

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1. Review Summary

Programs Reviewed:	City Studies, HBA: Specialist, Major and Major Co-op; Minor Human Geography, HBA: Specialist; Major; Minor Physical and Human Geography, HBA: Major Geographic Information Science: Minor (Arts) Urban Public Policy and Governance: Minor (Arts)
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Human Geography
Commissioning Officer:	Vice-Principal (Academic) & Dean University of Toronto Scarborough
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	Professor Sara McLafferty, (Head) Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Professor Daniel Shrubsole, Associate Dean Undergraduate Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Western University Professor John Smithers, Department of Geography, University of Guelph
Date of Review Visit:	March 24-26, 2021 (conducted remotely)
Date Reported to AP&P:	April 12, 2022

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: October 17-18, 2013

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Impressive rethinking of curriculum following departmentalization
- Dedicated faculty committed to keeping programs rigorous and up-to-date
- Unique City Studies program and cutting-edge Geography program
- Positive, supportive environment and excellent morale among students, faculty, and staff

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Enhancing the student learning experience and students' writing and research skills
- Exploring additional program development opportunities
- Changing the faculty complement composition to continue to meet curricular needs and bring stability to the Department
- Evaluating program staffing levels
- Addressing the need for a common student/faculty space and a computer lab to support emerging areas of research and teaching

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

1. About the University and UTSC: UTSC Strategic Plan, 2020-25; UTSC Academic Plan (2015-20); UTSC Admissions Viewbook (2020-21); Campus Virtual Tour; Interactive Campus Map.
2. About the Review: Terms of Reference; Review Report Template; Remote Site Visit Schedule.
3. About the Department: Previous External Review Report (2013); Final Assessment Report: Previous External Review (2013); Unit Academic Plan, April 2015; Unit Self Study, March 2021.
4. About Programs and Courses: Description of all programs (2020-21 Academic Calendar); Description of all courses (2020-21 Academic Calendar); Self-Study Data; Curriculum Mapping: Department of Human Geography Curriculum Map and Course Mapping
5. Course Syllabi (all courses).
6. Faculty CVs (all faculty).

Consultation Process

The reviewers met with the following: the decanal group, including the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, Vice-Dean Recruitment, Enrolment and Student Success, Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning and Undergraduate Programs, Vice-Dean Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Interim Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity and Success, Acting Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum, Director, Office of the VP Academic and Dean, and Academic Programs Officer; the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation; the Chair of the Department of Human Geography; Department of Human Geography faculty – tenure- and teaching-stream (all ranks); Staff, Arts and Science Co-op; UTSC Chief Librarian and library staff; departmental administrative staff; and undergraduate students.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program(s)

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

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Educational programs a key strength, with courses and curricula that engage and challenge students while honing their analytical and critical skills
 - ▶ Faculty and staff are committed to student learning and success
- Objectives
 - ▶ Departmental and program missions well aligned with University mission; greater alignment expected after Departmental academic plan update
 - ▶ All programs develop valuable skills (e.g., communication, writing, qualitative and quantitative reasoning, interdisciplinary critical thinking, research, professional training, social activism, and digital competency)
 - ▶ Courses and programs effectively address current geographical theories, perspectives, and methodologies
 - ▶ Programs' mix of skills, opportunities, and experiential learning reflects "the cutting edge of geographic training in leading geography departments"
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Reasonable admissions requirements serve the needs of the Department and are consistent with other Geography programs
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ High-quality course content and program structure
 - ▶ Laudable efforts to include applied assignments in courses, some of which are partnered with community groups and local government agencies
 - ▶ Department has made strong efforts to include tutorial and discussion-like components in several courses

- ▶ Faculty effectively incorporate research methodologies, theories, debates, and publications in their courses
- ▶ Department has developed a suite of courses to serve students not pursuing Human Geography programs
- Innovation
 - ▶ Unique City Studies program focuses on issues of local and regional significance, while providing opportunities to learn from and engage with community partners
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Department offerings achieve a very high level of diversity, in terms of both scale (local/regional/global) and in the breadth of thematic areas covered (e.g., social, cultural, political, economic, indigenous, racial)
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Very detailed learning expectations and outcomes for each course level are consistent with the Department's commitment to student learning and success
 - ▶ Department is committed to ensuring students develop strong communication and research skills, and a deep understanding of geographic concepts, methods and findings
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students hold faculty and staff in high regard for quality teaching, kindness, and responsiveness to concerns
 - ▶ Students praised Department's class size management, which affords opportunities to make friends and develop continuing relationships with classmates
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Reviewers note rapid enrolment growth and high levels of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and course offerings as indicators of programs' success

