FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW (PPR)
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
Arts and Contemporary Studies
Faculty of Arts

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the undergraduate Arts and Contemporary Studies program. This report identifies the strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvements and enhancements, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

This report also includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the final assessment report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy, or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations, who will be responsible for leading those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations

SUMMARY OF THE PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW OF ARTS AND CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

The Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Arts and Contemporary Studies (ACS) at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) is a unique and customizable full-time program in the humanities and social sciences. A BA in ACS provides insight into the historical and philosophical grounds of contemporary culture and global society. Through individual and group coursework, students in ACS examine ideas that shape the world.

The BA provides students with the opportunity to specialize in a wide variety of fields or to remain "Generalist" and choose across social sciences and humanities fields. The Arts and Contemporary Studies Program aims to strike a balance between theoretical and practical education. A unit within the Faculty of Arts, ACS' core interdisciplinary curriculum, combined with the various "Option" choices, aims to ensure students graduate with a wide array of professional choices and opportunities.

This document comprises The Faculty of Arts' Dean's response to the Peer Review Team (PRT) Report and the School's response, in accordance with the directions of the 2020 Periodic Program Review (PPR) Manual and with Section 8.2 of Senate Policy 126, Periodic Program Review of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs. The site visit by the external PRT for the Periodic Program Review was carried out between August 2-3, 2023. The Arts and Contemporary Studies program submitted a list of potential Peer Review Team (PRT) candidates to the Office of the Dean who then selected

Dr. Andrea Davis, Professor, Department of Humanities

Founder and Program Coordinator, Black Canadian Studies Certificate
Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, York University

Dr. Aara Suksi, Associate Professor, Classical Studies
Director, School for Advanced Studies in Arts & Humanities
Western University

Dr. Paula Schwebel, Associate Professor, Philosophy
Faculty of Arts, Toronto Metropolitan University

The PRT report recommends a thorough curricular review to further concentrate the program, refocusing its structure on interdisciplinary, critical and creative thinking. The reviewers consider it important to restructure the program into thematically-focussed courses, allowing students to use tools from arts and social sciences to confront complex contemporary issues. Special attention should be paid to ethically-informed, diverse and inclusive forms of thinking and learning based on student-driven questions. The review team proposes the elimination of the existing disciplinary and interdisciplinary options to allow students more opportunities to pursue minors.

The PRT Report offered the following fifteen critical recommendations, and the program has responded thoughtfully to each to generate their Implementation Plan. The Dean's Office is in full support of the program's responses to the PRT recommendations.

The program submitted its response to the PRT report to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts to which the Dean responded on February 15, 2024.

The Academic Standards Committee completed its assessment of the Arts and Contemporary Studies PPR on March 7, 2024**.** The Committee indicated that a thorough, analytical and self-critical program review was conducted. The program provided a detailed plan for future growth and support for development.

The Academic Standards Committee recommends that the program continue, as well as provide a one-year follow-up report, as follows:

1. The mandated Two-Year Follow-up Report will be submitted by June 30, 2026 . In addition, the program will submit to the Academic Standards Committee by June 20, 2025:
    a. A program leadership management plan;
    b. A reviewed program council by-laws;
    c. A teaching assignment strategy;
    d. An interim report on curricular modifications.

Presented to Senate for Approval: **April 2, 2024**

Start date of next Periodic Program Review: **2030-31**

SUMMARY OF THE REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS WITH THE

PROGRAM'S AND DEAN'S RESPONSES

Recommendation 1
The members of the ACS Program should compose a general mission statement for the purpose of public outreach, for informing students as they choose programs, and as a guiding statement for curriculum redesign. The creation of such a statement would be useful in the processes of considering the coherence of the program, the role of the curriculum in responding to current global and local contexts, and the contribution the program has to make to communities on campus and beyond. The mission statement, if designed to be published online on the program web page, can also serve to enhance the visibility and accountability of the program.

