

# UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

## 1. Review Summary

<b>Programs Reviewed:</b>	<p><b>Undergraduate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Information, B.I.</li> </ul> <p><b>Graduate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma in Advanced Study in Information Studies, D.A.I.S.</li> <li>• Master of Information, M.I. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Concentrations:</i> Archives and Records Management; Critical Information Policy Studies; Culture and Technology; Human Centred Data Science; Information Systems and Design; Knowledge Management and Information Management; Library and Information Science; User Experience Design</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Master of Museum Studies, M.M.St.</li> <li>• Doctor of Philosophy in Information Studies, Ph.D. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Concentrations:</i> Archives and Records Management; Critical Information Policy Studies; Cultural Heritage; Information Systems and Design; Knowledge Management and Information Management; Library and Information Science; Media, Technology and Culture; Philosophy of Information</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Combined Degree Programs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master of Information / Master of Museum Studies</li> </ul>
<b>Division Reviewed:</b>	Faculty of Information
<b>Commissioning Officer:</b>	Vice-President and Provost
<b>Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anind K. Dey, Dean and Professor, Information School, University of Washington</li> <li>• Thomas Finholt, Dean and Professor of Information, School of Information, University of Michigan</li> <li>• Lisa Henderson, Dean and Professor, Faculty of Information &amp; Media Studies, Western University</li> </ul>
<b>Date of Review Visit:</b>	February 1-5, 2021
<b>Date Reported to AP&amp;P:</b>	October 26, 2021

## Previous UTQAP Review

Date: January 15 - 17, 2014

### Significant Program Strengths

- Good reputation of programs
- Strong course offerings
- Well-designed curriculum structure
- Active and engaged faculty with deep expertise and innovative research
- Commitment of alumni and professional groups to the Faculty

### Opportunities for Program Enhancement

*The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:*

- Reducing the number of concentrations within the Master of Information (MI) program
- Exploring student recruitment strategies to help address MI enrolment challenges
- Strengthening administration of the graduate program
- Striving to increase faculty research funding
- Enhancing communication among Faculty members with respect to strategic direction, governance structures, and promotion processes
- Creating additional academic administrative leadership roles
- Re-visioning the relationship between the Robarts Library, the Bissell Building, and the Inforum
- Extending fundraising initiatives
- Conducting a re-branding exercise of the Faculty

## Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

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### Documentation Provided to Reviewers

- Review Terms of Reference
- Site Visit Schedule
- Self-study and appendices, including access to course descriptions and faculty CV's
- Previous review report (2014) including administrative response
- Towards 2030: The View from 2012 - An Assessment of the University of Toronto's Progress Since Towards 2030

## Consultation Process

- Vice President and Provost
- Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
- Dean, Faculty of Information
- Associate Dean Academic
- COVID-19 Advisor and former Associate Dean Academic
- Bachelor of Information (B.I.) students
- Master of Information (M.I.) students
- Master of Museum Studies (M.M.St.) students
- Ph.D. students
- Full Professors
- Associate Professors
- Assistant Professors
- Contract Limited Term Appointed faculty members
- Teaching stream faculty members
- Faculty members - Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology, UTM
- Faculty members - Department of Arts, Culture & Media, UTSC
- Program Directors
- Chief Librarian and Deputy Chief Librarian
- Dean, School of Graduate Studies
- Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean, UTM
- Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean, UTSC
- Dean, Faculty of Music
- Vice-Dean, Academic Operations, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Dean, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work
- Administrative Staff Representatives
- Director, Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology, UTM
- Chair, Department of Arts, Culture & Media, UTSC
- Office Manager & Executive Assistant
- Assistant Dean, Registrarial and Student Services
- Chief Administrative Officer
- Research Funding Coordinator

## Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

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### 1. Undergraduate Program(s)

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall Quality
  - B.I. program “has gotten off to a strong start with high expectations of students”

- Admissions requirements
  - ▶ Demanding and holistic admission requirements
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
  - ▶ B.I. program launched with 16 students in 2019-20, after a highly competitive admission process; of 159 applicants, 27 were admitted (17% admission rate)

## 2. Graduate Program(s)

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Admissions requirements
  - ▶ Demanding and holistic admission requirements across all programs
- Curriculum and program delivery
  - ▶ Leadership and faculty have been effective in elaborating new academic programs to meet growing demand in emerging (e.g., human-computer interaction, data science)
  - ▶ M.I. Co-op program placement rate fluctuates, but has remained “fairly high” since it was introduced in 2016
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - ▶ Reviewers note that the graduate students they met with were “bright, engaged, and not afraid to speak truth to power,” noting in particular the initiative taken to create the student-authored report on equity, diversity and inclusion
  - ▶ Ph.D. students report feeling supported by their supervisors
  - ▶ Staff show energy and enthusiasm in supporting student career development, and impressive openness to using enterprise-level systems to enhance service capabilities in this area
- Quality indicators – graduate students
  - ▶ *Ph.D.*: Dramatic rise in applications between 2013-14 and 2018-19, driven largely by international applicants after the University tuition equalization policy; over the same period the admission offer rate decreased (from 36.1% to 25.4%) and the offer acceptance rate increased (from 76.9% to 93.3%) in 2018-19; trajectory of these rates is promising for the quality of applicants and enrolled students
  - ▶ *M.I.*: Applications doubled between 2013-14 and 2018-19 after introduction of attractive new concentrations and enhancement of existing ones; over the same period there were only minor changes in both the admission offer rate (from 70.4% to 67%) and the offer acceptance rate (from 62.1% to 62.5%)
  - ▶ *M.I.*: International student enrolments increased 685% (from 14 in 2013-14 to 110 in 2018-19), indicating significantly broadened recruitment field
  - ▶ *M.I.*: “Rock solid” time-to-completion rate (1.6-1.7 years) very promising for student employment success and limiting student debt
- Quality indicators – alumni
  - ▶ *M.I.*: Promising rates of employment within 12-18 months of graduation; 99% of alumni surveyed in 2019 described their work as closely or somewhat related to their graduate training

- ▶ *M.M.St.*: Employment rates reflect the program's greater specialization, with higher fluctuation relative to the M.I.; 100% of alumni surveyed in 2019 described their jobs as closely or somewhat related to their graduate training
- ▶ Active Faculty of Information Alumni Association (FIAA) committed to offering professional insight and opportunity to new graduates