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

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Major in Physical and Human Geography appears “dated and tired”; reviewers suggest that modest enrolment levels in the program may be related to a “lack of attention” to updating the curriculum
 - ▶ Student complaints regarding course sequencing and overlapping content of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-year courses; faculty note that content of introductory courses may be too basic
 - ▶ Inclusion of active research activities is difficult in courses with very large enrolments
 - ▶ Students indicated a desire for “still greater” diversity in course content
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Faculty commented on challenges and dissatisfaction with development of student skills in communication, research, and understanding of concepts; possible contributing factors include relatively large tutorials and lab classes, and comparatively high numbers of students for whom English is a second language

- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ City Studies co-op students voiced dissatisfaction that they are not guaranteed employment despite paying the co-op program fee; reviewers note that “this concern is common to many co-op programs modelled in a similar manner to UTSC”
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ Absence of a faculty leader for the Physical and Human Geography major
- Student funding
 - ▶ OSAP eligibility data indicate a comparatively high level of financial need among students in the Department

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Review and improve course sequencing, including co- and pre-requisite requirements, to avoid overlap in course content, ensure that students have the necessary background and knowledge for upper-division courses, and to provide greater connection between courses while retaining the ability to attract students from other cognate programs into Human Geography courses
 - ▶ Expand research opportunities for undergraduate students through course work and internships
 - ▶ Identify specific courses to deliver a set of research skills, in partnership with library staff
 - ▶ Develop Geographic Information Science (GIS) as an undergraduate Major program, to address the strong need for training in analysis, application, and management of geospatial technologies and data, and to contribute to the university’s initiative on data science
 - ▶ Work with collaborating departments to develop a more contemporary focus for the Physical and Human Geography major, including themes integrating human and physical geographic processes
 - ▶ Consider offering competitive research assistantships to further promote undergraduate research opportunities
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Publicize research opportunities for undergraduate students more widely; partner with the library to promote student-based research to the wider UTSC campus
 - ▶ Encourage faculty to incorporate undergraduates in their research projects when feasible; consider leveraging funding opportunities available through UTSC’s Office of the Vice-Principal, Research & Innovation to support undergraduate students who work on faculty research projects
 - ▶ Better promote career opportunities in Geography by utilizing materials from the Canadian Association of Geographers and American Association of Geographers websites
 - ▶ Strengthen alumni relationships through a LinkedIn site and other outreach efforts, in order to expand internship and employment opportunities for students, and potentially increase external funding

- ▶ Improve communication with current and prospective students regarding the process and deliverables related to securing employment for students in the co-op program
- ▶ Establish a more formal mechanism for students to have a stronger voice in Departmental governance and program planning

2. Graduate Programs (n/a)

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Research
 - ▶ Faculty publish regularly, publications include books and peer-reviewed articles in high-quality international journals
 - ▶ Research activities are very good relative to the seniority and career stages of tenure stream faculty
 - ▶ Recent faculty hires show signs of considerable research promise, reflecting the Department's commitment to creating identifiable clusters of research excellence
 - ▶ Political ecology, social-cultural geography, critical perspectives incorporating issues of uneven development and ethnic and racial inequality noted as areas of particular research strength
 - ▶ Department is emerging as a center of excellence for research in urban GIS emphasizing transportation, urban governance, and feminist and indigenous geographies; GIS research themes are highly relevant to social and environmental issues and inequalities at the local, national, and global scales, and mesh well with University areas of research priority
- Faculty
 - ▶ Faculty are making strong research contributions in their respective fields, indicated by their publications, externally funded grants, and numerous honors and awards from disciplinary organizations
 - ▶ Highly impressive range of faculty roles in academic or professional scholarly endeavours, including editorship roles on prestigious journals and leadership positions in numerous professional scholarly associations and national research panels
 - ▶ Faculty promotion and tenure outcomes indicate the Department's attention to research quality and impact
 - ▶ Teaching loads are well-defined and consistent
 - ▶ Reviewers note "a shared view concerning the importance of mentorship" as an investment in the success of individual faculty members as well as the Department as a whole

- ▶ “Early career faculty expressed appreciation and enthusiasm for the value of mentoring and indicated that they felt well supported both institutionally and collegially”
- ▶ Department’s plan to add five new faculty primarily focused in City Studies and GIS is “highly appropriate” given instructional needs and research opportunities

