



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

November 29, 2023

Professor Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

RE: Interim Monitoring Report on cyclical review of Renaissance Studies

Dear Prof. McCahan,

I write in response to your letter of July 14, 2023, requesting an Interim Monitoring Report on the September 24, 2018, UTQAP cyclical review of the Renaissance Studies undergraduate program, Victoria College.

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. As you note, under section 6.9.1.4 of the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process, a brief status report on the implementation of plans outlined in the Dean's administrative response is due midway between the year of the last and next UTQAP review site visits.

I am pleased to send you this status report in the attached Table, where each of the Implementation Plan recommendations have been addressed with updates from the unit and from the Dean's office on progress made to date.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to prepare this Interim Monitoring Report. The reviewers' comments and recommendations continue to help inform the future priorities of the Renaissance Studies undergraduate program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melanie Woodin".

Melanie Woodin
Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Professor, Department of Cell & Systems Biology

cc.

Angela Esterhammer, Principal, Victoria College

Grase Kim, Director of Administration, Victoria College

Suzanne Wood, Special Advisor to the Dean on Unit-Level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science

Gillian Hamilton, Associate Dean, Unit-Level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science

David Lock, Coordinator, Academic Planning and Reviews, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Emma del Junco, Acting Coordinator, Academic Planning and Reviews, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

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

UTQAP Cyclical Review Interim Monitoring Report

As required under [UTQAP section 6.9.1.4](#), the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs (VPAP) will request the Interim Monitoring Report from the Dean midway between the year of the last and next site visits.

Renaissance Studies undergraduate program, Victoria College

UTQAP Cyclical Review: September 24, 2018

Review Reported to Governance: October 30, 2019

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Implementation Plan Update	Supported by Program Innovation Funding (PIF) Provided by VPAP Y/N
<i>The reviewers made recommendations relative to developing a promotional strategy for the program, including updating the website to ensure its accuracy.</i>	<p>To increase the promotional reach of the program, the unit regularly maintains its website for accuracy, and the Program Coordinator has worked closely with faculty to update the program webpage annually to provide a detailed description of offered courses as they are taught in a particular year. The College has also added First-Year-Foundation courses that count towards degree requirements and that also serve to expose the program to a wider range of students (VIC196H: Renaissance Queens; VIC114H: Renaissance in Popular Culture; VIC141H: Discovery and Revolution; VIC142: Machiavelli – The Politics of Power)</p> <p>The unit has also provided increased faculty and financial support to the Association of Renaissance Students and supported promotion of their organization and events to the wider student body (club fairs, student conferences, etc.).</p> <p>The program’s course designators have been changed (“REN”) so that the Renaissance Studies course codes are clearer to students.</p> <p>Finally, the Sidney Smith Commons website now allows students to look for Renaissance Studies directly by program name, rather than having to search for programs by College, which enables students to discover Renaissance Studies as a possible program of study earlier.</p>	N
<i>While the program has confirmed its alignment with the Faculty of Arts and Science</i>	In addition to supporting faculty to craft new courses in which learning outcomes are more clearly foregrounded, the Program Coordinator has begun reviewing program syllabi to encourage explicit framing of course-level learning outcomes going forward.	N

<p><i>Degree Level Expectations, the reviewers emphasized the need to develop specific program learning outcomes, and suggested that course-level learning outcomes could be included in course outlines.</i></p>	<p>In consultation with recently hired faculty in the program (2022-24), and in response to the recent creation/redesign of several REN courses, the Program Coordinator and faculty are conducting a review of program-level learning outcomes and inviting guidance from the Curriculum Development Specialist in the Office of the Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education.</p>	
<p><i>The reviewers made suggestions relative to improving academic advising and curricular planning for students, including creating checklists, clarifying course availability, and communicating options for supporting quantitative and breadth requirements. They also recommended consideration of appropriate options for supporting the quantitative reasoning requirement.</i></p>	<p>The Program Coordinator now updates each year’s course offerings on the program webpage well in advance of student registration. Website program requirements have been updated to clarify any instructions about which students were confused.</p> <p>As the current and incoming Program Coordinator now both have a formal appointment at Victoria College (instead of being seconded from another unit), there is a better information pipeline between students, faculty, and the administrative support provided by the Program Liaison Officer in the Victoria College Principal’s Office, who provides ongoing guidance and support for program students and carries out program completion reviews for students approaching the end of their degree.</p> <p>Renaissance Studies students have access to a wide variety of courses that allow them to meet their FAS core competency in “quantitative reasoning,” including REN242H (“Scientific Worldviews of the Renaissance”), which has been offered yearly since the UTQAP review.</p>	N
<p><i>The reviewers suggested that the efforts of core participants in the program’s design and delivery could be amplified through the creation of an advisory board that could build relationships and promote opportunities for students.</i></p>	<p>The Program Coordinator chairs once-per-term meetings with the Renaissance Studies Academic Program Committee, which includes faculty from cognate departments (e.g., English, History, Art History, Italian Studies) and considers issues related to program curriculum. The Program Coordinator works closely with the Director of the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies and the Principal of Victoria College; all of these individuals are in regular contact with the Chairs of cognate departments, including English, History, Art History, French, and Italian Studies.</p>	N
<p><i>The reviewers recommended prioritizing shared faculty complement planning, given</i></p>	<p>The Dean’s office encourages partnerships with other units in Arts & Science to strengthen teaching in College programs through, for instance, cross-appointments and joint appointments. Victoria College has secured more regularized staffing of the program through</p>	N

<p><i>the demands on faculty time from cognate units. They noted that professors in both the tenure and teaching streams are stretched thin by overloads.</i></p>	<p>its own hiring of teaching-stream faculty, a research-stream hire cross-appointed with Italian Studies, joint-appointments, and 2 incoming CLTA appointments (in January 2024, one in September 2024) who may teach in the Renaissance Studies program.</p> <p>The College has also collaborated with other departments since the review (primarily Italian Studies, and the Departments of English and History) to allow more regular and reliable secondments of faculty to reduce the necessity of overload teaching in Renaissance Studies.</p>	
<p>Other recommendations or implementation plans not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
<p>Findings of assessments of program effectiveness, conducted as outlined in the self-study (see section 3.4 of the self-study template for more information)</p>	<p>The CRRS Academic Program Committee meets at least once each semester to discuss program curriculum.</p>	
<p>The status of any additional items discussed at the AP&P meeting as captured in the FAR/IP</p>	<p>No follow-up report was requested.</p>	
<p>Consultation in developing this brief report and (where applicable) a statement of how the Faculty has monitored the implementation of review recommendations</p>	<p>The Dean's office consulted with the Victoria College Principal's office, which consulted with its Program Coordinator and the CRRS Academic Programs Committee, as well as with other administrative units within the A&S Dean's office to produce this report.</p>	