

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	<p><u>Undergraduate Programs:</u> <i>Programs reviewed are no longer available for enrolment as of September 21, 2023:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slavic Languages and Cultures (HBA): Specialist, Major, Minor (Major/Minor Streams: Czech and Slovak, Polish, Russian, South Slavic; Ukrainian); • Russian Literature in Translation Minor <p><i>For reference: Undergraduate programs available for enrolment as of March 1, 2024:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures (HBA): Specialist, Major, Minor (Language Areas: Czech & Slovak, Polish, Russian, South Slavic, Ukrainian, Finnish, Estonian) • Slavic and East European Literature in Translation, Minor <p><u>Graduate Programs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slavic Languages & Literatures: MA, PhD
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David L. Cooper, Associate Professor, Head, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Administration, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign • Yana Hashamova, Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor, Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures, Ohio State University • Olga Maiorova, Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and of History, University of Michigan
Date of Review Visit:	February 1-2, 2024
Review Report Received by VPAP:	April 22, 2024

Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	September 12, 2024
Date Reported to AP&P:	October 22, 2024

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: March 6-7, 2014

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- The Department is "...a jewel in the crown of the University of Toronto, Canada, and North America"
- Stimulating, interdisciplinary curriculum
- Outstanding course offerings at all levels achieved through collaboration and creative teaching
- Notable quality of undergraduate and graduate students
- Stellar mentoring and advising provided for undergraduate and graduate students
- Highly impressive body of scholarship produced by faculty

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Using standardized measures in assessing students' language proficiency
- Strengthening students' language proficiency through international experiences
- Continuing to track student and alumni metrics to aid in demonstrating the Department's strong international standing
- Increasing support for conference participation and professional mentoring for graduate students
- Examining the impact of graduate student funding, especially relative to time-to-completion
- Reviewing faculty areas of expertise as part of the complement planning process

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

Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science; Vice-Dean, Academic Planning and Interim Associate Dean, Unit-level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science; Department Chair; Undergraduate and Graduate Associate Chairs; Department faculty; Slavic Resources Coordinator & Co-Director of the Petro Jacyk Program for the Study of Ukraine; Senior program administrators; Undergraduate and Graduate students; Administrative staff; as well as members of relevant cognate units (History; Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies; Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian 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
 - ▶ Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures (SLL) has a long history of being a “full service” Slavic department offering full undergraduate majors and graduate study in several Slavic languages/literatures other than Russian
 - ▶ Undergraduate curriculum revisions represent a foundational change that keeps SLL in the forefront of the field and promises great benefit to students
- Objectives
 - ▶ Revised undergraduate programs balance and integrate the SLL’s various language and cultural streams and respond to recent external reviews, to the impetus to decolonize study of the region, to larger trends in the field in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and to the FAS strategic priority to reimagine and reinvent undergraduate education
 - ▶ Restructured undergraduate curriculum will bring pedagogical efficiency by offering integrated comparative options requiring faculty to cross the boundaries of their national literary areas and collaborate across languages and cultures
 - ▶ Restructured undergraduate programs reflect a thoughtful approach to maintaining equitable options across Slavic language areas, adding Estonian and Finnish as well
 - ▶ Department is gradually shifting toward more of a cultural studies approach, offering new courses in areas like diaspora and migration, race and gender studies, media and film studies that often cross old disciplinary boundaries and attract new students
 - ▶ Programs offer a broad and comparative approach that speaks to a variety of student intellectual interests; transition to a more comparative curriculum follows the best disciplinary developments
 - ▶ Program learning outcomes are aligned with institutional expectations for student learning outcomes

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Admission requirements are appropriate
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Restructuring of undergraduate programs to integrate all streams under the rubric of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures, harmonizing coursework requirements, and introducing shared core courses noted as a significant innovation
 - ▶ Curriculum revisions promote a more inclusive and egalitarian balance of programs that is no longer dominated by Russian and Soviet topics, and promises a number of other positive outcomes including greater instructional efficiency and improvements in stimulating student cohort cohesiveness and collaboration
 - ▶ SLL considers the range of students' skills and backgrounds and adapts language classes and cultural curriculum to meet their diverse needs
 - ▶ Language program follows a communicative model to build both linguistic and cultural proficiencies
 - ▶ Flexible program options allowing students to take some comparative courses or courses in cognate disciplines reflect a more interdisciplinary, comparative, and forward-looking approach to the field
 - ▶ Program requirements are well designed to enable students to achieve the department's thoughtfully articulated program learning outcomes
 - ▶ SLL's programs offered in-person in lecture, seminar, and mixed lecture/discussion formats, in line with disciplinary norms and best practices
 - ▶ Current research informs the content of existing classes and the addition of new classes in the department
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Department provides support for students seeking assistance with using gender-inclusive language in language courses
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Program assessment practices offer a solid baseline for monitoring student growth and pedagogical effectiveness
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students are passionate about their studies and they admire their professors
 - ▶ SLL has been active and successful in raising funds to attract new students to their undergraduate programs
 - ▶ Smaller classrooms offer better engagement of faculty and students
 - ▶ Students expressed wide enthusiasm for the high standards for learning and engagement they encountered in the department
 - ▶ Undergraduate students expressed appreciation of the quality of education they are receiving, and voiced loyalty and commitment to the program
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Impressive and commendable enrollments in SLL language classes, particularly in the absence an undergraduate foreign language requirement
 - ▶ Course evaluations and surveys indicate that students are achieving desired institutional degree outcomes through study in SLL

- ▶ Student evaluations of teaching quality in the department are high relative to FAS as a whole
- ▶ Rate at which 4th year SLL students' participate in at least one high-impact practice is higher than University or provincial rates
- ▶ 100% of polled SLL 4th year students respond that they would attend the same university and program if they could start over again
- Student funding
 - ▶ Department prioritizes community fundraising efforts, which help diversify curriculum and support undergraduate scholarships

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

- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Reviewers caution that students with interest or need for support using gender-inclusive language in language courses may not feel empowered to ask for it
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students expressed some dissatisfaction regarding unequal support of students specializing in different national cultures; reviewers attribute this to faculty departures and the inability of temporary faculty to provide the same level of support as tenure-stream faculty
 - ▶ Reviewers note that students appear to often find themselves lacking clear information regarding available courses, course schedules, and other opportunities

