

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1. Review Summary

Program Reviewed:	Book and Media Studies, B.A. (Hons.): Maj, Min
Division/Unit Offering Program:	University of St. Michael's College, Faculty of Arts & Science
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers:	1. Prof. Thomas Carmichael, Ph.D., Dean, Faculty of Information and Media Studies, University of Western Ontario 2. Prof. Paul Conway, Ph.D., School of Information, University of Michigan
Date of Review Visit:	May 3, 2018

Previous Review

Program approved to commence Spring 2007. No previous reviews.

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Self-Study and Appendices; Terms of Reference; Faculty CVS, Towards 2030 Framework.

Consultation Process

The reviewers met with the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science; Vice-Dean, Academic Planning and Strategic Initiatives; Principal and Vice-President of USMC and Director of the BMS program; BMS faculty members; Cognate faculty: Director of the Centre for Medieval Studies; Director of the Cinema Studies Institute; archivists from the Kelly Library; St. Michael's College staff; and undergraduate students in the BMS program.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - Remarkably successful program that is product of an inspired vision, a unique legacy, and the sustained engagement of faculty and sessional instructors
 - Program's interdisciplinary orientation and commitment to its objectives promise growth, development, and student interest—unique among humanities programs
- Objectives
 - Innovative, interdisciplinary program founded to carry forward the legacy of Marshall McLuhan's thought and housed in the University of St. Michael's College
 - Exemplary in its fulfillment of its objectives, those of Arts & Science and U of T
- Admissions requirements
 - Straightforward admissions requirements
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Course offerings are robust in each stream
 - Invaluable introductory foundation courses
 - Flexible curriculum with a lot of student choice
 - Welcome addition of an internship course in media, which provides a unique opportunity that is often not available to undergraduates in traditional humanities programs
- Innovation
 - Configuration of the program is unique in Canada and internationally
 - Immense book and manuscript resources of the University of Toronto and the University of Toronto library system offer outstanding opportunities for innovative practical engagement
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - Strength of the program's reputation, its subject matter, and its interdisciplinary orientation are attractive to students
 - Students are enthusiastic about the program
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students

- Larger than many undergraduate programs at U of T
- Quality of the program is commensurate with the strong quality of students on the St. George campus

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Separation of print and media into two subject POSTs
 - Program flexibility means that courses taught from year to year have little common content and causes students difficulty in mapping out their programs of study
 - While program demand is met by the committed and very successful instructors and scholars, current program delivery is constrained by the need to meet overwhelming demand
 - Delivery of the media internship course depends on faculty goodwill and voluntary labour
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - Program’s size far outstrips the resources available to support its mission

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Admissions requirements
 - Revise admissions requirements to make admission more competitive, reducing the number of majors and prioritizing BMS in course admissions
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Add significant resources to the administration of the internship course
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - Reduce the number of students in the major to a level that faculty and administrators feel can be supported and that is consistent with the program’s academic values and objectives

2. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Research
 - Each of the five faculty associated with the program has an active research profile
 - Archivists and librarians at the Kelly library who participate in the program also have active records of publication and academic activity
 - Exciting and necessary opportunities for undergraduate research, including the Interconnectivity Studies Working Group

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

- Faculty
 - Some faculty have teaching loads above what would be expected at a major research institution
 - Program requires more full-time faculty with significant research in their workloads

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - University to make a substantial commitment to faculty research to ensure faculty stay at the forefront of critical and intellectual fields
- Faculty
 - Address urgent need for more full-time faculty members, whose appointment includes significant commitments to and support for research in the fields represented by the program's unique vision

3. Administration

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
 - Program also enjoys the full support of the Principal of the University of St. Michael's College, where it is housed, and the support of the Faculty of Arts & Science
 - Faculty, staff, and students are enthusiastic about the program and committed to its objectives and success
 - Promising partnerships with Cinema Studies and Medieval Studies
 - Recognized relationship with the Collaborative Program in Book History and Print Culture
 - Developing relationships with the media and scholarly community across Toronto
- Organizational and financial structure
 - Impressive commitment of the director to seek partners to enlarge the faculty complement
 - Positive development of a home for students in the McLuhan Centre for Culture and Technology, which is an invaluable asset to the program and its students
- International comparators
 - Truly unique program in its equal dedication to book studies and media studies

