



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

May 5, 2025

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

**RE: Interim Monitoring Report on UTQAP cyclical review of the Victoria College Minor Programs**

Dear Prof. Rule,

I write in response to your letter of July 10, 2024, requesting an Interim Monitoring Report on the February 27-28, 2020, UTQAP cyclical review of the Victoria College Minor Programs.

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 Victoria College Minor Programs.

Sincerely,

Stephen Wright  
Acting Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science  
Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

cc.

Alex Hernandez, Principal, Victoria College

Grase Kim, Director of Administration, Office of the Principal, Victoria College

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

Caitlin Burton, Senior Manager, Governance, Academic Planning & Reviews, 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

# 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 review and year of the next site visit.

Victoria College Minor Programs, Faculty of Arts & Science

UTQAP Cyclical Review: February 27-28, 2020

Review Reported to Governance: October 27, 2020

Interim Monitoring Report: May 5, 2025

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Dean’s Implementation Plan Update	Program Innovation Fund (PIF) Y/N
<p><b><u>Overall:</u></b> <b><i>The reviewers noted that all of the programs face key decisions:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b><i>Several are at “a key point in their development when faculty will have to achieve consensus about whether to simply sustain a thriving program or aim to expand the capacity of the program and/or develop into a major.”</i></b></li><li><b><i>In the case of Semiotics &amp; Communications Studies, the reviewers raised concern that the program</i></b></li></ul>	<p>The courses in the Semiotics &amp; Communication Studies Minor were merged with the Material Culture Minor in 2021. New enrolments in the Semiotics and Communication Studies minor were suspended in anticipation of program closure in 2025. A more sustainable staffing model resulted. As well, this reflects changes in the discipline of Semiotics, which is now rarely taught at the graduate level, but which enhances the Material Culture program. The re-launched Material Culture and Semiotics Minor program integrated courses and modules in Semiotics into program requirements alongside the existing Material Culture courses. Program learning requirements were expanded to reflect the enhanced skills Material Culture students acquired in semiotics, sign theory, and interpretation. Notably, all students in the merged program can participate in the experiential-learning course VIC329H/Y “Internship in Material Culture,” where they apply their learning with external placements in museum, archival, or cultural institutions.</p> <p>The Dean’s office did not move forward with the College’s proposal (as per the reviewers’ suggestion) for a Major program in Creativity in Society in 2023, following recommendations from the Dean’s Advisory Committee on Academic Change, which raised serious concerns about potential overlap with other A&amp;S programs. However, we understand that the groundwork for the proposal’s discussion facilitated the College in creating the new Centre for Creativity, which launched in 2024.</p>	N

<p><i>rests on the “dynamic contribution” of a single faculty member, noting that “this minor program faces a choice about whether to hire or form inter-program relationships in order to continue to offer some of its courses.”</i></p>		
<p><b><i>The reviewers observe that the programs depend on “a significant proportion of part-time and term appointed faculty rather than tenured or tenure stream faculty.” While the reviewers observed that these faculty had noteworthy research engagement, they observed that students were less substantially engaged in faculty research.</i></b></p>	<p>The College responded in two main ways. The first was for Victoria University to hire its own Teaching Stream faculty (full and part-time). These teaching stream positions have allowed for more stable and predictable academic planning across academic programs. In any given year, 30 or more of the College’s core courses (0.5 FCE) are now delivered by this category of faculty. Notably, all of those appointed to these positions have active research programs and have engaged student researchers (via the College’s Scholars-in-Residence and Northrop Frye Undergraduate Research Fellow programs.)</p> <p>Secondly, the College has responded by firming up teaching relationships and Memoranda of Agreement with other U of T units and divisions (including the Faculty of Music and OISE), to ensure that Victoria College programs can continue to draw upon the expertise of award-winning researchers and teachers from across the University of Toronto. For example, the College secured provostial funding (through the Undergraduate Course Development Fund) that enables a professor in OISE to teach in the Education and Society minor program.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p><b><i>The reviewers recommended a heightened attentiveness to diversity among students, staff, and faculty and in some programs’ curricula, as well as expanding intercultural/international learning opportunities for students.</i></b></p>	<p>The Office of the Principal of Victoria College has sponsored an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group for the past two years, composed of faculty, staff, and students who offer feedback on issues of diversity and curricular breadth in College programs. This move addresses the recommendation in broad terms.</p> <p>Victoria College has also strengthened its minor programs and core faculty complement in the following ways:</p> <p>In the Education and Society program, courses such as EDS369H “Black Inclusion and Excellence in Schools and Curriculum,” EDS260H1 “Equity and Diversity in Education,” EDS263H “Disability, Inclusion, and Education” (new for 2025-26, and EDS358H “Residential Schools in Canada,” draw upon a range of lived experiences and viewpoints and reflect the overall diversity of faculty teaching in this program.</p>	<p>N</p>