Program Response:
Agreed. The creation of a mission statement for the ACS program will be an important project for Fall 2023, to be carried out mainly by the ACS Program Council and its sub-committees. As the ACS program establishes a Program Advisory Council, the feedback from the PAC members will also be useful. Many stakeholders associated with the program, including students, find it difficult to explain its objectives while at the same time we see many graduates who have successfully used the program to achieve their personal and career goals. A review of the program will need to balance its strengths, its flexibility and its emphasis on intellectual curiosity, with the necessary task of creating a more coherent curriculum. Posting the mission statement on the website, emphasizing the distinct goals of the program, will be helpful in attracting students.

This first PRT recommendation echoes the first point of the Executive Summary: Clarified Program Mission, to better match Student Expectations and Curriculum. ES Recommendation 1a further suggests that the program be renamed with a "more immediate, clear and communicative phrase". Any change in name will reflect the mission of the program and the program's specificity in relation to other programs at TMU and across Ontario and North America.

Dean's Response:
In light of the ongoing significant decline in program applications and enrolments, the Dean of Arts considers the re-imagining of the mission of the Program to be the crucial first step to any modifications to the Program. Further, the Dean encourages the Program to think boldly and creatively about the possibilities for a new, clearly defined, unique Program curriculum and identity (to be captured in a new name and new mission), and recognizes that a radical rehaul of the Program will be necessary to achieve this aim. In short, the Program should take this opportunity to re-imagine an interdisciplinary degree that centres anti-racism, decolonization and equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) issues and perspectives, and is purposeful in its interdisciplinary approach (rather than interdisciplinarity being the de facto result of a desire to create a degree that allows for the involvement of teaching across the Faculty of Arts).

As part of the development of the new mission statement, the Program will need to consider topics such as: how to best define and embed interdisciplinarity in the Program's core learning; whether there is ongoing value in the type of flexibility and customization that is currently characteristic of the Program; whether the language requirement should be maintained; whether the ability for students to earn "teachables" should constrain the curricular structure; and how the degree structure and curriculum of the Program should differ from that of double majors. The mission statement must also clearly articulate the Faculty's prioritization of decolonization, anti-racism, and equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The Dean recognizes that it will be necessary to create new and impactful messaging about and promotion of the Program once it has been revised. The Communications Team in the Dean's Office will help to strategize communication of the Program's new mission upon its creation.

Recommendation 2
- Revise the ACS curriculum in the light of a mission statement and a rearticulated set of clear learning outcomes that are distinct from those of other programs in the Faculty of Arts.
- Consider how each core course aligns with the institutional priorities and strategic focuses, intentionally embedding discussions and explorations of historical and contemporary racisms and colonialisms and the ways in which they continue to impact Indigenous, Black, and other racialized peoples, and Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.
- Include required experiential learning, perhaps in the form of a co-op placement, community engaged learning experiences, and a required capstone course that includes a focus on practical and professional skills.

Program Response:
Agreed. It is clear that the ACS curriculum needs significant revision. The creation of a mission statement and a clearer articulation of learning outcomes will help to guide the program through this process. To develop a clearer focus, it will be necessary to prune irrelevant and unavailable courses from the curriculum, which is simply too unwieldy. With students taking courses from the required ACS core courses and from any of the nine 13-course options, the total core electives that had to be course-mapped in the program numbered over 400. Furthermore, there is little to stop generalist students from focusing on lower-level courses, which hinders the development of proficiency in any given area. This goal is consistent with Recommendation 4 in the Executive Summary on the importance of scaffolding to ensure intermediate and proficiency coverage. The curriculum review will need to ensure that all ACS students become proficient in the required learning outcomes.