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

- Relationships
 - Relationships with other units are essential to realize development of the faculty complement

- Strength of the relationship with the iSchool is less apparent than with other units, though the Dean of the iSchool and notable faculty members have been supportive of the program
- The iSchool's new undergraduate program will likely limit potential for direct collaboration with the program
- Organizational and financial structure
 - Considerable challenge of managing the program with a small number of administrators and support staff, who have commitments outside of the program
 - AV and IT infrastructure at St Michael's lags behind that of the University, though these are prioritized in the upcoming USMC plan
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - Universal understanding that faculty resources are a central challenge
 - Enrolment growth does not provide the program with any immediate or guaranteed advantage in terms of revenue or a claim on resource
- International comparators
 - Comparator programs include a significant cohort of tenure-stream and tenured faculty and a major research mission

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - Develop the relationship with the new Digital Humanities program at Woodsworth College
 - Continue to develop societal outreach relationships
- Organizational and financial structure
 - Continue to develop partnerships to enlarge the faculty complement
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - Consider the size of Book and Media Studies in the context of its current resources and academic objectives
 - Prioritize seeking student support through bursaries and scholarships
 - Highlight the extraordinary success of the program in appeals to alumni



2. Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

March 6, 2019

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

Re: UTQAP cyclical review of Book and Media Studies (BMS)

Dear Professor McCahan,

Along with the faculty, staff and students of Book and Media Studies, I am pleased with the external reviewers' assessment of BMS and its programs: Book and Media Studies, B.A., Hons. (Major, Minor). The reviewers complimented the "*remarkable success*" of the Book and Media Studies undergraduate program, highlighting its "*interdisciplinary orientation and its double commitment to the historical culture of the book and the contemporary media landscape and its social context.*"

The quality of this program notwithstanding, as per your letter dated January 21, 2019, the review report raises a number of issues and challenges. I am writing to address the areas of the review report that you identify as key. The response to these items and implementation plan are separated into immediate (6 months), medium (one to two years), and longer (three to five years) terms, where appropriate, along with who will take the lead in each area. The Dean's office has discussed the reviewers' comments through consultation with the Director of the Book and Media Studies program to develop the following implementation plan incorporating the reviewers' recommendations.

The reviewers observed that growth has outpaced the faculty complement and emphasized the importance of having faculty who are engaged in research contributing to the program; they identified a number of possible cognate unit relationships to build on in this regard. They also recommended changing admissions requirements control enrolment more effectively to align it with the available faculty compliment.

Implementation Plan

Immediate term response: The program is open to all of these points and notes the research-informed teaching currently being done by the USMC teaching-stream professors currently involved with the program (who hold SSHRC grants, publish books and peer-reviewed articles, and are part of and convene meetings of international groups of scholars in cognate fields).

The Principal has been actively involved in conversations with Chairs/Directors of cognate units, and is already working with English, Cinema Studies, and the Digital Humanities to examine the possibility of including courses taught by cognate tenure-stream faculty in the BMS program.

The Principal will work with the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate and International, to determine the optimal enrolment for the program.

Medium to longer term response: The Faculty is aware of the need to engage tenure-stream faculty in interdisciplinary programs, including those sponsored by Colleges. The Faculty is currently engaged in an Academic Planning exercise involving eight working groups. The Academic Planning and Change Working Group includes in its terms of reference the need to address support for interdisciplinary programs. The report of the Working Group, including a set of recommendations, will be provided to the Dean in May 2019. The reports of all working groups will provide the groundwork for the next A&S Academic Plan.

The reviewers noted that the program's current size outstrips the resources available to support its mission. How will IT, AV and staff resource needs be addressed in line with the program's academic objectives?