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
  - ▶ Ph.D. students expressed concern regarding mismatch between program requirements and expected time-to-completion of four years, commenting that program course requirements are "overly burdensome" and leave limited time to conduct research and write dissertations; students reported average Ph.D. time-to-completion rate of over seven years
  - ▶ Ph.D. students conducting qualitative/ethnographic research during the COVID-19 pandemic have had their progress halted due to restrictions on in-person contact and access to physical sites
  - ▶ *M.M.St.*: Reviewers suggest that the curriculum "rooted primarily in established museums and related organizations in Canada and North America" may be less attractive to international students
- Accessibility and diversity
  - ▶ Ph.D. students indicated that they did not feel supported by the iSchool administration, due in part to a perceived lack of response to issues related to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID)
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - ▶ Ph.D. students reported feeling less connected to Faculty's research mission due to a perceived lack of support for student funding
- Quality indicators – graduate students
  - ▶ *M.M.St.* admission rate increased from 2013-14 to 2018-19 while enrolments remained steady
- Student funding
  - ▶ Ph.D. students expressed concern that funding packages were not sufficient to support them through their program; students noted the high cost of living in Toronto and the larger issue of basing funding packages on expected time-to-completion of four years
  - ▶ International students "may be eligible for far fewer opportunities" to secure their own external funding

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
  - ▶ Examine and adjust expectations for Ph.D. program time-to-completion
  - ▶ Support Ph.D. students in identifying alternative ways to make progress to degree completion in light of pandemic-related restrictions on in-person activity

- ▶ Review M.I. Co-op program to optimize and stabilize student placement rates
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - ▶ Explore ways to increase PhD student involvement in writing research proposals
- Student funding
  - ▶ Address student requests for institutional funding beyond their fourth year of study
  - ▶ Identify funding mechanisms to extend time-to-completion for students with pandemic-related research interruptions

### 3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Faculty
  - ▶ Impressive cohort of junior faculty bring “important energy into the research enterprise”
  - ▶ First-rate recruitment of ambitious, creative tenure-stream faculty and CLTAs, including for emerging curricular areas
  - ▶ Immensely enthusiastic teaching stream faculty enjoy their role as “experimental pedagogues with relative job security”
  - ▶ Assistant professors unanimously enthusiastic about their appointments, Faculty culture and mentorship, research support, and iSchool’s commitments to EDID

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

- Research
  - ▶ Concern regarding low rates of participation in Tri-Council research funding and corresponding low rates of graduate student (HQP) grant-based funding
  - ▶ Faculty members report lack of incentives and Faculty support for pursuing large-scale funding as impediments to increasing involvement in Tri-Council research
  - ▶ “Disengagement” by associate-level faculty deprives iSchool of key leadership in driving successful research proposals
- Faculty
  - ▶ Concern that EDID-related curriculum updates fall disproportionately on faculty with diverse backgrounds, creating additional emotional labor
  - ▶ Recurring tension around faculty growth, and inclusion of UTM/ICCIT and UTSC/ACM faculty members in iSchool’s graduate faculty
  - ▶ Changing nature of faculty research work, with some research models dependent on a greater number of doctoral students, creates competition for Ph.D. students and may lead to faculty retention issues; further competition for students noted between faculty across the three University campuses; “at the moment, there aren’t enough students to satisfy all of these demands”
  - ▶ Associate level faculty reported an aversion to taking on large research projects

- ▶ Reluctance among Associate level faculty to seek promotion to full professor noted as a serious issue
- ▶ Some Associate level faculty report disillusionment and “consistent violations of trust by leadership”
- ▶ ICCIT and ACM faculty do not always feel recognized for their teaching contributions to the M.I. program
- ▶ Concern regarding employment uncertainty expressed by CLTA appointees

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
  - ▶ Provide assistance for faculty members in developing a “granting culture” within the iSchool, including workshops, proposal review, assistance with budget preparation, and the use of operating reserves to support development of Tri-Council funding proposals
  - ▶ SSHRC Connections Program strongly recommended as a collaborative opportunity for iSchool/ICCIT/ACM faculty, with lower barriers to entry than other SSHRC programs; SSHRC Partnership Grants program noted as a “long-term goal”
- Faculty
  - ▶ Ensure that faculty of colour are not expected to fulfill students’ needs regarding EDID issues; initiatives undertaken should be collaboratively developed and implemented
  - ▶ Make an accurate inventory of ACM and ICCIT faculty members’ teaching in the M.I. program, and their other iSchool service contributions
  - ▶ Support integration and collaboration between tri-campus faculty members, including complementary scholarship and instruction
  - ▶ Broad recognition of scholarly equity among tri-campus faculty would lead to increased research cooperation within and across faculty groups, possibly including more Tri-Council grant collaborations and HQP funding
  - ▶ Provide course release for academic program directors to align with best practices at peer institutions and elsewhere within the University
  - ▶ Continuous teaching stream faculty appointments, including conversion of CLTAs, would help in retention of Indigenous faculty and faculty of colour
  - ▶ Provide mentorship and guidance for junior faculty members regarding the “changing balance of tenure-system life”, including adjustments over time in the relative emphasis on teaching vs. research, to help with faculty retention and career development

#### 4. Administration

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
  - ▶ Good morale overall, notably high among recently hired faculty and new academic leaders

- ▶ Collegial relationship between iSchool and SGS leadership, based on cooperation and mutual understanding; iSchool is well-regarded by Deans of cognate divisions with areas of collaboration, shared goals, and similar points of tension and possibility
- ▶ Dynamic, integrative tri-campus activities and initiatives in knowledge mobilization, internal and external partnerships, and research centers
- ▶ Dean's Office recognizes the exceptional scholarship of colleagues at ICCIT and ACM, with faculty from these units contributing to a variety of iSchool administrative activities as well as moderate teaching and supervision in the PhD program
- ▶ Highly engaged and committed Faculty of Information Alumni Association (FIAA) assists students with career development support, networking events, and grants
- ▶ Administrative staff are supportive of the Faculty's goals and genuinely appreciative of leadership; staff also appreciate being invited to participate in broader conversations regarding equity and community at the iSchool
- ▶ Professional/Managerial staff are enthusiastic about the Faculty's mission, and appreciative of Dean's assistance in addressing areas in need of additional resources and support
- ▶ iSchool is recruiting a Director for EDID, and has committed to a greater focus on recruiting and retaining Indigenous faculty and students
- ▶ Reviewers express appreciation for the sincerity with which members of the Tri-Campus Review Graduate Unit Working Group had "surveyed different configurations to seek good faith and intentionality in establishing partnerships where everyone knows what to expect"
- Organizational and financial structure
  - ▶ Scope of leadership roles is logical, although very broad in some cases
  - ▶ Professional/Managerial staff welcomed and appreciated central administrative systems in helping to manage processes of a moderately large Faculty
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  - ▶ Faculty has had tremendous recent success in program development, domestic and international student recruitment, and faculty and staff renewal
  - ▶ Staff acknowledge Dean's recent efforts in program expansion and internal reorganization; all agree on the importance of a strategic planning process to guide the Faculty under a new Dean
- International comparators
  - ▶ iSchool "has the distinct advantage of exceptionally high academic rankings"

