

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1. Review Summary

Programs Reviewed:	Creative Expression & Society, Minor Education & Society, Minor Material Culture, Minor Semiotics & Communication Studies, Minor
Division/Unit Offering Programs:	Faculty of Arts & Science Victoria College
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	Professor Manina Jones Department of English & Writing Studies Western University Professor April Nowell Department of Anthropology University of Victoria Professor Robert J. Tierney Department of Language and Literacy Education University of British Columbia
Date of Review Visit:	February 27-28, 2020
Date Reported to AP&P:	October 27, 2020

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: January 11-12, 2006 (Semiotics and Communication Theory program only)

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

“The reviewers noted that the program rests largely on the considerable vitality of a single tenured full professor and recommend that steps be taken to maintain and even enhance the visibility of the program, perhaps finding resources to institute a new junior position in Semiotics to be offered competitively to departments strategically selected to assure future program development.”

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

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

Consultation Process

Dean, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Issues & Academic Planning, Faculty of Arts & Science; Principal, Victoria College; Victoria College Academic Programs Administrative Staff; Program Coordinators of each of the 4 programs; Faculty, Creative Expression & Society Program; Faculty, Education & Society Program; Faculty, Material Culture Program; Faculty, Semiotics & Communication Studies Program; Chairs of Cognate Units – Creative Expression & Society Program: English; Cinema Studies Institute; Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies; Fine Art; Music; St. Michael’s College; Chairs of Cognate Units – Education & Society Program: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE); Psychology; Chairs of Cognate Units – Material Culture Program: Anthropology; East Asian Studies; Fine Art; History; Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (IHPST); Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations; Study of Religion; Chairs of Cognate Units - Semiotics & Communication Studies Program: Anthropology; Linguistics; Philosophy; Undergraduate Students in each of the 4 programs.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

Please note the following abbreviations used below for each program:

- CES: Creative Expression & Society, Minor
- ES: Education & Society, Minor
- MC: Material Culture, Minor
- SCS: Semiotics & Communication Studies, Minor

1. Undergraduate Program

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Programs offer supportive, dynamic, student-centered learning environment with high-quality faculty and interdisciplinary critical and creative engagements
 - ▶ Programs have adapted over time to remain contemporary, modernizing and critical
 - ▶ Semiotics & Communications Studies (SCS) program has rich history with connections to prestigious organizations and a range of high-profile visiting scholars
- Objectives
 - ▶ Creative Expression & Society (CES) objectives are consistent with the University's mission and Faculty's academic plans
 - ▶ Impressive Education & Society (ES) course offerings, in which students critically evaluate various aspects of society and schooling, including teaching practices
 - ▶ Material Culture (MC) program is among a handful of programs in the world focused upon this emerging interdisciplinary field of study; program has strong historical connections to curatorial studies and the local museum community
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ CES program admission requirements are appropriate
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ All programs offer opportunities for small-class settings such as workshops and seminars that are appropriate to their learning outcomes
 - ▶ CES: Strong demand among students and faculty for more courses, particularly in creative writing
 - ▶ CES: Reviewers report that there is both capacity and demand for expanding the program to a major, and they note that CES is seen as sufficiently differentiated from FAS English department offerings as to not be in conflict or competition
 - ▶ CES program provides a "distinctive interdisciplinary and intermedial emphasis" and has the potential to be a "showcase for interdisciplinarity"
 - ▶ CES program profits from local cultural communities and professional contexts