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

- Research
 - ▶ Reviewers observe some variation in research activity among faculty members, but note that this likely reflects disparities in research expectations for tenure stream and teaching stream faculty
- Faculty
 - ▶ Reviewers note challenges faced by faculty conducting community-focused research, including “being asked to propose their own criteria for CES and/or justify their research strategies”
 - ▶ Rapid increase in student demand for Department’s courses and programs has resulted in a heavy reliance on sessional instructors; reviewers note concerns about quality, content, and continuity due to precariousness of sessional instructor positions

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ Strengthen the Department’s research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and taking advantage of internal funding opportunities and institutional initiatives
- Faculty
 - ▶ Mitigate unsustainable reliance on sessional instructors through hiring of additional permanent faculty
 - ▶ Address strong need for additional faculty in City Studies; consider hiring at a senior level to provide leadership in research, community engagement, and curriculum development in this area
 - ▶ Address critical need for new faculty in GIS, particularly with development of the GIS major; reviewers note that “the existing curriculum lacks courses in key topics including geovisualization, spatial databases, and space-time analysis, and in application areas, such as health and environmental justice”
 - ▶ Prioritize faculty hires whose expertise intersects across the Department’s programs and links with broader campus and university research initiatives, including themes such as city/suburbs, health, and data science
 - ▶ Clarify research criteria for Community Engaged Scholarship (CES) in relation to promotion and tenure processes

- ▶ Address imbalance in enrolment across programs, through additional faculty hires in key areas and promoting faculty linkages and teaching across programs
- ▶ Improve mentoring for junior and mid-career faculty to offer crucial support for research excellence and career progression
- ▶ Strengthen mentoring for teaching-stream faculty

4. Administration

Note: Issues that are addressed through specific University processes and therefore considered out of scope for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns) are routed to proper University offices to be addressed, and are therefore not included in the Review Summary component of the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Strong collegiality and impressive degree of shared purpose, respect and genuine support evident across meetings with all members of the departmental community; faculty, students, and staff report very positive relationships and interactions, and reviewers note “a prevailing culture of mutual respect and professionalism within the unit”
 - ▶ Faculty, students, and staff greatly appreciate the Department’s open and effective leadership
 - ▶ Evident faculty commitment to the Department as a whole, and close associations with their area of principal teaching activity
 - ▶ Strong cohesion among staff, providing a high degree of personal and professional support to each other
 - ▶ Faculty and staff noted the material support provided on an ongoing basis, particularly in light of pandemic-related challenges
 - ▶ Students were “unequivocal in their endorsement of both faculty and staff,” describing in very positive terms their interactions with members of the Department
 - ▶ Strong library system with highly engaged, supportive staff; “it was particularly evident that early career faculty are in the process of developing strong relationships with library colleagues in support of both teaching and research”
 - ▶ Impressive outreach, engagement and impact at the local level with community organizations and non-profit and governmental agencies
 - ▶ “Department has brought on expertise enabling it to engage in a more fulsome manner in research and outreach in the service of a variety of racialized or otherwise ‘othered’ groups in society” since the previous review
 - ▶ Well-developed linkages with cognate units across the University, partly due to the comparatively high number of cross-appointed faculty
 - ▶ Strong evidence of formal and informal collaborations between departmental faculty and other universities and organizations
- Organizational and financial structure

- ▶ Department has taken necessary and appropriate steps to adopt a model of distributed leadership and management, allowing specific individuals to provide concerted focus on each of the major teaching programs in the unit
- ▶ Work undertaken in recent years to strengthen departmental governance processes has been well received
- ▶ Department models principles of inclusion, equity and transparency in decision making
- ▶ Distinctive practice of 'staff sharing' between units has been very effective
- ▶ Significant improvements in space/infrastructure management since the previous external review, including the move to Highland Hall and consolidation of Departmental space to bring faculty, sessional instructors, and TAs into closer proximity
- ▶ Dedicated formal/informal gathering spaces improve students' experience
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Overall the Department is highly successful with large, high-demand undergraduate programs that address critical social and environmental issues and embrace innovative experiential and community-engaged approaches
- International comparators
 - ▶ Levels of research activity (books, publications, grants) are on par with similar research-focused geography departments in Canada and the U.S.
 - ▶ Course offerings and learning objectives perform very well in relation to international comparators
 - ▶ Number of major/minor programs offered and sole focus on human geography distinguish the Department from many geography departments in Canada and beyond

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

- Relationships
 - ▶ Reviewers note concerns that the tri-campus structure in which graduate programs are centred at the St. George campus results in faculty and graduate students focusing their research activities there, which can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates
 - ▶ Tri-campus structure can result in periods in which few faculty colleagues are present at UTSC; seeing and working with each other more frequently at UTSC would be valuable for faculty esprit de corps
 - ▶ Reviewers caution that escalating work overload and fatigue may erode staff morale
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Large number of students relative to dedicated staff in the Department; number of students is unsustainable for current arrangement of a shared advisor
 - ▶ Multiple staff members are approaching, or have passed, workload capacity following recent enrolment growth, a situation that is recognized within the Department and by senior leadership

- ▶ Departmental space is fully utilized and future growth may create challenges in the management and allocation of office and/or research space
- ▶ Department faces resource challenges in delivering its programs; reviewers note that the clearest path to new revenue generation is through additional enrolment
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Departmental resources are stretched thin due to rapid enrolment growth, program development, and new research opportunities; “these pressures often compel the Department to be in reactive mode, and strategic planning is difficult”
 - ▶ Limited Departmental resources for student and faculty support; high levels of financial need among students

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Develop a more systematic and extensive partnership with the library to support development of students’ research abilities
 - ▶ Continue enhancing visibility in new Departmental space to establish ‘recognizability’ within the UTSC community
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Seek funding for a dedicated, full-time undergraduate assistant/advisor to serve the large and increasing student population
 - ▶ Consider teaching needs, including GIS lab space and tutorial rooms, as well as office space for staff and faculty and social/gathering spaces for students in future space planning
 - ▶ Consider resource constraints carefully at Department and Division level when increasing program enrolments
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Consider “tactical (near term) and strategic ways (e.g., manageable growth) to stabilize and support the best of what is currently in place and build on opportunities in ways that are both achievable and sustainable” regarding growth and additional investment in City Studies and GIS
 - ▶ Consider developing a continuing education certificate in GIS, beginning on a cost recovery basis, but with the prospect of new revenue generation in the future
 - ▶ Seek new sources of funding to support student research experiences, study abroad and internship opportunities, etc.
 - ▶ Strengthen connections through an alumni organization; showcase research and teaching activities through social media and other channels in to link current students with career opportunities and encourage alumni to contribute to the Department
 - ▶ Additional investments in faculty and staff will be needed in order to expand the Department’s programs and enhance co-op and other experiential learning opportunities

2. Administrative Response & Implementation Plan



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

March 11, 2022

Dr. Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-President and Provost
University of Toronto

Dean's Administrative Response: External Review of the Department of Human Geography, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Susan,

Thank you for your letter of November 29, 2021 requesting my administrative response to the external review of the Department of Human Geography. We want to thank the review team – Professor Sara McLafferty, Head, Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Professor Daniel Shrubsole, Associate Dean Undergraduate Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Western University; and Professor John Smithers, Department of Geography, University of Guelph – for their consultation with us during the remote site visit, held from March 24-26 2021, and for their report, which was finalized on June 9, 2021.

I appreciate the seriousness with which the reviewers approached the external review process, as well the thoughtful consideration given to the Department of Human Geography and its undergraduate programs in the review Report. I am very pleased by the overall positive review of the department. The reviewers describe Human Geography as “highly successful, with large and growing undergraduate programs and faculty research contributions that compare favourably with national and international comparators.” They note the strength of the department’s academic programs, the engaging and challenging curriculum, the commitment of faculty and staff to student learning and success, and the high level of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and course offerings. Further, they comment on the department as an emerging centre of excellence for research in urban GIS. Finally, the reviewers emphasize that they were “impressed by the degree of shared purpose, respect and genuine support that was evident across meetings with all members of the departmental community.”

The external review report was sent to the Chair of Human Geography, Dr. Thembela Kepe, on June 14, 2021, with a request to share it widely among the faculty, staff and students. On January 11, 2022 the decanal group, including myself, the Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning and Undergraduate Programs (VDTLUP), Acting Vice-Dean, Recruitment, Enrolment and Student Success (VDRESS), Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity, and Success (VDFAES), Acting Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum (ADUPC), Associate Dean Experiential and Global Learning (ADEGL), Director, Office of the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, and the Academic Programs Officer, met with the Chair, of Human Geography to discuss the external review report and administrative response; I am pleased with the depth of the discussion that took place.

My administrative response to the points raised in your letter is given below. This response has been developed in close consultation with the Chair of Human Geography, and reflects the key elements of the unit response letter, dated February 18, 2022. It also includes responses to points raised in the Request for Administrative Response that are outside departmental control.

Let me address the specific points raised in your letter:

- *The reviewers recommended a review of course sequencing and co/prerequisites, to avoid overlap in course content and to ensure that students have the necessary background for upper-level courses.*

In his response, the Chair notes that the Department has been engaged in an ongoing review of course co/pre-requisites for the last several years, with the goal of replacing specific course co/pre-requisites with a minimum number of completed courses. This has improved access to courses, however an unintended consequence of this has been that some students have been insufficiently prepared for some courses. The department will undertake a further review of course co/pre-requisites in the coming year in a planned curriculum retreat to identify courses that require firm co/pre-requisites for students to achieve the learning outcomes. The Chair also notes that the Department's Curriculum Committee began a curriculum review process in Fall 2021, and in January 2022 received reports evaluating the course content and sequencing from the City Studies and Geographic Information Science programs, and from the Urban Geography, Socio-cultural Geography, and Environmental Geography clusters of the Human Geography program. These reports will feed into discussions that will take place during the planned curriculum retreat, where content and sequencing will be considered both within and across clusters. An additional short-term action is being led by the Department's Liaison Librarian, who will be working with the Curriculum Committee to encourage program coordinators to leverage their expertise and offer of assistance with the development of course guides that focus on particular skills, consistent with identified learning outcomes.

- *The reviewers recommended updating the Major in Physical and Human Geography curriculum to develop a more contemporary focus on themes which integrate human and physical geographic processes.*

The Chair notes several opportunities to address this recommendation. First, the department has initiated discussion regarding the development of new courses focused on urban climate change as a way to better integrate the disciplinary content of the Major in Physical and Human Geography. Second, there are several current courses in the area of people and built environments, as the reviewers suggest, that can serve as the basis for these developments (for example: CITB08H3 – The Economy of Cities; CITC03H3 – Real Estate and the City; CITC18H3 – Urban Transportation Policy Analysis; and CIRD12H3 – Planning and Building Public Spaces in Toronto). These courses have not as yet been included as required or elective courses in the Major. The department will explore, at the planned curriculum retreat in the next year, ways to integrate these courses into the Major. Finally, the reviewers recommend that a future faculty hire is needed in the Physical and Human Geography program, to provide leadership, and instill a clearer sense of direction and integration. The Department will be bringing a request forward for consideration to the UTSC Faculty Complement Committee planning process. The Department's goal for this new hire will be to act as a liaison between the Department of Human Geography and the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences, which also supports the delivery of this Major. Bearing this goal in mind, the Department may seek a possible cross-appointment with the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences. I am supportive of these plans and will speak more directly to faculty complement planning under the second-to-last point below.

- *The reviewers encouraged the Department to develop a Major in Geographic Information Science, noting GIS as an area for enrolment growth in alignment with UTSC's goals to develop quantitative expertise.*

The Chair's response describes early stage developments underway in the Department to support this recommendation. The Department introduced two new GIS-focused courses in 2021-22, GGRC15H3 (Spatial Databases and Applications), and an upper-year special topics course on Cartographic Design. These courses contribute to areas identified by the reviewers as gaps in the GIS curriculum, and they will expand on the elective offerings for the existing Minor program in GIS, while at the same time expanding the Department's existing GIS course portfolio with the long-term goal of moving towards establishing a Major program. The Department will continue to expand research and curriculum in geographic information science, including developing more new courses, as faculty complement allows. In anticipation of developing a Major in GIS, the Department is conducting a curriculum survey of established GIS programs at North American universities. This gap analysis will highlight the additional knowledge, skills and applications that should be included in a Major. Finally, the Department has stated plans to hire strategically to build faculty strength to bridge the Department's GIS expertise with other active areas of interest, such as Urban Geography and City Studies. Towards this end the Department will be submitting a request for a new GIS faculty position within the next two years, and anticipates being in a position to begin developing a proposal for a GIS Major within the next two to three years. I am supportive of these plans and will speak more directly to Faculty complement planning under the second-to-last point below.

- *The reviewers noted faculty concerns regarding students' written and oral communication skills, their understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and their ability to conduct research, commenting on several possible contributing factors.*

The Chair agrees that students have struggled with their written, oral and research skills in many of the Department's courses, and expressed appreciation for the reviewers highlighting this issue, which has been a long-standing challenge in the Department. Since introducing a new writing course, GGRB03H3 (Writing Geography), in 2015-16, the Department has observed positive changes in the desired areas and doubled enrolment in Winter 2022, from about 20 to over 40 students. To expand the beneficial impacts of this course, the Department will change the role of this course in the curriculum, either to transition the course from an elective to a requirement, or offer it earlier – as an A-level (first year) course, or both. These plans align with campus-wide work that is currently underway to better support student writing. A Task Force on Writing Support has recently submitted its recommendations that will help to inform future resourcing and supports in this area across the campus.

In addition, the Department's Liaison Librarian is working with the Department Curriculum Committee and department faculty on an information literacy (IL) curriculum mapping project. The IL curriculum map will strategically identify where and how to develop research skills within Human Geography programs. The Department's planned outcome of this assessment will be to produce recommendations to better scaffold research skills for students as well as required supports. Attention to racialized perspectives, Indigenous ways of knowing and Black knowledges will be an important part of the pedagogical approach and methodology for this process, to align with the goals of the campus-wide curriculum review. The Department views this as a short to medium term goal, that can be completed within one year. The campus curriculum review Working Circle will be releasing its recommendations this term, which will help to support this process. Dedicated

resourcing has also been made available to departments in the form of the Pedagogies of Inclusive Excellence Fund, to advance curricular and pedagogical work in this area.

- *The reviewers recommended that course-based research opportunities be expanded, and that opportunities for research participation within the Department be publicized more widely.*

The Chair has highlighted a number of current course-based opportunities for students to engage in research in the Department, for example: CITC01H3 – Urban Communities and Neighborhoods Case Study: East Scarborough; GGRD31H3 – GIS Research Project; GGRD01H3 – Supervised Research Project, GGRD08H3 – Research Seminar in Environmental Geography, and CITD01H3 – City Issues and Strategies. As well, the Department introduced in 2020-21 a new seminar course GGRD25H3 (Work and Employment in the GTA), that offers students the chance to undertake geographically-informed labour market research on employment trends in the Toronto Region. The course introduces students to working with Statistics Canada data and strategies for synthesis and analysis of union research, scholarly work, third sector reports, consultancy research and municipal employment surveys, as well as a resume building workshop to learn how to include skills from undergraduate research on their CV. In the short to medium term, with the help of our Liaison Librarian, the department plans to model additional C- and D-level courses after this example.

The Chair also highlights in their report that the Department will introduce in Fall 2022 a Human Geography Research Internship. Through an application and selection process, promising students will register for either GGRD31H3 (Independent Research Project) or GGRD01H3 (Supervised Research Project) and undertake a research internship with a faculty member. Students will participate in the faculty member's research project, with evaluation criteria based on the quality of their contribution (e.g., literature/archive search, annotated bibliographies, assisting with surveys or mapping, etc.), as well as writing a short reflection paper on the experience. By agreement between the student and the faculty member, the quality of the student's research contribution will determine whether they can be considered a co-author on an article. To start with, this opportunity will be available to third and fourth-year students. There is no financial compensation for the internship and students will invest no more time than needed for a regular course. The Department is working with my office to consider how this initiative will contribute to ongoing development of experiential learning opportunities in the Department.

- *Noting dissatisfaction from some students that participation in the co-op program did not guarantee employment, the reviewers commented that "more effective communication between the Arts and Science Co-op office and prospective students about the deliverables is required;" they also recommended additional outreach efforts to expand internship and employment opportunities for students.*

The Chair acknowledges in his response that the Department works closely with the Arts and Science Co-op Office to identify and advocate for the best Co-op opportunities for our students. However, the Department is reliant on the Co-op Office for support in identifying placements. As well, the Chair notes that students are required to take on responsibility for applying for Co-op placements, which are not guaranteed. Nevertheless, the Chair acknowledges there is room for improvement, and the Department will engage with this issue at the planned curriculum retreat in the next year, giving more attention to managing students' expectations regarding Co-op. Finally, the Chair sees great potential in increasing the Department's focus on developing further experiential learning opportunities to build and expand on their existing co-op offerings. The Arts and Science Co-op Office is also working with departments to ensure a broad range of placement options for students in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, as well as supporting work-integrated learning

opportunities for students who are interested in workplace opportunities but may not wish to pursue a co-op program.

- *The reviewers noted concerns that faculty and graduate students often focus their research activities at the St. George campus, which can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates.*

A majority of the Department's graduate students are based on the St. George campus within the tri-campus Graduate Department of Geography and primarily come to UTSC to TA or consult with their supervisors. Given this reality, the Department's undergraduate students have limited opportunities to be exposed to graduate students' research. As well, faculty members in the Department of Human Geography at UTSC also hold a graduate appointment in a tri-campus Graduate department(s) and must spend some of their time on the St. George campus consulting with their graduate students, as well as teaching graduate courses. These realities notwithstanding, the Department is exploring ways to expand on opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in research at UTSC, as noted in the point above.

- *The reviewers noted a growing focus on Community-Engaged Research (CER) in the Department, and recommended clarification of research criteria in relation to promotion and processes for faculty whose research is community-focused.*

As the Chair notes in his Response, the issue of Community-Engaged Research is actively being discussed in various spaces across the tri-campus University of Toronto, including at UTSC. The Dean's Office will work with the Department to ensure that CER is appropriately valued and recognized in promotion and PTR assessments and factored into faculty workload. The Department plans to use regular Departmental meetings and their planned two-day retreat to expand their understanding of CER, including approaches such as ethnography, and to find ways to include work that faculty engage in overseas.

- *The reviewers made a recommendation to "strengthen the Department's research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and taking advantage of funding opportunities and initiatives available through the Office of the Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation."*

In his Response, the Chair describes initial plans to work with the Department's Liaison Librarian to showcase faculty research through TSpace, the institutional repository. Faculty have already begun to submit deposits to TSpace and will continue to do so. The Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation (OVPRI) at UTSC has also invested resources aimed at better communicating the impact of faculty research across the campus. In addition to publishing and presenting in conferences, faculty in the Department continue to promote their work through various media outlets, not only in Canada, but in other countries, for those who do overseas work. Finally, the Department plans to increase existing efforts for faculty to take the opportunity to apply for funding offered by the OVPRI at UTSC.

- *The reviewers noted a strong need for faculty complement planning, particularly in areas of expected growth, and encouraged a complement mix that could provide leadership in research, community engagement, and curriculum development, and build stronger linkages with campus-wide research initiatives.*

The Chair's response notes that faculty complement needs careful consideration and planning, particularly as the Department's programs continue to grow. To support the development of a new Major program in GIS, the Department plans to request two new faculty positions in GIS over the next five years, anticipating making the first request within the next two years. Additional capacity is also needed in City Studies, which is the fastest growing program in the Department. One growth position has already been approved and a search is currently underway. The Department plans to request a second faculty position within the next two years, and a third faculty position within five years. While this position will primarily serve City Studies, it will also support the Human Geography programs. Finally, as discussed above, there is a need for a new faculty hire to provide leadership for the Physical and Human Geography program, envisioned as a joint hire with the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences.

To support the Department in their complement planning, in 2019-20, UTSC established the Faculty Complement Committee (FCC) to provide recommendations to me regarding the distribution of teaching-stream and tenure-stream faculty positions sought by academic units in the yearly recruitment cycle, within the context of strategic multi-year departmental and campus faculty complements. The FCC provides a consultative, inclusive and transparent process that involves all academic units in determining the complement submission at UTSC. The Department of Human Geography will be encouraged to bring their plans and priorities forward each year through the FCC. My office will also work with the Department to ensure it has the resources it needs to support the further development of their programs.

- *The reviewers observed that growth in student and faculty numbers warrants attention to staff complement to ensure sufficient capacity to support student advising, curriculum mapping and other functions.*

The Chair has noted in their response that the Department has shared staff with two other departments (Global Development Studies and Political Science), which presents challenges as the department continues to grow. The Department is working in consultation with my office to develop a staff complement plan over the next three to five years to ensure adequate staffing resources.

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of Human Geography. An interim report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will be prepared for 2024-25. The next external review of the Department has been scheduled for 2028-29.

Regards,



William A. Gough

Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

Cc: Dr. Thembela Kepe, Chair, Department of Human Geography, UTSC

Implementation Plan

Action	Timeline	Lead
Undertake a curriculum review to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all courses that require firm pre-requisites; and Resolve the existing course sequencing problem and eliminate overlap in course content. 	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	HG Faculty and Liaison Librarian
Develop and introduce new courses focused on urban climate change and on people and built environments to support the Major program in Physical and Human Geography.	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty
Introduce a new GIS Major. This includes doing an analysis of GIS programs and courses across the country, to ensure the UTSC program is modelled on the best of these.	Long term [3-5 years]	HG Faculty
Introduce a new required, first-year course focused on improve written and oral communication skills. Alternatively, strongly integrate these skills in our first-year core courses.	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty and Liaison Librarian
Conduct an information literacy (IL) curriculum mapping project that will strategically identify where and how to develop research skills within HG programs.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	Liaison Librarian and HG Faculty
Introduce a Human Geography Research Internship opportunity.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	HG Faculty
At an upcoming department retreat, expand our understanding of CER, to include work that faculty do overseas, including approaches such as ethnography. Link these understanding to how we do internal evaluations (e.g. PTR)	Medium term [1-2 years]	HG Faculty
Strengthen the department's research visibility and impact via open access posting on T-Space. Increase the up-take of this for all faculty.	Short term [6-months to 1 year]	Liaison Librarian and HG Faculty
Through the FCC process, submit requests for the following faculty positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One teaching stream position in the area of Community Engaged Learning in City Studies One tenure stream position in GIS 	Medium term [1-2 years]	Chair, Human Geography

Action	Timeline	Lead
<p>Through the FCC process, submit requests for the following faculty positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One tenure stream position in City Studies • One tenure stream position in GIS • One tenure stream position in Physical and Human Geography; ideally, this role will be at the Associate or Professor rank in order to take on the leadership of the Major program; this role could be a cross-appointment with the Dept of Physical and Environmental Sciences 	<p>Long term [3-5 years]</p>	<p>Chair, Human Geography</p>
<p>Review and prioritize administrative staff needs; when appropriate, submit requests for additional administrative staff support to the Dean. Potential requests include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Program Coordinator to provide student advising and support; • A Chair's Assistant/Department Administrative Assistant. 	<p>Medium to long term [1-5 years]</p>	<p>Chair, Human Geography</p>

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

The spokesperson for the reading group reported that the review summary accurately reflected the full review. The reading group noted that administrative response outlined in detail the actions that the Department had already taken and demonstrated that many of the recommendations could be addressed in the short to medium term.

Professor Katherine Larson, Vice-Dean, Teaching, Learning and Undergraduate Programs commented that the Department had been developing strategies in consultation with the UTSC Arts and Science Co-op Office to increase the range of placement options and to encourage students to apply more broadly for cooperative opportunities. She also noted that there were other experiential learning opportunities that may benefit students as well.

Professor Thembela Kepe, Chair, Department of Human Geography, noted that the Department had planned to hold a retreat within one year, with discussion topics to include managing student expectations and facilitating greater knowledge in the process for cooperative placements.

In response to a member's question regarding the number of students who participated in a cooperative placement, Professor Kepe indicated that the cooperative program was available only to students enrolled in the City Studies program and approximately 10 students had a cooperative placement. Professor William Gough, Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, UTSC, indicated that approximately 4000 of the 14000 registered students at UTSC were enrolled in a cooperative program.

No follow-up report was requested.

4. Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the department as highly successful, with large and rapidly growing undergraduate programs that effectively address current geographical theories, perspectives, and methodologies; the high student satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and course offerings; the research strengths in political ecology and social-cultural geography, particularly in issues of uneven development and ethnic and racial inequality; they also highlighted the department's emergence as a centre of excellence for research in urban GIS emphasizing transportation and land use; its commitment to "Community-Based Research"; and its strong collegiality and well-developed linkages with cognate units, including those on the St. George campus.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: conducting a review of course sequencing and co/prerequisites; updating the Major in Physical and Human Geography curriculum to develop a more contemporary focus; developing a Major in Geographic Information Science; addressing factors contributing to concerns around students' communication skills, understanding of key disciplinary concepts, and ability to conduct research; expanding and better-publicising course-based research opportunities; improving communication between Arts and Science Co-op office and prospective students around co-op

placement deliverables, and enhancing outreach efforts to expand student internship and employment opportunities; addressing concerns that faculty and graduate students often focus their research activities at UTSG, which can weaken research experiences and opportunities for UTSC undergraduates; clarifying research criteria in relation to promotion and tenure processes for faculty whose research is community-focused; strengthening the Department's research visibility, impact, and profile by publicizing research accomplishments more widely and taking advantage of available funding opportunities and initiatives; engaging strategically in faculty complement planning, particularly in areas of expected growth; and ensuring that the staff complement has sufficient capacity to support student advising, curriculum mapping and other functions.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Division, unit 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 of the Department of Human Geography. The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than Winter 2025 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in 2028-29.

6. Distribution

On June 29, 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 Vice Principal Academic & Dean of UTSC, 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 Chair of the Department.