space Allocation MCAPS process. OVPAD will work with the department to try to their space goals Ongoing: Assistant Dean

			department has little autonomy in allocating space even in buildings /areas where we have a significant footprint (e.g., the NSB or Davis Research Wing). Increased departmental autonomy in space planning would make improvements to the student experience such as this more easily achievable.	
The reviewers noted morale and workload concerns among Laboratory Coordinators and technical staff, emphasizing the importance of stronger mentorship and community-building within these groups. They recommended that the Department review role classifications and recognition mechanisms to better reflect staff qualifications and contributions, and consider structures to support mentorship and collaboration across technical teams.	21.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department appraises mechanisms to improve morale where appropriate of dedicated laboratory coordinators and their important role in delivering rewarding undergraduate laboratory experiences”	The following are ongoing efforts: • <u>Department-Wide Acknowledgment:</u> Lab coordinators' contributions are recognized in Town Halls, Weekly Digests, Digital Display. • <u>Events:</u> Last year, Lab Coordinators have been/will be invited to the Awards Night and are included in the planning of the Holiday Lunch and Townhalls to minimize scheduling conflicts. Coordinators and their families continue to be welcomed to many family-friendly events hosted by CPS and UTM including the Solar Eclipse Viewing, CPS Trivia Night, Open Houses, etc. • <u>Team Lunches:</u> On-campus BYOL (Bring Your Own Lunch) team lunches were organized for Lab Coordinators over the summer to encourage connection and strengthen team	OVPAD supports the efforts of the department to recognize their staff and will help to connect the department to other UTM departments who employ similar staff to share best practices. Likewise, OVPAD will connect the UTM Human Resources for staff recognition opportunities. Ongoing: Assistant Dean

			morale across disciplines in CPS. Future plans include inviting the administrative team to BYOL events to strengthen connections with Lab Coordinators and enhance everyone's sense of belonging within the department. Another future plan includes offering one extended lunch break during each reading week to provide the team with opportunities to connect over meals outside the workplace. • <u>Regular Lab Visits:</u> Frequent conversations between Manager and Lab Coordinators, as well as a feedback session with the Chair each term, help identify needs and provide support and feedback on lab operations. • <u>TA Training Involvement:</u> Coordinators are empowered to design and deliver their own course-specific TA training, enhancing lab delivery and ultimately elevating student experience. • <u>Resources and Initiatives:</u> Working to provide extra TA support when requested to support coordinators in the delivery of labs. Increased support for Coordinators to lead and contribute to new initiatives (e.g.,	



			experiment development, event planning, safety protocols, etc.). • <u>Alternative Work Arrangements</u>: Where feasible, flexibility has been extended to Lab Coordinators.	
	22.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department develops structures to encourage technical support across different teaching programs to regularly discuss challenges and opportunities as a single group and to share ideas and details for implementing good practice across different programs in a coordinated way”	The following initiatives reference the technical staff of Earth Science, Physics and Chemistry Lab Coordinators collectively: • Hold annual lunches with technical staff and the chair to discuss challenges and identify solutions. Organize events that bring the technical staff together (e.g., Bring your own lunch, campus walks, etc.). • Proactively identify common issues and engage the technical staff for input, encouraging peer-to-peer feedback, as was done during the recent update to our internal document outlining TA and Lab Coordinator duties in the teaching labs. • Encourage and support cross-discipline collaboration. (e.g., Science Splash, collaboration for lab preparations and troubleshooting, etc.).	OVPAD supports the efforts of the department to develop their staff across teaching programs. We further recognize that while there are some cross-program commonalities, there is also a high degree of specificity in each position and indeed many staff are hired precisely for their subject matter expertise, which makes cross-program participation more challenging. Ongoing: Assistant Dean

			- Schedule dedicated meetings every four months between manager and the technical staff to reflect on challenges and successes. - Organize team-wide training sessions (e.g., de-escalation training, workplace harassment, etc.) to build collective capacity and consistent approaches across the team. - Lab Coordinators were not invited to departmental retreats for many years. However, they were included this summer, and we will continue to invite them going forward to ensure their perspectives are shared and their contributions align with the broader departmental goals.	
	23.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department develops a more robust culture of mentorship for all staff groups, including both tenured faculty and short-term staff of technical support, TAs, and sessional instructors”	CPS will take a number of measures to improve mentoring: <u>Faculty</u>: Continue funding support for lunch/dinner /coffee between senior faculty and mentored Assistant Professors. <u>TAs/Grad Students</u>: Continue funding and better advertise Mentor Café, which pairs senior graduate students with 1st year graduate students and supports coffee/discussions each term.	OVPAD supports the efforts of the department to recognize their staff and will help to connect the department to other UTM departments who employ similar staff to share best practices. Likewise, OVPAD will connect the UTM Human Resources for staff recognition opportunities. Ongoing: Assistant Dean

			3. Sessionals/LTAs: Steps to improve sessional mentoring were discussed in 17. 4. <u>Technical Staff</u>: Laboratory Coordinators are encouraged to participate in professional development activities. Staff are also encouraged to engage in departmental and university-wide committees, and to participate in mentoring opportunities such as the Rose Patten Mentoring Program. Secondments are supported as a means of professional advancement.	
	24.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department considers appropriate and constructive regrading of technical support staff in light of the actual range of tasks they perform, many of which are not currently written into their formal job descriptions, and their enhanced levels of qualifications”	Our efforts to reclassify the Chemistry undergraduate laboratory coordinators to a higher pay band to accurately reflect their duties and responsibilities have not been successful. Nevertheless, we remain committed to advocating for this initiative with central administration. This is essential not only for retaining our outstanding team but also for effectively recruiting new staff as our current employees advance into new opportunities in and outside the department.	OVPAD will help the department to work with UTM Human Resources to identify appropriate job classifications for their staff. Ongoing: Assistant Dean
	25.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department changes the	This change has been implemented.	Complete

		name of the 'Laboratory Technicians' to 'Laboratory Coordinators' to recognize their Master's and Doctoral educational level"		
	26.	Reviewers recommend "that the Department looks for opportunities to have technical support staff included on both faculty and support staff job recruitment panels"	• Senior technical staff served on the recruitment panels for two recent interviews for term Lab Coordinator positions. • Lab Coordinators are encouraged to attend faculty candidate talks and provide feedback to the hiring committee. • Lab Coordinators are encouraged to join departmental and UTM-wide committees. For example, some coordinators have served on CPS Outreach and EDI committees. Many current coordinators serve on UTM's Joint Health and Safety Committee.	OVPAD supports the department's efforts to include staff input on hiring decisions, to the extent possible, but we also note that hiring committees are often bound by collective bargaining and university wide policies.
The reviewers observed that inequities in divisional budget carry-forward policies constrain the Department's flexibility in supporting research and teaching. They recommended that divisional leadership	27.	Reviewers recommend "that the Department seeks to establish greater dialogue with the two other U of T campuses beyond UTM and with central U of T admin to establish greater financial parity across the three campuses in regard to	This has been conveyed to the administration as we would all like to see these points implemented. Lack of transparency and the precariousness of funding from year to year is perhaps the most significant challenge to developing and implementing strategic goals within CPS. We thank the external reviewers for highlighting this problem.	The Vice-Principal, Academic and Dean is working together with the UTM Vice-President and Principle to determine the feasibility of delegating authority of an academic budget to the Dean and which in turn would allow for more budgetary autonomy for units. This is a complex process because fiduciary responsibilities are articulated in the

engage in cross-campus dialogue to promote greater financial parity across campuses, clarify central finance guidelines, and support autonomy in expenditure decisions related to undergraduate teaching.		annual budget carry forward levels, greater clarity and transparency in central U of T finance guidelines, and greater autonomy in expenditure decisions relating to undergraduate teaching programs where appropriate”		policy that established UTM, which are different than those at Faculty of Arts and Science and other UofT academic divisions. Long Term: Dean
The reviewers commended the Department’s efforts to engage faculty, staff, and students through inclusive events and town halls that foster communication and a sense of community. They encouraged the Department to continue these practices and consider additional structures to support collegial relationships, information sharing, and collaboration across all constituent groups.	28.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department continue to engage its members, staff, and students through regular town hall meetings, which are fully inclusive of all stakeholders”	Townhalls open to all members of CPS will continue with the next one scheduled for February 2026.	Complete
	29.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department fully involves all members in Department events (e.g., awards celebrations, Open Houses, etc.), including tenured faculty, non-tenured staff (sessional instructors, TAs, technical staff, laboratory coordinators, administration) and the student body of both	CPS members will be invited to all community focused Departmental events including Award Celebrations, Holiday Parties and Town Halls. Technical and administrative staff are regularly invited to participate in UTM events such as Open Houses, Solar Eclipse Viewing, CPS Trivia Night, etc.	Ongoing: Department Chair

		undergraduate and graduate students”		
	30.	Reviewers recommend “that the Department grows the engagement with relevant programs with the two other U of T campuses, e.g., through proactively encouraging cross-campus small group ROPs which capture balanced levels of student academic attainment”	The challenges imposed by the distance between campuses makes this suggestion of promoting cross-campus ROPs inherently difficult. For lab-based sciences, the need to spend significant time in a lab at one campus while taking courses at another poses a real hurdle. In fact, St. George Chemistry will not accept UTM research students in their research courses, historically, these efforts have not been successful. Many of the CPS faculty have echoed these sentiments having previously attempted to supervise research students based at St. George during the academic term.	UTM, UTSC and FAS operate largely autonomous undergraduate programs. While undergraduate students can enrol in a limited number of courses from other campuses, which contribute to their degree programs, the autonomy of each academic division is a higher priority than integration at this time and this recommendation is not being pursued.
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	31.	“The 2017 Review suggested that it would be appropriate if the standards for entry into specialist programs were the same for all disciplines. Astronomy (no minimum grades) and Earth Sciences (minimums of 60% in some courses) are the two disciplines that should consider harmonizing entry	In CPS, at present, the minimum requirements for specialists to achieve in select introductory courses is between 60% and 65% across Physics, Chemistry and Earth Sciences. We do not feel it appropriate to set the identical criteria across all disciplines. While sitting within the same department, these disciplines are unique and should be allowed to maintain a reasonable level of autonomy.	OVPAD supports the department's decision not to harmonize program entry requirements and maintain separate admissions standards for its distinct disciplinary programs. This recommendation is not being pursued further.

		grades with Chemistry and Physics.”	Astronomy, however, does not specify a minimum for admissions to the specialist. Note, there are no Astronomy courses in the first year of the Astronomical Sciences Specialist program. A similar criterion will be imposed by requiring them to pass PHY146H5/147H5 with a minimum mark of 60%.	

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the Department of Chemical and Physical Sciences for delivering high-quality programs across Astronomy, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, and Physics, and for fostering strong connections between teaching and research. They highlighted the Department's distinctive interdisciplinary structure, which creates valuable opportunities for collaboration and innovation. The reviewers commended CPS faculty for their national and international recognition, including significant research funding and prestigious awards, and applauded the Department's commitment to student success through engaging instruction, well-equipped laboratories, and rich experiential learning opportunities such as Research Opportunity Programs and the Advanced Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory (AirLab). They noted effective responses to the previous review, including curriculum renewal, enhanced TA training, and improved laboratory facilities. The reviewers also praised the Department's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and described CPS as a collegial, well-led, and forward-looking department that sustains a dynamic and supportive academic community at UTM.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: continuing to nurture cross-disciplinary integration among Astronomy, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, and Physics, and exploring opportunities for expanding its academic programming at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; addressing concerns about variability in course content and expectations for shared foundational courses taught across disciplines and considering being more prescriptive in defining essential content, prerequisites, and learning outcomes to ensure alignment and consistency; providing more structured academic and career advising, particularly in navigating prerequisites and program sequences and establishing a formal mentoring framework to support early and ongoing student guidance; exploring ways to enhance support for ROPs, field courses, and undergraduate research experiences across disciplines; considering strategies to strengthen complement planning, reduce reliance on temporary appointments, and enhance mentorship and support for teaching staff; reviewing laboratory staffing and space needs and exploring opportunities to identify dedicated communal study areas to support safe, high-quality learning environments; reviewing role classifications and recognition mechanisms to better reflect staff qualifications and contributions, and considering structures to support mentorship and collaboration across technical teams; engaging in cross-campus dialogue to promote greater financial parity across campuses, clarify central finance guidelines, and support autonomy in expenditure decisions related to undergraduate teaching; and continuing to engage faculty, staff, and students through inclusive events and town halls that foster communication and a sense of community.

and considering additional structures to support collegial relationships, information sharing, and collaboration across all constituent groups.

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

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

Progress checks and monitoring of the implementation plan will occur through the Chair's Annual Report to the Dean.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than 2028-29 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in 2032-33.