	<p>Additionally, the program’s internship course now offers an intercultural/international experiential learning opportunity in the form of an exchange with partners at Branksome Hall Asia (South Korea) that the College administers.</p> <p>In the Material Culture and Semiotics program, a recent tenure stream joint-appointment (75% ANT/25% VIC) with the Department of Anthropology answers concerns like those raised by the reviewers. This faculty member will teach courses that draw on their scholarship on the archaeology of the African diaspora, among other research and teaching interests.</p> <p>The hiring of an Egyptian-Canadian creative writer, joint with English (51% ENG/49% VIC), on July 1, 2023, has strengthened the Creativity and Society minor program.</p> <p>The College made a Faculty Appointments Committee request in spring 2025 to add a scholar of Indigenous critical and creative writing to teach primarily in the College’s Literature and Critical Theory program who would then also be available to occasionally teach courses in the Creativity and Society minor. This request was not approved by the FAC.</p> <p>Since the review, the ASDO has hired a Director Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion. The Administrative HR, Academic HR, and EDI offices have struck a working group that will assess current A&amp;S recruitment and hiring practices to address any systemic barriers and make enhancements to our practices.</p> <p>Since the review (as of October 2023), Arts &amp; Science participates in a central initiative regarding tuition for Indigenous Students. The University of Toronto covers the cost of tuition for students from nine First Nations, under the U of T Indigenous Tuition Grant, as part of its efforts to make the university more accessible and inclusive for Indigenous students – and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities. The grant covers the cost of tuition for current and future Indigenous students enrolled in most undergraduate, graduate and professional credit-based programs across the three campuses – part of a suite of programs available to Indigenous students as part of U of T’s commitment to increasing access and support services. With the support of the Colleges, the Deans of Students, and U of T Housing Services, A&amp;S will implement an upper-year Indigenous undergraduate student college residence guarantee by September 2025. The Guarantee will enable Indigenous students to live on campus for the duration of their studies and will codify an existing practice of some Colleges. The guarantee will serve as an additional recruitment tool, and may help assuage the concerns of Indigenous students and families about safety and housing security while pursuing their undergraduate studies at U of T.</p>	
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	Improvements in data gathering and sharing since the review have also been made; the University has an institutional dashboard, and information is now being collated and shared at the divisional level. These reveal that the trajectory for diversity in faculty complement is positive, with gains most notable in the Assistant and Associate Professor ranks thus far.	
<b><u>Creative Expression &amp; Society:</u></b> <b><i>The reviewers noted that the program could benefit from greater exposure on websites and recruiting sessions.</i></b>	<p>Following the UTQAP recommendation, Victoria College has made a concerted effort to increase the program's exposure and regularly advertises itself through its websites and social media, Campus Day, and Program Days among other channels.</p> <p>In addition to the Jewison Stream of the Vic Ones program, a new foundational course entitled CRE201H "Introduction to Creativity," also serves as a point of entry to the program for curious students. As a result of these efforts, the Creative Expression &amp; Society program has nearly doubled within the last five years.</p> <p>Since the review, the OFR has moved from using College-specific course codes to program-specific codes across the Faculty.</p>	N
<b><i>The reviewers recommended that the CES reinforce its links with music, the visual arts, and other creative disciplines, as well as better leveraging community connections and the central Toronto location, noting that the "program has the potential to be a showcase for interdisciplinarity."</i></b>	<p>Responding to the point of leveraging community connections, Victoria College launched its Centre for Creativity last year, in part to foster these sorts of connections. For instance, beginning this year, the Centre will be entering a partnership with the Toronto International Festival of Authors.</p> <p>The Creativity and Society program now includes several courses that span creative disciplines and thereby highlight its interdisciplinarity. Representative courses include, for example, CRE272H "Song, Lyrics, and Songwriting," CRE370H "Music and the Imagination," CRE276H "Writing for the Stage and Screen," CRE247H "Creativity in the Sciences," and next year, CRE349H "Special Topics in Creativity: Photographic Darkroom Techniques," among other interdisciplinary offerings.</p>	N
<b><u>Education &amp; Society:</u></b> <b><i>The reviewers raised concern about the admission requirement of a 70% grade in an introductory Psychology course, noting that "The size of this single course, the arbitrariness of the assessment measurement criteria, and the gate-keeping role of this course are problematic."</i></b>	To address the potential obstacle to enrolment in Education & Society presented by the 70% requirement in PSY100H1 "Introductory Psychology," the College has broadened the admission requirements to also include one of the following courses: SOC100H1 "Introduction to Sociology I: Sociological Perspectives," VIC152H "School and Society: Historical and Contemporary Contexts," and VIC153H1 "School and Society: Equity and Social Justice in Education." VIC150Y is no longer offered but is still accepted as a prerequisite for students who have already taken this course. Overall, these adjustments ensure a more inclusive and interdisciplinary foundation for incoming students.	N