- ▶ CES is currently undertaking to expand experiential, community-engaged, and professional student opportunities, in collaboration with local cultural institutions
- ▶ MC: Well-developed internship program
- Innovation
 - ▶ CES students choose from an innovative array of course possibilities, with opportunities to study and practice creativity across a spectrum of disciplines and media
 - ▶ MC faculty emphasized a need to expand scope of curriculum beyond museum studies to study objects in hospitals, schools, social work settings, etc.
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ ES field placement sites include urban settings to capitalize upon Toronto's racial and economic diversity, as well as an international placement in China
 - ▶ ES: Reviewers were impressed with the proposed inclusion of faculty with the background and expertise to address Indigenous matters
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ CES program offers a progressive, multidimensional educational experience through capstone projects and "master" genre classes
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Programs are interdisciplinary, attracting "keen and curious" students from various departments and programs of study
 - ▶ CES students commented that the program is intellectually stimulating and creatively enriching
 - ▶ CES attracts strong interest, particularly among students intending to apply for graduate study in creative writing at the University
 - ▶ ES program is supported by qualified and supportive faculty and staff
 - ▶ ES students have formed a vibrant learning community, producing a newsletter and organizing events
 - ▶ MC faculty and students have access to world class collections and state of the art digital technologies at local cultural and educational institutions
 - ▶ MC: "Engaged and enthusiastic" student community has formed a student association and recently organized a research conference
 - ▶ SCS: Highly-engaged students see Semiotics as an enriching avenue of their academic studies, emphasizing the importance of semiotics as a soft skill set that contributes to a variety of career paths

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

- Objectives
 - ▶ ES: Attracting international students and developing out-of-province or international engagements will require forms of outreach and oversight beyond current levels of support
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ ES: Admission Requirement of 70% grade in a large introductory Psychology course is problematic and outdated given changes in the field of Education over time

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Student engagement in faculty research seemed less substantial across all programs
 - ▶ MC: Some students have difficulty undertaking the unpaid internship due to financial and time constraints
 - ▶ MC: Reviewers noted some disagreement among faculty and staff over whether the current size of the program is appropriate or should be increased
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ MC: Faculty suggested that new course offerings could increase diversity in the program
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ ES: Primary methods of assessment (e.g. reports, written analyses, and discussions) are “somewhat detached” and do not include assessments based on firsthand engagements with social justice matters
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Little evidence of students’ collaborative scholarly inquiry with other students or with faculty/staff; possibly due to lack of funding or “a limited articulation of the value of such endeavors as desired outcomes of the programs”
 - ▶ CES: Some students report finding the program only by accident when searching for creative writing courses
 - ▶ CES: Relatively small participation in international learning opportunities among students
 - ▶ SCS: Semiotics journal *Semiotica* no longer housed at the University
 - ▶ SCS students unsure of level of recognition of Semiotics for future career/graduate education paths

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Objectives
 - ▶ ES: Pursue additional international opportunities and develop a more varied range of international experiences for students
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ ES: Review admission requirements, particularly the elimination of the required introductory Psychology course
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ CES: Reinforce program links with other creative disciplines such as music, visual arts, and writing as well as capitalizing further on the program’s location
 - ▶ CES: Augment the “society” aspect of the program through increased community engagement and other high impact experiences
 - ▶ ES program encouraged to consider extending course offerings to cover topics such as multiple literacies, translanguaging, STEM, Art Education, Drama Education, Historical Consciousness and Museum education, children’s and adolescent literature, Asian Studies, African Studies
 - ▶ ES program encouraged to explore possibilities of additional connections with the other Victoria College minor programs that address issues related to media

- ▶ MC: Create dedicated lab space, with a full-time lab technician, for research and to house a teaching collection
- ▶ MC: Modify internship program to either be a paid position, or to be worth a greater number of credits so that students do not have to take a full course load in addition to the internship
- ▶ SCS/MC: Consider options for developing additional connections between the programs, focused on their cultural studies-based commonalities; approaches could include shared courses or possibly a merger of the two programs
- ▶ SCS: Consider establishing a “Media and Semiotics” program in concert with the existing Book and Media Studies program, with a dedicated faculty member as Program Coordinator
- Innovation
 - ▶ MC: Pursue expansion of program scope beyond museum studies to study objects in hospitals, schools, social work settings, etc.
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ CES: Increase attentiveness to cultural and gender diversity in the curriculum to better reflect the identities and cultural backgrounds of its students and engage with multi-cultural creative communities in the Toronto region
 - ▶ CES program encouraged to reflect on how it might Indigenize program offerings
 - ▶ Education programs, including ES, are encouraged to seek more students and staff from diverse backgrounds and to create more supervised experiences and engagements across a diverse range of settings
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ ES: Include firsthand engagements with social justice matters in methods of assessment
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ CES: Increase program visibility on college websites and in recruitment materials
 - ▶ CES: Increase student participation in international learning opportunities with improved outreach and by adapting opportunities to appeal to CES students
 - ▶ ES: Enhance web-based communications to improve prospective students’ awareness of program offerings
 - ▶ ES: Provide fuller and more multifaceted engagement with digital literacies in courses and experiential/international engagements