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Continue the general transformation of the department toward a cultural studies approach
 - ▶ Develop comparative and cross-disciplinary courses, integrating new topics, approaches, and material into the cultural curriculum
 - ▶ Enable further integration of the various language-area streams by allowing a greater number of courses to count toward requirements
 - ▶ Expand opportunities for students to communicate research results, offering options to present results in blogs, podcasts, websites and other forms of media, in addition to traditional research papers
 - ▶ Explore ways to understand and better serve students' professional aspirations
 - ▶ Students expressed interest in more interdisciplinary and cultural studies courses offering thematically broader topics to take them beyond literary studies and provide broader cultural and social contexts
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Continue to consider students' diverse needs, including providing language classroom models for students wishing to use gender-inclusive language
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Consider adding additional small assessment practices to monitor students' progress toward program-level learning outcomes

- ▶ Consider additional methods of assessing students' language proficiency to determine if they are meeting program goals
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Reviewers note that better communication regarding courses, course schedules, and other opportunities could improve students' experience
 - ▶ Reviewers recommend careful use of student evaluations in monitoring programs for potential issues
 - ▶ Seek institutional support to study the undergraduate students' profiles and career outcomes
 - ▶ Further integrate career preparation and development of transferrable skills into programs
 - ▶ Continue involvement with the FAS Backpack to Briefcase program

2. Graduate Program(s)

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures (SLL) has a long history of being a “full service” Slavic department offering full undergraduate majors and graduate study in several Slavic languages/literatures other than Russian
- Objectives
 - ▶ Programs are appropriate to their goal of preparing university-level researchers and teachers in the field
 - ▶ Program learning outcomes are aligned with institutional expectations for student learning outcomes
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Standards for admission to MA and PhD programs are field appropriate and comparable to top peer institutions
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Diversified MA program now includes a two-year option to expand opportunities for advanced study to students not fully prepared by their undergraduate programs
 - ▶ Graduate program structure and requirements are in line with the expectations of top programs at peer institutions
 - ▶ SLL's programs offered in-person in lecture, seminar, and mixed lecture/discussion formats, in line with disciplinary norms and best practices
 - ▶ Program structure is appropriate to the degree of mastery expected upon completion
 - ▶ Time-to-completion expectations are reasonable
 - ▶ Department is able to offer enough graduate courses to meet student demand and to ensure that they can meet program completion requirements
 - ▶ Current research informs the content of existing classes and the addition of new classes in the department

- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Department provides support for students seeking assistance with using gender-inclusive language in language courses
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Program assessment practices offer a solid baseline for monitoring student growth and pedagogical effectiveness
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students expressed wide enthusiasm for the high standards for learning and engagement they encountered in the department
 - ▶ Course evaluations and surveys indicate that students are achieving desired institutional degree outcomes through study in SLL
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ PhD graduates enjoy a high success rate on the academic job market
 - ▶ Some PhD graduates have launched successful academic careers in North America and Western Europe
 - ▶ Success of PhD alumni indicates that program’s field-appropriate learning outcomes are being achieved
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ Faculty advance research topics and use methods that educate and train their graduate students with the latest developments in the field
- Student funding
 - ▶ SLL has been active and successful in raising funds to supplement graduate funding

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

- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Reviewers caution that students with interest or need for support using gender-inclusive language in language courses may not feel empowered to ask for it
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students expressed some dissatisfaction regarding unequal support of students specializing in different national cultures; reviewers attribute this to faculty departures and the inability of temporary faculty to provide the same level of support as tenure-stream faculty
 - ▶ Reviewers note that students appear to often find themselves lacking clear information regarding available courses, course schedules, and other opportunities
- Student funding
 - ▶ Low levels of graduate student funding are a fundamental barrier to recruiting top students and to their timely completion of their programs
 - ▶ Current funding packages do not provide adequate living resources for students given the high cost of living in Toronto

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Reviewers support planned modifications to graduate program curricula, including removal of the coursework plus research paper option from the MA program and removal of the Slavic linguistics field option from the PhD program
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Continue to consider students' diverse needs, including providing language classroom models for students wishing to use gender-inclusive language
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Consider adding additional assessment practices to monitor students' progress toward program-level learning outcomes
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Reviewers recommend careful use of student evaluations in monitoring programs for potential issues
 - ▶ Seek institutional support to study non-academic career outcomes for PhD graduates and
 - ▶ Explore opportunities to provide guidance regarding non-academic careers for graduate students, e.g., providing information about existing workshops, information sessions, or training for careers beyond academia
 - ▶ Further integrate career preparation and development of transferrable skills into programs, including presenting information and research results in blogs, podcasts, websites and other forms of media
 - ▶ Reviewers note that better communication regarding courses, course schedules, and other opportunities could improve students' experience
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ Reviewers support efforts to eliminate some program requirements and reduce time to completion rates
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Explore opportunities to gather more comprehensive data on alumni career outcomes, to inform career preparation and skill development components within programs
- Student funding
 - ▶ “We recommend in the strongest possible terms that the university prioritize increasing funding levels for graduate students if it aims to continue to be a leading research institution”

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ SLL faculty are well recognized and respected for their service to the profession, serving on many boards and committees and supporting a wide range of North American and European journals

- ▶ Department is well positioned for leadership continuity with a pool of talented faculty at various stages of development
- ▶ Faculty commitment to student mentoring is reflected in undergraduate student satisfaction and graduate student citations of faculty availability for consultation and openness in the classroom
- Research
 - ▶ Tenured, tenure track, and teaching stream faculty are renowned scholars who produce a high volume of important publications in a broad array of sub-disciplines
 - ▶ “Enviably” quantity of books produced by the Department in the past decade
 - ▶ Faculty demonstrate admirable success in receiving grant awards through national competitions administered by SSHRC
 - ▶ Impressive research output and collaborations in joint research ventures with peer institutions in North America, the UK, and Western Europe
 - ▶ SLL faculty organize and frequently participate in conferences and other academic gatherings worldwide
- Faculty
 - ▶ SLL faculty are committed to maintaining and increasing the Department’s current standing as an internationally recognized premier center for research and teaching in Slavic and East European languages, literatures, and cultures
 - ▶ SLL faculty are highly skilled scholars and teachers, well qualified to realize the program’s goals and successful in fostering the program’s academic environment
 - ▶ SLL faculty work on projects with international experts from the U.S. and Europe is a strong testament to their international reputation
 - ▶ Collaborative research efforts of SLL faculty are remarkably robust for a field in which individual authorship and research projects are the norm
 - ▶ Faculty promote innovation and foster a rigorous intellectual climate for their graduate students, evident in the innovative interdisciplinary coursework offered in the program and in the performance of their graduates on the competitive academic job market
 - ▶ Faculty are remarkably balanced and egalitarian in the sharing of doctoral student supervision responsibilities
 - ▶ Several SLL faculty have received FAS and college teaching awards
 - ▶ Mid-career and junior faculty members are well-established or show great potential for success
 - ▶ Teaching stream professor in Russian language pedagogy has built a strong reputation of engaging with the most current pedagogy and being supportive of teaching assistants
 - ▶ Successful tenure and promotion processes in the period under review indicate the effectiveness of the Department’s PTR Committee