The ACS program has been criticized, quite rightly, for being overly Eurocentric. The suite of ACS courses presenting a chronological arc have centered on a European worldview, in which other cultural perspectives may appear as an afterthought. This is a serious deficiency that must be corrected, as emphasized in the Executive Summary (ES) Recommendation 3: "Centering of Equity and Diversity in Teaching and Curriculum". A greater integration in all ACS courses of institutional and strategic foci, particularly the emphasis on decolonization, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusivity, will be a short-term and long-term goal for the program. The curriculum must be revised to ensure that core required and elective courses critically examine current issues, especially as these impact Indigenous, Black, and other racialized peoples as well as other equity-seeking groups. Breaking down the chronological arc, with its tendency toward master narratives, would also bring the program back to its interdisciplinary roots. One way to do this will be to require all ACS students to take at least 2 of the courses introducing the interdisciplinary thematic options, as they did prior to the introduction of the disciplinary options. ACS might also consider introducing a mandatory course on Indigenous Studies, as other programs such as Sociology and Criminology have done. This could take the place of one Open Elective.

Following the creation of co-op for programs in the Faculty of Arts in 2021, starting with a limited number of programs, almost all of the programs in the Faculty of Arts are to join the co-op program this year. ACS is proud to join this initiative to increase the career focus of the program and help students

develop their career identity. SSH 104 Co-op Program Preparation will be required for the co-op. However, not all students will take the co-op program. Experiential learning must be embedded throughout the program. Making ACS 800, a project-based course, a required course for all students, as indicated in ES Recommendation 7b, will contribute to the experiential aspect of the program. Another useful addition would be a career-oriented course which includes job-shadowing, as previously piloted in the Faculty of Arts in SSH 500. Students who do not enrol in co-op will be strongly encouraged to take ACS 910 Fellowship Practicum. Following ES recommendation 7a, ACS 401, required for all students, could be adapted as "a community-action research course". Revision of the curriculum must enhance and ensure career-integrated and experiential learning for all students.

Dean's Response:
The Dean requires a significant revision of the ACS curriculum to bring it in line with the Faculty's focus on decolonization, anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusivity; to take advantage of new opportunities for experiential learning such as co-op; and to stimulate interest among numerous recently-hired Indigenous and Black faculty members. The Dean considers clear scaffolding of Program Objectives and Learning Outcomes to be key measures of the quality of the Program (as outlined by the Institutional Quality Assurance Process) and supports the Program's efforts to ensure that all students reach the level of proficiency in the soon-to-be defined new Program mission. The Program is reminded that the Vice-Provost Academic's office has a number of resources available to support the development of Program Objectives and Learning Outcomes. See also discussion of PRT Recommendation 1 above.

Recommendation 3
Remove the disciplinary options, and possibly also the interdisciplinary options, to create a more clearly structured and compact program that is easier for students to navigate.

Program Response:
This recommendation overlaps with ES Recommendations 2, 5, 6 and 7. There is a general consensus that the over-abundance of options means a lack of clarity regarding the program's mission. Consequently, all of the options need to be reviewed and renewed in relation to the program's mandate and mission statement. At least some must be removed. Unless there is strong argument to the contrary, all disciplinary options can be removed.

The removal of options from the ACS program requires careful consideration in order to maintain the flexibility of the program and ensure that students continue to have access to courses that will facilitate their personal interests and career goals. All core electives on Table I are currently taken from the options and are available to all ACS students, including those who do not commit to an option, often referred to as "generalists". To be clear, there is no "generalist option", simply a choice made by students to draw on core electives from the nine official options without committing to a specific option.

The disciplinary options in English, French, History and Philosophy were added to the ACS program in 2006, at a time when the Vice-President Academic and the University Planning Office stated categorically to the Chairs of the departments in question that undergraduate degrees at Ryerson University in the Humanities would not be considered, largely for financial reasons. The number of courses in the options was set at 12 and later 13 because that was considered a reasonable equivalent to majors in other Ontario universities. Previously, while the interdisciplinary options existed from the inception of the program, in 2003, ACS students were only required to take 8 courses (raised to 9 in 2005) from Table I (Professional/Core elective Table), which contained all the courses in the interdisciplinary options in a single undifferentiated list. In 2003, the list consisted of 33 courses; in 2023, certain options include over