2. Graduate Program (n/a)

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Research
 - ▶ Solid record of research engagement and scholarly publication among faculty at Victoria College

- Faculty
 - ▶ Faculty members are devoted to their programs
 - ▶ Teaching staff in the minor programs are highly regarded for their significant professional, scholarly, and creative accomplishments; sessional and term-appointed faculty provide “steadfast support” for the programs

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

- Faculty
 - ▶ Programs depend upon a significant proportion of part-time and term appointed faculty, rather than tenured or tenure stream faculty
 - ▶ MC program faculty commented on not having sufficient time to develop new external partnerships and take full advantage of local cultural and educational institutions
 - ▶ SCS: The responsibility and reputation of the program rests on “the dynamic contribution of a single faculty member who is nearing retirement”

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ CES: Reviewers encourage attentiveness to cultural and gender diversity in future faculty complement planning for the program
 - ▶ MC: Consider joint faculty appointments with cognate departments to increase the involvement of tenure-track faculty in the program; this will enable development of new external partnerships and fuller engagement with local resources
 - ▶ SCS: Reviewers commented that sustaining the Semiotics minor without a dedicated full-time faculty member as Program Coordinator is “not a realistic option”

4. Administration

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Victoria College Principal is trusted and respected by program faculty and staff, “bringing a mix of integrity, well- grounded knowledge, shared values and vision”
 - ▶ Constructive team of dynamic administrative staff creates a sense of place and community in keeping with “the rich history and strong reputation of the College”
- International comparators
 - ▶ Victoria College programs are highly respected and have earned a strong national and international reputation; influential programs engage scholars and artistic producers “at or exceeding the level of its international comparators”

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

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Operational budgets associated with the programs appear to be historic rather than enrolment-based and may not be resilient to shifts in the budget formula
 - ▶ Each program is largely dependent on leadership of the Coordinator role; this enables adaptability but can create future uncertainty
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Constrained budgetary conditions may result in difficulty diversifying faculty complement
- International comparators
 - ▶ SCS: Reviewers note that the University no longer offers graduate programs in Semiotics and observe that “programs with undergraduate and graduate specializations in Semiotics are now rare, both in Canada and internationally”

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ MC: Allocate additional IT support for website enhancements to increase awareness of the program
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Several programs are at a key development point at which a decision will be necessary on whether to maintain or expand, and/or be developed into a major program
 - ▶ Diversity and inclusiveness should be an important factor in planning for faculty complement, student body, and curricular content
 - ▶ SCS requires a dedicated faculty position in order to sustain the program; reviewers note the need to either hire new faculty or form inter-program relationships to continue offering some SCS courses



2. Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

September 21, 2020

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

Re: UTQAP cyclical review of Victoria College Minor Programs

Dear Professor McCahan,

Along with the faculty, staff and students of Victoria College, I am pleased with the external reviewers' assessment of Creative Expression & Society, Minor; Education & Society, Minor; Material Culture, Minor; and Semiotics & Communication Studies, Minor. The reviewers complimented the College, noting that "*the programs in the College provide a supportive and dynamic learning environment with interdisciplinary critical and creative engagement*" and stated of the programs that "*all are highly respected within and beyond the University of Toronto.*"

The quality of these programs notwithstanding, as per your letter dated July 15, 2020, 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 responses to these items and implementation plan are separated into immediate- (six months), medium- (one to two years), and longer- (three to five years) term, where appropriate, along with who (College, Dean) will take the lead in each area. The Dean's office has discussed the reviewers' comments through consultation with the Principal of Victoria College to develop the following implementation plan incorporating the reviewers' recommendations.

