

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1. Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Hons. B.A., Caribbean Studies: Specialist, Major, Minor
Division/Unit Reviewed OR Division/Unit Offering Program(s):	Faculty of Arts & Science, offered in association with New College
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	1. Professor Laurent Dubois, Department of History, Duke University 2. Professor Brian Meeks, Department of Africana Studies, Brown University
Date of Review Visit:	November 18, 2019
Date Reported to AP&P:	October 27, 2020

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: January 27, 2012

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Undergraduate Programs

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Rich educational environment for students supporting critical and creative thinking, knowledge integration and global citizenship
- Highly engaged students
- Innovative mentorship of first-generation students to improve their basic academic skills and help them connect their lived experience with their academic interests
- Strong community profile and outreach activities

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Increasing the program's social science component to provide a greater diversity of disciplinary approaches
- Increasing and stabilizing course offerings to improve student access to courses and support growth in program enrolment
- Developing an elective second language component to support multilingual Caribbean Studies and extend students' understanding of global citizenship
- Including comprehensive or capstone courses to allow students to demonstrate achievement of program objectives

Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Accessible and supportive faculty

Administration

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Increasing and regularly updating the Program's web presence and marketing to recruit students to the program and the University

Last OCGS review(s) date(s): N/A

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

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

Consultation Process

Reviewers met with the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science; Vice-Dean, Academic Planning, Faculty of Arts & Science; Principal and Vice-Principal, New College, Faculty of Arts & Science; Interim Program Director, Caribbean Studies; Former Program Director, Caribbean Studies; New College Registrar; New College administrative staff; Continuing Faculty; Faculty in Caribbean Studies from other STG units and divisions including History (STG), Women and Gender Studies Institute (STG), Culture & Media (UTSC), and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; Sessional instructors; Undergraduate students; Caribbean Studies Advisory Board; Chairs of Cognate Units: African Studies, Centre for Comparative Literature, Department of History, Department of Spanish & Portuguese, Diaspora & Transnational Studies, Equity Studies.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Unique and deeply valuable program, both for the University and the broader scholarly community of Caribbean studies
 - ▶ Program has significant positive influence within the University, “participating in central ways in the diversification of the faculty and of ways of thinking on the campus”
 - ▶ Program provides solid foundation of knowledge and experience for students interested in further careers in academia, or in international development, humanitarian work, or international entrepreneurial opportunities
- Objectives
 - ▶ Program largely fulfills ambitious objective to provide a broad, multilayered understanding of the region and its diasporas, including the history, culture, society, languages, “contemporary contexts and struggles, and... possible futures that may emerge”
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ “Appropriately open” requirements allow a broad range of students to enter the program

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Well structured curriculum with expanded course offerings in social sciences and history, implemented since last review
 - ▶ Core introductory course with five informal program pathways offers students breadth and depth in the subject area, allowing students to focus on their interests while receiving necessary core training
- Innovation
 - ▶ Intensive and ongoing program enhancement initiatives since 2012 review include curricular innovation, support for opportunities outside the classroom, and expanding faculty participation
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Clear commitment to welcoming a diverse group of students
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students have multiple opportunities for learning beyond the classroom through engagement with the local Caribbean community and various overseas programs
 - ▶ “Robust and useful” collaboration with the Caribbean Studies course union which supports conferences, a publication, and a study hall
 - ▶ Students spoke positively of the quality of instruction offered and especially appreciated small class sizes and special attention paid to writing in the program
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Positive developments since 2012 review in program’s assessment of students’ learning trajectories and outcomes; reviewers praised using alumni surveys to supplement statistical information

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Expand language training as well as learning abroad opportunities
- Innovation
 - ▶ Collaborate with other departments (e.g., Spanish and French), or as part of a consortium with other universities, to enhance opportunities to study lesser-taught Caribbean languages
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Consolidate staffing and support for existing learning abroad programs
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Situate program’s broad learning outcomes in the context of its role in helping students in the Transitional Year Program succeed at the university
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Find “holistic” ways of assessing post-graduate employability, taking into account the program’s multiple possible professional trajectories
 - ▶ Program’s long-term impact on individuals and on the production of knowledge about the Caribbean should be emphasized in assessing outcomes for alumni

2. Graduate Program N/A

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Research
 - ▶ Productive and highly-regarded faculty members conduct research in a wide range of areas covering a significant cross-section of the field of Caribbean studies

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

- Faculty
 - ▶ “A rich, diverse and robust program of Caribbean studies cannot be sustained with the present tiny cohort of faculty”
 - ▶ Substantial curriculum currently offered is only possible through teaching overloads and other voluntary efforts

The reviewers identified the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ Pursue new tenure-track hires, ideally as joint appointments with other language or social science departments, to continue curricular expansion and innovation and strengthen the program

4. Administration

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Program’s strong links with local Caribbean community promote significant public engagement, reflection, and scholarship
 - ▶ Program “clearly plays an important role in the formation of graduate students in other departments at the university interested in Caribbean Studies” and provides “an intellectual community and support system for doctoral students as well as their mentors”
 - ▶ Collegial, convivial relationships among program faculty members as well as with faculty in cognate departments
- International comparators
 - ▶ Program is unique in North America for focusing entirely on Caribbean studies; in most other universities the region is paired with Latin American studies programs, making direct comparison difficult
 - ▶ In offering programs leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree, Caribbean Studies is unique among peers in the discipline which in many cases offer certificates

- ▶ Leading-edge program is unique in its efforts to “encompass the entire Caribbean and its various diasporas while housing scholars with an active research agenda in the Humanities and Social Sciences of the region.”

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

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Director’s role involves considerable work in building and maintaining community relationships as well as additional responsibilities in advising and mentoring students of colour and first-generation students
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ With significantly enhanced support, Caribbean Studies will likely be able to increase enrolments, raise its profile across the University, and maintain its rich, diverse and robust program

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Directors of cognate programs encouraged collaboration to strengthen work and create opportunities in areas of shared interest
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Audit the full range of tasks undertaken by the program Director, and consider granting extra relief from teaching duties for this position.
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ New College and the University need to make a decision as to the mid and long-term future of the Caribbean Studies Program and whether enrolment numbers should be the decisive metric in determining its future direction
 - ▶ Given the unique nature of the program and its strong ties to local community, program should be given special consideration and sufficient resources to continue and expand



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 Caribbean Studies

Dear Professor McCahan,

Along with the faculty, staff, and students of Caribbean Studies, I am pleased with the external reviewers' assessment of the Caribbean Studies programs: B.A., Hons., Specialist, Major, Minor. The reviewers complimented program, noting that it is "*unique and deeply valuable both for the institution and the broader scholarly community in this field*" and that "*there is no other program like it in North America.*"

The quality of this program notwithstanding, as per your letter dated May 11, 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 (unit, Dean) will take the lead in each area. The Dean's office has discussed the reviewers' comments through consultation with the current and former Director of Caribbean Studies, as well as the Principal and Vice-Principal of New College, to develop the following implementation plan incorporating the reviewers' recommendations.

Implementation Plan

The reviewers noted that the Caribbean studies program presents an opportunity "to envision a more robust way of encouraging students to deepen their study of various languages" and encouraged coordination with other FAS departments (Spanish and French in particular); they also suggested exploring a "consortium model" of collaborating with other universities to offer instruction in Caribbean languages.

Immediate-term response: Caribbean Studies (CS) has considered the issue of language acquisition in the past but, in consultation with its Advisory Board, opted not to increase French or Spanish language requirements. Several factors played a role in this decision: (1) the pedagogical trade-off between increased language requirements and reduced interdisciplinary learning, which is a cornerstone of the Caribbean Studies programs; (2) declining enrolments in Caribbean Studies, which may have been negatively affected by increased course requirements; (3) uncertain access to French and Spanish courses (introductory language courses were and are

often oversubscribed), and (4) concerns about creating an equity barrier among CS students, as some students have prior language knowledge and others do not.

Nonetheless, in light of the reviewers' suggestion, the Program Director will meet with the Chairs of the Departments of Spanish and Portuguese and French to explore increasing language opportunities in Spanish and French. Caribbean Studies will report back and discuss these issues with its Advisory Board.

Medium-term response: If Caribbean Studies decides that it would like to pursue increased language requirements for its students, the Faculty will work with the French and Spanish and Portuguese departments to facilitate access to courses for Caribbean Studies students.

The Unit will also explore the possibility of offering a Creole language course.

The reviewers suggested enhancing study abroad opportunities through the expansion of existing relationships with partner institutions, the development of new relationships, and the consolidation of staffing and support for overseas study.

Immediate-term response: While experiential learning abroad is currently on hold due to COVID-19, CS will maintain its existing learning abroad opportunities in Belize and Cuba. In addition, CS is currently working with Woodsworth College on a new proposal involving Puerto Rico. As Puerto Rico is a site of interest to faculty from other units (developing research-practice partnerships), it may be possible to develop over time strong, stable links to Puerto Rico.

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 international experiential (among other) 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 and broaden international opportunities for Arts and Science students.