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

- Relationships
  - ▶ EDID issues were raised frequently in site visit meetings, with faculty and student groups commenting on a lack of coordinated action and a felt sense of complacency from Faculty administration
  - ▶ Some faculty members commented on being marginalized and "reported a few incidents where issues related to EDID caused significant damage to relationships and a lot of distrust"



- ▶ iSchool students had conducted a survey on EDID issues within the Faculty and an audit of course reading lists to assess the proportion of readings authored by BIPOC scholars, resulting in a student-authored report with a series of recommendations and demands; students reported a more active response to the report from individual faculty members than from the Faculty overall
- ▶ Faculty members reported mixed reactions to the student-authored EDID report; reviewers note “there was no faculty-wide discussion to help support each other,” a situation exacerbated by the absence of in-person and ad hoc conversations due to the pandemic
- ▶ Given their experiences teaching “broadly diverse undergraduate student populations,” ACM and ICCIT faculty are well-positioned to respond to student EDID concerns but feel their input is not sought or considered by the iSchool
- ▶ Faculty members requested a strategy/roadmap for engaging and responding meaningfully to students’ concerns, including curriculum updates; iSchool leadership acknowledged that this is needed but were reticent to create a longer-term plan prior to the appointment of a new Dean
- ▶ Reviewers noted concerns about the transparency of the EDID Director hiring process, and observed a number of opinions from faculty and staff regarding the role and its potential to help the iSchool move forward together
- ▶ Reviewers note “inevitable” tension in tri-campus relationships due to competition for resources, doctoral students, and recent increases in master’s program enrolments
- ▶ Additional tri-campus tension appears rooted in historical expectations, resource distribution, and impressions of status difference between “flagship” and “satellite” campuses common to North American multi-campus institutions; reviewers note significantly more collegial and collaborative relationships between ACM and ICCIT faculty members than between these groups and St. George campus-based iSchool faculty
- ▶ Staff members acknowledged having witnessed microaggressions
- Organizational and financial structure
  - ▶ iSchool staffing and systems have not caught up to iSchool’s growth, and are strained by recent enrolment increases
  - ▶ Academic programs are highly differentiated, resulting in a large number of individual Director roles with disparate work expectations
  - ▶ ACM/ICCIT faculty encounter challenges finding available when working in the iSchool’s Bissell building
  - ▶ Reviewers note limitations of “scarce resource” logic expressed in the iSchool self-study; observing that “austerity in the face of success” can undermine trust
  - ▶ Combination of roles to into Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies position creates a single expansive, multi-dimensional, possibly overwhelming role
  - ▶ Dean’s repeated short-term appointments create difficulty addressing systemic and long-term challenges, resulting in faculty and student frustration and “magical thinking” about what a new Dean will be able to accomplish
  - ▶ Significant leadership roles within the Faculty held by faculty with relatively little administrative experience

- ▶ Rapid growth of the Faculty, as well as pandemic-related shift to remote work, has resulted in increased demands for staff support
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  - ▶ iSchool is “at the painful inflection point between the legacy orientation to library science and the future of a broader orientation (including library science but encompassing new opportunities in human-computer interaction and in data science)”; reviewers note that navigating and bridging the “likely cultural divide between the seasoned and new faculty” will be a major challenge
  - ▶ The role for the iSchool in significant, newly-launched initiatives in data science and related areas is not clear; reviewers note: “There is some concern that the lack of engagement may result in the Faculty of Information being subsumed in a larger academic unit broadly focused on Computing and led by Computer Science”

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
  - ▶ Focus EDID efforts towards a core set of goals, expressed in a strategic plan; the plan should create a framework for Faculty-wide and tri-campus conversations, provide a roadmap for necessary changes, include mechanisms for shared accountability, and connect with broader University EDID initiatives
  - ▶ Consider engaging third-party experts to moderate sensitive community-wide conversations about EDID and curriculum
  - ▶ Selection process for EDID Director should be transparent, and include community-wide engagement around the scope and responsibilities of the role
  - ▶ Seek assistance from the School of Graduate Studies and the Provost’s Office in the tri-campus Memorandum of Agreement process, to reach a sustainable, cooperative revenue and resource agreement balancing faculty academic access and iSchool revenue operations
  - ▶ Strong recommendation for all graduate faculty members to read the Tri-Campus Review Graduate Unit Working Group Report to understand complexities of tri-campus history, changing demographics, and relationships
  - ▶ Transparency and cooperation will be important factors in ongoing conversations regarding tri-campus dynamics; reviewers observe that to realize full potential, tri-campus iSchool community will need to recognize that “flagship/satellite configuration and its status presumptions no longer apply, and if continued will hinder integration and collaboration”
  - ▶ Recommendation to create a Memorandum of Cooperation to support culture shift and buy-in for tri-campus iSchool faculty, with input and commitment from participating Faculty and Unit leadership; the document could be drafted but not finalized until new iSchool Dean is appointed
  - ▶ Conduct a survey of unique alumni involvements and visits to clarify participation, extend outreach, and reduce the per-alum expectation in FIAA activity
  - ▶ Reviewers agree with staff comments regarding the need to update the iSchool website to improve clarity, navigability, and community engagement