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

- Faculty
 - ▶ Reviewers note the current non-alignment of faculty expertise with all of the Slavic language/literature areas programmatically covered as a challenge to programs' sustainability
 - ▶ Czech/Slovak and Polish streams in undergraduate and graduate programs are served by limited time teaching stream faculty with some support from part-time visiting faculty
 - ▶ Unsuccessful attempts to secure administrative approval to address concerns regarding faculty disciplinary coverage have left the department leadership frustrated and demoralized as they aspire to continue to be a "full service" Slavic department offering full undergraduate majors and graduate study in several Slavic languages/literatures other than Russian

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ Undergraduate curriculum revisions will require faculty to cross the boundaries of their national literary areas and collaborate across languages and cultures.
 - ▶ Reviewers support the Department's proposed approach to hire Slavic comparatists who can cover more than one language/literature area, and who also address the trend toward interdisciplinary and cultural studies approaches in the field
 - ▶ Reviewers strongly recommend the approval of the current proposed hire of a Slavic comparatist in digital culture and new media as an investment in a promising strategic direction; "...the proposed hire would help SLL to implement with a greater degree of success the curricular modifications to the undergraduate programs, as well as both MA and PhD levels"
 - ▶ Request for new hire should be framed in the context of efforts to expand curricula and course offerings to include innovative interdisciplinary topics, issues, and methodologies
 - ▶ Limited-term teaching stream and part-time visiting faculty should not be envisioned as a permanent solution to concerns regarding faculty disciplinary coverage in areas with recent faculty losses, but as a temporary solution to maintaining those streams as the process of shifting new faculty expertise into those areas continues; "for program quality and sustainability, the final goal should be core faculty coverage of these areas"
 - ▶ Consider joint hires with other units

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
 - ▶ Collegial and courteous professional relationships among faculty
 - ▶ SLL has developed important and productive relationships with local and national Slavic diaspora communities, enabling creation of a broad slate of student awards and prizes; Department has a strong history of community fundraising
 - ▶ Gradual shift toward a more cultural studies approach to the discipline has enabled SLL to build vital relationships with cognate units
 - ▶ Collaborative relationships are evident in the Department's cross-listed courses with no fewer than 13 programs and centers
 - ▶ Participation in several graduate collaborative specializations benefits students and speaks of the openness of the Department and the collaborative work of the faculty
 - ▶ SLL faculty offer lectures and presentations to the local community
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Current Chair has been "a most capable, dedicated, and far-sighted leader"
 - ▶ Duties appear to be well divided and shared among the core faculty contingent
 - ▶ Department functions well with current administrative structure (Department Chair, Associate Chair-Graduate, Associate Chair-Undergraduate and two administrative staff members) and various committees
 - ▶ Staff members have excellent working relationships and appear committed to the Department
 - ▶ SLL's physical space is adequate for the department; recent renovations added utility and modern atmosphere
 - ▶ U of T Libraries and their holdings and resources for Slavic studies are extraordinary and offer a wealth of resources to students for research; scholarly support provided by the libraries is ahead of that available in many peer departments
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ SLL belongs among the most elite Slavic departments in North America for the quality and breadth of its faculty, research, and academic programs
 - ▶ SLL is the only full-service Slavic department in Canada and one of the few that has been able to sustain programs across multiple Slavic areas at a high level, including undergraduate majors and PhD specializations and not just language instruction
 - ▶ SLL has shown itself to be responsive to indications of potential problems and ever engaged in a process of program improvement
 - ▶ Recent undergraduate program reforms and the ongoing shift in the department toward a more cultural studies and interdisciplinary approach keep it on the cutting edge of developments in the field

- ▶ Efforts in research, curricular reform and innovation, and community outreach serve the strategic priorities of the Faculty of Arts & Science to push the boundaries of research excellence, enhance academic programming and the student experience, and build partnerships with local and global communities
- ▶ FAS Language Citation initiative is a unique program to recognize achievements in the study of foreign languages
- ▶ Commendable fund-raising initiative could boost undergraduate program enrolments
- ▶ Department has distinguished itself with long-standing commitment to disciplinary diversity and the wide range of East European languages and cultures taught and studied
- ▶ SLL's comprehensive programs of study in several languages and cultures, including less commonly taught languages, are among its greatest strengths
- ▶ SLL is in the "vanguard" of the discipline-wide initiative to decolonize Slavic studies to make the field more inclusive and open to the previously marginalized cultures of Eastern Europe; "This feature of the Unit is a great asset to the profession"
- International comparators
 - ▶ SLL is the only full-service Slavic department in Canada and belongs among the most elite Slavic departments in North America for the quality and breadth of its faculty, research, and academic programs
 - ▶ SLL is internationally recognized as a center of Ukrainian studies comparable, in the Western hemisphere, to only a few high-profile institutions
 - ▶ SLL has done a remarkable job of maintaining program enrollments that are near the top among its peers
 - ▶ Faculty grant success and publication productivity compares favorably with Slavic departments in the U.S.

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

- Relationships
 - ▶ Reviewers observe some tension between experts in different national cultures (though they note that this does not appear to be detrimental to the working environment of the Department and is common in the field)

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Continue to seek more collaborations with cognate units and programs through cross-listed courses, joint programs, and joint hires
 - ▶ Advance and expand community outreach efforts, to increase the public engagement of faculty and students and enhance the Department's social impact
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Proposed renaming of the department should be part of efforts to rebrand SLL as a unit dedicated to interdisciplinary language and culture study to attract a broader cohort of students to its programs and increase its enrollments

- ▶ In collaboration with the Faculty of Arts & Science and other language departments, develop a larger initiative designed to bring attention to the University of Toronto as a flagship Canadian institution for world and less commonly taught languages; such an initiative could highlight existing opportunities for foreign language and culture study, enable expansion of co-curricular opportunities, demystify career pathways for students, and enable recruitment
 - Departments could pursue outside grant funding to finance this initiative
- ▶ Explore strategies to increase publicity for the FAS Language Citation initiative, as part of a larger project to highlight the unique opportunities for language study available at the University, generate interest and excitement among students, and as a potential opportunity for growth
- ▶ Reviewers support current plan to create a new curriculum committee to guide the implementation of the new undergraduate curriculum changes, and to lead further curriculum additions
- ▶ Establish a permanent scholarship committee comprising the Department's continuing faculty on an annually rotating basis
- ▶ "...In the context of limited resources and in the face of shrinking enrollments, the shifting of faculty expertise may have to happen over a longer term and one or two of the areas with the smallest enrollments may have to be let go. We recommend frank discussion between the department and the administration on these issues."
- ▶ Leverage community partnerships and donor relationships as part of Departmental revenue generation efforts
- ▶ Consider diversification of enrollment strategies in order to attract students who are majoring in disciplines other than Slavic studies, but who have an interest in acquiring knowledge of Eastern Europe and Central Eurasia
- International comparators
 - ▶ Leverage practices already implemented by peer institutions in North America as part of broader project to re-package cultural curriculum, in order to target a broader undergraduate student population and facilitate enrollment growth



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

September 12, 2024

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

RE: UTQAP cyclical review of Department of Slavic & East European Languages & Cultures (formerly Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures)

Dear Prof. McCahan,

I write in response to your letter of June 18, 2024, regarding the February 1-2, 2024, UTQAP cyclical review of the Department of Slavic & East European Languages & Cultures (formerly Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures) and requesting our Administrative Responses.