Implementation Plan

Overall:

The reviewers noted that all of the programs face key decisions:

- *Several are at "a key point in their development when faculty will have to achieve consensus about whether to simply sustain a thriving program or aim to expand the capacity of the program and/or develop into a major."*
- *In the case of Semiotics & Communications Studies, the reviewers raised concern that the program rests on the "dynamic contribution" of a single faculty member, noting that "this minor program faces a choice about whether to hire or form inter-program relationships in order to continue to offer some of its courses."*

Immediate-to-Medium term response: Victoria College has been considering this issue since the reviewer visit. They are preparing a proposal to integrate the Minor in Semiotics with the Minor in Material Culture. This modification would draw on complementary elements between the two programs so as to enrich Material Culture and give students the opportunity to study Semiotics within that context. The proposal is expected to be brought to curricular governance in 2020-2021.

The College has also begun a process of consultation to consider whether to develop a proposal to add a Major to the Creative Expression and Society (CES) program of study. The establishment of a new degree program is a significant undertaking that requires external appraisal and Quality Council approval. The Dean's Office will work closely with the College to help assess the budgetary and faculty resource implications, in addition to considering potential student demand and enrolment effects across other programs in the Faculty. While FAS support for all new program initiatives should reflect the academic priorities of the Faculty, FAS will consider carefully all proposals brought forward by its units.

The reviewers observe that the programs depend on “a significant proportion of part-time and term appointed faculty rather than tenured or tenure stream faculty.” While the reviewers observed that these faculty had noteworthy research engagement, they observed that students were less substantially engaged in faculty research.

Immediate-term response: Ensuring that students have the opportunity to participate in at least one experiential learning experience during their undergraduate degree is a strategic priority of the Faculty, as articulated in the Academic Plan (2020-25). To help achieve this goal, the Faculty of Arts and Science recently established the Experiential Learning and Outreach Support (ELOS) office in order to better support an expansion of faculty-led and course-based research (among other) experiential opportunities. The ELOS office has hired an Experiential Learning Officer (ELO), Research & International, whose role is specifically to support the expansion of research opportunities across all academic units, as well as to broaden international opportunities for Arts and Science students.

Victoria College has been actively increasing support for students' research engagement, as it recently established the office of Undergraduate Research Coordinator; undergraduate fellowships at the College's Research Centres; and the Scholars-in-Residence humanities research residency program. All of the Victoria College Minor programs are well placed to draw on these College resources.

With regard to faculty complement, many of the part-time and term-appointed faculty are creative professionals- for instance, professional writers in Creative Expression & Society and curators in Material Culture. Given the nature of these Minor programs, the employment of highly esteemed practitioners as instructional staff enhances student experience by providing tangible evidence of employment opportunities for students. The review report recognizes these faculty as “diversely talented” and “dedicated and highly qualified”; it concludes that “Victoria College engages (in both a full and part-time capacity) scholars and artistic producers at or exceeding the level of its international comparators.”

The reviewers recommended a heightened attentiveness to diversity among students, staff, and faculty and in some programs' curricula, as well as expanding intercultural/international learning opportunities for students.

Immediate-term response: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) among students, staff and faculty are a key priority for the Faculty of Arts and Science. In order to promote EDI among staff and faculty, Arts and Science has established a new EDI Standing Committee, which is charged with identifying barriers faced by under-represented groups and developing policy proposals that will break down those barriers, enhance inclusion and promote diversity.