- Organizational and financial structure
  - ▶ Reviewers emphasized the critical importance of completing the appointment of a new dean for the Faculty
  - ▶ Reviewers caution against “magical thinking” regarding the appointment of a new Dean and note they will need “room to learn, make decisions, make mistakes, and ultimately succeed in the role”
  - ▶ Leadership roles with broad, multi-dimensional responsibilities should be reviewed and adjusted as necessary to ensure appropriate workload
  - ▶ Where possible, consolidation of sub-disciplinary specialization areas may relieve “service fatigue” expressed by faculty in leadership roles
  - ▶ Provide leadership development opportunities for faculty seeking leadership positions
  - ▶ Cultivate a culture of financial accountability, trust, and appropriate transparency
  - ▶ Reviewers caution against continuation of “austerity culture” and note that the iSchool is positioned for a shift to “articulating the need and willingness to spend money (wisely) to meet growth, even as resources are set aside to support building renovation”
  - ▶ Consider staff suggestions to develop an iSchool online calendar, improve records management processes, and develop standardized onboarding processes for new faculty and staff in all positions
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  - ▶ Opportunity exists to develop intra-University relationships and partnerships; consider in particular the future of iSchool’s relationships with University computer science units, and possible roles in new data science initiatives
  - ▶ Work to optimize alumni development/advancement opportunities and consider a fundraising campaign
  - ▶ Begin individual and group contemplation and discussion of iSchool’s long-term strategy, in preparation to continue strategic planning after new Dean is appointed



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF INFORMATION

Office of the Dean

15 September 2021

Professor Susan McCahan  
Vice-Provost Academic Programs  
University of Toronto  
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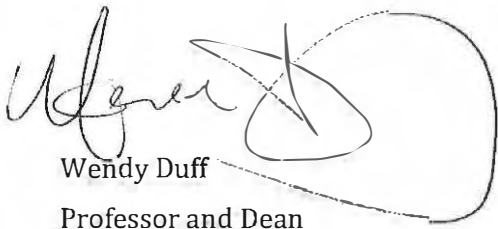
Re: Administrative Response to the External Reviewers' Report, Faculty of Information

Dear Professor McCahan:

This letter constitutes the administrative response to the external review report for the Faculty of Information dated 31 March 2021. The self-study process and external review were very helpful in identifying foci for both our immediate and longer term attention, as well as in reinforcing areas of strength within the Faculty.

We are grateful to the staff of your office for the coordination of the Review, and to the reviewers for a very insightful and constructive review that will contribute significantly to our academic planning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Duff', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Wendy Duff  
Professor and Dean

# Administrative Response to the External Review of the Faculty of Information

The response follows the numbering of the Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

## 1. Graduate Programs

1.1 PhD Curriculum and program delivery/ Student funding/ Student engagement, experience and program support services

Examine and adjust expectations for Ph.D. program time-to-completion

- Numerous changes to the pre-candidacy course requirements have been made over the past several years to allow students more flexibility in course selection to provide more opportunities for students to develop their dissertation topics and methods. Moreover, when the Media, Technology, and Culture (MTC) concentration was introduced in 2019, it was argued that providing area-specific courses and redistributing some preparatory work away from reading courses toward a slightly more standardized curriculum would enable students to complete and defend their dissertations in their fourth year. In the immediate and medium-term the Faculty is focusing its efforts on addressing the reviewers' recommendations that focus on removing some of the structural and financial barriers students face in completing their degree requirements within the expected time period and increasing the amount of fifth year funding provided by the Faculty.

Address student requests for institutional funding beyond their fourth year of study

### *Immediate term actions*

- Doctoral students entering their fifth year in Fall 2021 without external funding will receive a Doctoral Completion Award and the COVID-19 Program Completion Award; the combined value of those awards is equivalent to the living allowance that is normally discontinued after the student's fourth year of study. Fifth year tuition fees are already paid for by the Faculty and that will continue.
- Flag opportunities for students to apply for University-wide doctoral fellowships, such as those available through the Critical Digital Humanities Initiative and the Jackman Humanities Institute.

### *Medium term*

- Explore ways in which PhD slots can be supported across the St. George, UTM and UTSc campuses, either directly, or through partial support provided through supervisors and, on the basis of that exploration, develop a plan to deliver fifth year funding for PhD students.

- Undertake an analysis of time-to-completion rates for students who have been enrolled in the Media, Technology, and Culture (MTC) concentration since 2019 to assess whether this model offers an effective means of reducing student time-to-completion and if so, to consider how it might be transportable to other PhD concentrations.
- Work with the Associate Director for Advancement (see 3.3 below) to increase funding for international doctoral students.

#### *Longer term*

- Find ways to increase funding to PhD students on a year to year basis with a view to reducing the pressure on students to take on additional teaching assistantships which may delay their time to completion.
- On an annual basis monitor time to completion to assess whether and to what extent changes in the funding model and structure are shortening time to completion.

**Lead:** PhD Directors in consultation with Dean and ADA; Associate Director for Advancement

Support Ph.D. students in identifying alternative ways to make progress to degree completion in light of pandemic-related restrictions on in-person activity.

#### *Immediate and medium term actions*

- Monitor the issues students face as a result of pandemic-related restrictions which have been documented most recently through the vehicle of the students' 2021 Annual Progress Report (APR) and provide advice and assistance to students and supervisors seeking to identify alternative ways to move their research forward.

**Lead:** Doctoral Committee on Standing; PhD Director; MTC concentration lead; doctoral advisors/supervisors

Identify funding mechanisms to extend time-to-completion for students with pandemic-related research interruptions

#### *Immediate and Medium term actions*

- The Faculty has already put in place two funding mechanisms aimed at reducing the impact of COVID-19 on doctoral research and time to completion. The COVID-19 Program Completion Award is a fellowship provided to full-time Doctoral students in the Faculty of Information who, for reasons due to COVID-19, require additional time in their program that takes them beyond the funded cohort of the Doctoral program. The COVID-19 Research Pivot Bursary is available to students who have incurred additional costs (e.g., replacement of equipment or supplies, travel, language classes, etc.) as a result of pivoting their research plans due to a COVID-19 related disruption.
- Monitor the administration of these two awards and adjust parameters as needed.

**Lead:** PhD Directors in consultation with Dean and ADA



Explore ways to increase PhD student involvement in writing research proposals

*Immediate term actions*

- Strongly encourage doctoral supervisors to engage their students in the process of preparing their grant proposals.
- Through the Faculty's Learning Hub, develop workshops for PhD students on topics related to the preparation of research proposals and grant applications.

*Medium and long-term actions*

- In the medium and long term, increasing PhD student involvement in writing research proposals will be tied to the Faculty's success in cultivating a "granting culture" within the Faculty (see actions identified below under 2.1. Research).

## 1.2 MI Curriculum and program delivery

Review M.I. Co-op program to optimize and stabilize student placement rates

*Immediate term actions*

- The Faculty has recently hired a business development consultant to identify potential employers and to develop a strategic plan for the MI co-op option. The plan will identify resources required and annual targets for placements in the MI co-op option.