6 Distribution

On August 15th 2026, 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 and Dean, University of Toronto Mississauga, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Classical Civilization (BA): Major, Minor History (BA): Specialist, Major, Minor History of Religions (BA): Specialist, Major, Minor Diaspora and Transnational Studies (BA): Major, Minor Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies (BA): Major, Minor History and Political Science (BA): Specialization (Joint with Political Science) South Asian Humanities, Minor Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Minor
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Historical Studies University of Toronto Mississauga
Commissioning Officer:	Professor William A. Gough Interim Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Professor Lisa L. Moore, University of Texas at Austin, USA • Professor Carolyn Muessig, University of Calgary, Canada • Professor Grant Nelsestuen, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA
Date of Review Visit:	February 10-11, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	July 7, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 23, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: February 9-10, 2017

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Impressive research productivity of both tenure-stream and teaching-stream faculty
- Increased faculty and staff complement since the previous review, in contrast to declines elsewhere in North America
- Increased number of graduates from both South Asian Civilizations and Classical Civilizations, and healthy enrolments in History of Religion and Women and Gender Studies
- Strong sense of community within the Women and Gender Studies program, and the innovative new Digital History courses in the History program

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Increasing tenure-stream faculty presence on the UTM campus to enhance classroom contact hours and student advising, co-curricular activities, the distribution of service responsibilities across teaching- and tenure-stream faculty and administrative staff, and department morale
- Investing in language training offerings for the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Minor as well as the South Asian Civilizations Minor
- Increasing experiential learning and out of classroom learning opportunities, to capitalize on the “cultural abundance” in the UTM campus area
- Enhancing the value of the unit as a whole by ceasing support for programs that do not appear to fit with the unit or at UTM; and moving healthy programs to other departments where they may be a better fit
- Working with the Dean’s Office to create unique experiences and partnerships within and beyond UTM that leverage the department’s unique array of programs and meet interdisciplinary goals

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study; Previous review report including the administrative response(s); Access to all course descriptions; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty.

Consultation Process

Faculty, students, administrative staff and senior program administrators as well as members of relevant cognate units as determined by the commissioning officer. In the case of professional programs, the views of employers and professional associates should be made available to the reviewers.

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
 - ▶ Collegial and scholarly strengths, including faculty and staff contributions, research activity, infrastructure, and governance, enhance the quality of academic programs and overall student experience
 - ▶ Department benefits from strong interdisciplinary programs that distinguish it from peer institutions, particularly in Classics, History, Religion, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS)
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Department is recognized for its broader focus beyond Greece and Rome, incorporating Anatolian, Persian, Etruscan, and Egyptian cultures, while also facing similar challenges common to small departments in maintaining upper-level language offerings
 - ▶ Department is nationally competitive, distinguishing itself through its interdisciplinary approach and its commitment to underrepresented traditions
 - ▶ Students in WGSS program benefit from exposure to diverse methodological approaches, including archival research, ethnography, and digital humanities
 - ▶ Faculty highlighted strong social integration across departmental programs, with emerging initiatives such as cross-listing and a new joint seminar series between Religion and History that foster intellectual integration and collegial collaboration.
 - ▶ Classical Civilization program offers a rare combination of hands-on learning within a research-intensive university, and the History program demonstrates exceptional geographical breadth

- Innovation
 - ▶ Digital humanities initiatives such as Visualizing the Americas and Queer Peel extend research beyond the university, demonstrating a commitment to knowledge mobilization and public accessibility
 - ▶ History of Religions program stands out for its methodological focus and inclusion of underrepresented traditions, which sets it apart from many North American counterparts
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ History of Religions program benefits from faculty expertise across a wide range of traditions, including Zoroastrianism and Indigenous North American traditions, offering a level of diversity that distinguishes it nationally
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Classical Civilization program promotes student engagement in research through faculty-led projects such as fieldwork in Cyprus, analysis of seal impressions from Maresha, and studies on ancient Mediterranean religion and material culture
 - ▶ History program integrates research with student learning by providing faculty mentorship on independent projects and creating opportunities for archival work and field-based inquiry
 - ▶ History of Religions program supports student involvement in research through mentorship, collaborative projects, and experiential learning, with faculty-led initiatives offering opportunities to engage with primary sources, digital humanities tools, and interdisciplinary approaches
 - ▶ Faculty in History of Religions program actively seek external funding, securing SSHRC grants and other awards that contribute to research excellence and enhance student learning opportunities
 - ▶ History of Religions demonstrates strong grant capture and a clear commitment to integrating student learning with cutting-edge research, supported through targeted funding for interdisciplinary projects and effective use of internal opportunities such as the Critical Digital Humanities Initiative, work-study programs, and Chancellor Jackman Fellowships
 - ▶ Faculty research in WGSS program is deeply embedded in mentorship and student engagement, with many offering opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to participate in research projects
 - ▶ WGSS program has been successful in securing funding for student engagement and mentorship, offering research assistantships and fellowships that integrate students into cutting-edge projects
 - ▶ History of Religions program maintains strong connections with UofT's Summer Abroad Office, creating expanded opportunities for international study
 - ▶ WGSS faculty are developing initiatives such as the Feminist Research Lab (FRL), which provides undergraduate students with research experience and interdisciplinary training in feminist methodologies
 - ▶ Programs have developed targeted events to enhance belonging, such as Classics and the World Today (CaWT), which engages undergraduate students in connecting ancient Mediterranean history to contemporary issues, such as the Muslim

Materialities Lecture Series (MMLS), which fosters interdisciplinary discussion of material culture, reflecting the Department's commitment to inclusivity, interdisciplinarity, and external engagement

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Department faces challenges in maintaining upper-level language offerings, a difficulty shared with other small departments
 - ▶ History program has emerging gaps in areas such as Middle Eastern history and the histories of Black Diaspora
 - ▶ WGSS program lacks a long-term hiring strategy to strengthen expertise in South Asian feminisms and to address gaps in research areas critical to student and scholarly interests
 - ▶ Declining enrolments present a significant challenge, as reduced course offerings limit curriculum diversity, and may further affect student recruitment and retention

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Strengthening outreach efforts, particularly in high school engagement, to enhance enrolment pipelines
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Assess language course enrollment in aggregate by considering the total number of students engaged in CLA courses rather than focusing only on upper-level enrollments, to better reflect the value of these offerings
 - ▶ Embed consistent and robust cross-listing across all programs in the department to broaden student access, increase interdisciplinary engagement, and strengthen department's social and intellectual life for both faculty and students
 - ▶ Use cross-listing to help counter reduced course offerings and related enrolment declines
 - ▶ Consider methodological synergies as opportunities for complementary cross-listing
 - ▶ Support coherence in the joint History and Politics program by having the History Program Director and a counterpart from Political Science meet twice a year to coordinate program planning and address curricular changes that could affect the joint degree
 - ▶ Consider increasing interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-listing of courses in History of Religions program to enhance research integration, address existing gaps, and strengthen program sustainability
 - ▶ Strengthen intellectual integration across the programs in Historical Studies by expanding initiatives such as cross-listing courses and building on new efforts like the joint Religion and History seminar series, which can enhance collegiality and help address gaps in program expertise

- ▶ Enhance the History program by increasing pre-modern coverage to complement its strong geographical breadth, while continuing to support the Classics program's distinctive integration of hands-on learning within a research-intensive environment.
- ▶ Explore sustainable solutions for Latin and Greek courses, such as integrating graduate students as modeled at McMaster and UTSG to help ensure continuity
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Build on department's strong international faculty presence and global partnerships by developing formal research exchange programs, visiting scholar initiatives, and joint graduate training opportunities
 - ▶ Build on department's SSHRC grant success by enhancing structured undergraduate research training and developing stronger graduate pathways to support research excellence and student success

2. Graduate Program(s) N/A

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Department, through its outstanding governance, research, teaching and notable collegiality, is delivering a remarkable academic, professional and educational experience for faculty, staff and students
 - ▶ Department's academic excellence is grounded in the strength of faculty scholarship and its integrating into teaching
 - ▶ Department delivers a high-quality academic experience through governance, research, and teaching, while cultivating a collegial environment
 - ▶ Department, with its innovative research and commitment to excellence in teaching, is uniquely positioned to be a cornerstone of this initiative
 - ▶ Dynamic programs exemplify the scholarly leadership necessary to drive this vision forward
- Research
 - ▶ Department is nationally competitive, distinguished by its interdisciplinary approach and commitment to underrepresented traditions
 - ▶ Classical Civilization faculty engage in diverse, interdisciplinary research spanning areas such as ancient Mediterranean networks, Roman religion, Hellenistic politics, and Latin poetry, supported by competitive grants and reflected in strong peer-reviewed publication records and active participation in national and international scholarly communities
 - ▶ Faculty expertise in the Classical Civilization program is well-balanced across different career stages, with junior, mid-career, and senior scholars contributing to a dynamic research environment
 - ▶ Limited-term faculty in the Classical Civilization program contribute important specializations to support the vibrancy of the program's research culture

- ▶ Teaching is strongly informed by active research, supported by the unit's significant grant capture, including numerous internal awards and six SSHRC grants (two Connection, two Insight Development, and two Insight).
- ▶ Faculty in the History program engage in a broad, interdisciplinary range of research across fields such as political economy, cultural studies, religious studies, visual culture, and environmental history, producing recognized scholarship including books, journal articles, edited volumes, public scholarship, and documentary filmmaking
- ▶ Faculty in the History program actively contribute to national and international research networks through editorial boards, high-impact research collaborations, and SSHRC-funded projects, placing them competitively among peers in Canada and abroad
- ▶ Faculty research in the History program demonstrates notable strength across areas such as the history of capitalism, colonialism, and global networks; the materiality of religion; Middle Eastern and Iranian historiography; visual and media culture; and environmental and Indigenous histories, reflecting a wide-ranging and analytically rich set of scholarly contributions
- ▶ History program has strong record of securing external research funding, including SSHRC Insight and Insight Development Grants, institutional awards, and international funding
- ▶ History faculty receive support for projects across diverse historical and interdisciplinary areas such as capitalism, colonialism, political economy, environmental history, gender and sexuality studies, and digital humanities
- ▶ History program's success in obtaining SSHRC funding for long-term collaborative projects highlights its leadership in advancing historical scholarship nationally and internationally
- ▶ Faculty in History program secure funding from diverse sources, including the Critical Digital Humanities Initiative, Jackman Humanities Institute, eCampus Ontario, and other institutional and external bodies
- ▶ History faculty research projects often employ innovative methodologies such as curating digital archives, developing new pedagogical approaches, and working within transnational and interdisciplinary frameworks
- ▶ History's ability to attract funding supports student mentorship through research assistantships, fostering a strong research culture
- ▶ History faculty success in obtaining awards such as the Alexander von Humboldt Research Renewal Grant enhances international research collaboration
- ▶ Ongoing external funding success ensures History faculty remain leaders in their fields strengthening the program's research profile and advancing the university's academic mission
- ▶ History of Religions faculty research is interdisciplinary and methodologically diverse, encompassing religious history, textual studies, material culture, and global intellectual traditions

- ▶ History of Religions faculty members contribute to scholarships in Jain studies, Buddhist monastic networks, Hebrew Bible and Dead Sea Scrolls research, Zoroastrian exegetical traditions, and Shi'i material culture
- ▶ History of Religions faculty consistently publish in leading academic presses and journals, reflecting a strong commitment to high-quality, peer-reviewed scholarship
- ▶ Faculty in the History of Religions program engage in translational projects, critical editions, and historiographical analyses that contribute to central debates in religious and historical studies
- ▶ History of Religions program maintains a strong research profile, with most faculty holding a strong funding record of research funding, including SSHRC Insight Grants
- ▶ Several faculty in the History of Religions program have published multiple sole-authored academic books
- ▶ [History of Religions program is well recognized for its expertise in South Asian religious traditions, a focus that will be further strengthened by endowed chairs in Jain and Sikh studies
- ▶ Faculty research in the History of Religions program employs diverse sources and methods, including ancient and modern texts in multiple languages, inscriptions, monuments, rituals, ethnographic studies, visual culture, and film, allowing a multifaceted exploration of religion and its societal impact
- ▶ Faculty in the History of Religions programs actively secure external funding, including SSHRC grants and other awards, which support research excellence and create valuable student learning opportunities
- ▶ Faculty in the History of Religions program have secured significant funding from national, international, institutional, and private sources to support research, pedagogy, public engagement, digital humanities, and student-focused initiatives
- ▶ Several faculty in the History of Religions program have been awarded SSHRC Insight Grants for major multi-year research projects on topics including Shi'i material culture, global Hinduism, and the historiography of South Asian and Middle Eastern religious traditions
- ▶ Faculty in the History of Religions program have secured targeted funding for interdisciplinary research on esoteric interpretations in Islamic thought, Himalayan religious networks, and marginalized mystical voices
- ▶ WGSS faculty actively publish in leading academic journals, engage in community-based research through art, media, and activism, and are nationally and internationally recognized through research awards, prestigious fellowships, and editorial contributions to scholarly publications
- ▶ WGSS faculty integrate mentorship and student engagement into their research, providing opportunities for undergraduate and graduate participation in research projects
- ▶ WGSS faculty secure competitive research grants, such as SSHRC Insight Grants and other institutional and external funding, supporting individual projects and program initiatives and position the program as a leader in feminist, diasporic, and intersectional studies