50 electives each. A few years after the creation of the disciplinary options, the Departments of English (2012), History (2012), Philosophy (2013) and Languages, Literatures and Cultures (LLC, 2016) launched their own undergraduate programs. One could argue that the new disciplinary programs now replace the disciplinary options and that running the current ACS disciplinary options alongside the new Humanities programs is redundant and sets programs in competition with one another. The Chairs of the specific departments were consulted last year and were generally in favour of removing the disciplinary options. Excluded from this category is the Anthropology option, which does not have an equivalent program even in LLC, where most of the courses originate. Similarly, there is no B.A. specifically in French, although Languages and Intercultural Relations (LIR) does have two streams: French and Spanish.

There are concerns that arise from the removal of the disciplinary options. While ACS students may choose not to commit to a given option, because all the courses of all the options on Table I are available to all students, ACS students select courses from an array of electives to create an academic path that suits their personal, academic and career goals. In particular, many students select courses from the options to obtain their "teachables" for Ontario Teachers' College. The Student Recruitment team has explained that one of the selling points for the program is that students can achieve at least 2-3 "teachables". Education and academic administration are areas where ACS students have had a great deal of success. To help students continue on the path to Ontario Teachers College, it will be important to maintain this flexibility and access to relevant courses even if the ACS program removes the disciplinary options and the plethora of courses associated with them. Given the importance of French as a "teachable", it may be beneficial to keep that option or to integrate the French courses into another option. As the Ontario Teachers College has indicated for a number of years, there is "near zero unemployment" among French teachers in Ontario:
(See https://www.oct.ca/public/media/announcements/2022-transition-to-teaching).
ACS students also have access to French courses through Liberal Studies, Core electives, and Open electives, even without the French option.

Another issue with removing the disciplinary options is that it may limit "buy-in" to the program from the constituent departments of English, LLC, History and Philosophy. Currently, the Chairs of the four departments are members of ACS Council. Each of those departments also has a representative among the TFA members who teach in the program. Interdisciplinary programs depend on the good will of other departments to provide instructors and curricular and administrative support. The administrative structure of the ACS program needs to be strengthened to compensate, as discussed under Recommendation 9. A new administrative structure might allow for increased participation from other departments and disciplines.

The removal of interdisciplinary options presents its own complications, which must be discussed by the ACS Program Council and curriculum committee. Each of the interdisciplinary options tends to be associated with specific career goals: culture studies: careers in media and cultural advocacy; global studies: careers in public service, public policy, NGOs; diversity and equity: careers in social work, equity advising in HR administration, etc. As the self-study has established, the great majority of ACS students do not choose to enroll in an option. This is understandable, as selecting an option requires a commitment to take a structured suite of 13 core courses, from a given list, in addition to all the required ACS core courses, with all the scheduling issues that may entail. Moreover, the choice of 9 13-course options is problematic for a program whose first-year intake is currently less than 70 students, although until recently it was relatively stable at approximately 120 students. The introductory courses to the interdisciplinary options are often undersubscribed and therefore costly and yet interdisciplinarity has always been at the heart of the ACS program. ES Recommendation 6 e) suggests that all ACS students

should be required to take introductory interdisciplinary courses. This is consistent with the original curriculum, which until 2007 required students to choose 2 introductory courses from the interdisciplinary options. It is clear from looking at the core electives in some interdisciplinary options that there has been significant mission drift and loss of thematic unity. This can be remedied by a stronger alignment between the mission statement, the options/concentrations and their learning outcomes. For example, the Executive Summary suggests that the Diversity and Equity option be redrawn to contain specific subheadings in Indigenous Studies, Black Studies, LGBTQ Studies, Disability Studies, etc.