Medium to Longer-term response: Units across the Faculty and university continue to develop ties to the Caribbean. For example, the University currently has exchange agreements with the University of West Indies and UTM offers a Study Abroad opportunity in the Dominican Republic. In future, CS (and other Units in the Faculty) may be able to capitalize on these and future networks.

The reviewers noted that “a rich, diverse and robust program of Caribbean studies cannot be sustained with the present tiny cohort of faculty” and encouraged institutional support for increasing the faculty complement, in either languages or social sciences, perhaps as a collaboration between appropriate departments and the Caribbean Studies program.

Immediate-term response: The Unit has identified Caribbean Comparative Literature as an academic priority and the Faculty has approved the hiring of a new joint appointment between CS and Comparative Literature to fulfill this priority and strengthen their faculty cohort.

CS will continue to explore and foster their ongoing collaborations with Latin American Studies, Equity Studies, African Studies and History - their most successful institutional partnerships - and seek new relationships across FAS.

Medium-term response: As part of its current academic planning exercise, FAS has developed a unit-level academic planning template to assist units such as Caribbean Studies in articulating their 5-year vision. This planning process will begin at the completion of the UTQAP review process and will address complement planning among other issues.

Longer-term response: Please see below.

The reviewers observed that the position of Program Director involves considerable additional work building and maintaining relationships with local Caribbean communities and mentoring both students of color and first generation university students; they recommended extra relief from teaching duties and an audit of the full range of tasks undertaken by the Director.

Immediate-term response: The Director will begin a self-audit of the full range of tasks he undertakes and will work with the College to identify creative solutions that would lessen the Director's workload, such as establishing a mentoring program between graduate and undergraduate students.

Medium-to-Longer term response: Please see below. If the status of the program changes, the role and support for the Director will also change.

The reviewers stated that "New College and the University need to make a decision as to the mid and long-term future of the Caribbean Studies Program," and encouraged the Faculty to consider strategies for raising the program's profile and finding other ways to support it.

Immediate to medium-term response: The Dean's office is committed to the long-term success of the Caribbean Studies program. The Dean's Office will work collaboratively with the Unit and College to explore changing the status of the unit to an EDU-B. As an Extra-Departmental Unit (EDU-B), a Unit can hold up to 49 percent of academic appointments and can seek new appointments directly from the Faculty Appointments Committee. It may administer research funds and offer graduate programs where the number and research strength of faculty is appropriate. In addition, the Director is appointed under the University's Policy on Appointment of Academic Administrators. Administrators of EDU-Bs are then part of the Faculty's academic leadership team and have academic and budgetary responsibility for the Unit. Establishing Caribbean Studies as its own Extra-Departmental Unit may provide it with the resources it needs to raise the program's profile and enable it to grow and flourish.

The Vice-Dean, Academic Planning and Vice-Dean, Faculty, Academic Life and Equity have established a working group with representation from the Unit and College and a mandate to explore the benefits and challenges of establishing Caribbean Studies as an EDU-B. The working group will report back to the Dean within the year.

The Dean's office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Director, 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 November 18, 2019 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 Caribbean Studies program's strengths and noted a few areas for development. Caribbean Studies 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 signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melanie Woodin
Dean and Professor of Cell and Systems Biology

cc.

Bonnie McElhinny, Principal, New College
Tara Goldstein, Vice Principal, New College
Néstor E. Rodríguez, Director, Caribbean Studies, Faculty of Arts & Science
Melanie J. Newton, Former Director, Caribbean Studies, Faculty of Arts & Science
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. The Group agreed that the Dean's administrative response fully addressed the issues identified. In reply to a comment raised regarding the planned transition of the program to an Extra-Departmental Unit B, Dean Woodin noted that the process had already begun with consultations to chart a path forward. No follow-up report was requested.

4. Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the program as well-structured and unique in North America in its specific focus on the Caribbean; they noted significant program enhancements since the previous review in terms of curricular expansion and innovation, learning assessment, and beyond-the-classroom opportunities, both local and overseas; and noted that the curriculum largely fulfills ambitious objectives of offering a "deep immersion" in the history, culture, and society (including contemporary contexts and struggles) of the region and its diasporas, to a diverse range of students. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: envisioning a more robust way of encouraging students to deepen their study of various languages in collaboration with other FAS departments and possibly other institutions; enhancing study abroad opportunities; enhancing institutional support for increasing the faculty complement, in either languages or social sciences; providing increased relief from teaching duties for the program Director and conducting an audit of the full range of tasks undertaken by this role; and making a decision about the future of the Caribbean Studies Program, while encouraging the Faculty to consider strategies for raising the program's profile and exploring additional ways to provide support.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty 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 through ongoing meetings with the Director, as well as the A&S unit-level planning process.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs midway between the November 18, 2019 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 Director.