- ▶ WGSS program demonstrates strong research capacity such as SSHRC, the Canada First Research Excellence Fund, and the New Frontiers in Research Fund to support innovative and interdisciplinary projects
- ▶ Faculty in WGSS have secured funding for critical public scholarship on topics such as health, digital activism, and transnational feminist networks with institutional support enabling research on race, gender, and sexuality in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the African diaspora
- ▶ Faculty research in the department reflects a strong profile, marked by interdisciplinary excellence, robust grant capture, and meaningful student engagement
- ▶ Faculty members are recognized leaders in their fields, contributing to national and international research networks and advancing innovative scholarship
- ▶ Faculty engage in international collaborations, including projects such as the 'Translating Greek and Latin' with Justus Liebig University and Scuola Normale Superiore, and 'Overlooked,' a network dedicated to marginal conditions in Latin poetry
- Faculty
 - ▶ Faculty in the Classical Civilization program balance teaching and research effectively, with active participation in academic associations, collaborative projects, and conference presentations that align with leading national and international peers
 - ▶ Faculty in the History program include senior and mid-career researchers alongside emerging scholars who bring new perspectives to established areas of strength
 - ▶ Faculty in the History of Religions program demonstrate a strong dedication to teaching excellence, with multiple teaching awards, including the 3M National Teaching Fellowship
 - ▶ History of Religions program benefits from faculty expertise in pedagogy, including a leading scholar in the field and a faculty member who has secured substantial federal and provincial funding to develop extensive online course materials
 - ▶ Faculty in the History of Religions program include a balanced mix of senior and mid-career scholars
 - ▶ Department's international faculty bring diverse academic backgrounds and research expertise, strengthening its global outlook, interdisciplinary focus, and capacity for transnational collaboration
 - ▶ Department's international faculty and global partnerships support transnational research collaborations, enhancing its international presence

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

- Faculty
 - ▶ History of Religions program faces faculty availability challenges due to administrative secondments and fellowships, which are not typically offset by replacement hires, leading to periodic gaps in teaching coverage
 - ▶ History of Religions program faces EDI concerns, with limited representation of visible minorities and a significant imbalance among full-time faculty

- ▶ WGSS program faces structural challenges, including heavy reliance on sessional faculty and a recently untenured tenure-stream cohort, which affect curricular continuity and long-term development
- ▶ WGSS program faces a gap in expertise related to gender, migration, and human rights following a recent faculty retirement that has not been replaced
- ▶ WGSS program lacks a long-term hiring strategy to strengthen expertise in South Asian feminisms and to address gaps in research areas important to students and scholars
- ▶ WGSS program faces challenges in sustaining long-term faculty positions, with over-reliance on short-term contracts affecting curricular continuity
- ▶ WGSS program faces faculty shortages compared to similar programs, limiting long-term sustainability

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ Expand external partnerships by increasing engagement with government and professional organizations, as well as public history institutions, NGOs, and policy think tanks, to enhance departmental visibility and create more research and student opportunities
 - ▶ Build stronger community-based research partnerships by developing MOUs with local archives, Indigenous organizations, and community research groups to support long-term collaboration and reciprocal knowledge exchange
 - ▶ Diversify collaborative research initiatives by fostering more joint grant applications, particularly interdisciplinary SSHRC and international funding proposals, to create new research opportunities
- Faculty
 - ▶ Provide a 0.5 FCE mid-career faculty release from one of the Department's programs to act as a special advisor and Program Director for DTS over three years to assess the program's long-term viability
 - ▶ Retain the WGSS program within the Department and stabilize it by reinstating a professorial-level faculty position to provide leadership and mentorship, while also appointing a teaching-stream faculty member to strengthen curricular continuity, expand capacity, and support student recruitment
 - ▶ Ensure that each Program Director's 0.5 FCE teaching release is securely ringfenced to support program quality control and maintain a sustainable workload for Program Directors.
 - ▶ History program should continue investing in tenure-track positions to strengthen research capacity and sustain expertise, while maintaining vital contributions of teaching-stream faculty in pedagogy and curriculum innovation
 - ▶ Consider expanding strategic cross-listing in the History program to strengthen coverage in areas such as pre-modern global history, histories of the Black Diaspora, and Environmental History, with the latter offering notable potential for growth given student interest in environmental issues and possible future hiring opportunities

- ▶ Explore ways to address EDI in the History program by prioritizing greater gender balance and representation of visible minorities in future hiring and by supporting long-term faculty retention
- ▶ Consider directing future hiring in the History of Religions program toward areas such as Middle Eastern history and the histories of the Black Diaspora to address emerging gaps
- ▶ Pursue investments in tenure-track positions in the WGSS program to support long-term sustainability and strengthen its national and international profile
- ▶ Develop a strategic hiring plan in the WGSS program, including a professorial position and a teaching stream appointment, to reduce reliance on short-term contracts and enhance curricular continuity, research excellence, and student engagement
- ▶ Strengthen tenure-track positions, address gaps in underrepresented research areas, and enhance cross-disciplinary collaborations to sustain momentum and support the Department's continued success in building a dynamic, globally competitive research environment
- ▶ Further leverage the Department's international faculty presence and global partnerships through initiatives such as formal exchanges, visiting scholar programs, and joint graduate offerings, while also pursuing strategic efforts to formalize cross-disciplinary collaborations to support continued growth and innovation
- ▶ Reduce reliance on sessional instructors in areas such as WGSS and Diaspora and Transnational Studies by pursuing targeted investments in faculty positions to support program stability
- ▶ Address faculty shortages in the WGSS program through strategic hires or cross-appointments to support its long-term sustainability

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
 - ▶ Department fosters a strong sense of community expressed by students, staff, and faculty across all programs
 - ▶ Department provides a positive environment for people to flourish
 - ▶ Head of Department's leadership consistently fosters a supportive office culture and work-life balance
 - ▶ Various initiatives engage faculty, students, and external partners in developing a strong sense of community, such as the Department's *Bites and Boardgames* event and the WGSS *Feminist Lunch Series*, which have been instrumental in building student-faculty relationships

- ▶ Department maintains strong relationships with cognate departments and external academic and professional organizations, with programs actively engaged in cross-campus collaborations, research initiatives, and professional networks that enhance teaching, research, and scholarly impact
- ▶ Faculty across multiple programs engage with local and national communities through outreach and public-facing initiatives, including high school lectures in Classics, public humanities and community-based research in History, strengthened ties with Sikh and Jain communities in the History of Religions program, and community-engaged research in WGSS that informs initiatives such as Scholar Strike Canada
- ▶ History faculty maintain research relationships with archives, local libraries, and digital humanities initiatives, supported by the UTM Library's digital scholarship unit
- ▶ University of Toronto Mississauga Annual Classics Seminar Series (UTMACS) brings together faculty, students, and external scholars to discuss the relevance of classical studies in contemporary discourse
- ▶ In History, faculty partnerships with organizations such as ArQuives: Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives and Indigenous communities on residential school research demonstrate impactful public scholarship
- ▶ Faculty maintain strong links with the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion (CSSR) and the Ontario Classical Association, supporting engagement with broader academic and professional communities
- ▶ WGSS program maintains robust collaborations with the Queer and Trans Research Lab, Technoscience Research Unit, and Centre for Caribbean Studies, reinforcing interdisciplinary and intersectional scholarship
- ▶ Department has cultivated a strong network of relationships among faculty and students, with cognate academic units, and through broader community and institutional partnerships, significantly enriching research, teaching, and community engagement.
- ▶ Faculty-led partnership with institutions such as Justus Liebig University in Giessen, Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, and the University of the West Indies demonstrate the Department's notable international reach
- ▶ Department has cultivated strong academic relationships and community engagement, with a solid foundation in interdisciplinary research, external partnerships, and student-focused initiatives
- ▶ Priorities Funding initiative has supported student learning and engagement by enabling interdisciplinary events such as UTMACS and MMLS, which provide valuable opportunities for student-faculty interaction and research exposure
- ▶ Department demonstrates a strong commitment to interdisciplinary research, external partnerships, and student-focused initiatives, promoting a positive academic environment
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Recent implementation of Program Directors for each program supports quality control of teaching and learning

- ▶ Each Program Director (PD) provides careful oversight of their program, supported and guided by the Head of Department
- ▶ Staff are equally engaged with supporting the running of both the teaching and research agendas of the Department
- ▶ Department maintains a clear financial framework, with departmental funds supporting operations, teaching, research, and student needs, and faculty research funds supplemented by professional expense reimbursements and external grants from agencies such as SSHRC and the Mellon Foundation
- ▶ Access to specialized funding supports medium-term financial planning and enriches the student experience and administrative support
- ▶ Department's governance structure, outlined in its Constitution, ensures financial viability through a clear hierarchy of leadership, decision-making committees, and dedicated administrative support with oversight from the Executive Committee and targeted financial management by research and undergraduate committees
- ▶ Administrative roles, including the Department Manager and Financial Officer, enable efficient budget management, financial forecasting, and policy advising, contributing to the overall fiscal stability of the Department
- ▶ Head of Department, PDs and administrative staff are invested in ensuring a high academic standard and student experience
- International comparators
 - ▶ Classical Civilization program provides students with a personalized learning experience comparable to that of the US liberal arts colleges
 - ▶ History program combines teaching and research excellence comparable to leading US universities and liberal arts colleges, with faculty research spanning Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America, providing a distinctive international scope
 - ▶ History of Religions program compares well with leading North American counterparts, offering a secular, interdisciplinary perspective, strong methodological diversity, and distinctive coverage of underrepresented traditions such as Zoroastrianism, Jainism, and Sikhism
 - ▶ WGSS program aligns with comparable small programs in Canada and the US, while its faculty research in areas such as LGBTQ Studies, Black Studies, Indigenous Studies, migration, and transnational feminisms reflect leading trends in the field beyond the regional focus of many peers
 - ▶ Faculty in WGSS program secure competitive research grants, including SSHRC Insight Grants and other external and institutional funding, strengthening individual projects and program initiatives and positioning the program as a leader in feminist, diasporic, and intersectional studies

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

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Department faces financial constraints due to budget reduction strategies, including a 50% cut in discretionary funds and limits on carry-forward balances, requiring careful resource allocation and planning to maintain academic and research excellence

- ▶ Department's integrated administrative structure, which encompasses multiple distinct programs, presents challenges in articulating a unified vision and securing resources for specific academic needs
- ▶ Limited financial autonomy under the centralized budget model restricts the department's ability to reallocate funds toward strategic priorities such as faculty hiring and course continuity
- ▶ Restricted autonomy over budget allocation poses challenges, despite access to specialized funding that supports medium-term financial planning and student experience

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Strengthen internship partnerships with museums, libraries, and advocacy organizations to expand applied and experiential learning opportunities, enhancing student engagement and connecting academic learning with practical experience
 - ▶ Leverage department's strong international partnerships, such as those with Justus Liebig University, Scuola Normale Superiore, and the University of the West Indies, by pursuing strategic initiatives that expand global engagement
 - ▶ Consider developing formal research exchange programs, study abroad opportunities, visiting scholar appointments, or joint graduate training initiatives with international institutions
 - ▶ Strengthen inter-departmental collaboration by expanding structured interdisciplinary collaborations such as cross-listed courses, joint conferences, shared research groups, and, where feasible, cotaught courses to enhance academic and pedagogical synergies
 - ▶ Enhance community impact by increasing involvement with secondary education, local museums, and cultural organizations to expand public-facing engagement opportunities
 - ▶ Create global research clusters such as migration, colonialism, or environmental humanities to facilitate new interdisciplinary collaborations and external funding opportunities, and formalize international partnerships to strengthen the Department's role in global research and academic exchange
 - ▶ Build on Department's strengths in interdisciplinary research, partnerships, and community engagement by renewing its commitment to DTS, deepening interdepartmental collaboration, expanding government and professional partnerships, and increasing public-facing scholarship to enhance overall impact
 - ▶ Expand inter-campus and interdisciplinary collaborations, including cross-listed courses and shared graduate programs to strengthen faculty and student engagement and make more effective use of resources
 - ▶ Leverage international partnerships and develop stronger graduate research opportunities, particularly in WGSS and History, to elevate the Department's standing and long-term impact