In terms of curricular review and development, significant progress has been made in recent years on integrating EDI within these programs. For instance, the Material Culture program has added several Indigenous components and the Education & Society program's "commitment to dealing with diversity" was also commended by the reviewers. FAS will continue to work with all programs in the Faculty to expand diversity. Together the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate and the Vice-Dean, Faculty, Academic Life and Equity are currently discussing strategies to imbed EDI across the FAS curriculum.

Medium and Longer-term response: The Faculty is committed to enhancing student diversity. While the student population is very diverse, some groups are under-represented. In order to improve representation, the Faculty is exploring such initiatives as broad-based admissions. Broad-based admissions expands the basis for admissions beyond academic performance, with the objective of establishing more equity-based admissions criteria that takes account of candidates' experiences and situation. Arts & Science is also committed to ensuring that all students are able to participate in all aspects of their university experience once admitted to the Faculty. To that end, Arts & Science is actively exploring ways to reduce barriers to participation in co-curricular, international and experiential learning opportunities. Initiatives include development of an Experiential Learning Student Bursary to help subsidize participation costs, as well as the building of an Experiential Learning Inclusion Lens for practitioners to assess their experiential learning programs and ensure equitable and equal access for all students.

While the Federated Colleges have some autonomy in hiring, as many academic appointments related to College programs are either University appointments or jointly held, it is important to note the steps the Faculty is taking to prioritize improving equity, diversity and inclusion among faculty and staff. While the Faculty will proceed cautiously over the next few years in making new commitments to faculty positions in general (because of the heightened financial uncertainty caused by COVID-19), appointments that enhance diversity will be prioritized. The Faculty also seeks to improve diversity in hiring by ensuring that units are well aware of the criteria and timelines necessary for application to Provostial funding programs targeted to increase diversity. In addition, FAS is also developing improved EDI guidelines for academic units to use in their requests for academic appointments; enhancing training programs for Dean's representatives on search committees to best ensure consistency in meeting the Faculty's goals in relation to searches; and has developed statements for Units to include in hiring advertisements requesting that candidates demonstrate their commitment to EDI through a statement of their academic and professional contributions and commitment to EDI principles.

The newly created ELOS office is poised to collaborate with academic units and Colleges to build new partnerships and deepen existing international opportunities available to undergraduate students throughout the Faculty.

The College is also actively working to expand intercultural learning and international exchange opportunities. However, developing program-specific study-abroad experiences for relatively small Minor programs is a resource-intensive, longer-term project. The College is focusing on strengthening ties to cognate programs and ensuring that students are aware of relevant international/intercultural opportunities.

Creative Expression & Society:

The reviewers noted that the program could benefit from greater exposure on websites and recruiting sessions.

Immediate-term response: The Victoria College Minor programs, such as CES, are advertised in all of the College, Faculty, University-wide and external events, such as the Ontario Universities Fair. The College website is also up-to-date and well maintained. In the spring of 2020, the newly appointed CES Program Coordinator and the Coordinators of the other Minors began implementing new approaches to informing students about the Minor programs at an early stage of their studies (for instance, reaching out to students in relevant first-year courses).

Medium-term response: The Faculty, in consultation with the Colleges, is proposing to change course code designators from College-specific codes (e.g., VIC) to program-specific designators (such as CES). Colleges interested in this initiative will have the opportunity to submit these changes through curricular governance in the Fall of 2020. If accepted, these changes will appear in the 2021-22 course calendar. The rationale for this proposal is that students can readily search and find programs related to their interests with subject-relevant course designators. In contrast, college-code designators do not convey any information about the courses or their parent programs.

The reviewers recommended that the CES reinforce its links with music, the visual arts, and other creative disciplines, as well as better leveraging community connections and the central Toronto location, noting that the “program has the potential to be a showcase for interdisciplinarity.”

Immediate-term response: The CES program is working to leverage community connections in new ways. Toronto’s current Poet Laureate is a key full-time faculty member who involves students in community arts projects, and CES faculty regularly invite film-makers, editors, publishers, and other industry professionals to speak to their classes.