It should be noted that Policy 2 on Undergraduate Curriculum Structure, implemented in 2019, does not recognize "options". The nearest equivalent is a "concentration", defined as: "A Senate-approved set of degree level courses within the core of a degree program or major, which is completed on an optional basis." The TMU undergraduate calendar indicates that concentrations consist of 6-12 courses. Existing concentrations in the Faculty of Arts are found in LIR, Politics and, in next year's calendar, English, and all include only 6 courses. At TMU in general, the Fashion Communication, Fashion Studies and Fashion design concentrations include 8 courses, with all other concentrations having only 6 courses. Students are generally encouraged to take more than one concentration.

This model of having several concentrations available may approximate the ACS student strategy of exploring multiple avenues of study and, where applicable, of accumulating "teachables". The number of teachables" required at the Ontario Teachers College varies depending on different factors, in particular, whether the "teachable" is a first or second teaching subject at the Intermediate/Senior or Junior/Intermediate level. In general, the first teaching subject requires 8-10 courses while the second teaching subject requires 6. If disciplinary options are removed, the interdisciplinary options can still be used to allow for "teachables". Furthermore, if redeveloped, the Innovation and Inquiry option could serve as a place for courses leading to a General Science "teachable", while also allowing students to explore areas such as biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, bioethics, computer science, environment and urban sustainability (EUS), medical humanities, etc. The original name of the option was Science and Technology; one might consider returning to a more transparent name such as Science and Culture. The blending of Arts and Science has been discussed with the Office of Vice-Provost, Academic and the Dean of Arts Office as a possible collaboration between the two eponymous faculties.

The ACS curriculum will need to review all remaining options and consider how they can be transformed into concentrations, which would have the benefit of a more intentional, pared down curriculum. Having a smaller number of ACS concentrations with fewer courses than the current 13-course options would likely be more attractive, allowing students to continue to tailor their program to their own interests. Each of the concentrations should have its own mission statement. The choice of electives should be reviewed and, in most cases, culled, in order to ensure that each course contributes in a meaningful way to the concentrations' stated learning outcomes and objectives.

Finally, the elimination or the renewal of any of the existing disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary options must go hand in hand with a more highly structured ACS program core with clear progression of learning outcomes from introductory to proficiency levels. To this end, it will be useful to include core electives on Table I that are tailored to the general mission of ACS. These interdisciplinary core electives will ensure a greater degree of rigour beyond simply having students take courses available from the options.

Dean's Response:
In general, the Dean of Arts supports efforts to streamline the curriculum and render it more

manageable in terms of student progression through the Program and in terms of Program administration; however, the discussion of whether and which disciplinary or interdisciplinary concentrations (formerly identified as options) should be retained is better held in the context of the new Program mission and name. Once the Program's mission and name have been revised, it is likely that decisions over which concentrations should be renewed, eliminated, or created – or even whether concentrations are a desirable curricular option – will be rendered more clearly. If concentrations are maintained as a curricular structure, they should be seen as an opportunity to embed EDIA principles and perspectives within the degree.

Recommendation 4
Restructure the core courses ("Ideas that Shape the World") to more explicitly respond to contemporary issues using a range of theoretical and practical approaches that decenter Eurocentric perspectives.

Program Response:
Agreed. The need to restructure and transform the core ACS courses is a matter of general agreement, corresponding to ES Recommendation 3 on enhancing EDIA in the curriculum as well as ES Recommendation 4 on restructuring the framework of the general ACS program. It will be important for the ACS curriculum committee to review the existing suite of ACS core required courses to ensure that they are more responsive to the institutional priorities of TMU and the Faculty of Arts, as well as to student career and personal goals. The courses should align with the learning outcomes and the mission statement established by the ACS program council. In particular, a review of the ACS core courses should help the program to move away from a strongly chronological approach based on Eurocentric perspectives on history toward a more thematic approach that consistently references contemporary issues. As mentioned previously, there are existing ACS courses that are truly interdisciplinary and not focused on historical periods, in particular, the introductory courses to the interdisciplinary options, which, consistent with ES recommendation 6 e), could be made into a required group of core electives. This would increase awareness and understanding of interdisciplinary approaches; concomitantly, this would increase enrolment numbers in these well-established courses. Another possibility, raised during discussions with the PRT, would be the creation of an ACS Special Topics course taught by faculty, particularly faculty from equity-deserving groups; this would attract instructors to the program and would also bring new perspectives to ACS students.

Dean's Response:
The Dean of Arts is pleased to note the Program's commitment to embedding EDIA and decolonizing its core courses as doing so is in line with the values of the Faculty. Consideration of how to do so is best done in the context of the newly defined Program mission. In light of the creation of a new Program mission, the Program might choose to restructure the current suite of core courses or to develop an entirely new suite of core courses.

Recommendation 5
Embed in a progressive way, beginning with the first year, a suite of professional and practical skills, including the ability to articulate the value of the training received in the program.

Program Response:
Agreed. This recommendation corresponds to ES Recommendation 7 on career-integrated and experiential learning. It is clear from the self-study and student surveys, that students would like more opportunities for experiential learning and career-related training. A step in this direction will be the introduction of the co-op program, including the co-op preparation course SSH 104. However, not all

students are interested in co-op nor do all meet the standard CGPA requirement for entry to the program. ACS has a one-semester internship course ACS 910 which generally attracts about 10-20 students each year. The ACS program gives students the option to choose between 2 capstone courses: ACS 800, which is project-based, and ACS 900, which is seminar-based. To fortify the role of the capstone course, it will be desirable to make ACS 800 a required course, as recommended in ES Recommendation 7 b. However, course mapping shows that only the combination of ACS 800 and ACS 900 or equivalent (e.g. ANT 900, PHL 900) gives students full proficiency in all learning outcomes. It is therefore desirable to keep both capstones. This would also have the effect of strengthening the program core and ensuring greater consistency around learning outcomes.

Dean's Response:
In general, the Dean of Arts supports deeper integration of professional and practical skills as outlined by the Program in its response to the PRT and welcomes the Program's plans to participate in the co-op program. The long-standing difficulties attracting and retaining TFA to teach in the program as identified in the PPR (see Dean's Response to PRT Recommendation 9 below) suggests that careful consideration will need to be given to the viability of introducing a mandatory project-based capstone course into the Program's curriculum (although doing so might attract TFA to the Program). Attention should also be given to ensuring that capstone courses allow students to demonstrate proficiency in the new Program Learning Outcomes which will emerge from the revised Program mission. It may be, for example, that a more specific seminar course will need to be created to meet the needs of the Program's new mission.

Recommendation 6
Create dedicated sections of the required first-year program courses, so that incoming ACS students can benefit from the peer-support of a cohort.

Program Response:
Agreed. Creating dedicated sections of required first-year program courses has been implemented elsewhere, notably in the Philosophy program, to increase the cohort effect. As the ACS program moves onto the First Year Common platform, as indicated in PRT Recommendation 7, they will follow the usual pattern of taking 2 required core courses in the first year and using the first year to explore their interests in Social Sciences and Humanities, with students having the opportunity of transferring into and out of the program at the end of the first year. There are programs in the Faculty of Arts, such as Geography, that allow a third disciplinary course in first year; in the context of ACS, students could then maintain in first year the choice between ACS 106 Introduction to Language and a list of language courses, which include ASL and will include, in Fall 2024, Mohawk. Dedicated sections of ACS 100 and/or ACS 103 may help to create a sense of community among the ACS first year students. PRT recommendation 6 does not correspond to any in the Executive Summary. It would not be the highest priority but certainly merits consideration.

Dean's Response:
The administrative staff for ACS has the ability to add students to a particular section of a course by creating block enrolments for sections that the Program owns. The Registrarial Support Services team (adminsupport@torontomu.ca) can provide support for this process.

Recommendation 7
Integrate the program with the Common Platform to allow for flexibility in students' program choices.