**Lead:** Dean; Co-op academic lead; Assistant Dean, Student and Registrarial Services (responsible for Career Services)

*Medium term*

- The Faculty will implement the strategic plan and tweak it as necessary; monitor the success of the program and the number of new employers and; survey graduates who have completed the co-op program to determine their employment success.

**Lead:** Co-op academic lead; Assistant Dean, Student and Registrarial Services

*Longer term*

- The Faculty will continue to monitor the number and diversity of co-op placements as well as the employment rates of MI graduates who complete the co-op option.
- Drawing on the lessons learned from developing and implementing the strategic plan for the co-op option, the Faculty will develop and implement a strategic plan for its other work experience opportunities, i.e., the BI, MI, and MMSt practica and internships.

**Lead:** Program Directors in consultation with Career Services

## 2. Faculty/Research

### 2.1 Research

Provide assistance for faculty members in developing a “granting culture” within the iSchool, including workshops, proposal review, assistance with budget preparation, and the use of operating reserves to support development of Tri-Council funding proposals

SSHRC Connections Program strongly recommended as a collaborative opportunity for iSchool/ICCIT/ACM faculty, with lower barriers to entry than other SSHRC programs; SSHRC Partnership Grants program noted as a “long-term goal”

#### *Immediate term actions*

- With support of UofT Research Services, hire a Strategic Research Development Officer who will be responsible for strategic planning and provide support to the Associate Dean Research (ADR). This role will supplement our existing Research Grants Officer in supporting the ADR. The Strategic Research Development Officer will work with individual faculty members to build individual strategic research plans, and support the development of relationships between the Faculty and researchers/communities outside of it. This action was implemented in August 2021.
- Create a series of workshops for NSERC Discovery Grant applying faculty members. These workshops will provide peer-based support for developing the NSERC grant proposals across the six months leading to Discovery Grant submission. We will supplement this in the long term by providing workshops targeted to junior STEM-oriented faculty members to inform them of other relevant granting opportunities (e.g. MITACS). This action has been implemented and we are executing this task.
- Ease the mechanical burden of completing grant applications by hiring a work-study position for mechanical tasks. We have hired a work-study position to help faculty members complete the Canadian Common CV. This was perceived to be an onerous task by many of our faculty members, and another way we could support them.
- Develop individual strategic research plans for pre-tenure faculty members applying for SSHRC funding to help them identify opportunities for funding, and review their grant proposals. This action has been implemented and we are executing it.
- Split the positions of ADR and PhD Director to allow the ADR more time to focus on these activities. This action has been implemented.

#### **Lead: ADR**

#### *Medium term*

- Develop a strategic research plan for the Faculty (see 3.3 below). Our current approach is to develop an overall strategic plan for the Faculty. Emerging out of this work will be a supplemental document that outlines the strategic research priorities. These should be aligned with the strategic research directions outlined by the institution, as well as extant and



growing strengths of our Faculty. We are now engaged in the process of developing the strategic plan for the Faculty.

- Develop individual strategic research plans for all faculty members, including those applying for SSHRC funding, to help them identify opportunities for funding, map out the foreseeable future, and review their grant proposals. We had previously developed individualized strategic plans for some faculty members on an ad hoc basis, and saw that this led to a significant level of success, particularly with tri-council funding. We will engage more faculty members with this initiative, beginning with pre-tenure faculty members, before moving to mid-career faculty members, and providing it as an option for more senior colleagues. Through this initiative we hope to raise faculty members' awareness of the wide range of SSHRC research programs available to them and encourage them to take advantage of the various types of research these programs support.
- Identify mechanisms for reducing the administrative load of tenure-track faculty members to enable them to devote more time to their research (see 3.2 below).

**Lead:** ADR

*Longer term*

- Implement and monitor the strategic research plan. We have begun developing a set of metrics that we can use to assess our progress towards improving the research climate at the Faculty.
- Conduct a comprehensive five-year review of the plan and revise accordingly

**Lead:** ADR

## 2.2 Faculty

Ensure that faculty of colour are not expected to fulfill students' needs regarding EDID issues; initiatives undertaken should be collaboratively developed and implemented

- Actions related to EDID issues are described below under 3.1 Relationships.

Make an accurate inventory of ACM and ICCIT faculty members' teaching in the M.I. program, and their other iSchool service contributions

Support integration and collaboration between tri-campus faculty members, including complementary scholarship and instruction

Broad recognition of scholarly equity among tri-campus faculty would lead to increased research cooperation within and across faculty groups, possibly including more Tri-Council grant collaborations and HQP funding

- Actions related to Tri-Campus issues are described below under 3.1 Relationships.

Provide course release for academic program directors to align with best practices at peer institutions and elsewhere within the University

- Actions related to faculty administrative workload and compensation are described below under 3.2 Organizational and Financial Structure.

Continuous teaching stream faculty appointments, including conversion of CLTAs, would help in retention of Indigenous faculty and faculty of colour

- Actions related to retention of Indigenous faculty and faculty of colour are described under 3.1 Relationships.

Provide mentorship and guidance for junior faculty members regarding the “changing balance of tenure-system life”, including adjustments over time in the relative emphasis on teaching vs. research, to help with faculty retention and career development

*Immediate term*

- Develop an onboarding handbook for new faculty members across the tri-campus that explains how things work at the University and Faculty levels (e.g., administrative structures, processes and procedures relating to teaching and research) and who does what (e.g., the role of the associate deans, program directors, concentration liaisons, student services and Dean’s office staff). See also 3.2 below.
- Create orientation sessions for new faculty that explain the handbook’s contents in more detail.
- Assign a faculty mentor to all assistant and associate faculty members.
- Hold meetings between the Dean and new assistant professor faculty members on a bi-monthly basis to discuss various aspects of faculty life including tenure and PTR processes.
- Hold meetings between the Dean and associate professors on a bi-monthly basis to discuss various issues relating to research, teaching and service loads and the path to full professorship.

**Lead:** Dean

*Medium term*

- Reduce teaching load of faculty in their first 5 years.
- Conduct annual interviews with new faculty during their pre-tenure period to identify and address any issues or challenges the faculty member may be experiencing.
- Identify university wide support structures for new faculty who come from underrepresented groups.

**Lead:** Dean

*Longer term*

- Monitor the impact of the actions described above and revise accordingly.
- Conduct a comprehensive five-year review of the immediate and medium term actions and revise accordingly.