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Encourage faculty across all programs apply annually to the Priorities Fund to support recruitment initiatives, strengthen academic community, raise program visibility, enhance the Department's identity, and work toward securing a permanent budget allocation for these efforts
 - ▶ Retaining the Financial Officer position beyond June 30, 2025, to ensure effective budget management and staff oversight, as eliminating the position would create undue administrative strain and hinder the Department's ability to sustain its current level of excellence and efficiency
 - ▶ Consider strategies for careful resource allocation and long-term planning to sustain academic and research excellence in the Department within the context of reduced discretionary funds and limits on carry-forward balances
 - ▶ Encourage all programs to consistently apply for Priorities Funding, as this could strengthen the case for incorporating it into the annual budget to support both recruitment efforts and research initiatives such as seminar series
 - ▶ Maintain the role of a financial officer to support effective budget oversight
 - ▶ Reassess the use of enrolment to determine the number of course offerings and hires, as current assumptions about course sizes remain inconclusive
 - ▶ Incorporate research support funding into grant applications, such as SSHRC, to enable a shared research associate position that can assist all faculty with grant applications and management
 - ▶ Pursue long-term funding for key staff positions, particularly in financial administration and research support, to maintain operational effectiveness and ensure continued growth
 - ▶ Retaining the Financial Officer beyond June 30, 2025, to ensure effective budget management and staff oversight and to prevent administrative strain as departmental budgets continue to grow
 - ▶ Encourage all programs to consistently apply to Priorities Funding
 - ▶ Explore opportunities to increase the Department's financial independence to better align resources with academic priorities
 - ▶ Explore external funding opportunities, optimize cross listing across programs, and advocate for sustainable financial models that support both research and pedagogical innovation
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Address faculty retention, enrolment sustainability, and financial planning to support the Department's long-term success
 - ▶ Pursue a limited number of strategic hires to provide the necessary resources for the Department to run efficiently
 - ▶ Prioritize investment in human resources, as the Department's primary need is staffing rather than equipment or overhead
 - ▶ Reassess the placement of WGSS within the Department as the program evolves to determine whether the Department remains the most suitable home

- ▶ Strengthen structured interdisciplinary collaboration, increase external engagement with professional organizations and policymakers, and diversify funding sources to ensure long-term program viability
- ▶ Explore the development of the U1M campus as a Humanities Hub to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and academic engagement
- ▶ Expand the Hub initiative to elevate the profile and impact of the humanities at U1M as a leader in interdisciplinary research and student-centered learning



Office of the Vice-Principal,
Academic & Dean

February 24, 2026

Professor Nick Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

RE: UTQAP cyclical review of the Department of Historical Studies and its programs

Dear Professor Rule,

Thank you for your letter of November 26, 2025 requesting the decanal administrative response to the February 10-11, 2025 review of the Department of Historical Studies and its programs: Classical Civilization, HBA (Major, Minor), History, HBA (Specialist, Major, Minor), History of Religions, HBA (Specialist, Major, Minor), Diaspora and Transnational Studies, HBA (Major, Minor), Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, HBA (Major, Minor), History and Political Science, HBA (Specialist) (Joint with Political Science), South Asian Humanities (Minor), and Latin American and Caribbean Studies (Minor).

On behalf of the University of Toronto Mississauga, we would first like to thank the reviewers, Prof. Lisa L. Moore, University of Texas at Austin, Prof. Carolyn Muessig, University of Calgary, and Prof. Grant Nelsestuen, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, for their comprehensive review of the Department of Historical Studies and its programs. We would also like to thank the Chair, Prof. Boris Chrubasik, and faculty, administrative staff, and all those who contributed to the preparation of the self-study. We also thank the many staff, students, and faculty members who met with the external reviewers and provided thoughtful feedback.

In their report, the reviewers indicated that the Department demonstrated delivering a remarkable academic and professional experience for faculty, staff, and students. They indicated that the Department achieves this due to their outstanding faculty and staff who operate with notable collegiality. Highlighted by the reviewers were the Department's accomplishment in creating personalized learning experiences for its students and research excellence, effectively emulating leading programs in North America.

In their report, the reviewers recommended assessing course enrolment, with an emphasis on upper-year courses, to enhance access and interdisciplinarity. They recommended regular coordination with cognate units for joint degrees to strengthen recruitment and the hiring of teaching-stream faculty, as well as retaining current staff structures to ensure operational efficiency and effective budget management.

The reviewers' recommendations have been addressed in the enclosed Review Recommendations Table that outlines the department's response, the decanal response, and the Implementation Plan identifying action items and timelines for each recommendation (immediate, medium, or long term). This administrative response was developed in consultation with senior leadership in my office and the Department of Historical Studies' Chair.



Office of the Vice-Principal,
Academic & Dean

Progress checks and monitoring of the implementation plan will occur through the Chair's Annual Report to the Dean. We also acknowledge your office will request a brief Interim Monitoring Report midway between the February 2025 review and the next cyclical review, which is scheduled to take place in the 2032-33 academic year.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the review report. The reviewers' comments and recommendations will help inform the future priorities of the Department of Historical Studies and its programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alison Syme".

Alison Syme
Acting Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean

Encl.: 2024-25 UTQAP Review of the UTM Department of Historical Studies – Review
Recommendations (table)

CC: Boris Chrubasik, Chair, Department of Historical Studies, University of Toronto Mississauga
Bryan Stewart, Vice-Dean, Academic Programs, University of Toronto Mississauga
Ferzeen Sammy, Manager, Academic Programs & Quality Assurance, University of Toronto Mississauga
Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance
Emma del Junco, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist
Stephanie Machado Fernandes, Administrator, Academic Programs



2024-25 UTQAP Review of the UTM Department of Historical Studies- Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, “it is important to note that, while the external reviewers’ report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability” (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean’s Response & Implementation Plan
The reviewers observed that declining enrolments and reduced course diversity pose challenges for program sustainability. They recommended expanding cross-listing across all programs in Historical Studies to enhance curricular integration, broaden student access, and foster interdisciplinary engagement.	1.	“The reviewers recommend embedding consistent and robust cross-listing across all programs in the Department of Historical Studies. Cross-listing would broaden student access to courses, increase interdisciplinary engagement, reverse the cycle of reduced course offerings that lead to further declines in enrollment, and enhance the social and intellectual life of the Department for both faculty and students. Methodological synergies should be kept in mind and tapped into as complementary cross-listing possibilities.”	While we believe the reviewers missed a few instances where many of our courses are already cross listed, we will explore this going forward along (to date) three avenues: 1) Consider a Historical Studies breadth requirement 2) Encourage colleagues who wish to teach in different programs to do so 3) Offer more [cross fertilization] outside of the curriculum. For example, starting in February, we will have a ‘research sharing lunch where students and	The Office of the Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean (OVPAD) will support the Department’s curricular development and course planning through the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate. OVPAD will work with the department to explore options for revising the curriculum to improve integration. Immediate to medium-term: Vice-Dean, Undergraduate

			faculty will be invited to a colleague's 'my research from last summer' event.	
	2.	"We recommend that DTS program have consistent and robust cross-listing with relevant courses in the other programs within Historical Studies, an activity that can be overseen by the Program Director."	See above #1 and below, #6.	See above, #1.
	3.	"The [History] program effectively utilizes existing human resources, but strategic cross-listing could further strengthen its profile in underrepresented fields such as pre-modern global history, histories of the Black Diaspora and Environmental History, which remain underrepresented."	We will consider other fields in our subsequent complement plan, while being mindful of steady state period for faculty complement.	See above, #1.
	4.	"Some faculty noted that while there is an excellent social integration across departmental programs, the next step was to create a more intellectual integration achieved by such initiatives as cross-listing certain courses of the different programs housed in Historical Studies. This would create further bonds of collegiality while enabling a richer palette of courses to complement programs where there might presently be gaps in expertise."	See #1 and 3.	See above, #1.
The reviewers noted challenges in maintaining upper-level language offerings in the Classical Civilizations program. They recommended assessing enrolments in aggregate across language courses to better reflect program demand and support the continuity of advanced instruction.	5.	"Given the importance of upper-level language instruction in maintaining a rigorous and competitive Classics program, we recommend that the Dean's office assess language course enrollment in aggregate, considering the total number of students engaged in CLA courses rather than singling out enrollments in upper-level language courses. Evaluation within the broader context of overall engagement with the Classics program will thus provide a more accurate measure of its impact and demand."	The program continues to be committed to offer Greek and Latin continuously to our undergraduate students. Best practices to build programs are annual offerings, and we will strive for that. The program is considering whether upper-level online delivery during the summer term could be explored, but only if this is pedagogically suitable.	OVPAD supports the academic planning process for all UTM academic units and provides guide documents for each planning cycle. The OVPAD will continue to work with the department to plan for capacity and enrolment monitoring in these courses. Immediate: Vice-Dean, Undergraduate

The reviewers noted concerns about faculty shortages and reliance on sessional instructors, particularly in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Diaspora and Transnational Studies. They emphasized the importance of sustaining program delivery through strategic complement planning, and the pursuit of targeted tenure- and teaching-stream faculty hiring as opportunities permit. They further recommended that complement planning consider equity, diversity, and inclusion priorities, with attention to gaps in both disciplinary coverage and faculty representation.	6.	“The reviewers recommend a 0.5 FCE mid-career faculty release from one of the Department's programs to act as a special advisor and Program Director for DTS over three years to assess the program's long-term viability.”	We recommend a special advisor to the Chair to investigate the viability and direction of the DTS program over three years. This project would require substantial time commitment over and above the 20% service load, and we therefore would need one 0.5 FCE course per year for the 3 years to allow sufficient time for the required work. Each year, the Advisor will submit a progress report to the Chair.	OVPAD, through the Vice-Dean Faculty will work with the department to identify appropriate administrative leadership and support for DTS. Immediate: Vice-Dean, Faculty
	7.	“Reviewers recommend that the WGSS program both remain in the Department of Historical Studies and be stabilized through the reinstatement of a faculty post at the professorial level, ensuring strong leadership and mentorship within the program. Additionally, the appointment of a teaching-stream faculty member would further enhance continuity in instruction, build curricular capacity in general, and attract more students both to the program and the Department.”	The department is committed to championing further WGSS positions in the tenure stream, and we will apply for it as part of upcoming complement requests.	OVPAD will continue to work with Historical Studies and all academic units at UTM to advance faculty hiring through our established faculty complement planning process. Ongoing: Vice-Dean, Faculty
	8.	“The reviewers recommend that the WGSS post be reinstated but at a professorial level, allowing for a leadership appointment regarding the development of the program and mentorship for WGSS faculty. We also recommend the appointment of a teaching stream faculty to stabilize the continuity of teaching on the program.”	See #7 above.	Same as above, #7. In addition, the OVPAD supports the department in determining areas of strategic deployment for faculty hiring. Ongoing: Vice-Dean, Faculty
	9.	“Given demonstrable student interest in environmental challenges, the last area [Environmental History], in particular, perhaps offers the most potential for growth in terms of enrollments and the faculty may wish to prioritize this field in the case of any replacement or new hires.”	The history program reserves the right to find its ideal complement as part of its next complement planning phase.	Same as above in #7, #8.