The following programs were reviewed: Slavic Languages and Cultures (HBA): Specialist, Major, Minor (Major and Minor Streams: Czech and Slovak, Polish, Russian, South Slavic, Ukrainian); Russian Literature in Translation (Minor); Slavic Languages & Literatures: MA, PhD.

On behalf of the Faculty of Arts & Science, we would first like to thank the reviewers, Professor David L. Cooper, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Professor Yana Hashamova, Ohio State University, and Professor Olga Maiorova, University of Michigan, for their very comprehensive review of the Department. We would also like to thank the department chair, program coordinator, 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 April 19, 2024, after which the chair shared it widely with stakeholders in the Department. We are extremely pleased with the reviewers' positive assessment of the overall strength of the Department and its outstanding, productive faculty. The review report noted the recently restructured undergraduate program and its more comparative curriculum, with its flexible program offerings and well-designed requirements to achieve the program learning outcomes and the high standards for learning and engagement at both undergraduate and graduate levels, with PhD graduates enjoying a high success rate on the academic job market. The report applauded the faculty as renowned scholars who produce a high volume of important publications in a broad array of sub-disciplines and who are also well recognized and respected for their service to the profession. The review report also raised several issues and challenges and identified areas for enhancement, including the need to provide language classroom models for students wishing to use gender-inclusive language, developing better communication

regarding courses, course schedules, and other opportunities, and identifying the low levels of graduate student funding as a barrier to recruiting top students.

Each of these recommendations has been addressed in the attached Review Recommendations Table that 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 department 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.

As this UTQAP cyclical review was deferred twice (from the 2021-22 and 2022-23 review cycles), the next UTQAP cyclical review of the Department will take place no later than the 2029-30 review cycle. This date reflects the original UTQAP review cycle (2021-22) and is stipulated in the most recent deferral response from your office dated October 21, 2022.

My office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with program leadership and through the Department'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 February 2024 UTQAP cyclical review and the year of the next site visit in the 2029-30 review cycle 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 Slavic & East European Languages & Cultures (formerly Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures) and its undergraduate and graduate programs.

Sincerely,



Antoinette Handley
Acting Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Professor, Department of Political Science

cc.

- Leonid Livak, Chair, Department of Slavic & East European Languages & Cultures, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Gillian Hamilton, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Caitlin Burton, Manager, Academic Change & 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

2023-24 UTQAP Review of the FAS Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures - 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 recommended that SLL continue the general transformation of the department toward a cultural studies approach and encouraged the development of additional comparative and cross-disciplinary courses; they also voiced support for plans to create a new curriculum committee to guide the implementation of the new undergraduate curriculum changes and to lead further curriculum adjustments.	1	“We recommend that SLL continue the general transformation of the department, in line with the transforming discipline, toward a cultural studies approach.”	This transformation is ongoing. The new suite of the Department’s modified undergraduate programs, enhancing interdisciplinarity and covering the full range of creative cultural expression beyond literature, took effect in March 2024. The Department’s medium-term goal is to ensure the smooth transition, for students and for faculty, from the old to the new suite of undergraduate programs. The long-term goal, fully contingent on the Department’s future faculty complement, is the expansion of our interdisciplinary and comparative course offerings in cultural history and in various forms of creative cultural expression that link all seven language and culture areas we teach (Czech and Slovak, Estonian, Finnish, Polish, Russian, South Slavic, Ukrainian) in one intellectually coherent and integrated curriculum which has been put in place during the recent modification of our undergraduate programs.	The Dean’s office celebrates the significant, perhaps unprecedented curricular renewal of the undergraduate program that the Chair has led over the past two years. The Department’s curricular work is ongoing, and departmental leadership is encouraged to work with the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (CTSI) for additional guidance.
	2	“We encourage the development of additional comparative and cross-disciplinary courses (diaspora studies, race and gender, media, digital humanities) and the further integration of the various language-area	The creation of more comparative and interdisciplinary courses integrating all language and culture areas taught at the Department is our academic unit’s medium-term curricular priority. This is because our	The Dean’s office directs the Chair and department faculty to the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate, who is available to the Department for guidance on curricular matters

		streams by allowing a greater number of such courses to count toward requirements.”	modified suite of undergraduate programs, which came into effect in March 2024, has a significant comparative component in two different course categories (“Core courses” and “Comparative courses”) representing over 30% of the required coursework in each modified Minor, Major, and Specialist program. More such courses will be created in the forthcoming academic year, drawing on the expertise of our current faculty. In the long term , however, the success of the Department’s recent curricular renewal (which aims, among other things, to enhance comparativity and interdisciplinarity in our undergraduate programs of study) will depend on the renewal of our faculty complement, particularly with an eye on colleagues trained in more than one language and culture area and whose research specialization fills the Department’s current disciplinary lacunae – media studies, digital culture, and environmental humanities.	in addition to CTSI mentioned above #1. The Associate Dean, Teaching & Learning, and Faculty Liaisons are available to assist with pedagogy and course design.
	3	“We support the chair’s plan to create a new curriculum committee, which can guide the implementation of the new undergraduate curriculum changes but can also lead and supervise further curriculum additions.”	The curriculum committee, consisting of the Department’s officers (Chair, Associate Chair-Undergraduate, and Associate Chair-Graduate), was created in the academic year 2023-2024. In the medium-term , we will continue fine-tuning the committee’s functioning, especially as concerns the creation of new undergraduate and graduate courses and the modification of existing courses, with special focus on our academic unit’s new curricular needs as our faculty and students transition from the old suite of undergraduate programs to the modified suite of programs which came into effect in March 2024.	The Dean’s office applauds the Department’s formation of a curriculum committee and is available for guidance on best practices.
	4	“We recommend that the Department continue to seek even more collaborations [with cognate units] through cross-listed courses, joint programs, and joint hires.”	For the past fifteen years, the Department has been and remains at the forefront of collaborative curricular initiatives. The list of our courses that count toward program requirements in other academic units is long	The Dean acknowledges the rich currently existing relationships the Department has with cognate units within Arts & Science. In the short-to-medium term, the Dean's office will work with the Unit to develop a forward-