<p><b><i>The reviewers encouraged incorporating first-hand student engagement with social justice matters into the program, and recommended a review of program offerings and joint program possibilities. They also recommended offering courses in STEM, Art Education, Drama Education, Historical Consciousness, and Museum education</i></b></p>	<p>The College has taken significant steps to enhance first-hand student engagement with social justice matters by integrating community-based learning into courses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction of EDS355H “Social Justice in Education,” a course that explicitly connects students with community organizations. The College reports that there are currently 11 Social Action Projects underway supporting local community organizations. The College partnered with HMB490Y Health in Community students, working on several projects with various partners: 1) Pueblo Science - students worked to create a new health curriculum for Indigenous grade school students 2) Youthlink - students created post-secondary pathways workshops 3) Down Syndrome Association of Toronto - career exploration workshops."</li> <li>• Expansion of internship opportunities in EDS360H “Education Internship,” that allow students to work directly in education and social justice-focused settings, with both local and international communities.</li> <li>• The addition in 2015 of VIC451H “Learning Communities and Higher Education” as one of the options to fulfil the program requirements of an education-focused experiential learning course, which provides structured engagement with mentorship and equity-focused leadership experiences.</li> </ul> <p>The College has expanded course content and explored new interdisciplinary opportunities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new course EDS358H “Residential Schools and Education in Canada,” which develops historical consciousness by examining the legacy of residential schools, their lasting impact on Indigenous communities, and the role of education in truth, reconciliation, and decolonization.</li> <li>• The course EDS357H “Education in a Global Context” explores education systems, policies, and practices within historical, social, and political frameworks across the world.</li> <li>• The program has incorporated art and drama education content into EDS356H “Multiliteracies in Education.”</li> <li>• A Science Education course proposal was developed in collaboration with the Science, Technology and Society program, but is currently on hold.</li> <li>• MA-CSE Combined Degree Program: This new offering provides students with an integrated pathway to graduate study while deepening their engagement with child study and education.</li> </ul>	<p>N</p>
<p><b><u>Material Culture:</u></b> <b><i>The reviewers raised concern about unpaid internships, noting that some students “felt they could not afford the time to take the internship and</i></b></p>	<p>The Material Culture &amp; Semiotics internship (now labelled a “practicum” in line with terminology used by MCS fields) remains unpaid, as a result of a few related considerations. Since students receive either an H or Y course credit, remuneration comes in that form, per university guidelines. Students enrolled in the MCS Practicum (MCS329H/Y) typically devote 75 hours for the H section and 125 hours for the Y section, which is well within the time commitment for students in a typical A&amp;S course (70-80 hours for H courses, 140-160 hours for Y courses). Time for meetings, readings, and assessments is factored into the requisite MCS internship hours. The parameters of the MCS internship hours are flexible, with students working partly in-person and off-</p>	<p>N</p>

<b><i>work and complete their courses.”</i></b>	site, so that they may fulfill any other outside commitments (e.g. work for other courses, part-time employment, family obligations, etc.).	
<b><i>The reviewers recommended the creation of “dedicated lab space” for research and to house a teaching collection.</i></b>	Victoria College is currently exploring advancement and grant-funded opportunities for the creation of a combined critical creativity and material culture lab space that would exist to bridge research and teaching. In the shorter term, Victoria College is engaging with the Curator of the Scientific Instruments Collection at the University of Toronto about the possibility of housing some of the teaching collection currently in need of an institutional home.	N
Other recommendations or implementation plans not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	N/A	
Findings of assessments of program effectiveness, conducted as outlined in the self-study ( <i>see section 3.4 of the <a href="#">self-study template</a> for more information</i> )	Victoria College programs are subject to several review processes prior to FAS governance. In particular, changes to the CRE, MCS, and EDS Minor programs are brought forward to meetings of the Program Coordinators each semester and reviewed by the Principal and Academic Programs Director. If approved, these potential changes are then brought for review to the Academic Committee of Victoria College (one each semester), before undergoing a final, formal review and ratification at Victoria College Council (which meets four times a year).	
The status of any additional items discussed at the AP&P meeting as captured in the FAR/IP	N/A	
Consultation in developing this brief report and (where applicable) a statement of how the Faculty has monitored the implementation of review recommendations	<p>The ASDO produced this report in consultation with the Principal of Victoria College and its administrative leadership. As well, the ASDO consulted with members of its own senior leadership and administrative leadership on various aspects of this report as relevant.</p> <p>The ASDO monitors implementation of review recommendations through period meetings with Chairs, Directors, and Principals and through regular governance and curricular oversight.</p>	