Medium-term response: The CES program is actively reaching out to faculty and practitioners in visual arts and seeking to incorporate multimedia forms (such as graphic novels and podcasts) into its course offerings through new courses expected to be introduced in the 2020-21 cycle. The Program Coordinator is undertaking new efforts to work with publishing houses, festivals, and student-run creative-writing journals.

Education & Society:

The reviewers raised concern about the admission requirement of a 70% grade in an introductory Psychology course, noting that “The size of this single course, the arbitrariness of the assessment measurement criteria, and the gate-keeping role of this course are problematic.”

Immediate to Medium term response: The program agrees that it is timely to revise this aspect of the admission requirements. In consultation with the Faculty of Arts and Science, and in consideration of similar programs at UTM and UTSC, Education & Society reviewed its admission requirements in summer 2020 and formulated a proposal for revised requirements that are broader and more appropriate to the current orientation of the program. This proposal will be submitted for FAS approval in the Fall of 2020.

The reviewers encouraged incorporating first-hand student engagement with social justice matters into the program, and recommended a review of program offerings and joint program possibilities. They also recommended offering courses in STEM, Art Education, Drama Education, Historical Consciousness, and Museum education.

Immediate-term response: A review and update of Education & Society course offerings began in 2019-20, when a new Program Coordinator joined the program, and continued in response to the UTQAP process. Some modifications made in the course of this curriculum review will be implemented in 2020-21 (e.g., introduction of a “Multiple Literacies” course).

Medium-term response: Other modifications to the curriculum are in the proposal stage for implementation in Fall 2021 (e.g., introduction of a course entitled “Education in a Global Context,”). This new course proposal responds directly to a recommendation made by the reviewers and reflects the expertise of new faculty.

With regard to “joint program possibilities,” a proposal for a Combined Degree program – Honours Bachelor of Arts or Honours Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts in Child Study and Education (MA-CSE) – is in preparation for the 2020-21 curriculum change cycle. While any undergraduate major/specialist within the Faculty is acceptable for this program, the Minor in Education and Society is a required undergraduate element in the proposal. Once approved, the Combined Degree Program will provide students with the opportunity to gain early (conditional) graduate admission (in Year 3 of undergraduate study), a clear pathway towards the teaching profession, and access to an enriched combination of academic programs. The development of the proposal has involved considerable consultation between the relevant programs and guidance from the Faculty’s registrarial office.

With the recent hire of an Indigenous faculty member at Victoria College as June Callwood Professor in Social Justice, the program anticipates strengthening student engagement with social justice matters.

Material Culture:

The reviewers raised concern about unpaid internships, noting that some students “felt they could not afford the time to take the internship and work and complete their courses.”

Immediate-term response: While unpaid academic internships taken as part of a supervised course are common across other units, the ELOS office is actively looking to reduce barriers for students unable to participate in unpaid internships due to financial circumstances.

In this particular case, clear communication may be an issue, as the course title (“Material Culture Internship”) appears to be a source of confusion. The “internship” is more accurately a community-engaged learning opportunity for students. It is an optional supervised course with an academic, in-class component and external placement hours that are completed in a museum, archives, or cultural institution. The unpaid nature of the placement is in line with similar experiential learning opportunities in other Arts & Science programs and at other institutions. The College is undertaking internal consultation to consider renaming the course “Experiential Learning in Material Culture” instead of the current “Material Culture Internship.”

With the assistance of the Faculty of Arts and Science’s Experiential Learning Office, the College is also reviewing the number of placement hours in the H and Y versions of the course to ensure that they are in line with other experiential learning courses at Victoria College and the Faculty of Arts & Science and that they are appropriate to the course credit weighting. The ELOS office will be doing a review of all academic internship programs across the Faculty over the next year.

The reviewers recommended the creation of “dedicated lab space” for research and to house a teaching collection.