**Lead:** Dean

### 3. Administration

#### 3.1 Relationships

Focus EDID efforts towards a core set of goals, expressed in a strategic plan; the plan should create a framework for Faculty-wide and tri-campus conversations, provide a roadmap for necessary changes, include mechanisms for shared accountability, and connect with broader University EDID initiatives

Consider engaging third-party experts to moderate sensitive community-wide conversations about EDID and curriculum.

Selection process for EDID Director should be transparent, and include community-wide engagement around the scope and responsibilities of the role

*Immediate term actions*

- Hire a consultant to moderate community-wide conversations about EDID. In October 2020, the Dean hired two external consultants to facilitate conversations with faculty and staff and prepare a report outlining findings and recommendations. The consultants were chosen from a list of recommended consultants found on the ARDCO website. The consultants organized two community discussions with faculty and staff between October and December 2020 and submitted a report with findings and recommendations in February 2021. The new EDI Director is now reviewing the report as one of the preliminary steps in developing an EDI strategic plan.
- Hire a Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. This action has been implemented. The hiring process took place between January and April 2021: in January, the Dean invited two faculty members from St. George and UTM Campus, two graduate students (nominated by the MI and MMSt student associations), the Assistant Dean for Student Services, and Chief Administration Officer to serve on the Search Committee for EDI Director. Two central HR staff members: an Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) officer and the Executive Director, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, also participated in the search. The Committee was larger and more diverse than our previous PM searches. The Dean provided updates on the search at Faculty Meetings on January 21, March 18 and at Faculty Council on February 4 and March 25, 2021. The new EDI Director joined the Faculty in June 2021 and is currently meeting with staff and faculty one on one to solicit their views on the Faculty's current strengths and challenges in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion; their expectations concerning the role of the EDI Director, and priority areas requiring attention.

- Create new faculty positions in areas that **will** attract Black and Indigenous scholars, i.e., Black Studies and the Archive; Indigenous Data Sovereignty; Indigenous Knowledge Systems. these positions have now been approved and will be posted in Fall 2021. Racialized and Indigenous faculty members and doctoral students were asked to serve and provide guidance on these searches.
- Create an EDI Committee and a Truth and Reconciliation Committee as Standing Committees of Council.
- Create EDI fellowships for students.
- Initiate a process for incorporating EDI elements into the Faculty's program-level student learning outcomes with a view to integrating those elements into the content, delivery and assessment of the academic programs and ensuring that all the courses offered within those programs are in alignment with them.

**Lead:** Dean; ADA; Program Directors; EDI Director

*Medium term*

- Develop an EDI strategic plan that aligns with the recommendations of the Anti-Black Racism Task Force Report.
- Complete the process for incorporating EDI elements into the Faculty's program-level learning outcomes and integrating them into the curricula of those programs.
- Increase the number of racialized faculty and develop a strong mentoring program for new faculty from underrepresented groups.
- Work with UTL, Alumni Association and other stakeholders to increase the number of scholarships, awards and bursaries for students from underrepresented groups
- Require the completion of a minimum of one mandatory module on anti-Black racism every year by all academic administrators and senior administrative staff in the Faculty (this aligns with rec. 7.2 of the Anti-Black Racism Task Force Report).
- Organize an annual EDI Day where faculty and staff can receive EDI education and training

**Lead:** Dean; EDI Director; ADA; Program Directors; Assistant Dean, Student and Registrarial Services

*Longer term*

- Implement the EDI strategic plan and monitor its success
- Conduct a comprehensive five year review of the EDI strategic plan and revise accordingly

**Lead:** Dean; EDI Director; ADA; Program Directors; Awards Committee



Seek assistance from the School of Graduate Studies and the Provost's Office in the tri-campus Memorandum of Agreement process, to reach a sustainable, cooperative revenue and resource agreement balancing faculty academic access and iSchool revenue operations

Strong recommendation for all graduate faculty members to read the Tri-Campus Review Graduate Unit Working Group Report to understand complexities of tri-campus history, changing demographics, and relationships

Transparency and cooperation will be important factors in ongoing conversations regarding tri-campus dynamics; reviewers observe that to realize full potential, tri-campus iSchool community will need to recognize that "flagship/satellite configuration and its status presumptions no longer apply, and if continued will hinder integration and collaboration"

Recommendation to create a Memorandum of Cooperation to support culture shift and buy-in for tri-campus iSchool faculty, with input and commitment from participating Faculty and Unit leadership; the document could be drafted but not finalized until new iSchool Dean is appointed

#### *Immediate term actions*

- Operating within the framework of the *Tri Campus Review: Graduate Units Working Group Report* (Feb. 2020) and using the vehicle of the Tri-Campus Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), the Dean will work with the ICCIT/UTM and ACM/UTSc Deans to develop a tri-campus Memorandum of Agreement to support the culture shift recommended by the reviewers (this developmental work is already in process).
- Appoint ICCIT faculty in leadership roles (ICCIT faculty recently have been appointed to the positions of PhD Director, the MTC PhD concentration and the Critical Information Policy Studies (CIPS) MI concentration).
- Identify and track annual teaching and service related to the Masters' and PhD program by faculty at ICCIT and ACM.
- Establish a PhD funding model that allows the Faculty of Information to begin to take advantage of currently unfunded PhD slots to enable "lab model" faculty members across the tri-campus to recruit doctoral students more effectively and in an equitable way.
- Include ICCIT and ACM faculty in all the Faculty's onboarding initiatives for new faculty.

**Lead:** Dean; Tri-Campus Deans; PhD Director; MTC academic lead

#### *Medium term actions*

- Establish annual meetings of the FI Dean and the Directors of UTM and UTSc to implement the recommendations of the tri-campus review of programs.
- Monitor the success of the MOA in improving the relationship among faculty working on the three campuses.
- Develop research clusters across the three campuses to support integration and collaboration among tri-campus faculty.

## Administrative Response to the External Review of the Faculty of Information

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- Within the framework of the MOA, determine how PhD slots can be co-supported by these units more broadly—either directly, or through partial support provided through supervisors.

**Lead:** Dean; Tri-campus Deans; ADR; PhD Director

### *Longer term actions*

- Conduct a comprehensive five-year review of the MOA and revise accordingly.

**Lead:** Dean

Conduct a survey of unique alumni involvements and visits to clarify participation, extend outreach, and reduce the per-alum expectation in FIAA activity

### *Immediate term actions*

- The new Associate Director for Advancement (see 3.3 below) will conduct an alumni survey.