			(see the self-study) and still growing. In the long term , we plan to continue the practice of creating courses that both appeal to students outside the Department’s own programs of study and meet the requirements and expectation of cognate academic units. In the medium term , the Department’s proposed hire in the tenure stream – a Slavic comparativist specializing in media studies and digital culture – will allow our academic unit to expand existing collaborative relations or establish new such relations with units and programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, to wit, Book and Media Studies at St. Michael’s College; the digital humanities program at Woodsworth College; and the Graduate Collaborative Specialization in Book History and Print Culture at Massey College. Although our repeated requests for this new hire have been denied by the FAS faculty appointments committee, we will renew our hire request in 2024-25.	looking academic plan as part of the upcoming 5-year unit-level academic planning process, to commence upon completion of the UTQAP review. Each unit is asked to create a 5-year academic plan that includes goals for research, curriculum, faculty support and administrative staff support. As part of this process, the Department is also asked to outline its complement needs over the next five years. The ULP process for the Department is currently scheduled for 2025-26.
5	“What, however, can help the Department to increase its prominence at the UofT and help grow its enrollment in the near future is focusing on students who are majoring in disciplines other than Slavic studies but who potentially might be open to acquiring some knowledge of Eastern Europe and Central Eurasia. We recommend that the Department seek pathways to attract such students to its broader course offerings.”	As detailed in the self-study, the Department has long endeavored, through the design and delivery of its undergraduate courses, to attract students from disciplinary fields other than Slavic and East European Studies. To this end, we offer a broad variety of courses in cultural history and cultural expression (literature, cinema, theatre, cultural history, folklore, etc.) that are taught entirely in English with all materials in English translation. The recent modification of our undergraduate programs significantly expands the thematic breadth of our curricular offerings through comparative and interdisciplinary coursework, which is also taught in English. This practice of targeting students from disciplinary field outside Slavic and East European studies is integral to the Department’s teaching philosophy and will continue in the long term . In the medium	The Dean’s office will connect the Chair to the Office of the Faculty Registrar to facilitate the Department’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 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	

			<p>term, we plan to enhance this practice through new faculty hires whose expertise will complement the Department’s thematic lacunae, broadening our course offerings. The first such proposed hire in the tenure stream will be a Slavic comparativist specializing in media studies and digital culture. Although our repeated requests for this new hire have been denied by the FAS faculty appointments committee, we will renew our hire request in 2024-25.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The Dean’s office also encourages the Chair to reach out directly to the Colleges for guidance on how to expand the visibility of Slavic programs through College channels. The Vice-Dean, College Relations, can assist the Chair in this matter.</p> <p>U of T participates in the Universities Fair each year, and the Department is encouraged to participate directly in that event.</p> <p>The Dean’s office also suggests that Chair also explore the most common program pairings with Slavic, and initiate discussions with those units to amplify the visibility and relevance of Slavic programs. The Dean’s office can assist the Chair in navigating data resources to identify these pairings.</p>
The reviewers recommended that SLL continue to consider the diverse needs of students and integrate new topics and material into the curriculum, including “the thorny problem of gender-inclusive language in Slavic languages”.	6	<p>“The reviewers recommend that the department continue to consider the diverse needs of its students and integrate new topics and material into its curriculum, for example, addressing the thorny problem of gender-inclusive language in Slavic languages and providing models in the language classroom to students who want to use such language.”</p>	<p>Addressing current social issues in the process of language instruction is part and parcel of the Department’s culturally contextualized language pedagogy which targets not only competence in the target language but competence in the culture where the target language is spoken. The Department agrees with the reviewers’ recommendation and will continue its longstanding practice of encouraging Teaching Assistants and Instructors to address and explore current social issues in the process of culturally</p>	<p>Immediate term: The Dean’s office supports the Department in exploring ways of incorporating curricular changes that address gender-inclusive language in the teaching of Slavic languages. TA Training is available through the Teaching Assistants’ Training Program (TATP) sessions, run through the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation. The (TATP) supports teaching at the university and beyond by delivering programs and workshops that foster inclusive and innovative teaching practices for first-time</p>

			contextualized language teaching. This would necessarily include the relation of gender as a social construct to its function as a grammatical category, as well as the transferability of the Western theory and practice of gender-inclusive language to Slavic and East European cultural contexts where the target languages are spoken.	TAs and Course Instructors and those wishing to develop a range of teaching specializations. These resources can advise on best practices in further developing facility with gender-inclusive language. As well, all units have access to Faculty Liaisons in the A&S Teaching and Learning team, to advise on pedagogical matters and highlight divisional Teaching and Learning resources available to faculty.
The reviewers recommended a number of changes to undergraduate program curricula, including further integration of language-area streams, incorporating support for developing transferable skills, additional types of assessment practices, and increasing the use of comparative coursework in areas with limited faculty support to reduce dependency on individual instructors.	7	“The reviewers suggest that the department consider counting more comparative coursework, particularly in language areas where faculty support is currently diminished, to further reduce dependency on a sole instructor...”	The Department’s new suite of modified undergraduate programs of study, which came into effect in March 2024, aims to make our curriculum more integrated across language and culture areas, as well as significantly more comparative, thereby reducing the dependence of a given language and culture area on a single instructor, as has been the case in Czech, Estonian, and Finnish streams. In the modified undergraduate programs, the ratio of comparative to area-specific courses is about 35% to 65% respectively. As a result, the new suite of programs engages the Department’s faculty in significant collaboration across language and culture areas. The Department’s medium-term goal is to ensure smooth transition from the old to the new, much more comparative undergraduate programs. Our long-term goal is further to increase the ratio of comparative to area-specific courses by drawing on the expertise of the Department’s proposed new hire – the Slavic comparativist specializing in media studies and digital culture.	As above, the Dean’s office supports the Department leveraging the resources of A&S Teaching and Learning team and CTSI for guidance on best practices in assessment design to diversify the curriculum and take full advantage of faculty expertise.
	8	“Given the small percentage of undergraduates who go on to graduate study in the field, we would encourage the department to expand on the kinds of genres students are required to practice for communicating their research results, not abandoning the research paper (also a vital skill outside the academy) in all	The Department agrees that its current continuing faculty complement, by virtue of its academic training and research focus, is not versed in novel online discursive forms which could be used as pedagogical tools. That is one of the reasons we have repeatedly asked for a tenure-stream appointment in media studies and digital culture. Although	The Dean’s office will direct the Chair to several divisional and institutional resources which can enable faculty in the Department to expand their facility with different types of assignments and assessments. In addition to leveraging the expertise of CTSI, the Faculty of Arts & Science Teaching & Learning team can provide one-on-one and group