Longer-term response: A modest Material Culture lab space currently exists but courses in the program make limited use of it because attractive options for hands-on work are available in nearby affiliated institutions such as the Gardiner Museum. However, as Victoria College plans for the future, within the context of capital planning at Victoria University, increased teaching and research space is a strong priority.

The Dean’s office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair, as well as the A&S unit-level planning process. A brief report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, midway between the February 27-28, 2020 site visit and the year of the next site visit, will be prepared.

The year of the next review will be the **2027-28** review cycle.

To conclude, we appreciate that the external reviewers identified the minor programs' strengths and noted a few areas for development. Victoria College has already begun to move forward with plans to address the recommendations as presented by the reviewers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Woodin". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "W".

Melanie Woodin
Dean and Professor of Cell and Systems Biology

cc.

Angela Esterhammer, Principal, Victoria College
Virginia Maclaren, Acting Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Faculty of Arts & Science
Gillian Hamilton, Associate Dean, Unit-Level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science
Andrea Benoit, Academic Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Daniella Mallinick, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance, Office of the
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

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

The spokesperson for the Reading Group reported that the summary covered the full Review and that the administrative response covered the issues raised. The Group noted, however, that there were two major upcoming changes in the programs: namely, the integration of the Minor in Semiotics & Communication Studies with the Minor in Material Culture and the proposal to add a Major to the Creative Expression and Society program. The Group leader questioned whether, in the Dean's view, it would be sufficient to wait for the next cyclical review of the programs or whether a follow-up report would be advantageous.

In reply, Dean Woodin explained that the integration of programs as well as the addition of a new program would require careful scrutiny and that it would likely be beneficial to wait for the next cyclical review of the programs to examine these changes. Professor Angela Esterhammer, Principal of Victoria College, confirmed that consultation processes for these academic changes were already underway.

No follow-up report was requested.

4. Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised all four programs for providing a “supportive and dynamic learning environment with interdisciplinary critical and creative engagements,”; they were impressed with the students in all programs; they noted the ways in which the programs leverage their location and connections within the city to enhance engagement with local academic, cultural, and community partners; and they commented on the quality, dedication, and significant scholarly and creative achievements of the faculty. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: In their comments addressed to all four programs, the reviewers recommended achieving a consensus about key decisions, such as whether to simply sustain the thriving program or expand the capacity and/or develop into a major; examining the programs' dependence on “a significant proportion of part-time and term appointed faculty rather than tenured or tenure stream faculty”, and in particular its potential impact on student engagement in faculty research; and paying heightened attention to diversity among students, staff, and faculty and in some programs' curricula, as well as expanding intercultural/international learning opportunities for students. In their comments addressed to the Creative Expression & Society program, the reviewers recommended increasing program exposure on websites and recruiting sessions; reinforcing program links with music, the visual arts, and other creative disciplines; and better leveraging community connections and the central Toronto location. In their comments addressed to the Education & Society program, the reviewers recommended reconsidering the program admission requirement of a 70% grade in an introductory Psychology course; incorporating first-hand student engagement with social justice matters into the program; reviewing program offerings and joint program possibilities; and expanding course offerings in the areas of STEM, Art Education, Drama Education, Historical Consciousness, and Museum education. In their comments addressed to the Material Culture program, the reviewers recommended addressing concerns regarding about unpaid

internships and creating “dedicated lab space” for research and to house a teaching collection. In their comments addressed to the Semiotics & Communications Studies program, the reviewers recommended addressing concerns that the program rests on the “dynamic contribution” of a single faculty member, noting that “this minor program faces a choice about whether to hire or form inter-program relationships in order to continue to offer some of its courses.”

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

5. Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Dean’s office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair, as well as the A&S unit-level planning process.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than midway between the February 27-28, 2020 site visit and the year of the next site visit on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in 2027-28.

6. Distribution

On June 30, 2021, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to the Vice Principal of New College and the Program Directors.