Reviewers agree with staff comments regarding the need to update the iSchool website to improve clarity, navigability, and community engagement

### *Immediate term actions*

- In April 2021, the Faculty hired a new Communications Coordinator, whose job includes keeping the website up to date. This coordinator also has responsibility for executing the Faculty's social media strategy, which is designed to enhance engagement on all its platforms including the website. Analytics data shows the Faculty has so far succeeded in increasing engagement for all its social media accounts as well as directing users to specific pages on the website.
- In June 2021, the Faculty transferred the hosting of the website from a US-based service provider to a company located in Ontario. This was a preliminary step towards the ongoing revitalization of the website.
- In summer 2021 a Website Revitalization Committee (WRC) was struck to get the process of revitalizing the website underway. It is composed of faculty members, staff, and recent graduates and is chaired by the Senior Communications Officer. The Ultimate overseer of the WRC is the Dean. As the WRC goes about its work it will be seeking input from those responsible for the different sections of the website. For example, it will coordinate with the Associate Dean Research while working on the site's Research Section, the Careers Office while working on the site's Careers section, and the Alumni Association while working on the Alumni section. Ultimately, the WRC will be responsible for ensuring consistency and continuity throughout the website as well as compliance with best practices.
- As a first-step, the WRC sent out a questionnaire to all staff and faculty members and a sampling of students. The next step is for committee members approve an action plan, submit it to the Dean for approval, hire a contractor, and begin the process of redesigning the website and cleaning up the backend.

- The working schedule calls for the hiring of a contractor this fall. This contractor will be selected by the WRC and hired by the Chief Administrative Officer. The contractor's work will be supervised by the Senior Communications Officer, assisted by the Communication Coordinator. We anticipate that if the contractor is hired on schedule, the new revitalized website will be ready to launch in early 2022.
- Best practices will be established for updating the website, and quickly spotting and addressing clarity and navigation issues.
- Simultaneously, an audit will be carried out to ensure the writing quality on the current website is up to par. The Communications team will work with those responsible for different sections of the website to restructure and improve writing quality, starting with the most high-traffic web pages.
- Also simultaneously, the Communications team, working together with a newly-hired contractor, will begin immediately to try to address the website's most critical current problem – the failure of the site's search engine, which ceased to function this summer – and any other major problems that arise.

#### *Medium term actions*

- Launch of new website.
- Ongoing monitoring to ensure that best practices are being followed for the website with revisions undertaken as needed.

### 3.2 Organizational and financial structure

Reviewers emphasized the critical importance of completing the appointment of a new dean for the Faculty

Reviewers caution against “magical thinking” regarding the appointment of a new Dean and note they will need “room to learn, make decisions, make mistakes, and ultimately succeed in the role”

- The decanal search that was in progress this past year did not result in the appointment of a new Dean. Since a new decanal search will not take place for another two years, these recommendations are moot.

Leadership roles with broad, multi-dimensional responsibilities should be reviewed and adjusted as necessary to ensure appropriate workload

Where possible, consolidation of sub-disciplinary specialization areas may relieve “service fatigue” expressed by faculty in leadership roles

Provide leadership development opportunities for faculty seeking leadership positions

#### *Immediate term actions*

- Working within the framework of the Faculty's strategic plan (see 3.3 below), the following actions will be taken:



- Initiate a review of the MI concentrations with a view to making recommendations concerning whether and how they might be consolidated or organized into larger clusters.
- Initiate a review of the current concentrations in the PhD programs with a view to making recommendations concerning whether and how they might be consolidated or organized into larger clusters.
- Initiate a review of existing administrative staff roles with a view to identifying existing and potential staff who could assist directors and liaisons to reduce the workload related to their administrative roles.
- Provide a 0.5 course release to program directors and MI concentration liaisons for the larger concentrations on a one-year trial basis while the review of the academic administrative structure is ongoing.
- Identify workshops/opportunities available in the broader university community that focus on supporting new and emerging academic leaders (e.g., the Emerging Leaders Program offered through the Rotman School of Management; the New and Emerging Academic Leaders (NEAL) Program offered through the Centre for Faculty Development in the Temerty Faculty of Medicine).
- Assign an administrative mentor from outside the faculty to assist new faculty administrators in acclimating to their administrative role.

**Lead:** Dean; Program Directors and concentration liaisons in consultation with the ADA

*Medium term*

- Implement the recommendations of the above-mentioned reviews to create a more streamlined academic administrative structure.
- Increase the number of teaching stream faculty members who can serve in academic administrative roles which better align with their advancement goals and priorities

*Longer term*

- Monitor the new academic administrative structure and administrative staff roles and tweak as necessary. As part of that monitoring, conduct annual interviews with academic administrators to identify and address issues and challenges they may be experiencing in their roles.
- Undertake a comprehensive five-year review of the academic administrative structure and revise accordingly

**Lead:** Dean; Associate Deans; Program Directors



Cultivate a culture of financial accountability, trust, and appropriate transparency

Reviewers caution against continuation of “austerity culture” and note that the iSchool is positioned for a shift to “articulating the need and willingness to spend money (wisely) to meet growth, even as resources are set aside to support building renovation”

*Immediate term actions*

- The Dean is committing significant resources to increasing the faculty complement while ensuring the Faculty does not go into debt. In spring 2021, the Dean invited faculty members to serve on the Faculty Complement Planning Committee. The Committee met in June to discuss Faculty needs and possible hires. Based on their recommendations the Dean's Office surveyed faculty members to solicit their views on the Committee's recommended faculty hires. On the basis of that feedback the Dean slightly revised the Committee's recommendations and submitted a list of proposed faculty hires to the Provost. Provostial approval has now been given to hire seven new faculty members in the 2021-2022 academic year. In this year's Annual Budget Report, the Dean will request permission to hire five additional faculty members in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Consider staff suggestions to develop an iSchool online calendar, improve records management processes, and develop standardized onboarding processes for new faculty and staff in all positions

