

# UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

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## 1. Review Summary

<b>Programs Reviewed:</b>	Economics, BCom: Specialist Economics, HBA: Specialist, Major, Minor Economics & Political Science, HBA: Specialist Financial Economics, HBA: Specialist International Affairs, HBA: Specialist Certificate in Advanced Economics
<b>Unit Reviewed:</b>	Department of Economics, UTM
<b>Commissioning Officer:</b>	Vice-Principal Academic & Dean University of Toronto Mississauga
<b>Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prof. Brian Copeland, Vancouver School of Economics, University of British Columbia</li><li>• Prof. Kevin Lang, Department of Economics, Boston University</li></ul>
<b>Date of Review Visit:</b>	October 25, 28 and 29, 2021 (conducted remotely)
<b>Date Reported to AP&amp;P:</b>	February 16, 2023

## **Previous UTQAP Review**

**Date:** March 24 & 25, 2014

### **Summary of Findings and Recommendations**

#### **Significant Program Strengths**

- High quality of educational experiences offered through the programs
- Breadth of field and specialized courses available to students
- Innovative teaching techniques and program design developed by dedicated faculty
- Faculty research and initiatives linking research to student learning

#### **Opportunities for Program Enhancement**

- Continuing to monitor applicants' performance in first-year, quantitative courses
- Strengthening the student experience across all program streams
- Obtaining increased data to facilitate tracking of student performance, time-to-completion, and post-graduation pathways
- Examining the role of mid-career faculty within the Departmental complement
- Increasing faculty cohesion and identity with the UTM undergraduate program and building the Department's reputation

## **Current Review: Documentation and Consultation**

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### **Documentation Provided to Reviewers**

Terms of Reference; Department of Economics Self-Study, 2021; Previous Reviewer's Report and Administrative Responses; UTM Degree Level Expectations 2016; UofT Facts & Figures, 2020; UTM Divisional Academic Plan, 2017; UTM Vision Statement, 2017; UTM Academic Calendar, 2021-22; UTM Viewbook, 2021-22; Tri Campus Framework (Framework for a New Structure of Academic Administration for the Three Campuses); Access to all course descriptions; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty.

### **Consultation Process**

As determined by the commissioning officer, the reviewers met with the Vice-Principal, Academic and Dean and Vice-Dean Teaching & Learning; Chair of the Department of Economics UTM; Associate Chair of the Department of Economics, UTM; Chair of the Department of Economics, St. George; Undergraduate students; Graduate students; Junior and Senior Tenure Stream faculty members; Contractually limited term appointment faculty; Teaching Stream faculty members; Chair of the Department of Management, UTM; Chair of the Department of Political Science, UTM; and Administrative Staff in the Department of Economics, UTM.

# 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
  - ▶ Department has maintained excellent set of undergraduate programs despite research focus
  - ▶ High-quality programs that develop analytical and critical thinking, and foster an understanding of how humans interact
- Objectives
  - ▶ Programs align with UTM's mission to "to develop thoughtful and empathetic global citizens capable of reflecting critically on the world and committed to the values of integrity, democracy, equity and diversity."
  - ▶ Degree Level Expectations emphasize breadth and depth of knowledge, methodologies, communication skills, awareness of limits of knowledge, and development of autonomy and professional capacity
- Admissions requirements
  - ▶ Program admission requirements, including a minimum grade in first-year economics and first-year math, seem reasonable
  - ▶ Past issues with coordination across different sections of first-year economics courses have been addressed
  - ▶ Minimum GPA requirement for Major has been eliminated, removing incentives for students to opt for "easy" courses
  - ▶ Economics Specialist and Financial Economics Specialist programs are highly selective and provide good preparation for graduate school
- Curriculum and program delivery
  - ▶ UTM has done a commendable job of offering a wide variety of undergraduate courses
  - ▶ Material covered appears to reflect current state of the discipline, as well as the outstanding quality of research faculty
  - ▶ Economics programs notably successful at ensuring that students develop writing skills
  - ▶ Unit's approach of keeping upper-level class sizes relatively small helps students develop writing, presentation, and research skills
  - ▶ Financial Economics Specialist program is well designed and of high quality, providing excellent preparation for employment in relevant fields
  - ▶ Specialist in International Affairs, and Economics and Political Science Specialist both have interdisciplinary focus balanced with an appropriate level of Economics

- Innovation
  - ▶ Department's Certificate in Advanced Economics program noted as a good initiative that helps clarify for students the courses necessary for pursuing graduate studies, and presents no significant resource cost
  - ▶ Reviewers impressed by innovative teaching (particularly among teaching stream faculty), such as use of flipped classroom approach
  - ▶ Impressive active teaching workshops organized over the summer, where faculty share teaching experiences and learn about innovative approaches to pedagogy
- Accessibility and diversity
  - ▶ Department offers course on Economics of Poverty, something found in relatively few similar programs
- Assessment of learning
  - ▶ Assessment methods are consistent with norms in the discipline
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - ▶ Successful use of undergraduate TAs, and graduate student help desk provides mentoring for undergraduates
  - ▶ Popular internship course provides opportunities for students to gain work experience
  - ▶ Successful and engaging new experiential learning course with focus on macroeconomic policy
  - ▶ Research opportunity courses available, where undergraduate students work under faculty supervision on original research

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

- Admissions requirements
  - ▶ Stringent admission requirements for Economics Specialist program result in relatively low enrolment
  - ▶ BCom Economics Specialist program is very small and demanding, with only one student completing the program between 2012-19
- Curriculum and program delivery
  - ▶ Students are unable to take many appealing electives (particularly field courses) until third year of program due to prerequisites; reviewers note this may negatively impact the mix of students who enrol in economics, and also discourage some enrolled students from continuing with the program
  - ▶ Economics Program structure creates high barriers for students outside economics who may wish to take field/applications courses but lack necessary prerequisites
  - ▶ Reviewers flag concerns that the Economics Specialist program may appear too rigorous to students who are unsure if they wish to pursue graduate studies, while the Major does not adequately prepare students for graduate school unless they receive guidance in selecting courses
  - ▶ Students report a lack of cohesion in the joint Specialist program in Political Science and Economics Innovation

- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - ▶ On the National Student Satisfaction Survey (NSSE) responses to General Questions, “UTM Economics students reported lower levels of satisfaction compared to the U15 average for economics and for the rest of U of T”, though reviewers note a discrepancy between these responses and other NSSE responses and a lack of clarity on potential contributing factors

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Overall quality
  - ▶ Department should consider strategies for strengthening undergraduate offerings
- Curriculum and program delivery
  - ▶ Review electives to determine which could be taught with fewer prerequisites, to make Economics courses more accessible to students within and outside of the department
  - ▶ Examine theory requirements with an eye to enhancing flexibility for students
  - ▶ Explore options for programming that could position more students for graduate education
  - ▶ Reviewers note current high demand for workers trained in data analysis and economics, and note possible opportunities to offer students options to specialize in an empirical data-oriented track
  - ▶ A capstone course in the joint Specialist program in Political Science and Economics could be of benefit
  - ▶ Reviewers note need for increased offerings in environmental economics and international trade
  - ▶ Reviewers recommend modernizing name of ECO364H5 to “International Trade”
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - ▶ Students indicate that they would like to see more elective courses that do not require intermediate theory and/or quantitative methods courses
  - ▶ Students note strong interest in additional research and experiential learning opportunities; department is supportive, however reviewers acknowledge that these activities tend to be resource-intensive
  - ▶ Students express desire for access to previous student evaluations when choosing courses
- Quality indicators – alumni
  - ▶ Reviewers note that tracking student trajectories after graduation could prove useful for ongoing quality assessment purposes

## 2. Graduate Program(s) n/a

### 3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
  - ▶ “There is no question that the faculty research activities' scope, quality, and relevance are all extremely high”
  - ▶ Impressive quality of UTM junior faculty
  - ▶ Faculty cover a wide range of fields, especially given modest number of tenure-track members
  - ▶ There is an active teaching and learning group at UTM, and the teaching stream faculty interact with teaching faculty in other units
- Research
  - ▶ Reviewers note very strong integration of research activities for UTM and UTSG faculty
  - ▶ Faculty regularly publish in the leading journals
  - ▶ Almost all UTM faculty incorporate elements of their research into their teaching
  - ▶ A number of faculty are actively engaged in policy research on fundamental areas for addressing the needs of diverse populations

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

- Faculty
  - ▶ Wide variation in mentorship for junior faculty
  - ▶ Reviewers struck by the apparent absence of a formal annual performance review for faculty
  - ▶ Reviewers observed the tenure-track faculty numbers to be low in comparison to other leading economics departments

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
  - ▶ Junior faculty would benefit from a more formalized mentorship program, including regular meetings with the Department Chair
  - ▶ New assistant professors would benefit from more formal orientation

### 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
  - ▶ Level of cooperation between the economics faculty at UTSG and UTM is “genuinely remarkable”
  - ▶ Evident that UTM can maintain such a high caliber research department because of its integration with the UTSG dept in almost all respects except undergraduate teaching
  - ▶ UTM faculty have offices at UTSG and are full participants in the doctoral program
  - ▶ Students seem very engaged in their programs and generally express very positive views about the availability of faculty
  - ▶ Staff appear to be very well-regarded and enjoy high morale
  - ▶ Faculty and staff appear happy with current departmental leadership
  - ▶ Generally cordial and productive relationships with cognate units; strong research ties with Management
  - ▶ Considerable evidence of significant ties between individual faculty members and external organizations
- Organizational and financial structure
  - ▶ Tri-campus graduate structure contributes significantly to a very positive view of both the present and the future among UTM economics faculty
  - ▶ Some devolution of authority from the Faculty to departments has occurred since previous review
  - ▶ Department appears to function smoothly; staff seem to be well-organized
  - ▶ Reviewers did not note any complaints about departmental space and infer that concerns raised in previous review have been addressed by new space allocation
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  - ▶ Department has a strong teaching program that benefits from highly regarded research faculty and dedicated members of the teaching stream
  - ▶ Quality of undergraduate experience in economics and related programs is high; students appear to be happy with the program and well prepared for the labor market or post-graduate education
- International comparators
  - ▶ “[T]he combined St. George/UTM economics department is highly regarded, not only in Canada but throughout the world. UTM economists are active participants in the international economics community. Many have strong international reputations.”
  - ▶ “The University of Toronto [tri-campus graduate] Department of Economics clearly ranks in the top thirty in North America and may well rank in the top twenty”

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

- Relationships
  - ▶ Some concerns noted that the Management program is expanding into areas historically addressed by Economics, and vice versa

- ▶ Reviewers struck by the absence of cross-listed courses between Management and Economics, and Political Science and Economics, despite the existence of programs that cut across these fields
- Organizational and financial structure
  - ▶ Reviewers note some difficulties with achieving staffing levels commensurate with the size of the undergraduate programs
  - ▶ Reviewers note concerns around whether UTSG can continue to provide individual offices to UTM faculty and flag serious potential recruitment issues
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  - ▶ Reviewers highlight very active academic labour market in economics, and the potential for loss of faculty
  - ▶ Reviewers note concerns around retaining young tenured faculty in the face of competition from peer US Economics departments that typically offer higher salaries
  - ▶ Reviewers note that with roughly 20% non-tenure stream faculty, the balance appears “at the upper end of what is consistent with quality undergraduate education in which students have sufficient interaction with research-active faculty”
  - ▶ Concerns raised around lack of obvious candidates for next department chair

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  - ▶ Reviewers “strongly recommend that the administration consider allowing some senior offers to offset the loss of tenured faculty”
  - ▶ Reviewers “strongly recommend against moving to a model with more nontenure stream faculty”
  - ▶ Prioritize potential disciplinary coverage in international trade and environmental economics in faculty complement planning
  - ▶ “It is essential that the UTM administration work with the Economics Department Chair to plan how to deal with outside offers and hire at the young tenured level”





## 2. Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

UNIVERSITY OF  
**TORONTO**  
MISSISSAUGA

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

January 16, 2023

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

Dear Professor McCahan:

We are writing to provide an administrative response to the External Review of UTM's Department of Economics and its programs, which was held in October 2021. This Department includes programs in Economics, BCom: Specialist; Economics, HBA: Specialist, Major, Minor; Economics & Political Science, HBA: Specialist; Financial Economics, HBA: Specialist; International Affairs, HBA: Specialist; Certificate in Advanced Economics. Overall, the reviewers found that the programs benefit from highly regarded research faculty and dedicated teaching stream faculty who provide students with an excellent undergraduate experience, as reflected by the high satisfaction reported by students. The reviewers specifically highlighted the Certificate in Advanced Economics, the new experiential learning course, and the popular internship course as strong initiatives. With respect to faculty, the reviewers commended the "genuinely remarkable" relationship between Economics faculty at UTM and St. George; the impressive junior faculty; and the innovative and engaging teaching across the Department. Staff are highly regarded and morale was observed to be high. These features set a strong foundation for the Department to build on as they plan for the next five years and beyond.


Enclosed you will find a brief discussion on specific recommendations made by the external reviewers in a table that outlines the Department's response, the Decanal response, and an Implementation Plan identifying action items and timelines (short, medium, and long term). This response was developed in consultation with the Department, through a Town Hall held on September 21, 2022, as well as from a Chair's Administrative Response submitted by Prof. Margarida Duarte, Chair of the Department of Economics. Progress checks and monitoring of the implementation plan will occur through the Chair's Annual Report to the Dean. The next external review of the Department of Economics is scheduled to occur in the 2027-2028 academic year, with a midway report submitted to your Office in 2024-2025.

Please let us know if you have any questions about this response.

Sincerely,



Amrita Danieri  
Interim Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean



Tracey Bowen  
Vice-Dean, Teaching & Learning

Encl: 2021-22 UTQAP Review of the Department of Economics, University of Toronto  
Mississauga - Review Recommendations (table)  
Department of Economics, Chair's Administrative Response

CC: Margarida Duarte, Chair, Department of Economics, University of Toronto Mississauga  
Yen Du, Manager, Academic Programs, Reviews & Quality Assurance, University of  
Toronto Mississauga  
Amanda Pullan, Research Analyst, Academic Programs and Curriculum, University of  
Toronto Mississauga

## 2021-22 UTQAP Review of the Department of Economics, University of Toronto Mississauga - Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who will take the lead in each area. If appropriate, please identify any necessary changes in organization, policy or governance; and any resources, financial and otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, "it is important to note that, while the external reviewers' report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university's internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability" (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Department Response	Dean's Response	Implementation Plan
<p>The reviewers encouraged the department to consider strategies for strengthening its undergraduate offerings, and made some suggestions for possible approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the program structure and course prerequisites with an eye to increasing flexibility and making Economics courses more broadly accessible to students within and outside of the department.</li> <li>• Enhancing opportunities for students to build skills in data analysis and economics.</li> <li>• The reviewers noted strong student interest in additional research and experiential learning opportunities, while acknowledging that these activities tend to be resource-intensive.</li> </ul>	1	<p>"[T]he department should consider certain strategies for strengthening its undergraduate offerings. First, it should review the undergraduate electives to determine which could be taught effectively with fewer prerequisites. This strategy would make elective courses accessible to undergraduates earlier in their studies. It would also open up some of the electives to students who are not majoring in economics. Some students may discover an affinity for economics; others may realize that they want to pursue economics in greater depth and adjust their course of study to prepare themselves for graduate studies."</p>	<p>The reviewers suggested increasing curricular flexibility in our programs by reviewing/reducing pre-requisites for 300+ courses and/or splitting the three foundational 200-level courses (in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and quantitative methods) into two semester courses each. The department agrees with many of the benefits of increased curricular flexibility raised by the referees but does not share the view that with the current program structure "many students do not get early exposure to much of what makes economics an exciting field". In all our foundational courses, tools are taught together with applications and there is a concerted effort to highlight a broad range of questions and applications that economic tools allow us to address. The faculty also points out that there are trade-offs to increasing curricular flexibility to be</p>	<p>See Department Response (beside) and Dean's Response (for Recommendation #4, below). For the Department, this recommendation and recommendation #4 are closely linked. As discussed below, the curriculum is designed with scaffolded learning objectives and assessments and the pre-requisites for senior level courses reflect this to ensure students have the necessary background knowledge to be successful in the course. There is some overall concern from the Department around maintaining quality in the programming. This will need to be reviewed carefully by the Economics Curriculum Committee. The Program &amp; Curriculum Unit (PCU) in the Dean's Office can assist and support this review and any curriculum change proposals, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Short Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) The Economics Curriculum Committee reviews overall programming within the department, with specific attention to the following: (1) development of a 'data-oriented track' and/or courses; (2) expansion of experiential learning opportunities; (3) possible advantages to splitting 200-level foundation courses into half-credit courses; and (4) opportunities to increase curricular flexibility.</li> <li>- (ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) Begin conversations with the Experiential Education Unit (EEU) within the Dean's Office to explore opportunities for (1) additional support that can assist with the expansion</li> </ul>

			<p>taken into consideration to maintain the quality of the programs. Notwithstanding these points, the department sees merit in the recommendations and the department's Curriculum Committee will discuss and review options for increasing curricular flexibility in the short term.</p>		<p>of experiential learning opportunities; and (2) increasing ROP awareness among newer faculty.</p> <p>Medium Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Develop a holistic, long-term plan to prioritize academic programming initiatives. These may include the items listed above, additional items that result from forthcoming discussions, as well as existing plans to grow existing programming (such as the Certificate in Advanced Economics).</li> <li>- (ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) Submit proposals for program and/or course changes through governance. The PCU in the Dean's Office will provide support and assistance.</li> </ul>
2	<p>"There may be other opportunities to offer students the option to specialize in an empirical data-oriented track. There is currently considerable demand for workers trained in data analysis and economics. A strong track providing students with these skills would make them highly employable in exciting and well-paid jobs in industry and government."</p>	<p>We agree with the reviewers on the growing importance of strong empirical skills. The department had planned to start developing a data-analytics track, but these plans were delayed by the pandemic. The Curriculum Committee will address this issue in the short term.</p>	<p>See Department Response (beside). The Office of the Dean agrees with this recommendation and the Department's plan to develop a 'data-oriented track' in Economics. Support within the Dean's Office from the Program &amp; Curriculum Unit (PCU) can assist with proposal develop, approval, and implementation. Cognate units should be consulted to gauge interest in offering similar data-analytics courses for resource sharing opportunities.</p>		
3	<p>"The student survey reported in the self-study, and our discussions with students, indicate that there is strong student interest in research and experiential learning opportunities. The department is supportive, but such activities tend to be resource-intensive."</p>	<p>The department has been promoting practical experiences in our curriculum that provide opportunities for experiential learning, presentations, research, writing, and group work. We aim to continue to improve the opportunities for student engagement with research, which develops a broad range of skills (in particular, economic analysis, communication, presentation, and group work), in appropriate, smaller size, 300/400-level courses. With many faculty members carrying out research in a host of fields in economics, there are opportunities for undergraduates to gain valuable</p>	<p>See Department Response (beside). The Economics Department has very successfully integrated research and experiential activities within their curriculum. As seen by the significant uptake in the internship course, student interest is strong. However, these opportunities are resource-intensive and, therefore, expansion of these opportunities is limited. The Office of the Dean encourages the Department to continue to grow these opportunities. The Experiential Education Unit (EEU) within the Office of the Dean is able to offer administrative support and funding opportunities. Student bursaries are</p>		<p>Long Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) Implement approved changes.</li> <li>- (ECO) Monitor impact of recently implemented changes with respect to student feedback, completion rates, class averages, enrolment numbers, etc. Propose changes if and as needed.</li> </ul>

			<p>research experience, especially for upper-level students who have taken appropriate courses. In terms of our internship course, the department more than doubled its capacity in the past couple of years and our capacity to further expand this course with the current resources is now more limited.</p>	<p>also available to assist students where costs may be a barrier to accessing experiential learning opportunities. The Department has yet to fully take advantage of ROP funding available to incentivize opportunities for undergraduate students to undertake research under the guidance of Economics faculty.</p>	
	4	<p>“We recommend breaking the current one-year microeconomics and macroeconomics courses into two-semester courses. This change would allow students to spread their core theory courses over two years and make additional room for interesting electives. For some programs, the department should consider requiring only one semester of each theory sequence.”</p>	<p>See Department Response for Recommendation #1 (above) and Dean’s Response (beside).</p>	<p>The 100-level Economics course has since been split into two half-credit courses (one focusing on microeconomics and the other on macroeconomics). This was done to allow for increased curricular flexibility within the Department as well as in programs that Economics supports (in Management and IMI). However, the faculty have expressed concern and are hesitant to split the 200-level courses in the same way at this time. As noted by the Department, purposeful and concerted effort has been made to marry theory and application in 200-level foundational courses and currently senior level courses are scaffolded with specific learning outcomes and assessments based on students having completed the full-credit courses. To ensure quality is maintained throughout programs and courses, significant changes to the structure and format and the resulting impact need to be considered fully.</p> <p>The Office of the Dean encourages the Department to continue these curriculum conversations and to</p>	

				consider their programming on a holistic level. We believe that the spirit of this recommendation may be organically achieved as their curriculum is updated and renewed in response to this review, student demand, and faculty interest. The PCU within the Office of the Dean can support these discussions and curriculum changes, as appropriate.	
The reviewers observed that the Economics Specialist program has had low enrolment in recent years and might appear too rigorous to students not yet committed to pursuing graduate studies in Economics, while the Major may not adequately prepare students for graduate school. They suggested exploring options for programming that could position more students for graduate education.	5	“The Economics Specialist program has had quite low enrollment in recent years. It is intended to prepare students for graduate school. Given the low enrollment, one potential concern is whether it successfully fulfills that need. As the department noted in its self-study, students are often not aware of the requirements for preparation for graduate school. The Economics Specialist program may appear to be too rigorous when they are unsure if they want to go to graduate school. And the Major program does not adequately prepare students for graduate school unless students have some guidance in selecting courses. A program somewhere between the Economics Specialist program and the Major in rigour might prepare more students for graduate school.”	<p>Enrolment in the Economics Specialist program declined considerably between 2012-13 and 2017-18 (reflecting in part the imposition of tighter entry requirements) and this program has had low and stable enrolment since then. We note, however, that enrolment in the 200- and 300-level “specialist courses” (typically required for admission into graduate programs in Economics and related fields) has been rising gradually, indicating that more students from our other programs are following a curricular path that positions them for graduate education.</p> <p>In recent years, the department has made a considerable effort to provide better information to students in their 1st and 2nd years and to better help them plan their course of study. The department also introduced a Certificate in Advance Economics which provides a signal of completion of requirements for graduate-level study in the student’s transcript. The department continues to see course selection as a critical challenge and</p>	<p>See Department Response (beside). The Office of the Dean recognizes the substantial and positive efforts made by the Department in recent years to promote their courses and advise students on appropriate academic pathways. As the Department has noted, they have seen encouraging enrolment numbers and is developing a more comprehensive plan to continue this trend.</p> <p>The reviewer’s suggestion to create programming “somewhere between the Economics Specialist program and the Major in rigour” to help prepare more students for graduate school is the focus of the Certificate in Advanced Economics (launched September 2019). The Certificate program is designed to give Economics Major students the opportunity to complete a suite of courses required for graduate level studies and be recognized on their transcript through a special notation. This allows students in the major that have developed an interest in economic-oriented graduate studies later in their undergraduate career to</p>	<p>Short Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Continue to implement the Department’s comprehensive plan to communicate to and engage with students placing special attention on advising on course selection at appropriate times; targeted recruitment and advising of high performing students that are well suited for specific courses/ programs; and counselling on academic and career pathway options.</li> <li>- (ECO) Continue to promote and monitor (enrolment numbers, completion numbers, student satisfaction) in the Certificate in Advanced Economics Program.</li> <li>- (ECO) Economics Curriculum Committee to review the Economics Specialist Program to consider opportunities for program innovation.</li> </ul> <p>Medium Term:</p>

			<p>will continue to devote considerable effort to make this selection more effective for students. The department is developing a comprehensive plan to continue improving communication and engagement with students. The department will also explore curricular options that can position more students for graduate education.</p>	<p>still do so without delaying their graduation by requiring a change in program (subject post) to the specialist. Interest and enrolment in the Certificate in Advanced Economics is strong.</p> <p>These recent changes do present an opportunity for the Department to review the program objectives of the Economics Specialist and experiment with innovative directions that previously could not be accommodated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Continue efforts to advise and engage with students with respect to course and program selection.</li> <li>- (ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) Develop and submit proposals for program and/ or course changes related to the Economics Specialist for governance approval.</li> </ul> <p>Long Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) Implement approved changes.</li> <li>- (ECO) Monitor impact of recently implemented changes with respect to student feedback, completion rates, class averages, enrolment numbers, etc. Propose changes if and as needed.</li> </ul>
<p>The reviewers observed that the BCom Economics Specialist program is very small and demanding, with only one student completing the program between 2012-19.</p>	6	<p>“Finally, the BCom Economics Specialist program is very small, and the self study notes that only one student has completed it between 2012-2019. The program is quite demanding as students have a heavy load of both management and advanced economics courses.”</p>	<p>Students in the BCom Economics Specialist program develop advanced core Economics skills in theory and econometrics while pursuing a Commerce Specialist program. Completion of the requirements for this program typically require students to take an additional term of study but it provides a useful avenue for students in Commerce to expand their exposure to economics. There are no resource implications from offering this program, but we agree that student enrollment and</p>	<p>See Department Response (beside). While the BCom Economics Specialist has an ambitious objective to expand economics exposure to commerce students; there is, unfortunately, not a strong interest in this program and its future should be considered in the immediate future by both the Economics and Management Departments. Given the stated interest and priorities of the Economics Department to develop and grow in other areas, closure of this program could allow for the</p>	<p>Short Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Economics Curriculum Committee, in consultation with the Department of Management, to review the BCom Economics Specialist to determine sustainability and relevance at this time. Alternative options to provide commerce students with exposure to economics may be more synergistic with the Department of Economics overall academic mission and</li> </ul>

			<p>completion numbers over the last several years raise the question of whether this program is fulfilling its goals. The Curriculum Committee will review this program, in consultation with the Department of Management.</p>	<p>intellectual room to focus on some of these other initiatives with little impact to the unit and its students. The PCU in the Office of the Dean can assist with strategic planning in this area and the development of academic change proposals that may result.</p>	<p>goals should be explored. One possible outcome may be the closure of this program.</p> <p>Medium Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) With the support of the Department of Management, develop and propose program and/ or course changes for the BCom Economics Specialist through governance, as recommended by the Economics Curriculum Committee.</li> </ul> <p>Long Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ECO) Monitor impact of recently implemented changes with respect to student feedback, completion rates, class averages, enrolment numbers, etc. Propose changes if and as needed.</li> </ul>
<p>Students report a lack of cohesion in the joint Specialist program in Political Science and Economics; a capstone course might be of benefit.</p>	7	<p>“When talking with students, one issue that came up was that the joint Specialist program in Political Science and Economics did not have a course that brought everything together - it was just a set of required courses from both departments. There was a sense that it lacked unity. In many cases, such as combined math and economics, or combined economics and statistics programs, such a structure works fairly well. But in</p>	<p>We agree with students and the reviewers that the Economics and Political Science Specialist program would benefit from further cohesion between the two disciplines. The department has long been interested in introducing a course in political economy, but this goal has been hindered by lack of faculty. We will continue to actively pursue opportunities to introduce this course. In addition, I will consult with the Department of Political Science to</p>	<p>See Department Response (beside). The Office supports the internal review of this program and efforts to create a more defined cohort along with cohesive program objectives. It may well be that a request to the Office of the Dean for an LTA or a part-time faculty member to teach a capstone course meets with a favourable response. Additional opportunities may include joint Research Opportunity Program (ROP) projects between faculty in the two</p>	<p>Short Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ECO) Begin discussions with the Department of Political Science to examine opportunities to strengthen the joint Specialist in Political Science &amp; Economics by emphasizing the connections between the two disciplines. Specific points of discussion should include: (1) creation of a capstone course; (2) creation of a modern political</li> </ul>



		<p>other cases, a cross-disciplinary program can be more effective with something in the program's structure that emphasizes the connections (or contrasts) between the disciplines. One option is a capstone course for students in a combined program. We note that the department has considered capstone courses and has concerns about the resource costs. However, in the case of Economics and Political Science, we think there is a good opportunity to create a modern political economy course.”</p>	<p>discuss joint efforts to bring cohesion to this program in the more immediate future.</p>	<p>departments, special topics courses, as well as jointly sponsored co-curricular activities.</p>	<p>economy course; (3) joint ROP opportunities; (4) special topics courses; and (5) jointly sponsored co-curricular events.</p> <p>Medium Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO, in partnership with the Department of Political Science and with support from the Office of the Dean) Develop and propose program and/ or course changes for the joint Specialist in Political Science &amp; Economics through governance.</li> </ul> <p>Long Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO, in partnership with the Department of Political Science) Monitor impact of recently implemented changes with respect to student feedback, completion rates, class averages, enrolment numbers, etc. Propose changes if and as needed.</li> </ul>
<p>The reviewers noted that department has made some headway on considering EDI issues in its curriculum, and suggested considering ways to continue to leverage faculty expertise in this area.</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>“UTM offers a course on the Economics of Poverty, something found in relatively few economics programs. While more common, providing a course on economic development helps students understand the challenges and potential strategies for alleviating poverty in low-income countries. Given the threat from climate change, it is important that Public</p>	<p>Several faculty members are engaged in research topics that relate to EDI issues as well as topics of growing societal importance such as environmental economics, climate change, and income inequality. The department’s coverage of these topics has increased steadily over the past few years. The department will continue to leverage faculty expertise</p>	<p>See Department Response (beside). The Office of the Dean is delighted to see the growth of interest in these areas by Economics faculty and encourages them to continue to offer programming and instruction in these areas, as appropriate. The PCU within the Office of the Dean can support these changes through the regular undergraduate curriculum review</p>	<p>Short Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Continue to encourage and support faculty to develop offerings in areas of EDI, international affairs, and sustainability, which is reflective of the natural research interests of faculty. These offerings may be in the form of new courses and/ or</li> </ul>

		<p>Economics I focuses on global warming and biodiversity loss. Nevertheless, elsewhere we note the need for more courses in environmental economics and, given its importance for Canada, international trade. A number of faculty are actively engaged in applicable policy research. This includes education policy, social programs such as unemployment insurance, environmental issues, structural change, a variety of aspects of development economics, residential segregation, inequality, mechanism design, immigration, and public finance.”</p>	<p>to cover these topics in our curriculum.</p>	<p>process and corresponding resource implications review.</p>	<p>new content in existing courses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) Submit course change proposals for governance approval, as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Medium Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) Implement approved changes.</li> </ul>
<p>The reviewers proposed that tracking student trajectories after graduation could prove useful for ongoing quality assessment purposes.</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>“It would be very useful to know what happens to students after they graduate - the types of employment and further study undertaken. There does not seem to be good data available on this, and we encourage efforts to develop surveys to acquire such information.”</p>	<p>We agree with the reviewers that it would be very valuable to have more information about our students after they graduate. The department implemented a “exit survey” after the last external review which has provided valuable insights into students’ curricular trajectories while at UTM and how they relate to their career plans at time of graduation. These insights have resulted in important curriculum developments, such as the Certificate in Advanced Economics. We also agree on the value of tracking student trajectories after graduation for ongoing quality assessment purposes and, in addition, on the value of strengthening links with alumni. The department recognizes the complexity of the infrastructure required to track students’ trajectories after graduation and will partner with the</p>	<p>See Department Response (beside). Alumni tracking and networking is a common desire across all units at UTM. As noted by the Department, alumni tracking is difficult and complex. It is a long-term goal for the division as a whole. Building strong connections and networks while students are at UTM will help in maintaining these relationships post graduation. The Department is encouraged to work with the Alumni Relations team within our Office of Advancement to determine strategies for developing and maintaining this network.</p>	<p>Short Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Begin conversations with Alumni Relations (within the Office of Advancement) to determine what data on graduates is available and strategies to improve alumni tracking.</li> <li>- (ECO) Continue to support and maintain strong relationships with student societies and groups to leverage their current alumni connections and encourage future networking.</li> <li>- (ECO and the Office of the Dean) Consider hosting regular alumni events. Funding is available from the Office of the Dean priority funds to help support these kinds of initiatives.</li> </ul>

			appropriate offices at UTM to access available data and explore ways to leverage it.		<p>Medium Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) implement recommendations from Alumni Relations, as appropriate.</li> <li>- (ECO) Continue to maintain the relationship with current student societies and groups.</li> <li>- (ECO) Continue to host regular alumni events.</li> </ul> <p>Long Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Continue to maintain relationships with student societies and host alumni events regularly and consistently.</li> </ul>
The reviewers suggested that junior faculty might benefit from enhanced mentorship opportunities related to both teaching and research, in addition to the annual PTR process.	10	“[W]e believe that junior faculty would benefit from a formal mentoring program for both research and teaching. Currently, there is wide variation in how frequently junior faculty meet with a mentor. We recommend that each be assigned two mentors, who would each meet with the assistant professor at least once per semester. A senior faculty member should visit the assistant professor’s class at least once per year and provide formative feedback. The chair should meet annually with each assistant professor with either a mentor or the associate chair present.”	The department agrees with the reviewers that junior faculty would benefit from a more formal mentoring program that generates valuable feedback on research and teaching throughout the mentees’ junior careers, and clearer expectations and increased accountability to mentors. I will strike a committee, with representation from all ranks and streams, to address this issue and improve our mentoring program.	See Department Response (beside). The Office of the Dean agrees with the comments of the reviewers and the Department. The Chair’s plans to strike a committee to improve mentoring in the Department is strongly supported, with encouragement to also reach out the Vice-Dean, Faculty’s team in the Office of the Dean for additional resources and support.	<p>Short Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Establish a committee to improve the faculty mentoring program in the Department. This committee will have representation from all ranks and streams. Considerations for improvement include assigning two mentors for each junior faculty; requiring at minimum one meeting with each mentor per academic term; an in-class visit by a senior faculty member per academic year; and an annual meeting with the Chair and the Associate Chair or one mentor.</li> </ul> <p>Medium Term:</p>

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Implement recommendations of the committee, as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Long Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Monitor the impact of changes.</li> </ul>
<p>The reviewers recommended continuing to monitor the optimal balance of junior and senior, and tenure- and teaching-stream faculty in complement planning, while also exploring recruitment in areas of limited coverage.</p>	11	<p>“There are few, if any, leading economics departments that have as few tenure-track faculty as the UTM department has.”</p>	<p>The department agrees with the reviewers on the need to hire high-quality mid-career faculty and we have been actively searching at this rank in the recent past. As the reviewers note, the market for economists is very competitive and we face increasingly stiff competition in faculty recruitment and retention from U.S. institutions and business schools which can pay much higher salaries. We agree with the reviewers that it is essential that the UTM administration work with the department to successfully make new hires and retain existing faculty.</p>	<p>See Department Response (beside). The Office of the Dean acknowledges the observations of the reviewers in this area, as well as the efforts made by the Department of Economics. We agree that recruitment, retention, and mentoring of faculty is critical and look forward to working with the Department. The Vice-Dean, Faculty within the Dean’s Office will support these efforts, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Short Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO, Office of the Dean) Continue conversations with the Vice-Dean, Faculty around major issues of concern noted by the reviewers.</li> <li>- (ECO) Submit annual complement plan to the Office of the Dean for review. As noted by the reviewers, the need for senior-level and tenure-stream faculty should be emphasized as well as the desire to bring in expertise to UTM in the areas of international trade and environmental economics. The Office of the Dean will review departmental complement plans as part of the annual faculty complement planning process. In addition, the Office of the Dean will support efforts by the Economics Graduate Department to better manage and coordinate hiring practices for the Departments at both UTM and FAS.</li> </ul> <p>Medium Term:</p>
	12	<p>“We strongly recommend that the administration consider allowing some senior offers to offset the loss of tenured faculty. We strongly recommend against moving to a model with more nontenure stream faculty. With roughly 20% non-tenure stream faculty, the balance seems to be at the upper end of what is consistent with quality undergraduate education in which students have sufficient interaction with research-active faculty.”</p>			
	13	<p>“The UTM faculty cover a wide range of fields, especially given the modest number of tenure-track faculty. We did note a lack of coverage in international trade, and it would be desirable to have another faculty member in environmental economics. Our understanding is that the department is actively seeking faculty specialized in both areas.”</p>			

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO, Office of the Dean) Continue conversations and efforts to maintain an optimal balance in the Department's faculty complement and support improvements to recruitment practices at the level of the Graduate Department.</li> <li>- (ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) Recruit new faculty, as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Long Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Continue to monitor the composition of the faculty and the needs of the Department. These observations should be reflected in the annual faculty complement plan submitted to the Office of the Dean.</li> </ul>
<p>The reviewers were struck by the absence of cross-listed courses between Management and Economics. In addressing this finding you may wish to speak to opportunities for strategic collaboration at the intersection of Management, IMI and Economics, that would benefit the UTM community as a whole.</p>	14	<p>"We heard some concern that the Management program is expanding into areas that are historically addressed by the economics department and some recognition that economics is covering some areas of finance traditionally reserved for the Management program. It is also clear that Management is considering reducing the economics requirements in its program, which would significantly impact the economics department. We were also struck by the absence of cross-listed courses between management and economics and between political science and economics</p>	<p>The Department collaborates with the Department of Management in their BCom and BBA programs and IMI in their Business Minor. These three units have also collaborated in research events. We agree that there is room for further collaboration between Economics, Management, and IMI given both the range of faculty research expertise and interests in these three units and the range of programs offered, strengthening the research output and educational experience at UTM. The department will meet with the Department of Management and IMI to explore effective pathways for collaboration.</p>	<p>See Department Response (beside, as well as for Recommendation #7) and Dean's Response (above, for Recommendation #7). The Office of the Dean strongly supports interdisciplinary and cross-departmental collaborations. Indeed, the Institute for Management &amp; Innovation (IMI) is an academic unit that is grounded in interdisciplinary pursuits and would be a natural collaborator here.</p>	<p>Short Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO) Strike a working group between Economics, Management, and IMI to explore effective pathways for collaboration in existing and potential programming.</li> </ul> <p>Medium Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) In collaboration with Management and IMI, propose program and/ or course changes, as appropriate based on recommendations of the working group.</li> </ul>

		despite the existence of programs cutting across fields.”			Long Term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) In collaboration with Management and IMI, implement changes and monitor student progress and satisfaction.</li> </ul>
The reviewers observed the benefits of bi-campus collaboration, and highlighted the significant appeal for UTM faculty of access to office space on the St. George campus.	15	“[W]e did not receive complaints about the physical space and infer that the concerns raised in the prior review have been addressed by the new space allocated to the department. The main concern was whether the St. George campus can continue to provide individual offices to UTM faculty. If there truly is a risk of space issues at St. George, this is a serious concern that should be addressed. It will be dramatically more difficult to attract faculty to UTM if good St. George space is unavailable.”	The department agrees that the high level of collaboration between the UTM and St. George departments plays a vital role in the level of undergraduate programs offered at UTM, the level of research of both departments, and the level of the graduate programs offered by the graduate unit. Faculty members of both departments also agree that appropriate office space for UTM faculty at the Department of Economics at the St. George campus (Max Gluskin House) is essential for making the close cooperation between the two departments work. Office availability in the Max Gluskin House has become scarcer in recent years and the future availability of sufficient office space remains a serious concern.	See Department Response (beside). The Office of the Dean is supportive of the faculty’s desire for continued allocation of St. George office space for UTM faculty. We also appreciate the space constraints for all divisions and academic units and that, currently, UTM is required to provide private office space for every full-time faculty member on the UTM campus, whether or not the office space is used regularly or even occasionally. Continued conversations with the Department of Economics at St. George to maintain a strong but fiscally responsible relationship is a key objective in the future.	Short, Medium, and Long Term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ECO) Continue to maintain the strong relationship with the St. George Department of Economics to find mutually beneficial solutions for space use.</li> </ul>
Other recommendations not included in the Request for Administrative Response	16	“The title of ECO364H5 is International Trade Theory. This sounds a bit outdated as presumably the course covers both trade policy and empirical evidence on various aspects of the economics of international trade. We suggest dropping the word ‘Theory’.”	See Dean’s Response (beside).	The Office of the Dean encourages the Department to consider this recommendation. A course name change can be proposed in the next round of undergraduate curriculum review and be effective for the 2024-2025 academic year. The PCU in the Dean’s Office can support, as needed.	Short Term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ECO) Proposed course name change to be reviewed by the Economics Curriculum Committee in the next round of curriculum review.</li> <li>(ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) If deemed appropriate, the change can be proposed in the Spring</li> </ul>

					<p>2023 or Fall 2023 rounds of curriculum review and (if approved) be effective for the 2024-2025 Academic Year.</p> <p>Medium Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (ECO, with support from the Office of the Dean) Course name change is implemented, reflected in the 2024-2025 Academic Calendar, and promoted accordingly by the Department.</li> </ul>
17	<p>"In our discussions with students, we (not surprisingly) heard that they found variation across instructors in the quality of teaching. They also noted that some instructors were more experienced than others. And they said that they would like to have access to previous student evaluations when choosing their courses."</p>	<p>See Dean's Response (beside).</p>	<p>Past course evaluations are available to students through QUERCUS, as per the <i>Policy on the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses</i>. In line with this Policy, instructors may opt to not release data for their course.</p>	<p>No action on this item is required as access to course evaluations is already made available to students as per the <i>Policy on the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses</i>.</p>	

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

The spokesperson for the reading group reported that the review summary had accurately reflected the full review and that the administrative response fully addressed the issues identified. The summary tells the full story of the review, and the reading group felt that the issues of curricular review and adjustments and faculty retention and recruitment were adequately addressed in the unit's response.

No follow-up report was requested.

### **4. Institutional Executive Summary**

The reviewers praised the strong teaching program that benefits from highly regarded research faculty and dedicated members of the teaching stream, the “genuinely remarkable” level of integration and cooperation between Economics faculty at UTM and UTSG, and the high student satisfaction and excellent undergraduate experience. They noted that course material reflects the current state of the discipline, and that the program ensures that students develop writing skills. They commended the certificate program, the new experiential learning course and popular internship course as strong initiatives, as well as the use of undergraduate TAs and the grad student help desk in providing mentorship to students. They highlighted the impressive junior faculty and the innovative and engaging teaching, in particular among members of the teaching-stream, and the high regard for and morale of staff members. Finally they noted that the department is well-organized and functions smoothly, stakeholders are happy with departmental leadership, there are no concerns related to existent departmental space, and that relationships with cognate units are cordial and productive.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: considering various strategies for strengthening undergraduate offerings; exploring options for programming that could position more students for graduate education; addressing issues in the BCom Economics Specialist program; exploring a capstone course in the joint Specialist program in Political Science and Economics; considering ways to continue to leverage faculty expertise in the area of EDI; tracking student trajectories after graduation; providing enhanced mentorship opportunities to junior faculty; continuing to monitor the optimal balance of junior and senior, and tenure- and teaching-stream faculty in complement planning, while exploring recruitment in areas of limited coverage; addressing the absence of cross-listed courses between Management and Economics and considering opportunities for strategic collaboration at the intersection of Management, IMI and Economics; and supporting bi-campus collaboration, while acknowledging the significant appeal for UTM faculty of access to office space on the St. George campus. The Dean's Administrative Response describes the division and unit's responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result.



## **5. Monitoring and Date of Next Review**

Progress checks and monitoring of the implementation plan will occur through the Chair's Annual Report to the Dean. The next external review of the Department of Economics is scheduled to occur in the 2027-2028 academic year, with a midway report submitted to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs in 2024-2025.

## **6. Distribution**

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 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 UTM, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.