		classes but offering options to present results in blogs, podcasts, websites and other forms of media as well.”	our request has been denied by the FAS faculty appointments committee, we will renew it in the upcoming academic year.	consultations on alternative and innovative forms of student communication and evaluation, and also hosts a Teaching & Learning Community of Practice (CoP) that was established in 2015 to create a collegial forum for faculty and instructors to meet and share teaching practices and strategies across fields and disciplines.
The reviewers advised that SLL seek institutional support to study the profile and career outcomes of its undergraduate students, along with the non-academic career outcomes of its PhDs, and that it further integrate career preparation into its programs at all levels.	9	“We recommend that SLL seek institutional support to study the profile and career outcomes of its undergraduate students, along with the non-academic career outcomes of its PhDs, and that it further integrate career preparation into its programs at all levels.”	In the past, the Department has been unable to track systematically career outcomes of its undergraduates, because of confidentiality concerns regarding personal information of our alumni. This information can only be collected and passed on to the Department by U of T administration. In the short and medium term , the Department looks forward to working with appropriate FAS offices on collecting career outcomes information of our undergraduate alumni which will permit, in the long term , to finetune our academic unit’s undergraduate curriculum better to reflect the professional interests and needs of undergraduates in our programs of study. At the graduate level, the Department has ample information about its alumni, most of whom are pursuing academic careers, as detailed in the self-study (either doctoral studies in the case of MA alumni or college and university positions in the case of PhDs). In the short term , to bolster the non-academic career outcomes of our graduate students, the Department is going to introduce a module on non-academic careers into its required doctoral proseminar. We plan to invite colleagues from the SGS specialized in non-academic career training to run the proseminar’s session on non-academic careers in 2024-25. In the medium and long term , we plan to make non-academic career training a regular component of the required doctoral proseminar, based on the result of the session newly introduced in 2024-25.	<p>The Dean’s office encourages the Chair to work with the Coordinator, Graduate Professional Development in the A&S Office of Graduate Professional Development & Student Success (GPDSS) for consultation about developing professionalization modules. This office supports the academic, non-academic, and pedagogical development of graduate students in the Faculty of Arts & Science through a variety of faculty-wide and unit-specific activities. The Coordinator can work with the Chair to advise on new or existing program offerings such as the creation of curricular or co-curricular professionalization courses, and the Dean’s office provides support to move such offerings through governance. In the short-term, the Dean’s office has connected the Chair to the Coordinator to begin this discussion.</p> <p>The Faculty of Arts & Science encourages units to develop strong alumni relationships.</p>

	10	<p>“The reviewers would also like to see additional steps in the enhancement of professionalization and career preparation for both undergraduates and graduates, following on those already taken in response to prior reviews. In particular, we recommend increased efforts to advise PhD students on careers outside the academy (in parallel to the FAS Backpack to Briefcase program the department works with for undergraduates) and efforts to track career outcomes for BAs, aside from graduate school admissions, and PhDs that leave the academy.”</p>	See the response above (#9).	<p>In addition to #9 above, the Coordinator, Graduate Professional Development in the A&S Office of Graduate Professional Development & Student Success (GPDSS) can facilitate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the A&S Pathways for PhDs workshop series that introduces A&S doctoral students to strategies and resources for finding meaningful work outside the traditional academic job market. working directly with graduate units to create or develop professionalization activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate professional skills workshops (academic or non-academic), including tailored versions of A&S workshops Contribute to existing unit-level activities (e.g. offering guest presentations to professionalization courses, arranging alumni speakers for career panels). Assist and offer feedback on the development of public-facing resources (e.g. alumni and career resource pages for unit websites or Quercus). <p>As noted in #9 above, the Chair has been connected to the Coordinator to begin this work.</p> <p>At the undergraduate level, the Program Exploration Days also offers career guidance for undergraduates. At these events, students are offered the opportunity to explore various career pathways and deepen their understanding of how to connect their program selection to their career goals.</p>
The reviewers noted that despite significant and successful efforts to raise funds to supplement funding packages, graduate	11	<p>“We recommend that the U of T as an institution and FAS make serious efforts to address the inadequacy of graduate student funding (as prioritized in FAS’s</p>	The Department agrees with the reviewers’ recommendation and hopes that “U of T as an institution and FAS make serious efforts to	The A&S Dean’s office recognizes that this review report recommendation regarding graduate funding is an ongoing concern for

student funding remains “a fundamental barrier to recruiting top students and to their timely completion of their programs.”		academic plan for 2020-25), which constitutes a major barrier for SLL and similar departments to recruiting highly qualified students and the most significant obstacle for timely degree completion for PhD students in SLL.”	address the inadequacy of graduate student funding,” as such efforts are outside the Department’s mandate and competence. Our academic unit has done its utmost to raise supplementary funds for our graduate students, as detailed in the self-study, and will continue to do so in the future.	the Faculty and has taken steps to address it, increasing the minimum level of graduate funding yearly since 2018-19. Further improvement in funding is an ongoing Faculty priority.
	12	“We recommend in the strongest possible terms that the university prioritize increasing funding levels for graduate students if it aims to continue to be a leading research institution.”	The Department agrees with this recommendation and hopes that “the university will prioritize increasing funding levels for graduate students,” since such funding lies outside the Department’s mandate and competence. As an academic unit, we have done our utmost to raise supplementary funds for our graduate students, as detailed in the self-study, and will continue to do so in the future.	The issue of funding, addressed above in #11, remains a topic of ongoing discussion among the stakeholders in the University.
To address concerns regarding the distribution of disciplinary expertise in the faculty complement, the reviewers endorsed the Department’s proposed renaming of the department, and its approach to pursue hires of Slavic comparatists who can cover more than one language/literature area and address the trend toward interdisciplinary and cultural studies approaches in the field.	13	“The proposed renaming of the department should be part of efforts to rebrand SLL as a unit dedicated to interdisciplinary language and culture study to attract a broader cohort of students to its programs and increase its enrollments. We recommend the approval of the current proposed hire of a Slavic comparatist in digital culture and new media as an investment to advance this promising strategic direction.”	The Department’s renaming process, launched in the fall of 2023, was successfully completed in the spring of 2024. As of July 1, 2024, the Department’s new name – Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures – will reflect the evolution of our academic unit’s geographic and disciplinary expertise. In addition to five Slavic language and culture areas, we have recently integrated into the main suite of our undergraduate programs of study two non-Slavic areas – Finnish and Estonian – and we plan to keep expanding in the medium to long term the number of national language and culture areas we research and teach. In addition, the Department’s curriculum has long gone beyond language and literature: we presently offer a broad variety of courses in cultural history and creative cultural expression. Our unit’s new name accounts for this evolution, charting the Department’s future toward further curricular enrichment and thematic diversity. The Department concurs with the	<p>Since the site visit and review report, the Dean’s office has worked with the Department to facilitate the formal proposal to change the Department’s name and supported its completion and subsequent pathway through Faculty governance in Spring 2024.</p> <p>Regarding to the recommendation for a new hire, the Dean’s office notes that all requests for new positions across the Faculty are submitted yearly to the Faculty Appointments Committee (FAC), which includes representation across its sectors (Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences) and from the Colleges. All FAC requests must include discussion of EDI. 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 for new positions than available positions.</p> <p>Longer-term complement planning is also included as part of the A&S 5-year unit-level academic planning (ULP) exercise. Following</p>

			reviewers’ opinion that, in the medium and long term , our proposed new hire in the tenure stream – Slavic comparativist in media studies and digital culture – will solidify and enhance our academic unit’s movement toward greater comparativity and interdisciplinarity which inform the curricular structure of the Department’s recently modified suite of undergraduate programs.	a UTQAP review, each unit is asked to create a 5-year academic plan that includes goals for research, curriculum, faculty support, administrative staff support, and complement planning. As part of this process, the Department will be asked to outline their complement needs over the next five years. The ULP process for the Department is currently scheduled for 2025-26.
	14	“we recommend that new hires (when possible) should have not only proficiency in more than one national language and culture but also in interdisciplinary areas (medical or environmental humanities; disability studies; gender studies, etc.)”	The Department concurs with the reviewers’ recommendations. Our proposed new hire in the tenure stream is a Slavic comparativist (i.e. working in at least two different language and culture areas) specialized in the interdisciplinary fields of media studies and digital culture. The new colleague’s research focus will enhance our modified undergraduate programs’ comparative nature, beginning with a core course that introduces students to digital media, online communities, and social network practices in Slavic and East European countries. Our graduate students’ training will also benefit tremendously from instruction and thesis supervision in the fields of media studies and digital culture, currently not taught at the Department for lack of specialists. In the short term , we will continue to ask for this position, hoping that the external reviewers’ recommendations will bolster our case with the FAS appointments committee which has repeatedly rejected our new hire request.	The Dean’s office acknowledges the Chair’s plan to submit a new request for a scholar in media studies and digital culture to the Faculty Appointments Committee at its next cycle in Spring 2025.
The reviewers recommended that SLL work with cognate units to develop an initiative designed to bring attention to U of T as “a flagship Canadian institution for world and less commonly taught languages” in order to highlight available opportunities for foreign language and culture study, invest in expanding co-	15	“We recommend that SLL, together with FAS and other language departments, develop a larger initiative designed to bring attention to the U of T as a flagship Canadian institution for world and less commonly taught languages.”	The Department will gladly participate in any FAS initiative to promote the study of foreign languages and U of T.	In the short-long term, the Dean’s office encourages the Department to optimize its participation in the Global Language Initiative as part of a collaborative effort to bring together units to increase access to language instruction. The Global Languages Initiative (GLI) is the collaborative effort of over 15 Departments, Programs, Colleges, Centres, and Institutes to increase access to additional

curricular opportunities, and demystify career pathways.				language instruction, such as in indigenous, foreign, official, and ancient languages. It is committed to promoting intercultural competence and global fluency, supporting the revitalization of lesser-taught and Indigenous languages, and engaging local and global communities.
	16	“More publicity about the program could further the cause of bolstering enrollments in languages at U of T. It could become a component of a larger project to highlight the unique opportunities for language study available at the U of T and generate interest and excitement among students, as the reviewers here are recommending as a potential opportunity for growth.”	As detailed in the self-study, the Department has unique advantages and disadvantages compared to similar units at peer American institutions. As the only full-service Slavic department in Canada, we teach a variety of less commonly taught languages unavailable at most other universities in Canada. The Department’s linguistic and cultural breadth has few rivals in North America. These advantages are offset by the fact that, unlike our American peer institutions, U of T has no foreign language requirement and, unlike cognate units at U of T, we do not teach languages offered in Canadian high schools. This significantly reduces our ability to attract undergraduate students. In addition, unlike the US federal government, the Canadian federal government has no targeted funding for encouraging the teaching and learning of strategically important foreign languages. As a result, faculty- and university-level publicity, as suggested by the reviewers, would be of great help to the Department’s effort to recruit students into its undergraduate programs. In the short to medium term , we look forward to working with the university administration on a publicity campaign raising awareness of our language and culture offerings.	<p>In addition to #5 and #15 discussed above, if the Chair wishes to explore further promotional strategies and to support its reputation-building, in the short-medium term, the Department is encouraged to work with A&S Communications & Public Affairs to help promote its news and events within the University community and beyond. The Dean’s office can facilitate that when the Department is ready.</p> <p>Once the Department determines appropriate student content to help improve academic wayfinding, the Department can engage the A&S offices of Communications and Information & Instructional Technology (IIT) for advice on how to implement any changes on its website.</p>
The reviewers observed that in the context of limited resources and reduced enrolments in some programs, the Department may need to consider longer-term strategic planning for their faculty	17	“...given the current faculty composition, we concur with the department’s plans to eliminate the MA option for coursework plus research paper and the PhD specialization in Slavic Linguistics.”	The MA option for coursework plus research paper and the PhD specialization in Slavic linguistics have been officially removed from the Department’s graduate programs as of July 1, 2024.	The Dean’s office supported the Department’s decisions in these curricular matters, and facilitated these major modifications to the graduate programs, which moved through Faculty governance this past spring 2024.

complement development and program offerings	18	<p>“We also recognize that in the context of limited resources and in the face of shrinking enrollments, the shifting of faculty expertise may have to happen over a longer term and one or two of the areas with the smallest enrollments may have to be let go. We recommend frank discussion between the department and the administration on these issues.”</p>	<p>The Department has recently completed major modifications to its undergraduate curriculum, pivoting away from the traditional model of faculty as specialists in a single national area. The restructured curriculum, which went into effect in March 2024, is designed to enhance the Department's teaching efficiency, since all faculty will henceforth teach in a single, fully integrated suite of comparative programs. The modifications will stimulate undergraduate enrollments by refocusing our curriculum from single language and culture areas to transnational and interdisciplinary studies that broaden students' intellectual horizons. In the medium term, our academic planning will target the refining and delivery of the modified curriculum. Faculty members who can teach in several language and culture areas are key to the success of our curricular renewal. Our proposed next hire will specialize in at least two such areas, becoming an engine of the unit's curricular renewal, since presently only two of our tenured faculty are trained comparativists. The proposed hire will also address the Department's research lacunae. In the short term, we are eager to have a frank discussion with the university administration, as recommended by the reviewers, concerning the Department's repeatedly denied request for the Slavic comparativist specialized in media studies and digital culture.</p>	<p>In the medium term, the 5-year unit-level academic planning process, to be launched for the Department in 2024-25, will enable the unit to outline its complement planning. Part of the process in developing a 5-year plan is the opportunity for the Chair to meet with the Dean and the entire Faculty Management Team to discuss the written plan and offer concrete suggestions and guidance for its optimization. As noted in #13, the Slavic ULP is currently scheduled to for 2025-26.</p>
	19	<p>“SLL has a small number of limited-term teaching stream and part-time visiting faculty at the moment, helping to provide expertise largely in the areas where faculty losses have made that necessary to continue to provide support for streams in the undergraduate major (Czech/Slovak and Polish) and graduate programs. This is not, nor should it be, envisioned as a permanent solution to instruction in those areas, but as the process of shifting new faculty expertise into those areas continues, the university should continue to support</p>	<p>Given the very significant number of tenured faculty retirements since the Department's last UTQAP review, and the administrative secondment of yet another tenured faculty member, the renewal of our tenure-stream faculty complement is the Department's most urgent academic priority, especially when it comes to Slavic Comparativists who can teach in more than one language and culture area in</p>	<p>As noted above #1, with the UTQAP cyclical review in hand, the Dean's office acknowledges the Chair's plan to submit a new request to the Faculty Appointments Committee at its next cycle in Spring 2025 for a scholar in media studies and digital culture.</p>

		<p>this as a temporary solution to maintaining those streams, so long as they remain a strategic priority for the department. For program quality and sustainability, the final goal should be core faculty coverage of these areas.”</p>	<p>support of our recently modified curriculum. As outlined in our self-study, the Department’s severely reduced tenured complement undermines our ability to administer undergraduate and graduate programs, to staff committees, to engage in required service at the departmental and FAS levels, and to supervise doctoral theses. The proposed hire in the tenure stream will make an urgently needed contribution to all these academic and service priorities. Pedagogical continuity in Czech / Slovak and Polish areas is among the challenges the Department faces in the short to medium term because the faculty teaching in these areas have limited-term appointments (CLTAs). While our temporary faculty are highly qualified and devoted instructors, their limited-term contracts inevitably have adverse effects on pedagogical continuity in the Czech/Slovak and Polish streams. To improve undergraduate experience in these areas, both need to rely on tenured faculty members. With an eye on filling these lacunae, the Department has repeatedly requested a new tenure-stream position for a Slavic Comparativist qualified to teach in more than one language and culture area. Our request has been denied, but we will renew it in the forthcoming academic year.</p>	
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3 Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P) Findings

The spokesperson for the reading group reported that the review summary accurately described the full review and that overall, they had found the review to be positive. The reading group reported that the administrative response had adequately addressed issues identified by the review and included a comprehensive, forward-looking plan. The reading group reiterated the response and concerns about the challenges with hiring faculty on a more permanent and long-term basis, which would help stabilize the program. The group also asked for confirmation regarding the impact of the recommendations and actions, including hiring faculty and collaboration and cooperation with other areas within the university, to be reported in the Interim Monitoring Report, which would take place in two years' time.

Antoinette Handley, Acting Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science responded that in the Faculty of Arts & Science, there was a well institutionalized process called the Faculty Appointment Committee that met on an annual basis to consider all unit requests. She noted that reviews were a critical and important part of that process, and was considered alongside a range of other indicators in the Faculty and units to consider how best to distribute scarce resources across the units and departments. Similar to UTM, the number of requests exceeded the amount of resources available, but all requests were carefully reviewed and where reviews were a critical part of that process. She noted that this would also be tightly integrated into a unit's forward looking planning. Acting Dean Handley concluded by confirming that the impact of the recommendations and actions, including hiring faculty and collaboration and cooperation with other areas within the university, would be reported in the Interim Monitoring Report.

No follow-up report was requested.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures (SLL) as belonging “among the most elite Slavic departments in North America for the quality and breadth of its faculty, research, and academic programs.” They noted that the department has been able to sustain high-level programs across multiple areas at both undergraduate and graduate levels, with offerings beyond language instruction. They highlighted the “significant and successful” responses to previous external reviews, most prominently through the restructuring of the undergraduate programs, “integrating all of the specialist, major, and minor programs as streams under the rubric of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures”. They observed that the FAS Language Citation initiative is a unique program to recognize achievements in the study of foreign languages. The reviewers applauded SLL’s graduate programs for their rigorous intellectual climate, innovative interdisciplinary coursework, and graduates’ success in the competitive academic job market. The reviewers commended SLL faculty as renowned scholars producing a high volume of important publications in a broad array of sub-disciplines, and noted their remarkable success in securing SSHRC grants. Finally, they noted the collegiality within the department, their strong relationships with other units within the University, and

their engagement with the local community. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: continuing the general transformation of the department toward a cultural studies approach and developing additional comparative and cross-disciplinary courses; continuing to consider the diverse needs of students and integrate new topics and material into the curriculum; consideration of a number of changes to undergraduate program curricula including further integration of language-area streams, support for developing transferable skills, additional types of assessment practices, and increasing the use of comparative coursework in areas with limited faculty support to reduce dependency on individual instructors; seeking institutional support to study the profile and career outcomes of its undergraduate students and the non-academic career outcomes of its PhDs; integrating career preparation into programs at all levels; exploring ways to address concerns regarding graduate funding packages; continuing to pursue hires of Slavic comparatists who can cover more than one language/literature area and address the trend toward interdisciplinary and cultural studies approaches in the field; working with cognate units to develop an initiative designed to bring attention to U of T as “a flagship Canadian institution for world and less commonly taught languages” in order to highlight available opportunities for foreign language and culture study, invest in expanding co-curricular opportunities, and demystify career pathways; and consideration of longer-term strategic planning for their faculty complement development and program offerings. 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 Dean’s office monitors progress on Implementation Plans through periodic meetings with program leadership and through the Department’s five-year unit-level academic planning process, which will begin at the conclusion of the cyclical review. The office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will request a brief Interim Monitoring Report midway between the February 2024 UTQAP cyclical review and the year of the next site visit to report on progress made on the Implementation Plan as outlined in the accompanying Review Recommendations Table.

The next UTQAP cyclical review of the Department will take place no later than the 2029-30 review cycle.

6 Distribution

On August 15th 2025, 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 & 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.