Implementation Plan

Immediate (six months) term response: The program's sponsor, USMC, will continue to offer these resources in ways that are commensurate with the size of the program. USMC continuously updates its facilities and related resources such as budgetary constraints allow.

The reviewers recommended assessing the desirability of maintaining distinct paths and the logic and relation of the program streams, as well as considering sequences of consistently offered courses.

The BMS program committee is convinced that the distinct streams are what make this an especially distinctive program: there are media studies programs and print culture programs at many institutions, but only BMS makes the case for their complementarity and integration.

Implementation Plan

Immediate term response: Since the reviewers' visit, the program is already committed to and practicing a more intentional and logical set of consistently-offered courses. The primary rubric for this – with currently stable teaching capacities, via the teaching-stream faculty noted above – is to consider student needs in the context of program requirements and legible progressions from gateway courses through to fourth-year courses.

Medium term response: The program is committed to creating a curriculum map as an added resource in this respect; the mapping exercise will provide an opportunity to consider these logical progressions and to assess whether changes to courses or program requirements are advisable.

The reviewers asked how the program will maintain its existing research and experiential learning opportunities as well as grow an integrated suite of experiential learning opportunities.

Implementation Plan

Immediate term response: Research opportunities are in place, supported by the College, and will continue.

Medium term response: The Faculty is committed to increasing capacity for experiential learning opportunities, and is in the process of setting up a new Experiential Learning and Outreach Support (ELOS) Office. This office will assist departments and programs with building more experiential, research, and international opportunities into their curricula, and with developing outreach activities that enable faculty and students to engage with relevant community and non-profit organizations, as well as industry. The office will also facilitate work or community placements for students that align with their educational goals. The ELOS team will work with the Principal over the next two years to identify experiential learning opportunities for BMS students.

The reviewers recommend that USMC make seeking student support for the program one of its priorities.

Implementation Plan

Immediate term response: The Principal has identified student support for BMS as a priority with colleagues in USMC senior administration (president, chief advancement officer, and bursar). In spring 2019, the program is hosting a public talk intended to engage alumni and, among other items, identify opportunities for giving to students in the program.

The Dean's office will monitor the implementation of recommendations, with, at minimum, a brief report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, midway between the year of the site visit and the year of the next site visit. The year of the next review will be the 2025-2026 academic year.

To conclude, we appreciate that the external reviewers identified Book and Media Studies program strengths and noted a few areas for development. The Book and Media Studies program has already begun to move forward with plans to address the recommendations as presented by the reviewers.

Sincerely,



David Cameron
Dean and Professor of Political Science

cc.

Randy Boyagoda, Principal of the University of St. Michael's College, Director of Book and Media Studies

Penelope Lockwood, Vice Dean, Academic Planning & Strategic Initiatives, Faculty of Arts & Science

Daniella Mallinick, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

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

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

At its meeting on April 2, 2019, the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.

4. Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the program's success, highlighting its innovation and interdisciplinary nature. Students are enthusiastic about the program and curriculum, which provides good student choice among a robust list of course offerings. The reviewers were impressed by the healthy relationship with St. Michael's College, and identified several other promising partnerships that can continue to grow the strong reputation of the program. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: addressing how enrolment growth has outpaced the faculty complement; having faculty who are engaged in research contributing to the program; changing admissions requirements to control enrolment more effectively to align it with the available faculty complement; addressing how the program's size outstrips the resources available to support its mission; assessing the desirability of maintaining distinct paths and the logic and relation of the program streams, as well as considering sequences of consistently offered courses; determining how the program will maintain its existing research and experiential learning opportunities as well as grow an integrated suite of experiential learning opportunities; and having USMC prioritize seeking student support for the program. The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty, College, and program's responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result.

5. Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Dean's office will monitor the implementation of recommendations, with, at minimum, a brief report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, midway between the year of the site visit and the year of the next site visit. The year of the next review will be the 2025-2026 academic year.

6. Distribution

On May 17, 2019, 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 the Director of the Program.