Office of the Vice-Principal,
Academic & Dean

	10.	“Additionally, the [History of Religions] program has identified areas of concern regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion: only two out of ten faculty members are visible minorities, and there is a notable gender imbalance, with only two full-time female faculty members. Addressing these gaps through future hiring and ensuring long-term faculty retention will be essential for sustaining the program's strengths while promoting greater diversity and inclusivity.”	This is an important issue to the department, and the department always works on diversifying its complement when it considers filling open positions.	OVPAD through the Vice-Dean Faculty will ensure that the department and its hiring committees are aware of strategies to increase the diversity of the applicant pool, as well as connecting the department to UTM and university diversity initiatives. Ongoing: Vice-Dean Faculty
	11.	“The faculty complement reflects a balance of senior and mid-career scholars, yet future hiring efforts could strategically address emerging gaps, particularly in Middle Eastern history and the histories of the Black Diaspora.”	See #9 above.	See above, #9.
	12.	“Strengthening tenure-track positions, addressing gaps in underrepresented research areas, and enhancing cross-disciplinary collaborations will ensure the Department's continued success in sustaining and further developing a dynamic and globally competitive research environment.”	See #9 above.	See above, #9.
The reviewers emphasized the value of stronger pedagogical and intellectual integration across Historical Studies programs. They recommended structured collaboration among Program Directors and faculty, including shared initiatives such as joint seminars and co-taught courses, to strengthen cohesion. They also highlighted the importance of ensuring that administrative structures provide appropriate support for Program Directors.	13.	“ Strengthening Inter-Departmental Collaboration - While relationships exist between different programs, there is potential for greater cross-pollination between faculty and research initiatives within the Department. Facilitating more structured interdisciplinary collaborations such as cross-listing courses across programs, joint conferences, or shared research groups could enhance academic synergies. If the administrative infrastructure can accommodate it, cotaught courses within and across programs would further integrate and embed intellectual and pedagogic synergies.”	See #1 above.	OVPAD will support the Department’s curricular development through the Vice-Dean, Academic Programs and Vice-Dean, Undergraduate. Any resulting proposal that affects faculty teaching load will benefit from consultation with the Vice-Dean, Faculty. Medium-term: Vice-Dean, Undergraduate
	14.	“To support coherence in the joint History and Politics program, the reviewers recommend that the History	This is implemented for summer 2026.	OVPAD thanks the reviewers for their recommendation and will support the



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Academic & Dean

		Program Director and a counterpart from Political Science meet twice a year to coordinate program planning and address any curricular changes that might impact the joint degree.”		department in this ongoing interdepartmental cooperation.
	15.	“We recommend that each Program Director's 0.5 FCE release from teaching be securely ringfenced to ensure the quality control of the programs and work life balance of PDs.”	We agree that the PD positions are vital for the sustainable operation of HS’s programs and the program’s individual needs.	OVPAD, through the Vice-Dean Faculty, will work with the department to identify appropriate administrative leadership and support for the department's programs. Immediate: Vice-Dean, Faculty
The reviewers commended the Department’s strong community and international partnerships, and encouraged it to build on these strengths through continued external collaboration and experiential learning. They suggested exploring ways to deepen engagement with community, cultural, and professional organizations, and to pursue opportunities for applied, interdisciplinary, and international collaboration that enhance both research and student experience.	16.	“ Expanding External Partnerships - Although faculty have established notable research collaborations, increasing engagement with external government and professional organizations could further elevate the Department's visibility. Strengthening relationships with public history institutions, NGOs, and policy think tanks could create additional pathways for research application and student opportunities.”	The Department is highly supportive of the creation of external partnerships when they are driven by faculty research.	We appreciate the initiatives already undertaken and planned by the department in this area. OVPAD will help to facilitate connections between the department and e OVPRI for additional supports and resources related to research partnerships. We also encourage engagement with UTM Advancement.
	17.	“ Enhancing Community Impact - Increased involvement with secondary education, local museums, and cultural organizations would provide more public-facing engagement opportunities.”	The department is actively pursuing opportunities to increase its outreach to secondary institutions.	The OVPAD provides administrative support and funding for community engagement and internships through its Experiential Education Unit (EEU). The EEU works with both internal and external partners to create and further develop experiential learning opportunities. Medium term: Associate Dean, Academic Experience
	18.	“ Developing More Applied and Experiential Learning Opportunities for Students - Strengthening internship partnerships with museums, libraries, and advocacy organizations could enhance student	The department is cognisant about the opportunities of experiential learning and internships. We are actively working with the Experiential education unit to	See above, #17.

		engagement and bridge academic learning with practical experience.”	increase our capacity with local institutions.	
	19.	Building Stronger Community-Based Research Partnerships - Developing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with local archives, Indigenous organizations, and community-based research groups could enhance long-term collaboration and ensure reciprocity in knowledge exchange.”	See #16 above.	Research partnerships are administratively situated in the OVPRI and OVPAD will facilitate interactions between OVPRI and the department, should they wish to pursue community-based research partnerships.
	20.	“Diversifying Collaborative Research Initiatives - While faculty participate in major grants and research networks, fostering more joint research applications-particularly interdisciplinary SSHRC or international funding proposals-could lead to new collaborative opportunities.”	If [interdisciplinary integration as mentioned above in #1] is successful, this will naturally translate into more joint research application if it is applicable. Successful research initiatives are only viable if they are initiated by faculty.	OVPAD encourages the department and faculty members to continue to work with the Office of the Vice-Principal, Research & Innovation (OVPRI) for all supports and resources related to external research funding. Medium to long-term: Department Chair and Vice-Principal, Research & Innovation
The reviewers emphasized that effective administrative and financial coordination is essential to the Department’s continued success. They recommended maintaining sufficient administrative capacity and engaging in strategic, multi-year financial planning to sustain operations and support growth. They also encouraged continued use of divisional funding mechanisms such as the Priorities Fund, and alignment of departmental planning with broader divisional priorities.	21.	“While the Department benefits from centrally allocated budgets, it faces financial constraints due to budget reduction strategies, including a 50% reduction in discretionary funds and limits on carry-forward balances. These financial restrictions necessitate careful resource allocation and strategic planning to maintain the Department's academic and research excellence.”	Even before recent budget reduction, HS has been very careful to be fiscally prudent (including off-setting staff complement requests through reorganisations and eliminations of positions). That said, the current budget model does not allow HS long-term planning for its operations or the implementation of creative strategic initiatives for cost containment.	The Vice-Principal, Academic and Dean is working together with the UTM Vice-President and Principal to determine the feasibility of delegating authority of an academic budget to the Dean and which in turn would allow for more budgetary autonomy for units. This is a complex process because fiduciary responsibilities are articulated in the policy that established UTM, which are different than those at Faculty of Arts and Science and other UofT academic divisions. Long Term: Dean

	22.	“The reviewers recommend that faculty on all programs apply annually to the Priorities Fund to support recruitment initiatives, with the goal of building academic community for faculty and students, raising the visibility of the respective programs and enhancing the identity of the Department as a whole, and eventually securing a permanent budget allocation for these efforts.”	We wholeheartedly agree with this recommendation and have been very active with the Priorities Fund since its inception. Yet it should also be noted that with more financial autonomy, the administrative burden of applying for and adjudicating priorities would not be necessary.	The OVPAD offers Priorities Funding on a yearly basis through a call for proposals from departments, not individual faculty members. OVPAD will continue to support the department in its request for resources through this program, within existing financial constraints Ongoing: Assistant Dean
	23.	“We recommend retaining the Financial Officer beyond June 30, 2025, as this role has been essential to the Department's operational success, allowing for more effective budget management and staff oversight. Given the significant increase in budgets, eliminating this position would create undue administrative strain and hinder the Department's ability to sustain its current level of excellence and efficiency.”	We have secured the position up to June 30, 2026, through a combination of cost-containment and cost sharing with the Black Research Network. Ad-hoc funding from OVPAD has allowed the position to operate at 100% until June 30, however we will have a shortfall of 30% FTE after that date. It is essential for the operation of HS to have this position continued.	The OVPAD will continue to work with the Department to assess administrative staffing levels and, as necessary, work with the department to make appropriate staff level requests through the existing campus resourcing process. Immediate to medium-term: Assistant Dean
	24.	“During our visit, administration introduced the idea of transforming the UTM campus into a Humanities Hub, a vision with significant potential for advancing interdisciplinary collaboration and amplifying academic engagement. While we did not examine the specifics in detail, it is evident that the Department of Historical Studies, with its innovative research and commitment to excellence in teaching, is uniquely positioned to be a cornerstone of this initiative.”	As an inherently interdisciplinary department with four constituent areas, Historical Studies is a mainstay of Humanities education at UTM. We would welcome the opportunity to be a key player in the championing of Humanities education at UTM. Colleagues have also invested significant labour in Humanities projects that the division ended up not supporting at this time.	The UTM Humanities Project is a long-term project to discuss undergraduate education in the humanities, involving all relevant departments and OVPAD. Ongoing: Dean, Assistant Dean, Vice-Dean, Academic Programs; Vice-Dean Undergraduate

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers commended the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies (HCS) as a distinctive and innovative unit with a strong sense of integration across its four program areas. They highlighted the curriculum's cross-pollination and incorporation of experiential and interdisciplinary learning. Students report high levels of satisfaction, noting engaging teaching, welcoming classroom environments, and valuable opportunities for research and co-curricular engagement. Faculty are recognized for their impressive research productivity and international collaborations, and recent strategic hires further enhance the department's reputation and community connections. Finally, the reviewers noted HCS's collegial and supportive culture, effective leadership and administration, and its productive partnerships across UTSC and beyond.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: engaging in strategic complement planning to correct the imbalance in HCS faculty ranks and to support enhanced coverage in Classics/Ancient World Studies and Latin American history, while also clarifying processes and strengthening supports for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty in relation to promotion and career progression; exploring ways to improve stability for part-time and CLTA faculty, including more timely communication around contracts and course allocations to support curricular planning and strengthen community; encouraging open communication and collaboration between the Department and the Dean's Office to address tensions related to strategic planning and priorities, particularly around enrolment pressures, experiential learning, and new initiatives; focusing departmental planning on a clear set of strategic priorities to avoid overextension as HCS pursues certificates, combined degree programs, and other initiatives alongside existing offerings; working with divisional leadership to clarify and address bureaucratic and structural barriers affecting departmental operations, including course double-numbering and cross-unit teaching; and enhancing the visibility of HCS programs through more active marketing and communications that highlight faculty expertise, diversity, and the department's strong sense of community.

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

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

Progress checks and monitoring of the implementation plan will occur through the Chair's Annual Report to the Dean.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than 2028-29 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in 2032-33.

6 Distribution

On August 15th, 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Interim Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean of the University of Toronto Mississauga, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan - DRAFT

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Classical Studies: Minor (Arts) Global Asia Studies (BA): Specialist, Major, Minor History (BA): Specialist and Co-op, Major and Co-op, Minor Religion, Minor (Arts) (suspended to new enrolments effective 2013-14) Women's and Gender Studies (BA): Major and Co-op, Minor Combined Degree Programs with OISE MT
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, UTSC
Commissioning Officer:	Vice-Principal Academic & Dean, UTSC
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Dr. Muriel Gomez-Perez, Professor, Department of Historical Sciences, Université Laval • Dr. Kristin Stapleton, Professor and Chair, Department of History, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York
Date of Review Visit:	February 12-13, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	June 18, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 11, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: April 4-5, 2018

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Enthusiastic and collegial faculty, staff, and students
- Students satisfied with the quality of instruction
- Department leverages the unique location of Scarborough within many programs and courses to explore relationships between the local and global
- Faculty with active research agendas, impressive international reputations and scholarly achievements, and commitment to undergraduate teaching
- Impressive tenure granting rate with system supporting the process

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Resolving inconsistencies with information and practices surrounding faculty tenure, promotion and leaves, and providing clear guidance and mentoring for faculty members and support for new chairs
- Addressing administrative barriers that prevent faculty from teaching courses across programs, departments and campuses
- Engaging in consultation with cognate units regarding complement planning for Women's and Gender Studies, and History programs
- Increasing faculty-student interactions in response to challenges posed by being a commuter campus
- Continuing to build a cohesive unit and developing formal procedures for departmental committees
- Changing staffing resources and structures to better support the department's needs
- Reviewing and revising the curriculum to improve the coherence of courses and minimize competition across programs, and to scaffold the development of skills and content knowledge in first to fourth year courses
- Addressing the gap between courses listed in the calendar and courses that are regularly available
- Improving the co-op for humanities students or developing other experiential learning opportunities
- Providing additional writing support for undergraduate students

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study, with supporting data and appendices provided in separate uploaded files; Review report template; Site visit schedule; Previous review report including the administrative response(s); Access to all undergraduate course and program descriptions; Access to syllabi for all undergraduate courses; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty; Links to the UTSC Strategic Plan 2020-25, University of Toronto Virtual Reality Tour, Interactive Campus Map, and UTSC Viewbook.

Consultation Process

Decanal group; faculty; students; administrative staff and senior program administrators as well as members of relevant cognate units, including the Arts & Science Co-op Office, the Office of the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation, the Office of the Registrar, and the UTSC Library.