*Immediate term actions*

- Including a calendar as part of the new website is a top priority. Unfortunately, in the past, technical issues with the current website prevented developers from adding any of the most popular WordPress calendar widgets. The Communications Coordinator will investigate a possible temporary fix. WordPress and WordPress widgets are continually updated and it is possible that current calendar widgets may no longer cause the technical issues they have in the past. If possible, a temporary calendar will be launched.
- In Spring 2021, a graduate of the MI program was hired to design a SharePoint file repository. Administrative records located on shared drives were successfully migrated to SP and organized in accordance with an approved Records Plan. We also created a Collaboration Site on Share Point and will use it until the intranet is put in place for sharing documents.
- A standardized onboarding process has now been introduced for all new faculty and staff hires. The Dean met with new faculty hires twice over the summer, let them know she has an open door policy and that faculty should feel free to come to her with any questions. Mentors were assigned to all new hires and those who did not have mentor in the past (for all ranks: Assistant, Associate, CLTAs). See also

### 3.3 Long-range planning and overall assessment

Opportunity exists to develop intra-University relationships and partnerships; consider in particular the future of iSchool's relationships with University computer science units, and possible roles in new data science initiatives

*Immediate term actions*

- Over the past several months the Faculty of Information has begun the work of developing intra-University relationships and partnerships and has actively pursued participation in a number of University-wide ISI initiatives. It is now an institutional partner in the Data Sciences Institute (DSI) and a contributor to the Critical Digital Humanities Initiative (CDHI). In addition, nine faculty members have been appointed as faculty affiliates with the Schwartz-Reisman Institute for Technology and Society.
- Connect Faculty and faculty members with the Black Research Network, the Indigenous Research Network and other emerging research networks that align with the disciplinary and professional interests of the the Faculty of Information

Work to optimize alumni development/advancement opportunities and consider a fundraising campaign

*Immediate term actions*

- Hire an Associate Director of Advancement as part of 2025 campaign work to identify a unique brand for the Faculty of Information.
- Create two additional staff positions to support advancement work.

Begin individual and group contemplation and discussion of iSchool's long-term strategy, in preparation to continue strategic planning after new Dean is appointed

- While the recent decanal search in the Faculty of Information did not result in the appointment of a new Dean, the Faculty is moving forward on strategic planning. Dean Duff, who has agreed to continue as Dean for another two years, will lead this work.

*Immediate term actions*

- Begin the process for developing a strategic plan for the Faculty. At the end of August 2021, the Faculty held a very successful strategic planning session to brainstorm ideas. During the planning session faculty members engaged in a number of activities aimed at identifying strategic priorities and priority enablers. This planning exercise has laid the groundwork for the next step in the strategic planning process.
- Hire a consultant to facilitate the strategic planning process in order to develop a clear vision, mission, values, and strategic directions. The Faculty is currently in the final stages of hiring the consultant who will report to the Faculty's Strategic Planning Committee (chaired by the Dean). Over the next six months, the consultant will carry out the following tasks:
  - ✓ Review the findings of the 2020 Self Study
  - ✓ Review the recommendations of the 2021 External Review of the Faculty of Information
  - ✓ Review the most recent academic plan
  - ✓ Review the Faculty of Information's select operating infrastructure and make recommendations for optimizing its effectiveness
  - ✓ Identify the key participants to be interviewed and/or be involved in focus groups
  - ✓ Develop an interview guide

- ✓ Develop goals and actions based on the strategic priorities
- ✓ Organize and facilitate two strategic planning retreats with key stakeholders (first within 1 month of the start of this project, the second within 4 months)
- ✓ The first retreat should accomplish the following: Establish the Faculty's vision, mission and values and confirm the priorities established based on the Self Study and External Review.
- ✓ The second retreat should accomplish the following: Test goals, strategic priorities, directions and actions over the next 5 years
- ✓ Draft and finalize the strategic plan within 2 months after the second strategic planning retreat
- ✓ Provide recommendations for the development of an implementation plan to move the Faculty of Information's strategic plan forward, including key action steps, timelines, and accountabilities

*Medium-term actions*

- Complete and implement the Strategic Plan and identify performance measures

*Longer term*

- Monitor the implementation of the Strategic plan and revise accordingly.

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

The spokesperson for the reading group found the review to be overall positive.

The spokesperson reported that, although related points were included in the summary, the summary did not directly capture the reviewers' recommendation that doctoral student numbers needed to be resolved to avoid retention issues for those faculty who rely on a laboratory model for their research.

In response to a question on the cancellation of the search for a new Dean, Professor Susan McCahan informed the Committee that the President and Provost jointly dissolved the Advisory Search Committee in accordance with the University's Search Committee Principles and Practices and, as a result of the temporary pause of the search, Professor Wendy Duff had agreed to extend her appointment as Dean for a two-year term.

In response to questions from the reading group, Professor Wendy Duff, Dean, Faculty of Information:

- Referred back to various sections of the administrative response outlining how the Faculty intended to address the comments of the reviewers.
- Noted that space continued to be an issue, and renovations that were underway would create more collaborative spaces.
- Noted that all Program Directors had now been granted course release and noted an interest in having more teaching stream faculty as Program Directors, given the alignment of the role with their scholarship.
- Highlighted the diversity that came with the interdisciplinary nature of the Faculty of Information, and that the need to build a common mission and values was being addressed through a recently established strategic planning process.

No follow-up report was requested.

### 4. Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the Faculty's tremendous recent success in program development, international student recruitment, and faculty and staff renewal; the modernization of program curricula to meet growing demand in contemporary sub-disciplines such as human-computer interaction and data science; the bright, engaged, and socially conscious students; the "demanding and holistic" admission requirements across all programs; the dramatic increases in PhD and MI program applications since the previous review; and the first-rate recruitment for tenure-/teaching-stream and CLTA positions, resulting in ambitious and creative new faculty hires. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: optimizing and stabilizing co-op placement opportunities for students in the M.I. program; addressing variations in the nature of faculty work within the discipline and tensions around faculty growth and doctoral admissions; addressing student concerns around a mismatch between Ph.D. program requirements and expected time-to-completion; providing additional support to Ph.D.

students whose research was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; consolidating certain specialization areas to alleviate service fatigue; supporting faculty serving in administrative or leadership roles; increasing faculty participation in Tri-Council-funded research projects; supporting and enhancing tri-campus relationships in the area of information, technology, communication and media studies; encouraging community-wide conversations on curricular EDID matters and developing a faculty-wide EDID strategic plan; providing guidance for junior faculty on the changing balance of tenure-stream life; and clarifying the Faculty's distinctive strengths "in the present and the intended future". The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty 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 will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs on the status of the implementation plans, due midway between the year of the last and next site visits.

The next review will be commissioned for a site visit to take place no later than eight years from February 2021.

## **6. Distribution**

On January 15, 2022, 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 Information, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance.