UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1. Review Summary

Program Reviewed:	Major (Joint) program in New Media Studies
Division/Unit Offering Program:	Centennial College: School of Communications, Media and Design University of Toronto Scarborough: Department of Arts, Culture and Media
Commissioning Officer:	Centennial College: Dr. Rahim Karim, Associate Vice President, Partnerships, Pathways and Internationalization University of Toronto Scarborough: Professor William Gough, Vice-Principal Academic and Dean
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• *Prof. Michael William Palm, Department of Communication, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill • George Paravantes, School of Media Studies and Information Technology, Humber College • *Prof. Carrie Rentschler, Art History and Communications Studies, McGill University • Prof. Henry Warwick, The Creative School, Ryerson University • Angela Delfico, Student, UTSC/CC Specialist (Joint) Program in Paramedicine *Note: review complies with UTQAP and college review requirements simultaneously. The two asterisked reviewers were invited under the UTQAP; the other three were selected to meet college review requirements*
Date of Review Visit:	November 5 & November 12 2021 (conducted remotely)
Date Reported to AP&P:	February 16, 2023

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 (2021-22); 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 Self Study, October 2021.
4. About Programs and Courses: Description of all programs (2021-22 Academic Calendar); Description of all courses (2021-22 Academic Calendar); Self-Study Data; Curriculum Mapping: Department 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 from UTSC, 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, Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity and Success, Interim Associate Dean, Undergraduate Programs & Curriculum, Associate Dean, Experiential and Global Learning, Director, Office of the VP Academic and Dean, and Academic Programs Officer

- The decanal group from Centennial College, including Associate Vice President, Partnerships, Pathways and Internationalization, Associate Vice President, Learning, Innovation, Teaching Excellence and Academic Quality, Dean, School of Communications, Media, Art and Design, Director, Centre for Academic Quality, and the Senior Manager, Office of Academic Partnerships and Pathways
- Departmental Leadership and Program Supervisors – UTSC and Centennial College: Chair of the Department of Arts, Culture and Media (UTSC), Program Supervisor, Major (Joint) program in New Media Studies (UTSC), Chair, Department of Arts and Design (CC)
- Administrative Staff – UTSC and Centennial College: Program Manager, Department of Arts, Culture and Media (UTSC), Assistant to the Chair, Department of Arts, Culture and Media (UTSC), Academic Partnerships Co-ordinator, Centennial College and UTSC
- Librarians – UTSC and Centennial College: Chief Librarian (UTSC), Liaison Librarian (UTSC), Director of Libraries and Learning Centres (CC), Acting Manager, Library Services (CC), Librarian (CC)
- Registrars – UTSC and Centennial College: Registrar and Assistant Dean (Enrolment Management) (UTSC), Associate Registrar and Director of Systems & Operations (UTSC), Associate Registrar and Director, Admissions and Student Recruitment (UTSC), Associate Registrar and Director of Student Services (UTSC), Registrar (CC)
- Faculty – UTSC and Centennial College
- 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
  - ▸ Reviewers concluded that the program is by most every measure a highly successful program
  - ▸ The Joint Program was revised in the 2015-16 academic year in response to the recommendations made by the previous program review conducted in 2013-14
- Objectives
  - ▸ The program is consistent with the mission and values of both UTSC, Centennial College, and the academic plans of the Department of Arts, Culture, and Media at UTSC and the School of Communications, Media and Design at Centennial College
- Curriculum and program delivery
  - ▸ Curriculum reflects the current state of the discipline and is generally appropriate for the level of the program
  - ▸ "The UTSC and [Centennial College] program delivery has been carefully balanced with an approach to and understanding of contemporary visual design and web development in New Media"

- Students build foundational skills early in the program, establishing creative confidence that is complemented with skills in sound design and video production courses
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - Students are pleased with the program overall and morale is positive
  - Students find the program to be of great value

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

- Admissions requirements
  - Admissions requirements may not adequately prepare students for, or signal, the technical aspects of the program
- Curriculum and program delivery
  - Reports from Centennial College faculty that many students are coming into Year 2 of the joint program "less prepared for their technical courses than the students they taught in the prior iteration of the Joint Program (before the last Program revisions), where students took courses at Centennial College in Year 3 and when there were fewer international students making up the program's cohorts"
  - Students are enrolling in courses 'out of order' which exacerbates some of the concerns regarding student under-preparation
  - Students would like access to more structured introductory technical competencies training to get a better sense of the basic training required as part of the program.
  - Students indicated a desire for a practicum requirement built into the Joint Program, modeled on, or including, the Ontario College Certificate in New Media Design
  - Students expressed interest in enrolling in the Ontario College Certificate in New Media Design but found the additional term of training, tuition, and fees unaffordable
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - Some students voiced they did not feel adequately prepared to enter the job market in new media industries after graduation, highlighting training in how to prepare/produce portfolios of their work for potential employers as an issue
  - Other students indicated having to self-teach essential software and technical skills required for the program, or engage in voluntary peer mentoring to become more technically proficient for their courses at Centennial College, "which is also one of the reasons why some faculty indicated an interest in pursuing more rigorous admission requirements"
  - Reviewers referenced the Self-Study and its mention that "[m]any students approaching the program seem unaware of its difficulty, or of the technical skills they will be expected to develop, and this has led to increasing rates of failure and frustration in a small but significant number of students"
  - While the larger Department of Arts, Culture and Media at UTSC has a number of events, organizations for students to engage with, there does not appear to be similar events or showcases specific to the New Media program

- ▸ Reviewers identified a need for ESL supports as fluent English-language students often do translation work for classmates whose English proficiency is not strong enough to fully participate in class or perform effectively on assignments
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
  - ▸ Centennial College faculty reported that they "are doing far more remedial technical teaching than they did before; they also reported a great variance in skills between students in the Program"
  - ▸ Variances in student competency levels leads to challenges in preparing for and designing courses; limits time available for the kinds of intermediate skills that would best prepare students for work in the field
- Quality indicators – alumni
  - ▸ Program does not currently track student placement and alumni outcomes

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Admissions requirements
  - ▸ Tighten enrolment requirements, possibly by raising the required GPA, to "ensure that students meet the standards of critical academic inquiry in the field"
  - ▸ Improve communication to admitted students so they are better aware of the kinds of self-directed learning that will be expected of them as part of the program, as well as what skills they should already possess, and, or, where they can acquire them if not through the program
  - ▸ Consider introducing a provision in the Joint Program "to test for and/or assess whether students have the necessary 'basic' technical proficiencies upon entry to the program may be advisable"
- Curriculum and program delivery
  - ▸ Contemplate "incorporating the [Ontario College Certificate in New Media Design] component as a program requirement, and if necessary to do so, extending students' time at Centennial from 1 to 1.5 years" to address student interest in a practicum requirement and additional technical training
  - ▸ Review online course descriptions to ensure they are up-to-date and reflect programs and software used in the field
  - ▸ Consider offering training in basic technical proficiencies, in addition to the core courses offered at Centennial College, for students identified as needing more remedial instruction and orientation
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - ▸ Increase visibility of students' capstone projects, such as through a dedicated showcase, for added benefit to their training and their employability
  - ▸ Reviewers encourage developing research opportunities for students that would "lead to problem solving and innovative thinking in work on real-world projects with clients, potential employers, community groups and others."
  - ▸ Increase student awareness of the English language support services already available on campus, and encourage students to utilize them; reviewers supportive of Self-Study suggestion to create a "Professional Communication" course for students struggling with English language competency

- Quality indicators – alumni
  - ▸ Reviewers strongly encourage UTSC and Centennial College to develop a process to track student placement and alumni outcomes

2. Graduate Program(s) n/a

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Research
  - ▸ "While UTSC faculty have exceptional traditional academic research profiles, they are also emerging and established leaders in digital research methods and new media studies inquiry"
  - ▸ Faculty publish regularly, with publications including scholarly books and articles, but also other public-facing venues and formats such as: major industry and NGO reports, public guides for new media research practice, digital resources for feminist online pedagogy, digital tools to address intersectional forms of online racialized and gender violence, among other examples
  - ▸ Combined, UTSC faculty have garnered awards and research grants in the millions of dollars.
- Faculty
  - ▸ UTSC's tenured and tenure stream faculty have strong expertise in key areas of inquiry such as digital journalism and multimodal reporting and publication, collaborative online pedagogies, ethical practices for conducting digital research, and digital culture and design to name a few examples
  - ▸ Reviewers commended UTSC's tenure track hires in Media Studies since the previous external review, many of whom have direct expertise in areas suited to the Joint Program.

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

- Faculty
  - ▸ Reviewers remarked that the Joint Program is clearly dependent on highly skilled and experienced non-permanent faculty; the lack of full-time faculty and staff "creates challenges for management and leadership"
  - ▸ "The Review Panel believes that a program that depends so heavily on non-permanent faculty risks exploiting and under-resourcing those contract faculty. It also risks underutilizing the Program expertise and memory that long-serving contract faculty have of the Joint Program."
  - ▸ The temporary nature of non-permanent faculty employment hinders UTSC's ability to retain strong teaching faculty in the program

- ▸ Some concerns regarding faculty morale around three key issues: the under-utilization of contract faculty expertise within the Joint Program and its administration; the temporary nature of contract faculty employment; and the changing nature of the teaching and classroom expectations for second-year courses at Centennial College.
- ▸ Reviewers observed tenured and tenure-track faculty seem to know little about the Joint Program, the reasons being that they "are not teaching at/on the 'frontlines' of the Joint Program (they do not teach its core courses at UTSC)."
- ▸ Teaching assignments in the Joint Program are often made just before the start of term, which limits faculty in terms of preparation

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
  - ▸ Improve job security for sessional faculty. "Their ongoing precarity may jeopardize the consistency and continuity of the program"
  - ▸ "With continued investments in hiring tenure track professors, UTSC's Department of Arts, Culture and Media has the potential to grow into a major program in the field of media studies in Canada, and internationally. It is already well on its way, and this growth stands to benefit the Joint Program."

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
  - ▸ Reviewers were impressed with the great expertise of librarians and library staff on both campuses. The libraries are "clearly exceptional resources available to students and faculty in the Joint Program"
- Organizational and financial structure
  - ▸ Despite the challenges of collaboration across two institutions as well as recent departures of program leaders on both campuses, program staff are skillfully handling the Joint Program's logistics
  - ▸ "The Review Panel was especially impressed by the level and consistency of staff coordination of the Joint Program and the provision of student enrolment and program services."
  - ▸ The framework for the development and administration of the Joint Program as established in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UTSC and Centennial College continues to be in effect and working

- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  ▸ The complement plan for the Joint Program appears cohesive in its vision and the curriculum, with the critical and theoretical components coming from UTSC and the practical components coming from Centennial College
- International comparators
  ▸ The Joint Program in New Media at UTSC/CC is unique in its heavier emphasis on new media theory, culture and criticism

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

- Relationships
  ▸ Limited opportunities for faculty and library staff to work together across the two campuses
- Organizational and financial structure
  ▸ Reviewers note a "striking lack of institutional knowledge about the program" following two key retirements, impacting the program and its management, particularly concerning the key roles faculty play in delivering courses for it and assisting students with placements
  ▸ "The Joint Program at Centennial College is currently overseen by a contract faculty member who has familiarity with program students and the core courses taught at Centennial. This person was new to the position at the time of the campus visit, and reported a lack of knowledge about the Joint Program and how it is run, and little access to forms of documentation that indicate what the established practices are for running the Joint Program and building the necessary relationships with placement opportunities"
  ▸ At UTSC, the Joint Program is overseen by the Director of the Media, Journalism and Digital Cultures; this is a large service role for a full-time faculty member
  ▸ Library spaces are under-utilized; a review of the organization of the Joint Program in relation to its technical and space resources may bring forward solutions to address this issue
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  ▸ Reviewers commented that the Joint Program will need to determine if it is interested in growing or remaining at its current enrolment numbers in order to make long-range plans
  ▸ "If there is interest in growing the program among some, there is a very real issue of whether there are adequate resources to sustain such growth, and what kinds of faculty resources would be needed"
  ▸ Including more tenured and tenure-track UTSC faculty in the Joint Program remains a challenge; UTSC may wish to expand faculty complements in Media Studies and New Media Studies in order "to realize our vision of global prominence in particular areas of scholarship" as stated in the Strategic Plan (2020)
  ▸ Program faces admissions challenges with some faculty wishing to raise requirements to ensure students are sufficiently prepared to start the program, though tightening admissions would introduce new "gatekeeping", possibly preventing otherwise capable and interested students from enrolling

- There are substantial student costs associated with the program such as computer expenses, and the large proportion of international students are ineligible for many scholarships and assistantship programs
- Reviewers were not informed of any development or fundraising initiatives related to the Joint Program. Revenue appears to be completely from tuition and the Ontario provincial government
- "The recent loss of key leaders at both UTSC and Centennial College exposed the long-range challenge of bolstering institutional memory and the risks of consolidating knowledge and experience in individual leaders"
- International comparators
  - A heavier percentage of the curriculum at most comparator programs is in the technical and design-side of student training, with some having built-in placements or practicums

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
  - The Joint Program would benefit from increased opportunities for faculty, libraries on both campuses to work together
  - UTSC's plan to build a new Arts and Media Building could be of great benefit to students in the Joint Program, especially if it creates more spaces in which students could do the combined technical (maker/designer/programmer) and academic work the Joint Program requires.
- Organizational and financial structure
  - Program encouraged to replace recent faculty retirement at the UTSC campus with a person deeply familiar with the Joint Program (ideally someone who teaches core courses) to recognize program expertise of contract faculty
  - Greater attention to institutional support for the program directors and staff, possibly appointing a "discrete Program Supervisor" as mentioned in the Self-Study
  - Reviewers recommend that the Joint Program overseer role at Centennial College become a full-time position
  - Explore hiring technical personnel, such as a technical teaching assistant, to connect students to technical resources and support the learning of technical skills if resources are available
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  - Better integrate the joint program with the larger UTSC Media Studies program, especially as Media Studies undergoes its own curricular updates
  - Utilize the current faculty renewal of the Department of Arts, Culture and Media to enhance tenure track and tenured UTSC faculty involvement in the Joint Program, wherever possible
  - Undertake a strategic consideration of whether there is interest in growing the Joint Program, and if so, identify the resources that would be necessary to sustain such growth

- ▶ Consider soliciting donations, grants, and scholarship funds from alumni, organizations and corporations in media fields related to the content of the program for development or fundraising initiatives

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Office of the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean

December 19, 2022

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

Chair's Administrative Response: External Review of the Major (Joint) in New Media Studies, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Susan,

Thank you for your letter of July 15, 2022 requesting my administrative response to the external review of the Major (Joint) in New Media Studies. I want to thank the review team – Professor Michael William Palm, Department of Communication, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill; Professor George Paravantes, School of Media Studies and Information Technology, Humber College; Professor Carrie Rentschler, Art History and Communications Studies, McGill University; Professor Henry Warwick, The Creative School, Ryerson University, and Angela Delfico, Specialist (Joint) Program in New Media Studies– for their consultation with us during the remote site-visit, held on November 5, and November 12, 2021, and for their Report, which was finalized on February 17, 2022, and shared with our faculty, staff and students.

I appreciate the reviewers' overall positive assessment of the Major (Joint) in New Media Studies. They noted that the curriculum reflects the current state of the discipline, and the mix of practical and theoretical education is unique compared to similar programs. The reviewers also highlighted the level and consistency of staff program coordination, student satisfaction, excellent contract, sessional and part-time faculty teaching in the program, and the emergence of UTSC faculty as emerging and established leaders in digital research methods and new media studies inquiry. Finally, the reviewers observed that the libraries at both campuses provide exceptional resources for students and faculty in the joint program, and the new planned Literatures, Arts, Media, and Performance (LAMP) Building at UTSC will greatly benefit students.

The external review report was sent to the former Chair of Arts, Culture and Media, Dr. Barry Freeman, on February 17, 2022, with a request to share it widely among the faculty, staff and students. On September 28, 2022 the decanal group, including myself, the Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning and Undergraduate Programs (VDTLUP), Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum (ADUPC), Interim Vice-Dean Recruitment, Enrolment & Student Success (VDRESS), and the Academic Programs Officer, met with the current Chair of Arts, Culture and Media, Thy Phu, and the Program Manager, Manaal Hussain, 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 Arts, Culture and Media, and reflects the key elements of the unit response letter, dated November 30, 2022. It also includes responses to points raised in the Request for Administrative Response that are outside Departmental control.

- *The reviewers recommended increasing clarity around the technical competencies expected of students at the start of the program, and providing supports for any students lacking these competencies. They also noted that ESL supports could be beneficial for some students.*

The Department is planning several approaches toward this recommendation, including working with Centennial College to determine core competencies in communication and articulate expectations for skills at the outset of the program. They will prepare and implement a diagnostic assessment for students in Year 2, which will direct students needing further training to workshops at UTSC. This will be framed as a support to ensure all students have the opportunity to acquire technical skills to succeed in the program, broadening access and mediating inequities of access. The Department will also establish a peer mentorship program where higher-year students offer guidance to students beginning in the program, and also revive a "Coding Club" (previously offered by a now-retired faculty member) which was successful and can now be offered again with current staffing. Centennial College offers a similar mentoring informally, and will also be assessing the feasibility of a formal peer-mentoring program as at UTSC. I am highly supportive of these plans, which build from equity-based principles and broaden access to skills for all students in the program.

Importantly, the Chair notes in her response that the acquisition of communications skills has been identified as a priority for all programs in the Department of Arts, Culture and Media, in large part due to the great numbers of international students enrolled. The Joint program in New Media Studies will benefit from access to a planned new A-level course in the Media Studies program on "Writing for Media Studies". Additionally, students will be guided to the Academic English Health Check and Reading and Writing Excellence program offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning, which enables students to improve their language and communication skills. This work aligns with Divisional discussions about the expansion of discipline-based writing supports at UTSC with pilot funding provided to the Centre for Teaching and Learning, drawing on recommendations from the campus's 2021-22 Writing Support Task Force.

Across all of our joint programs, my office will also be working with Centennial College on enhancing communication and related advisory supports for students about program expectations and scaffolding.

- *The reviewers noted that students identify technical training as a top program priority, and recommended considering incorporating the Certificate component as a program requirement (and extending students' time at Centennial if necessary).*

In her response, the Chair has identified challenges in meeting the recommendation to incorporate the Certificate component as a program requirement and extend students' time at Centennial, notably the difficulty for international students to defer travel or full-time work and then take on extra fees during the summer session. As well, introducing a work placement opportunity would mean reducing other curriculum and would compromise the learning objectives of the 14-week semester at Centennial. We note that as a Major, rather than a Specialist, New Media Studies is taken in combination with other programs, and introducing further complexity constrains students' ability to fulfil requirements of their other degree programs.

However, we recognize that technical training is important to the program and the Department has prepared a plan to restructure curriculum to better scaffold the development of skills. This restructuring will take the form of a re-designed plan in which Year 1 and Year 2 held at UTSC will focus on foundational communication and ethics topics and core technical competencies before moving to Centennial College in Year 3. This re-design will incorporate some of the key elements of the Certificate component. Re-arranging the order of key elements will enable them to add to the Joint program new courses in Professional Practice and Special Inquiry to the Joint program that are currently offered as part of the Certificate. In this way, students will further benefit from having access to the integral components of the Certificate program and—with this more collaborative structure of courses co-taught by Centennial College and UTSC professors—provide a more seamless integration. I am supportive of the planned restructuring, which will meet the practical goals of implementing this recommendation, and my office will work with the Department to facilitate close consultation with Centennial College in developing these changes.

- *The reviewers recommended continued strategic consideration of whether to adjust program enrolment requirements, noting the potential for both a reduction in the overall number of enrolled students, and for specific negative impacts on international student access.*

The Department has considered this recommendation carefully, and recognizes that while enrolment requirements usefully communicate core competencies, they can also reinforce inequitable structures, and prefer to take the approach of maintaining open access to the program. The skills development strategies and curriculum re-design mentioned above will allow the program to scaffold core competencies and provide students with equitable access to training and mentorship. These strategies will support student retention long term. These efforts will align the program's goals with UTSC's Strategic Plan, Inspiring Inclusive Excellence, as well as with the campus's emerging access plan. We will combine this focus with careful assessment of enrolment targets for this program as part of Strategic Enrolment Management planning.

- *The reviewers recommended increasing the visibility of students' projects completed in the capstone course, for instance with a dedicated showcase.*

The Chair has identified short term strategies to implement this recommendation, until a dedicated showcase space can be created. The Department will consult internally with other program areas to create a collaborative scheduling plan to use the hallways of the Administrative Arts meeting and AA 319. We plan to discuss with other ACM programs to collaborate on scheduling to enable the sharing of this space so that joint program students have the opportunity to make their work more visible. In the longer term, the creation of the Centre for Literatures, Arts, Media and Performance (LAMP) building will become the new home for the Department and benefit their programs in a number of ways, including a project gallery space. Planning for this space is underway.

- *The reviewers observed that a heavier percentage of the curriculum at most comparator programs is focused on the technical and design-side of student training, and that some have desirable placement or internship components built in.*

The Chair has noted in her response that, while the benefits of experiential learning are well understood for the program, this recommendation is challenging to address because Centennial College does not

have the capacity to find work-placements for a large cohort of students. Accordingly, the Joint program (ACM, in dialogue with Centennial) will investigate potential ways to add a practicum to the program and is investigating the feasibility of leveraging Centennial College's Storyworks program. I note that experiential learning programming is a strength of programming at Arts, Culture and Media, and the Department is well-positioned to prioritize this for the Joint program.

- *The reviewers highlighted concerns that the joint program is "clearly dependent on non-permanent faculty" who cover all core courses on both campuses, noting the potential negative implications for the consistency and continuity of the program. They also observed that the absence of full-time faculty and staff dedicated to the program creates challenges for management and leadership, and that the recent retirement of two key leaders on each campus has left a significant gap in program-related institutional knowledge. They recommended exploring options for providing greater stability for the program, and noted that the joint program could directly benefit from new tenure-stream faculty at UTSC playing a more central role in teaching core and complementary courses.*

I thank the reviewers for this recommendation, and acknowledge that while tenure-stream faculty in the Media Studies program are a good fit to teach courses in the Joint program, these faculty are also stretched to fulfill teaching needs in Media Studies due to recent growth in their program. Planned restructuring of the Media Studies program, which will allow Media Studies to share courses with the Joint program, will help create stability for the program. The Department is proposing a new tenure-stream position at the rank of Associate Professor, for New Media Studies, to offer the program leadership during this growth period. This proposal which will be considered as a part of the current Faculty Complement Committee planning cycle.

- *The reviewers recommended undertaking the strategic consideration of whether to grow the joint program, and identifying the resources that would be necessary to sustain growth.*

As mentioned above, equity of access and retention in the program are priorities for the Department, and the Chair recognizes that the strong enrolment in the joint program indicates the potential for growth. The Chair has recommended that further changes, including full-time Program Coordinators, support for a practicum, and the appointment of a new Associate Professor for New Media Studies, are necessary to help the program grow. My office will be working in dialogue with the Department and with Centennial to consider infrastructure and capacity needs for New Media Studies and the joint programs as a whole that would enable us to consider future growth.

- *The reviewers noted opportunities for enhanced integration of the joint program with the larger UTSC Media Studies program, especially as Media Studies undergoes its own curricular updates. They also suggested encouraging further collaboration between program faculty on both campuses.*

The Department has identified opportunities to respond to this recommendation, through the planned curriculum re-structuring for Media Studies described above. Courses in writing topics will be made available at the A-level to ensure that students acquire communication skills at the beginning of their program, through the introduction of new courses and the shifting of existing courses from higher levels

to A-level. As well, a new course at the C-level on "Digital Research Ethics" will be introduced to integrate the two program areas. I am supportive of these plans which will address these recommendations. As we emerge out of the pandemic, which has exacerbated a sense of institutional isolation, more regular opportunities to connect program faculty on both campuses is a priority. My office will work with Centennial College and the Joint Programs Steering Committee to facilitate this to ensure dialogue on curriculum development as well as better integration and support for student experience.

- *The reviewers noted the substantial and increasing percentage of international students in the program (and the connected limitations on provincial funding), and recommended exploring the pursuit of advancement initiatives related to the program.*

I thank the reviewers for this recommendation, and support the Chair in implementing plans to draw on the mentorship initiatives mentioned above, to build, cultivate, and sustain relationships with students during their time at the university and as they pursue their professional lives. The Department is also considering adjusting technology requirements to make room for more affordable options in computers and software licenses which will improve access. At the Divisional level, the Development and Alumni Relations Office is working on enhancing its connections to departments and building global alumni networks in the context of broader advancement planning.

I conclude by noting that many of these recommendations touch on areas that resonate generally across all Joint programs offered at UTSC with Centennial College, including also the Joint Specialist program in Paramedicine and the Joint Specialist program in Journalism, both of which were recently reviewed in November 2022. Clearer communication and support for students, clearer messaging around related programming areas, and staffing capacity are all themes that will be priorities for our Joint programs over the next few years. My office will be working closely with Centennial College leadership on a coordinated approach to improving student experience in our Joint programs. I look forward to continuing this work, and supporting the Department of Arts, Culture and Media in implementing these recommendations to strengthen the program.

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of Arts, Culture and Media, and meetings with Centennial College leadership. 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 2027-28.

Regards,

William Gough
Vice-Principal, Academic and Dean

Implementation Plan

Action	Timeline	Lead
Introduction of new student supports to improve technical competencies, including a diagnostic assessment and workshops in Year 2, revival of a Coding Club, and a peer mentorship program.	Short term	ACM Faculty
Bringing forward a curriculum modification for the program, involving: • Scaffolding of technical skills so students move from introductory, to intermediate, and demonstrate proficient levels of understanding and application • A skills diagnostic to identify areas of further training • A new A-level course on "Writing for Media Studies"	Short to medium term	ACM Faculty
Review space options with other ACM programs and determine showcase spaces for joint program students.	Short to medium term	ACM Faculty
Introduce elective course support with shared courses in New Media Studies	Short term	ACM Faculty
Add a new tenure-stream position in New Media Studies	Short to medium term	Dean's Office, ACM Faculty
Identify possibilities for experiential learning opportunities	Medium term	Centennial Faculty, ACM Faculty
Collaboration with Centennial College on improved communications processes	Short to medium term	Dean's Office
Re-assessment of enrolment targets within UTSC Strategic Enrolment Management framework	Medium term	Dean's Office

2021-22 UTQAP Review of the UTSC New Media Studies Program (jointly offered with Centennial College) - 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 *verbatim from the request*	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report *verbatim from the review report*	Program Response	Dean's Response
The reviewers made a number of observations and recommendations related to the fundamental focus of the program, and the balance of technical and theoretical competencies that it supports. - The reviewers recommended increasing clarity around the technical competencies expected of students at the start of the program, and providing supports for any students lacking these competencies. They also noted that ESL supports could be beneficial for some students. - The reviewers noted that students identify technical training as a top program priority, and recommended considering incorporating the Certificate component as a program requirement (and extending students' time at Centennial if necessary). - The reviewers recommended continued strategic consideration of whether to	1	"The Joint Program may need to better communicate to admitted students the kinds of self-directed learning they will be expected to engage in as part of the program, as well as the kinds of skills they should already have, and where and how they can acquire them if not in the program itself."	- The Department will establish, in collaboration with colleagues at Centennial College, a list of core competencies, which will form the basis for a revised communication plan that clearly articulates expectations regarding skills needed at the outset of the program. To identify whether remedial training is required, the program will devise and implement a diagnostic assessment, which students interested in enrolling in the program would take in Year 2. - The Joint program will be re-designed so that Year 1 and Year 2 will be held at UTSC, during which time students will acquire training in areas identified by program instructors as foundational, such as communication skills and ethics, along with the core technical competencies.	- The Dean's Office supports the Department's planned diagnostic assessment, redesign of the program structure, and mentorship opportunities.
	2	"To make the most of faculty's technical and industry expertise, a provision of some sort in the Joint Program to test for and/or assess whether students have the necessary 'basic' technical proficiencies upon entry to the program may be advisable. For students who are identified as needing it, more remedial forms of instruction in basic technical proficiencies could be included in addition to the core courses offered at Centennial College. A course that covers some of the technical basics, or another mechanism, could be considered to provide students with the initial proficiencies required of the Joint Program. The Joint Program could also likely benefit from developing a way to assess students' existing proficiencies upon entry to the Joint Program, to		

adjust program enrolment requirements, noting the potential for both a reduction in the overall number of enrolled students, and for specific negative impacts on international student access. • The reviewers recommended increasing the visibility of students' projects completed in the capstone course, for instance with a dedicated showcase. • The reviewers observed that a heavier percentage of the curriculum at most comparator programs is focused on the technical and design-side of student training, and that some have desirable placement or internship components built in.		better understand how many students may need remedial training and of what kinds."	
	3	"If resources are available, it is clear that technical personnel, such as a technical teaching assistant, could do some of the work of connecting students to technical resources and maker spaces and further direct them in their learning of technical skills. Given that the technical component of the Joint Program takes places at Centennial College, it would seem reasonable for this personnel to be employed there, but the larger program and institutional resources might make it more likely for UTSC to direct the additional resources required."	• Workshops, like the coding club will be established by ACM Program Manager, but will be run by the upper year students in the program. • ACM has a mentorship program in place already, which will be leveraged further to create a community of support for the newly admitted students	
	4	"One additional area that both faculty and students identified is the need for ESL training for students whose English-language proficiency is not at the levels of fluency that will enable them to fully participate in class and perform effectively on assignments"	• The PIE fund can support discipline language workshops; would ask for dialogue with CTL; hearing this from many departments • Students encouraged to take advantage of resources at UTSC such as Academic English Health Check, and Reading and Writing Excellent program. Exploring the possibility of attaching a bonus grade of completion within a prerequisite course at UTSC	• The Dean's Office supports the Department's plans, which align with Divisional discussions about the expansion of discipline-based writing supports at UTSC with pilot funding provided to the Centre for Teaching and Learning, drawing on recommendations from the campus's 2021-22 Writing Support Task Force.
	5	"The suggestion from the 2021 Self-Study to create a course in 'Professional Communication' to address English language competency for students may be an especially productive solution. The Joint Program may also want to ensure that students are aware of English language support services on campus, and provide encouragement to students to use them."	• The Department will set up a pre-start "boot camp" course as preparation during summer term • MDSA12H3 Writing for Media Studies will be introduced as a program requirement, which students will take in Year 1.	
	6	"Consider incorporating the Certificate component as a program requirement, and if necessary to do so, extending students' time at Centennial from 1 to 1.5 years."	• Aspects of the certificate will be integrated into a revised curriculum for the program, so students can benefit	• The Dean's office is supportive of the planned restructuring, which will meet the practical goals of implementing this recommendation, and will work with the

			without having to extend their studies in the summer.	Department to facilitate close consultation with Centennial College in developing these changes.
	7	"Further consideration of tightening enrolment requirements, possibly by raising the required GPA or going to 'direct admission' for incoming students. The Review Panel heard (and shares) concerns that doing so could reduce the number of students enrolled, by introducing new 'gatekeeping' that would prevent otherwise interested and capable students from enrolling, and penalizing international students specifically."	• Upon extensive discussion, the Joint program will focus on retention of students by implementing a skills diagnostic assessment to identify areas in need of further training.	• The skills development strategies and curriculum re-design mentioned above will support student retention long term, and align the program's goals with UTSC's Strategic Plan, Inspiring Inclusive Excellence, as well as with the campus's emerging access plan. • The Dean's office will combine this focus with careful assessment of enrolment targets for this program as part of strategic enrolment management planning.
	8	"Strive to increase the visibility of students' projects completed in the capstone course, for instance with a dedicated showcase. "	• The Department will incorporate the Joint program into the ACM Undergraduate Research and Creative Practice Symposium, which will be used to showcase students' final projects • Similar to Studio Art courses at ACM, AA 3rd floor hallway space and AA319 will be set up potential spaces to showcase student work at the end of the term.	• In the longer term, the creation of the Centre for Literatures, Arts, Media and Performance (LAMP) building will become the new home for the Department and benefit their programs in a number of ways, including a project gallery space. Planning for this space is underway.
	9	"The Review Panel recommends consideration of a placement opportunity within the structures of the Joint Program, and some inquiry into its feasibility."	• Following extensive discussions with Centennial, current capacity does not enable the Joint program to obtain work placements for all students; the joint program recognizes the potential for development of experiential learning opportunities that would provide students with the capacity to develop practical skills which would be advantageous for their professional life beyond the university. • The program will work to integrate a practicum into the core program and investigate opportunities through the	• The Dean is supportive of the Department's plans to incorporate experiential learning and research engagement into programming, noting that the Department is well-positioned to prioritize these areas for the Joint program.
	10	"The Review Panel also encourages the development of research opportunities for students, especially in ways that would lead to problem solving and innovative thinking in work on real-world projects with clients, potential employers, community groups and others."		

			Centennial Storyworks and ACM Engage programs. • Following a planned hiring for a new full-time faculty member at ACM (#16 below), the joint program will be better positioned to move forward with these plans.	
	11	"The Review Panel strongly encourages UTSC and Centennial College to develop a process for [tracking alumni outcomes], especially since the success of programs like this one are predicated on student employability and placement in the field."	• The ACM Program Manager will be working with the UTSC Development and Alumni Relations Office in devising an alumni engagement plan for ACM, which includes New Media Studies	
The reviewers highlighted concerns that the joint program is "clearly dependent on non-permanent faculty" who cover all core courses on both campuses, noting the potential negative implications for the consistency and continuity of the program. They also observed that the absence of full-time faculty and staff dedicated to the program creates challenges for management and leadership, and that the recent retirement of two key leaders on each campus has left a significant gap in program-related institutional knowledge. They recommended exploring options for providing greater stability for the program, and noted that the joint program could directly benefit from new tenure-stream faculty at UTSC playing a more central role in teaching core and complementary courses.	12	"More job security for the sessional faculty who teach the program curriculum. Their ongoing precarity may jeopardize the consistency and continuity of the program."	• Tenure-stream faculty in the Media Studies program at ACM are interested to teach courses in the joint New Media Studies program. A planned restructuring of the Media Studies program is expected to support the joint program by allowing Media Studies (MDS) courses to be cross-listed with New Media studies.	• The Dean's office supports the planned restructuring of the Media Studies curriculum to support the joint program with course options.
	13	"Faculty raised several issues related to the second concern about the temporary nature of employment for contract faculty teaching the majority of courses in the Joint Program. Teaching assignments for UTSC faculty in the Joint Program are often made right before the start of term, which does not give faculty adequate time to prepare, nor does it offer them job security in the Joint Program. The temporary nature of their employment obstructs UTSC's abilities to retain strong teaching faculty in the Joint Program. Several of the contract faculty who teach in the Joint Program from both UTSC and Centennial College have been working in these positions for multiple years. Drawing on UTSC's own statement of key commitments to 'intentional inclusion' and 'relational accountability' in the Strategic Plan from 2020 (p. 16), it seems prudent that a	• ACM is currently proposing a new tenure-stream position in New Media Studies at the rank of Associate Professor. The ideal candidate would have experience in professional practice, industry connections, and the capacity to take leadership over the joint program. • Replacing Professor Petit is an impact for both UTSC and Centennial. A teaching stream position makes sense for this planned appointment. • Centennial College is tasked with examining precarity and will consider possible courses of action. Precarity is a broader issue, though steps are underway to address this at ACM (see item 16 below).	• The Department's proposal for a new tenure-stream Associate Professor position will be reviewed as part of the current Faculty Complement Committee planning cycle.

	13	meaningful review of these teaching and work conditions be undertaken."		
	14	"UTSC likely needs a replacement for Prof. Petit to champion the Joint Program on its campus. We would recommend hiring a person who is deeply familiar with the Joint Program at UTSC (ideally, perhaps, someone who teaches core courses) to fill this key role. Finding solutions that also recognize the Joint Program expertise and memory of past-decisions that contract faculty have would also go a long way to sustaining the Joint Program when key staff and faculty leave."		
	15	"Administrators at Centennial College have committed to rehiring someone [to oversee the joint program at Centennial]; we recommend that this position be fulltime."		
	16	"More attention to institutional support for the program directors and staff. The 2021 Self-Study calls for the consideration of appointing 'a discrete Program Supervisor,' and the Review Panel supports further consideration of this option."	• The proposed new position in ACM of Associate Professor of New Media Studies would enable the joint program to ensure continuity in leadership as the successful candidate would be able to serve as program supervisor.	
	17	"The recent hires at UTSC clearly signal the strength of new media studies teaching and research at the university. The Joint Program could directly benefit from these faculty playing a more central role in the teaching of core and complementary courses, in addition to the elective courses they currently provide to students in the Joint Program."	• The planned modifications to the Media Studies program at ACM will increase elective course options for the joint program in New Media Studies.	• The Dean's office supports the planned restructuring of the Media Studies curriculum to support the joint program with course options.
The reviewers recommended undertaking the strategic consideration of whether to grow the joint program, and identifying the resources that would be necessary to sustain growth.	18	"Perhaps the most significant long-range planning challenges are tied to the question of whether there is interest in growing the size of the Joint Program, or whether the number of students-in-program is already ideal. If there is interest in growing the program among some, there is a very real issue of whether there are adequate resources to sustain such growth, and what kinds of faculty resources would be needed. At UTSC,	• Our discussions with Centennial College reveal that they can handle large enrollment. UTSC would need additional stipendiary support to offer multiple sections of NMEC, and NMED-level courses allowing students to progress through the program as planned. Currently, we only offer a section each (40 students each year), and would need	• The Dean's office will be working in dialogue with the Department and with Centennial to consider infrastructure and capacity needs for New Media Studies and the joint programs as a whole that would enable us to consider future growth

		the impending revision of the larger Major in Media, Journalism and Digital Cultures Program provides an opportunity to also examine the relationship between it and the Joint Program."	to offer at least 2 sections each to support increase in enrollments. Further, we intend to propose a brand new NMEC-level course which would also need to be offered twice.	
The reviewers noted opportunities for enhanced integration of the joint program with the larger UTSC Media Studies program, especially as Media Studies undergoes its own curricular updates. They also suggested encouraging further collaboration between program faculty on both campuses.	19	"The current faculty renewal of the Department of Arts, Culture and Media offers the perfect moment to enhance tenure track and tenured UTSC faculty involvement in the Joint Program, if that is possible. This is also an opportune time to perhaps better integrate the Joint Program with the larger Media Studies undergraduate program while the latter undergoes its own curricular revisions and updates."	• The planned modifications to the Media Studies program at ACM will increase elective course options for the joint program in New Media Studies.	• The Dean's office supports the planned restructuring of the Media Studies curriculum to support the joint program with course options.
	20	"The Joint Program also creates opportunities for cross-campus collaboration between the libraries that could be of benefit to the Joint Program and the larger relationship between UTSC and Centennial College. The Joint Program could still benefit from opportunities for faculty teaching in the Joint Program on both campuses to work together."	• The joint program will coordinate resources so that when students return to UTSC in Year 4, courses would be run collaboratively with support and contributions from Centennial College faculty.	
The reviewers noted the substantial and increasing percentage of international students in the program (and the connected limitations on provincial funding), and recommended exploring the pursuit of advancement initiatives related to the program.	21	"Given the substantial (and increasing) percentage of international students in the Joint Program, program administrators may have to consider soliciting donations, grants, and scholarship funds from alumni and organizations and corporations in media fields related to the content of the program."	• The joint program will investigate opportunities to coordinate with broader advancement initiatives at UTSC in order to cultivate relationships with alumni.	• At the Divisional level, the Development and Alumni Relations Office is working on enhancing its connections to departments and building global alumni networks in the context of broader advancement planning.
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	22	"The Review Panel recommends reviewing online course descriptions to ensure they are up-to-date with programs and software used in the field."	• The planned modifications to the Media Studies program at ACM will enable instructors to keep pace of the swift changes in the discipline.	• The Dean's office supports the planned restructuring of the Media Studies curriculum to support course review.

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

The Reading Group members found the summary to accurately reflect the full review. The Reading Group noted that while the reviewers were supportive of the program, it would not characterize the review as being positive. The Unit or the Dean was asked to respond in more detail to the reviewers' comments regarding job security, non permanent staff, institutional support, tightening enrolment requirements, the integration between Centennial College and UTSC, and the rationale for the program redesign.

In response to a question by the reading group, Professor Bill Gough, Vice-Principal Academic & Dean, UTSC responded by highlighting several initiatives:

- The relationship between UTSC and Centennial is substantial, extending from the joint programs to many other teaching, learning and research initiatives, leveraging co-located campuses.
- The joint programs are overseen by a steering committee with representation from both institutions.
- The two institutions are in the process of renewing the MOU; the revisions are designed, in part, to address some of the issues the reviewers highlighted regarding support and coordination.
- The curriculum review currently in progress will address course sequencing, cohorting, timely acquisition of technical skills, and the integration of applied learning and the culminating capstone.

Given that the program will be undergoing a significant redesign, a one-year follow-up report was requested.

4. Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the program as highly successful by nearly every measure, noting that the curriculum reflects the current state of the discipline, and the mix of practical and theoretical education is unique compared to similar programs. They observed that the program structure was revised in response to previous review recommendations, highlighted the level and consistency of staff program coordination and the provision of student enrolment and program services, and commended the excellent contract, sessional and part-time faculty who do the majority of teaching in the program. They also noted that UTSC faculty are emerging and established leaders in digital research methods and new media studies inquiry, and that the libraries at both campuses provide exceptional resources for students and faculty in the joint program.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: increasing clarity around the technical competencies expected of students at the start of the program and providing supports if needed; incorporating the Certificate component as a program requirement; continuing strategic consideration of whether to adjust program enrolment requirements; increasing the visibility of students' projects completed in the capstone course; exploring

options for providing greater stability for the program such as through new tenure-stream faculty at UTSC; undertaking strategic consideration of whether to grow the joint program; encouraging further collaboration between program faculty on both campuses; exploring the pursuit of advancement initiatives related to the program. 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

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of Arts, Culture and Media, and meetings with Centennial College leadership.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than Fall 2024 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in 2026-27, to take place in 2027-28.

6. Distribution

On June 30, 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 and Dean of UTSC, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Vice-Principal and Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.