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
 - ▶ Department offers innovative programs in four interrelated areas of study
 - ▶ HCS programs appear in some respects to be at the forefront of their disciplines, particularly in their encouragement of interdisciplinary engagement, and promotion of experiential learning
 - ▶ History (HIS) program is successful and well-known to students, and emphasizes transnational perspectives
 - ▶ Classics program distinctive for its geographic breadth and its thematic emphasis on empire and colonialism
 - ▶ Global Asia Studies program emphasizes transnational comparisons and connections, and has a distinctive strong focus on China and South and West Asia
 - ▶ Women's and Gender Studies program is well-known to students and has contributed to rethinking the field by incorporating new approaches into the curriculum, including intersectional, transnational, and postcolonial perspectives
- Objectives
 - ▶ HIS program offers Specialist, Major, and Minor options, emphasizing geographical breadth in course selection and encouraging exposure to different historical periods
 - ▶ All four HCS programs share a common mission "to help students build the knowledge and skills they need to understand inequities in historical and

contemporary societies”; reviewers note that this mission seems appropriate and aligned with UTSC goals articulated in the *Scarborough Charter* and related documents

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Enrolments in the Women’s and Gender Studies majors are relatively stable
 - ▶ HCS programs have no admission requirements, and the department is attentive to shaping and representing the programs in ways that resonate with UTSC students
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Faculty who administer and deliver HCS programs are dynamic scholars and accomplished teachers
 - ▶ HCS has worked very hard since its last review to develop program curricula in ways that support the unit’s shared goals
 - ▶ HCS faculty have devoted much thought to the curricula of the programs they oversee, and the extent to which the programs support one another is impressive
 - ▶ Much cross-pollination observed across HCS’s four programs, with many faculty teaching in more than one program, and courses double-numbered to comprise part of the curricula for two programs
 - ▶ Classics offers lower-level courses that attract a significant number of students seeking interesting electives; despite the program’s small size, enrolments are “truly impressive”
 - ▶ Classics program is distinctive for its focus on the early Islamic world, and its intentional emphasis on decolonial approaches
 - ▶ Classics has a newly strengthened tie to the Royal Ontario Museum, which may have positive impacts on experiential learning opportunities
 - ▶ Plan to revise the Classics curriculum to offer students more flexibility seems well-considered and appropriate
 - ▶ Core faculty in the Global Asia studies program are specialists on China and South and West Asia, but place emphasis on the greater global context and have productive collaborations with a number of cognate units
 - ▶ Majors and Specialists in Global Asia studies have access to learning opportunities at UTSC in languages including Mandarin, Cantonese, Tamil, and Hindi
 - ▶ HIS curriculum spans global history, covers a broad range of topics, and many courses offer transnational perspectives
 - ▶ HIS curriculum emphasizes reading, research and writing skills, and offers opportunities for interdisciplinary learning
 - ▶ Women’s and Gender Studies program takes an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach, with courses emphasizing transnational and decolonial perspectives; it offers valuable experiential and engaged learning opportunities connected to social justice activism
 - ▶ Faculty expertise in the Women’s and Gender Studies program offers students a variety of perspectives on feminism
 - ▶ There are four levels of courses in all HCS programs; this structure appears coherent and well-organized

- ▶ All four HCS programs provide enough courses for their students to complete academic requirements
- Innovation
 - ▶ Department exploring how best to engage in new programs such as the Certificate in Pathways to Health Professions, designed to give STEM students a grounding in health-related social science and humanities courses; HCS aims to concentrate on and strengthen existing areas of expertise
 - ▶ Department launched a pilot course this year designed to serve students affiliated with the Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health (SAMIH)
 - ▶ HCS is exploring the development of certificate programs around particular themes, and a potential collaboration with the iSchool on a combined degree program
 - ▶ UTSC offers Combined Degree Programs that allow students to pursue both undergraduate and graduate studies, including pathways that connect the History Specialist or Major with a Master of Teaching degree
 - ▶ HCS programs introduce transnational and intersectional approaches that move beyond single-region or traditional frameworks, with innovative course offerings across all four programs
 - ▶ Student communication skills are developed using varied and innovative methods; Women's and Gender Studies emphasizes art-based teaching; Global Asia Studies distinguishes itself from UTSG offerings and identifies goals of growth, language integration, and expertise in the Islamic world of Asia
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Course titles reflect a departmental focus on equity, decolonization and anti-racism
 - ▶ "The teaching objective in HCS is to put into practice Indigenous, anti-colonial, and anti-racist perspectives"
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students appear to greatly value the education they receive
 - ▶ Faculty and staff report receiving very positive feedback from students
 - ▶ Students interviewed report that they find their courses stimulating and engaging, and note a strong preference for in-person classes
 - ▶ Co-op streams are available to HIS students, however faculty believe that other forms of experiential learning are a better fit for students
 - ▶ Surveys indicate that students appreciate the range and flexibility of HIS course offerings
 - ▶ Student surveys indicate that HCS faculty create welcoming environments in their courses
 - ▶ Conversations with HCS students indicate that the department's mission is being conveyed through coursework
 - ▶ UTSC offers many forms of supports to students, particularly international learners
 - ▶ HSC student satisfaction appears overall very high
 - ▶ Undergraduate students have access to specialized research and a range of conceptual, methodological, and pedagogical approaches; and the majority of surveyed HCS students note that their programs provide opportunities for interdisciplinary learning

- ▶ Students benefit from faculty research, which is shared both in the classroom and when faculty invite colleagues to campus for speaking events and conferences
- ▶ Some students have participated in experiential learning opportunities through faculty research projects
- ▶ Department offers tutorials for core courses and many opportunities for extra-curricular learning via talks and events
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Number of HCS students on the Dean’s list has increased significantly
 - ▶ Course evaluations show improvements in the quality of students attracted to the HIS major and minor
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ HIS alumni have pursued graduate studies at a variety of well-regarded institutions

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

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Decline noted in enrolments in HCS Majors, though reviewers note this is likely connected to broader trends in humanities education
 - ▶ HIS has faced some challenges in recent years adapting to the transfer of the African Studies and Food Studies minors to other units, which involved rethinking teaching priorities and the departure of several affiliated faculty
 - ▶ Classics program is handicapped by the small faculty size and lack of resources for language instruction
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ GAS program notes declining major and minor enrolments in recent years (though it has relatively stable course enrolments)
 - ▶ HIS specialist enrolments have plateaued in recent years, majors have declined (though minors have increased)
 - ▶ Enrolments in the Women’s and Gender Studies minor have been somewhat variable, and enrolments in the co-op major are very low
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Offering core courses at the A-level by senior faculty noted as a challenge
 - ▶ Faculty desire to engage in the graduate programs where they hold appointments pulls them in multiple directions, and creates some challenges for curriculum planning
 - ▶ Faculty report concerns about their capacity to continue to offer robust curricula in each of the programs and to review and update curricula regularly
 - ▶ HIS faculty report that pressure to increase enrolments by adding lower-level courses has resulted in fewer D-level offerings
 - ▶ A noted weakness of the Classics program is its inability to offer instruction in Latin, Greek and Arabic
 - ▶ Language requirements in Global Asia Studies programs are frequently waived, though reviewers note that some degree-seeking students may enter the program with a command of one or more Asian language

- ▶ “It is quite striking that UTSC has few if any course offerings related to Northeast Asia and that the topic was not addressed in the GAS section of the self-study”
- ▶ GAS faculty report that students in the program have noted concern about the relatively low number of courses available to them, and limited progress has been made since the last review on reducing barriers that prevent faculty in other units from teaching courses in the program
- ▶ HIS offers very few courses in Latin American history, and no faculty member is a specialist in this area
- ▶ Full-time faculty in the Women’s and Gender Studies program have appointments in a variety of graduate units, which limits their capacity to support the program
- Innovation
 - ▶ Potential new certificates have not been conceived as a means to recruit new students into the majors or specialists, and may further restrict faculty capacity to teach D-level courses in existing programs
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Department could face a decline in international student enrolments, due to recent governmental measures aimed at reducing the ratio of international admissions
 - ▶ Reviewers note that a reduction in international admissions could be very challenging for HCS, which offers courses on the home regions of many international students
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Assessment of teaching and learning beyond grading appears to be done somewhat informally in each program
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ “One obvious barrier to the excellence of the programs lies in the relative lack of support for faculty-organized experiential learning opportunities”
 - ▶ The co-op program does not appear to reliably offer HCS students opportunities to deepen disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills
 - ▶ Reviewers report some difficulty assessing the level of student engagement in the department outside of classes
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Only the HIS program provided evidence of strong student outcomes in the HCS self-study
 - ▶ Reviewers note a lack of access to comparative data from other units, campuses and provincial or national sources to inform their assessment of HCS outcomes

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Objectives
 - ▶ Reviewers endorse the Department’s plan to change the name of the Classics program to “Ancient World Studies”; however they note that if this name change takes effect, efforts should be made to ensure the program is still visible to potential students who “continue to think in terms of the concept of ‘Classics’”

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Reviewers note that the creation of a Classics major is “inadvisable”, due to the lack of language learning opportunities
 - ▶ Encourage students in Global Asia Studies to pursue language studies, and ensure that supports for language study are made visible on the program’s webpage
 - ▶ Given pressure to increase enrolments, the unit might consider offering courses in Japanese and Korean culture, which have proven very popular at other institutions
 - ▶ Consider enhancing clarity and communications around the current regional emphases of the GAS program
 - ▶ Consider assigning experienced professors to HIS A-level courses, to recruit more History majors
- Innovation
 - ▶ HCS should carefully consider the possible impacts of new initiatives such as certificates and combined programs on faculty and staff workload
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ “Online instruction does solve some problems of accessibility and might give students more course options. But the feeling among faculty and students that humanities courses work best in face-to-face communal settings is shared widely”
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Explore the development of more systematic practices to assess student achievement, in consultation with divisional leadership
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ HCS faculty seem prepared to expand experiential learning opportunities beyond co-op offerings, but would require course release and other forms of support to enable such initiatives; reviewers recommend strengthening supports for forms of experiential learning involving small groups of students
 - ▶ Student surveys indicate a desire for more resources, such as internships and additional mentorship programs involving senior faculty
 - ▶ Reviewers endorse plans to prioritize tutorials for A-level courses
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Reviewers recommend that HCS collect data on alumni employment outcomes, and graduate program applications

2. Graduate Program(s) – n/a

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ HCS faculty are extremely productive, and fully engaged in their various disciplines
 - ▶ High caliber of academic leadership noted in the Classics program, which has an international influence

- Research
 - ▶ HCS faculty are very active researchers in terms of publications and grants; “[the] Department’s work is truly impressive”
 - ▶ Faculty research is notable for its global reach and diverse forms of dissemination, with strong publications, international collaborations, grants, and awards
 - ▶ Several HIS faculty members have received prestigious research awards, several faculty are key members of international research networks, and many engage in collaborative work from interdisciplinary perspectives
 - ▶ Part-time faculty and CLTAs are satisfied with their access to departmental funding for research
- Faculty
 - ▶ Two senior HCS appointments were made in the past year, and both bring impressive records to the department: the Tamil Studies Chair, and a distinguished professor in Black Canadian studies (reviewers highlight these as evidence that UTSC leadership appreciates the department’s work)
 - ▶ Hiring of Tamil Chair is an exciting development, which will more closely connect the institution with the Tamil diaspora community, and allow UTSC to become a global leader in Tamil studies
 - ▶ New faculty report feeling enthusiastic about joining the department, and welcomed by colleagues
 - ▶ GAS is prioritizing recruitment of an expert in Global Sinophone Languages and Cultures, which could also be helpful for the English-Chinese Translation program in the Department of Language Studies
 - ▶ Women’s and Gender Studies program has benefited from the recent hiring of two new faculty members, who join a strong cohort of colleagues
 - ▶ Chair has devoted considerable efforts to hiring teaching stream and part-time faculty in recent years to decrease reliance on sessional instructors
 - ▶ At the time of the review, the department had authorization to hire a senior colleague in Indigenous Histories of Environmental Justice, and outlined proposed future hires in Public History, Intersectional Indigenous Histories of Health and Medicine, and Global Sinophone Languages and Cultures (cross-appointed with the Department of Language Studies)

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

- Faculty
 - ▶ HCS has very few full professors for the size of the faculty, which leads to workload inequities
 - ▶ Some teaching stream faculty report a lack of clarity regarding promotion guidelines
 - ▶ Faculty note concerns that part-time teaching staff were not given contracts for the 2024-25 academic year in a timely manner
 - ▶ CLTA and part-time faculty play important roles in strategic curriculum planning, though some faculty noted that the precariousness of these positions raises questions about investing in this work

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ Work to strengthen the balance between junior and senior faculty
 - ▶ Provide promotion supports for faculty; the unit will benefit greatly from the advancement of its “talented and engaged” associate professors
 - ▶ Work to reduce the precarity of part-time and CLTA faculty, and ensure that contracts and course allocations are provided in a timely manner; this will promote course visibility, enable more effective curricular planning, and foster a more cohesive departmental community
 - ▶ Reviewers endorse a proposal to prioritize hiring an expert in public history, which could support initiatives such as the Scarborough Oral History Project digital archive, the potential development of a certificate in Digital History, and a combined degree program with the iSchool
 - ▶ Prioritize the recruitment of junior faculty, particularly to strengthen coverage in Classics/Ancient World studies, and Latin American studies
 - ▶ HCS priorities for future hiring seem well-considered, but should be revisited regularly and transparently, as the departmental and institutional landscape evolves
 - ▶ Clarify promotion guidelines for teaching-stream faculty to ensure transparency and help colleagues prioritize their work effectively

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
 - ▶ “Clearly HCS faculty and staff care deeply about UTSC’s mission to be of service to its students and the communities from which they come”
 - ▶ HCS community morale appears healthy, and staff, faculty and students report feeling welcomed by departmental colleagues
 - ▶ Current leadership is credited with strengthening departmental community and atmosphere, and is reported by faculty to be an innovative collaborator on developing new courses and initiatives
 - ▶ Program Coordinators and Committee Chairs appear very dedicated to organizing and scheduling course offerings
 - ▶ Library staff are enthusiastic participants in departmental life, both as resources for students and collaborators with faculty
 - ▶ An ongoing partnership with the UTSC Library and the Dragoman Renaissance Research Platform is noted as productive
 - ▶ HCS faculty work closely with colleagues in other units

- ▶ Recent hires in Tamil studies and Black Canadian studies expected to further strengthen impressive record of local, national and international social impact
- ▶ “The collaboration with the library to establish a Tamil archive of special collections, print and rare private papers is a wonderful project”
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Plans noted to expand the work of UTSC’s co-op program with humanities departments, and add a central staff position and a community engagement office to support these efforts
 - ▶ Department is fortunate with regard to its physical space and library resources
 - ▶ “Our conversations with the chair and departmental staff convince us that departmental resources are in very good hands”
 - ▶ Current HCS leadership has helped the department establish governance documents and procedures
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Programs appear to be very effective, despite relatively limited resources
 - ▶ The composition of HCS is unique, and has “created the conditions for a lively, innovative academic unit”

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

- Relationships
 - ▶ Reviewers highlight ongoing frustration stemming from a lack of mutual understanding between the department and the Dean’s office regarding institutional and departmental priorities, including initiatives such as the health professions certificate and the Co-op program; they note that without improved communication and support, departmental morale and work may be negatively impacted
 - ▶ “Many faculty believe that the department’s mission to offer UTSC students critical perspectives on history, gender, and contemporary society—including anti-colonial, transnational, intersectional, and interdisciplinary perspectives, public history, and global humanities—is not sufficiently valued by administrators”
 - ▶ Some faculty question the institution’s appreciation of departmental research efforts
 - ▶ Concerns raised about faculty morale, due in part to a lack of feedback from leadership on the unit’s 2024 strategic plan, and a lack of clarity regarding course and program enrolment priorities
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ New faculty note concerns about the level of staff support available to HCS, and potential impacts on their contributions to UTSC and the communities it serves
 - ▶ Some faculty and staff note concerns that central units appear to be focused primarily on the needs of other programs; some also note that working with central units is cumbersome and time-consuming
 - ▶ Ongoing bureaucratic barriers including issues with course double-numbering and cross-departmental teaching responsibilities continue to create uncertainty and hinder the department’s work

- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Department facing many challenges at a time when financial resources are limited
 - ▶ “the new UTSC emphasis on medicine and allied health studies is seen by many in the department as changing the nature of the institution and diverting resources and attention from the humanities”
 - ▶ Reviewers note some tension between the divisional and institutional emphasis on both enrolment figures and experiential learning, “since to be effective the latter requires a considerable investment of faculty time in a relatively small number of students”
 - ▶ Faculty report that pressure is being put on the unit to make courses more profitable, for example by increasing class sizes; however many HCS faculty emphasize the value of intensive engagement with students in smaller classes (though UTSC does not appear to have developed or employed metrics that measure the effectiveness of different modes of teaching)
- International comparators
 - ▶ “Given the unusual combination of four programs that make up HCS, it is difficult to compare it to other departments around the world”

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Reviewers urge HCS faculty and divisional leadership to engage in constructive dialogue to strengthen mutual understanding and respect, and encourage more effective collaboration
 - ▶ Faculty note desire for divisional and institutional leadership to help find effective ways to make HCS programs more visible to potential students; UTSC recruitment staff could work with HCS faculty on customized promotional initiatives
 - ▶ Explore opportunities to improve HCS marketing and communications, such as producing short videos that showcase faculty diversity, expertise, research, and publications, and that highlight the department’s strong sense of community
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Dean’s office should carefully consider the department’s views and concerns about collaborating with central offices, and work to minimize any barriers to HCS taking advantage of central resources
 - ▶ Reviewers note that it may be beneficial to consider streamlining some departmental processes, and periodically assess the unit’s governance and policy documents
 - ▶ “HCS has a strong record of recruiting excellent colleagues, but all faculty hires require corresponding staff support to reach their greatest potential”
 - ▶ Work with the Dean’s office to identify and, where possible, remove bureaucratic barriers to the department’s work; provide clarity for HCS around double-numbering courses and the ability of faculty in other units to teach core courses in HCS programs

- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Department should work towards developing shared, agreed-upon curricular goals in consultation with the Dean's office, and determine whether it might prioritize growing existing degree programs, or maximize enrolments by expanding "innovative and attractive lower level courses"
 - ▶ The unit might collaborate with leadership to reach a consensus on how to balance the dual goals of high enrolments and intensive instruction
 - ▶ Additional resources for language instruction and programming in Tamil studies would allow work in the area to flourish more quickly; advancement efforts should be devoted to developing Tamil studies
 - ▶ Tamil Chair is the first position endowed at UTSC via broad community support, and could serve as a model for future initiatives
 - ▶ Reviewers note that until strategic investments can be made in resources to strengthen HCS programs, "it may be necessary to more clearly identify and concentrate on core functions as opposed to taking on new initiatives or investing in less essential work. In short, the department seems to be trying to do too much."
 - ▶ Faculty and staff should work with departmental and divisional leadership to determine how HCS can most effectively use its available resources
 - ▶ Reassess departmental capacity and development plans through close collaboration between the unit and the Dean's office, with a focus on identifying top priorities and realistic goals, to prevent faculty and staff overextension and burnout
 - ▶ Unit leadership should work with the Dean's office to identify priority areas for fundraising that might support faculty positions and experiential learning programs beyond the co-op experience



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

February 11, 2026

Professor Nicholas Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Division of the Vice-President & Provost
University of Toronto

Dean's Administrative Response: External Review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Professor Rule,

Thank you for your letter dated October 15, 2025, requesting my administrative response to the February 2025 external review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies. I would like to extend my gratitude to the review team—Muriel Gomez-Perez, Professor, Department of Historical Sciences, Université Laval; and Kristin Stapleton, Professor and Chair, Department of History, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York—for their consultation with the department during the site visit held from February 12–13, 2025, and for their report, which was finalized on June 18, 2025, and shared with the department.

We appreciate the reviewers' recognition of the department's strong integration across its four program areas and the coherence of its curriculum. Their commendation of the high level of student satisfaction reflects the department's intentional incorporation of experiential and interdisciplinary learning, as well as the valuable co-curricular and research opportunities offered to students. The reviewers also highlighted the extensive partnerships and collaborations fostered by the department and its faculty members.

The review team has also identified several areas for enhancement, including clarifying departmental priorities and processes; strengthening supports for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty in promotion and career progression; and improving the timeliness of communications to support curricular planning and foster a stronger sense of community. They further noted the importance of continued communication and collaboration to ensure shared understanding and alignment of campus priorities between the department and my office. With this letter, I have included a table summarizing our responses to each of the reviewers' recommendations, along with anticipated timelines for implementation where applicable.

Once again, I thank the review team for their thoughtful and valuable assessment of the department and its programs. I look forward to supporting the department in implementing the recommendations of this report. The Dean's Office will continue to monitor progress through regular meetings with the Chair of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies. An interim report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will be prepared in Winter 2029. The next external review of the department is scheduled to take place no later than the 2032–33 academic year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Karin Ruhlandt". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Karin" and last name "Ruhlandt" clearly distinguishable.

Professor Karin Ruhlandt
Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

2024-25 UTQAP Review of the UTSC Department of Historical and Cultural Studies - Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who 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.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, “it is important to note that, while the external reviewers’ report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability” (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Time Frame	Lead	Unit Response	Dean’s Response
The reviewers noted an imbalance in HCS faculty rank distribution, with very few faculty at the Professor rank. They encouraged the Department to engage in strategic complement planning to ensure an appropriate balance of junior and senior faculty, and to prioritize enhanced coverage in Classics/Ancient World Studies and Latin American history when hiring opportunities permit. The reviewers also emphasized the importance of clarifying processes and strengthening supports for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty for promotion and career progression.	1.	“Work to create a better balance between full professors and more junior professors, provide support for associate professors that will lead to their promotion, and support the work of new faculty hires with adequate staffing.”	Immediate	Chair	3 Associate Professors are being reviewed for promotion this year; 2 more are planning to request detailed consideration in the next cycle or two. The chair is in ongoing conversations with all associate professors to provide mentorship and career support.	The Dean’s Office is committed to working with departments to ensure that colleagues are supported and mentored for promotion review. Through the office of the Vice-Dean, Faculty Affairs Equity and Success, the Mentoring Excellence and Diversity Advisory Committee (MEAD) also provides important guidance on matters related to career trajectories, mentorship, coaching, and professional development for faculty and librarians.
	2.	“The department and Dean’s office should work together to offer course releases and career counseling.”	Medium	Dean	An HCS pilot program has previously provided course releases for mid-career faculty approaching the completion of a second major project. The program, which ran for the past 3 years, has benefitted all 3 of the associate professors currently undergoing promotion review. It was put on hold this year due to budgetary constraints. With decanal support we’d be happy to resume it.	My office looks forward to ongoing dialogue with the Chair regarding faculty complement, promotion, and staffing needs, particularly in light of the campus’s current fiscal environment.

	3.	“Establish clear guidelines for the promotion of teaching-stream faculty.”	Immediate	Dean	HCS looks forward to receiving the updated guidelines on teaching excellence, once available. We currently have only one teaching-stream faculty eligible for promotion.	The Dean’s Office is developing updated Guidelines for the Assessment of Effectiveness of Teaching. Pending governance approval, these guidelines are anticipated to take effect in the 2026-27 academic year.
	4.	“We encourage the steady recruitment of professors at the beginning of their careers, particularly to strengthen Classics/Ancient World Studies and to cover the Latin American field.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS is deeply engaged in ongoing, strategic thinking in relation to divisional priorities and enrolment planning as they shape future complement plans. Over the past 5 years we have had significant success in recruiting phenomenal new colleagues that support departmental and divisional strategic priorities, including through the Provostial funds for Black and Indigenous faculty, the fruits of which show throughout the self-study and reviewer report. In line with departmental and stated institutional priorities on inclusive excellence as a means to expand enrolment and complement offerings, we remain committed to hiring in the field of Indigenous History and look forward to opportunities to articulate further complement plans in relation to shifting departmental and curricular priorities, and given the current budgetary context.	I appreciate the department’s identification of fields that would benefit from future hiring. My office looks forward to continued dialogue with the Chair on faculty complement, promotion, and staffing needs within the realities of the current fiscal environment, including opportunities to further leverage remaining provostial funds for Indigenous faculty hiring.
The reviewers observed that part-time and contractually limited-term appointment (CLTA) faculty members in the Department face significant precarity, due in part to late contracts and course allocations. They recommended exploring ways to enhance the stability of these arrangements and to ensure more timely communication to support	5.	“Reduce the precarity of the part-time faculty.”	Immediate	Dean	HCS would welcome opportunities to extend longer contracts to part-time faculty and stabilize their employment status. This would require decanal budgetary commitments.	The Dean’s Office remains committed to working with the Chair to assess faculty complement and staffing needs, while being mindful of the campus’s fiscal context.
	6.	“The university and department should define the teaching tasks of part-time and CLTA faculty by providing longer-term contracts as early as possible. By doing so, it will	Medium	Dean	Changes to contract length for part-time and CLTA faculty are not in the hands of the department. As stated above, we would welcome the opportunity to provide longer-term contracts to our part-	Please refer to my response to recommendation #5 for further detail.

effective curricular planning and foster a stronger sense of community.		promote the visibility of courses, allow for more effective curricular planning, and strengthen the feeling of belonging to a teaching and research community, thus fostering a more cohesive unit.”			time and CLTA colleagues. HCS views this as an important area for continued collaboration with the Dean’s office and will support efforts that promote stability, transparency, and community cohesion.	
The reviewers highlighted significant tension between the Department and divisional leadership regarding strategic planning and priorities, particularly around enrolment pressures, experiential learning, and new initiatives. They recommended encouraging open communication and collaboration between the Department and the Dean’s Office to build mutual understanding and clearer alignment of priorities and expectations.	7.	“Build a stronger mutual understanding and agreement about the relationship between institutional and department priorities.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS looks forward to learning more about current institutional priorities. Our track record demonstrates deep commitment to institutional strategic directions (e.g. PIE, the Scarborough Charter, Inclusive Excellence), in both the recruitment of new faculty, innovative curriculum design, and dynamic co-curricular programming, such as the Indigenous Speaker Series. We are also actively engaged in conversation with the Dean’s Office and other academic units about strengthening the legibility of our programs and courses to students in ways that support SAMIH (e.g. highlighting existing and emerging curriculum on feminist perspectives on health; social justice and equity, history of science, technology and medicine; colonial biopolitics; racial and gendered bodies; transnational knowledge production, etc.).	My office engages departments and their leadership through a range of established forums to share institutional priorities and receive feedback on emerging needs. These include the Chairs’ Council, where topics span budget planning, curriculum development, campus safety, and research and innovation, and the Campus Leadership Forum. With respect to curricular priorities and related development, interrelated bodies such as the Campus Curriculum Committee (CCC), the Health Across Disciplines Working Group, and the Campus Curriculum Review Working Circle continue to provide venues for dialogue, consultation, and the exploration of collaborative opportunities. HCS plays an important leadership role in these spaces, and we look forward to continued partnership.
	8.	“We recommend also that support be made available for forms of experiential learning involving small groups of students. This will require a serious discussion among the faculty, the Chair, and the Dean’s office staff to achieve a balance between enrollments and innovative instruction.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS is launching innovative curriculum to strengthen research- and practicum-based opportunities for program students in their second and third years e.g. through course-based participation in faculty-led research projects and through placements on- and off-campus that leverage students’ disciplinary knowledge and skills in a variety of professional settings. Such opportunities are resource intensive and often require individualized attention that	Experiential Learning (EL) is a longstanding strength and a key strategic priority for UTSC. To support the future evolution of EL on our campus, my office is undertaking an administrative review of the EL ecosystem this term. Recommendations arising from this work will help guide future practices in alignment with the division’s academic and institutional goals.

					cannot be provided in large classes. We would welcome further institutional investment in smaller class sizes that would allow us to expand EL opportunities across the board and believe we can offer divisional leadership in this area. To this end, we look forward to opportunities to create a CLTA for Tamil language and experiential learning as a template for future curricular innovation tied to SAMIH that can be extended across our programs).	We remain committed to ongoing dialogue with the Department Chair regarding faculty complement and staffing needs, particularly in light of the current fiscal environment.
	9.	“Discussions among the faculty, the Chair, and the Dean’s office staff to identify priority areas for fundraising are advisable, if these discussions have not yet taken place.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS will welcome such an opportunity, particularly in relation to existing and emergent faculty research interests in, e.g. Tamil Worlds, Palestine Studies, Black Knowledges, and Indian Ocean Studies, among others.	The Dean’s Office would be pleased to facilitate a discussion between the department and the Development and Alumni Relations Office to explore and implement advancement and further enhance alumni engagement strategies.
The reviewers raised concerns that HCS risks overextension as it pursues new initiatives such as certificates and combined degree programs alongside its existing offerings. They recommended that departmental planning focus on a clear set of strategic priorities to maintain core strengths and ensure sustainable use of resources.	10.	“Reassess the capacity of the department to continue to offer all of its degree programs as well as add new options such as certificates and combined degrees and reconsider the development plan of the department.”	Medium	Chair, PCs, faculty	Conversations among HCS faculty, as well as with the Dean’s Office, are already under way toward this end. Our goal is to reduce our administrative complexity and create more streamlined and legible program options to students that leverage optimally our existing teaching capacity by consolidating offerings at the lower level while providing differentiated streams for students seeking to specialize in specific fields/disciplines/methods/professionalizing tracks at the upper level, including a more research-intensive specialist stream. The proposal currently in discussion among faculty could see our programs in Classical Studies, Global Asia Studies, and History merged into a single program with specialized thematic/disciplinary streams. It also suggests that our program in Women’s and Gender Studies formally	We commend the department’s efforts to streamline current offerings in ways that would better fulfill students’ academic and professional needs while also reducing administrative complexity. The Dean’s Office looks forward to learning more about the department’s curricular planning and future direction. Last fall, we launched a new expression-of-interest process to consider new and significantly modified program initiatives and to assess their potential resource implications, and we are working with HCS to prepare for this submission as departmental discussions unfold.

					expand its remit to incorporate Social Justice.	
	11.	“We recommend strong collaboration between the Dean’s office and faculty to think about the future development of the department, to reconsider the links between disciplines and the complementarity of programs, and to identify three or four top priorities for investment. The department must be realistic about what it can accomplish without leading to faculty and staff burnout.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	The chair is already in conversation with decanal leadership to discuss strategic directions along the lines above. Once the department has had a chance to confirm and fine-tune its plans for program modifications the chair will share these with the dean’s office for further consultations and governance implementation.	Please refer to my response to recommendation #10 for further detail.
The reviewers noted faculty concerns regarding ongoing bureaucratic and structural barriers to departmental operations, including issues around course double-numbering and cross-unit teaching. They recommended that the unit work with divisional leadership to clarify and address these concerns to reduce any unnecessary obstacles to effective curriculum planning and delivery.	12.	“Identify and, if possible, remove bureaucratic barriers to the work of the department: The 2018 program review identified several barriers to the work of the department that have not yet been satisfactorily addressed. These include issues with double-numbering courses and the ability of faculty in other departments to teach core courses in some of the HCS programs. We recommend the Dean’s office be asked to provide clarity on these bureaucratic matters, so they do not continue to feature among the faculty’s concerns.”	Immediate/medium	Dean	HCS would welcome clarity on these longstanding challenges.	In Summer 2025, the Dean’s Office introduced new administrative guidelines to support and incentivize interdisciplinary curriculum development. These guidelines aim to: (1) Build on UTSC’s longstanding strengths in interdisciplinary teaching and foster its continued development in ways that benefit all academic units; (2) Provide clarity for Chairs and administrative staff in planning and administering interdisciplinary courses, which are increasingly prevalent as disciplinary boundaries evolve; and (3) Establish administrative and budgetary parameters that encourage sustainable cross-departmental collaboration. Departments will continue to receive periodic reminders of these guidelines as part of our ongoing support for interdisciplinary initiatives.

The reviewers emphasized the importance of enhancing the visibility of HCS programs. They recommended more active marketing and communications to highlight faculty expertise and diversity, and the department's strong sense of community.	13.	"Improve marketing and communications."	Immediate	Dean	HCS would welcome the opportunity to work with Marketing and Communications on videos that introduce students to the vibrancy of our programs and that profile our faculty research and teaching interests. The department is also in the process of restructuring its web presence to make the class offerings and faculty specializations more visible and accessible to students. We are aware that increased marketing support for Humanities departments is a priority area for the Dean's Office, and look forward to continued dialogue on this critical complement to academic advising.	We commend the department for its efforts to enhance the accessibility of student-facing information through its website. Our office is actively working with the Marketing and Communications team to explore additional approaches for highlighting faculty research strengths and teaching interests. The Dean's Office will continue to advocate for the marketing and communications needs of Humanities departments with divisional partners such as Marketing and Communications and the Academic Advising & Career Centre.
	14.	"We recommend the production of short videos to highlight and promote HCS's faculty diversity, areas of expertise, research, publications, and profiles ('engaged teachers'), and also to promote the department as a 'tight community'... linked to a well-stocked and easily accessible library."	Immediate/medium	Dean	See above	Please refer to my response to recommendation #13 for further detail.
	15.	"We suggest that a section of the [Global Asia Studies] program's webpage be devoted to [language study opportunities]."	Immediate	GAS Program Coordinator	We appreciate the reviewers' suggestion to clarify the department's student-facing information. The chair is in discussion with the GAS Program Coordinator to determine appropriate next steps, which will be informed by upcoming decisions about the program's future direction.	We commend the department for its efforts to enhance the accessibility of student-facing information, including curricular and co-curricular initiatives, through its website. These improvements meaningfully support students' ability to navigate academic requirements and other study opportunities.
	16.	"The program faculty should also consider explaining [regional	Immediate	GAS Program Coordinator	We appreciate the reviewers' suggestion to clarify the department's student-facing information. The chair is in discussion with	Please refer to my response to recommendation #15 for further detail.

		emphases] more clearly on its webpage.”			the GAS Program Coordinator to determine appropriate next steps, which will be informed by upcoming decisions about the program’s future direction.	
	17.	“Measures should be taken to make the [Classics/Ancient World Studies] program visible to potential students who continue to think in terms of the concept of ‘Classics.’”	Immediate	CLA Program Coordinator	We appreciate the reviewers’ suggestion to clarify the department’s student-facing information. The chair is in discussion with the CLA Program Coordinator to determine appropriate next steps, which will be informed by upcoming decisions about the program’s future direction.	The Programs and Curriculum team within my office is available to support the department in preparing and submitting proposed curricular changes, such as updates to course descriptions, to help ensure clear and accurate communication to prospective and current students as they consult the Academic Calendar and timetable for course and program planning.
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	18.	“For purposes of recruiting more majors, the department should consider assigning experienced professors to the A-level courses, as was recommended in the 2018 IQAP report.”	Immediate	Chair	In line with the recommendations of the 2018 IQAP report, the majority of HCS A-levels are at this time already taught by experienced professors. This year, out of 12 A-levels in the department, 4 are taught by tenured faculty, 2 by highly experienced part-time faculty, and 6 by 3 sessionals (two of whom are long-term). HCS is working on reducing our overall A-level offerings and increasing further the share of continuing faculty among A-level instructors. In 2026-27 HCS will offer 9 A-levels, of which 6 will be taught by continuing faculty and 3 by long-term sessionals.	We applaud the department’s efforts to staff its A-level courses with continuing and experienced faculty members and to review its course offerings with increasing intentionality, taking into account student enrolment trends and faculty complement. The Dean’s Office will continue to support this work as part of the annual curriculum cycle and in relation to program development, budget planning, and enrolment considerations.
	19.	“We suggest collecting data to show employment outcomes, as well as which graduate programs students apply to and why.”	Medium	Dean	Data collection on graduates’ employment outcomes has long been a departmental desideratum. However, we have been told repeatedly that only DARO is allowed to collect such data, which is strictly limited and not available to us in analytically meaningful (non-anecdotal) format.	We will continue to support the department in articulating its post-graduation and alumni data needs and will engage the Development and Alumni Relations Office, as well as relevant divisional offices such as Arts & Science Co-op and the Academic Advising & Career Centre to explore potential solutions.

	20.	“Devising more systematic assessment practices may not be a high priority... But this might be an area in which the Dean’s office or some other campus unit could step in and help, particularly if it is an institutional priority.”	Long-term	Dean	We are not sure what this refers to but agree that systematic assessment (particularly of quality and innovative teaching, not just enrolment) is a laudable goal for the division. We look forward to collaborating toward this development.	Each year, the UTSC Academic Handbook is updated to ensure that policies and best practices for administering assessments, including term tests and final examinations, remain aligned with the tri-campus University of Toronto Assessment and Grading Practices Policy. Instructors are encouraged to clearly articulate assessment expectations in their syllabi to support transparency and student success.

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

Note: This section will be updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs after the conclusion of the governance cycle, using language verbatim from the approved Report of the AP&P committee meeting.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers commended the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies (HCS) as a distinctive and innovative unit with a strong sense of integration across its four program areas. They highlighted the curriculum's cross-pollination and incorporation of experiential and interdisciplinary learning. Students report high levels of satisfaction, noting engaging teaching, welcoming classroom environments, and valuable opportunities for research and co-curricular engagement. Faculty are recognized for their impressive research productivity and international collaborations, and recent strategic hires further enhance the department's reputation and community connections. Finally, the reviewers noted HCS's collegial and supportive culture, effective leadership and administration, and its productive partnerships across UTSC and beyond.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: engaging in strategic complement planning to ensure an appropriate balance of junior and senior faculty, prioritizing enhanced coverage in Classics/Ancient World Studies and Latin American history, and clarifying processes and strengthening supports for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty for promotion and career progression; exploring ways to enhance the stability of part-time and CLTA faculty arrangements and ensuring more timely communication with these groups; encouraging open communication and collaboration between the Department and the Dean's Office to build mutual understanding and clearer alignment of priorities and expectations; focusing departmental planning on a clear set of strategic priorities to maintain core strengths and ensure sustainable use of resources; working with divisional leadership to clarify and address faculty concerns regarding ongoing bureaucratic and structural barriers to departmental operations; and strengthening efforts to enhance the visibility of HCS programs.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the division and unit's 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 continue to monitor progress through regular meetings with the Chair of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than Winter 2029 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will take place no later than the 2032–33 academic year.

6 Distribution

On August 15th 2026, 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 the University of Toronto Scarborough, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.