Program Response:

Agreed. This is a longstanding recommendation that also appears in the first ACS Periodic Program Review as well as ES Recommendation 5 b. There are numerous benefits of adopting the flexible first year Common Platform that allows first year students to explore their options in Social Sciences and Humanities, review their choices at the beginning of the second term and transfer seamlessly between programs in accordance with their interests and academic goals. Currently, students must reapply to TMU in order to transfer in and out of ACS. While this is not a complicated process, the change of programs is less seamless for the ACS students than for those on the Common Platform. All of the programs currently in the co-op program are also on the first year Common Platform, offering SSH 104 Co-op Program Preparation at the beginning of second year and taking their first of three work terms in their fourth semester.

Dean's Response:
The Dean welcomes inclusion of the Program on the Arts Common Platform. Doing so is in line with the Faculty of Arts' goal of making seamless transfers between programs within the Faculty accessible to all students.

Recommendation 8
Revise the structure of the program in such a way that students are not only progressing systematically towards mastery of the degree outcomes but are also able to articulate the value of the abilities and knowledge they are acquiring.

Program Response:
Agreed. This recommendation coincides with ES Recommendation 4. The ACS core courses must correspond to learning outcomes related to the mission statement and their role in the curriculum must be made evident to the students and instructors. They must also be examined in terms of inclusivity, community and equity. It is especially important for the generalist pathway to reflect a clear progression so that students take courses that introduce, reinforce and ensure proficiency in learning outcomes. To this end it will be important to restrict the number of lower level core courses that ACS students are able to take from existing Table I. This will simply require the application of a restriction clearly stated on the Table of core electives. As mentioned previously, it may also be helpful to have courses on Table I that relate directly to the program rather than just the options. The ACS self-study also suggested limiting the number of lower level Liberal Studies courses to 2; however, while this is common practice in the Faculty of Arts, it is inconsistent with Policy 2 and would require an exception to be made by the Academic Standards Committee and TMU Senate.

The PRT members have commented that students in the generalist option are not required to take a capstone course. In fact, ACS students choose between ACS 800, a project-based capstone course, and ACS 900, a dissertation-based course. Each option also has its own capstone course. Given the importance of experiential learning, it is best to ensure that ACS 800 is a required capstone. This will reinforce the cohort effect at the end of the program, emphasizing the students' achieved proficiency in the primary learning outcomes in a course that they recognize as an actual capstone. However, course mapping indicates that students do not reach proficiency in all learning outcomes unless they enrol in both ACS 800 and ACS 900 or an equivalent seminar course from the existing options. It is therefore desirable that all students take both ACS 800 as a capstone along with ACS 900 or equivalent. In some instances, it may make sense to keep the disciplinary capstones as core electives.

As the PRT report has indicated, the program is more focused on the history of ideas than contemporary

issues; the title Arts and Contemporary Studies is therefore misleading. While many suggestions for the name change have appeared, including for example Applied Humanities or Culture Studies, a clearer mission statement will help the program to find a name that aligns with all that the program is designed to accomplish while providing greater transparency for students.

While ACS students value the program for its flexibility, the amount of choice can be overwhelming for some students. In particular, the PRT members indicated during the site visit that students found the recently introduced Open electives to be confusing. Prior to Fall 2022, students took Professionally-related courses from a select list whereas Open electives can be taken from any program across campus, including the students' own program. Since the ACS program, already characterized by a high level of electivity, has 9 Open electives, as opposed to the more usual 6-7 Open electives in Arts, it is obvious why ACS students might feel overwhelmed. Some of the proposed changes to the ACS program, such as the move to the Common Platform, the introduction of co-operative education and the requirement to take a certain number of introductory interdisciplinary courses, will necessarily reduce the number of Open electives. The ACS program council will need to reflect on the appropriate number of Open electives, within the ranges allowed by Policy 2, but in general, it seems best to bring the number closer to that of other undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Arts. A balance is needed between helping students to take control of their educational journey and ensuring that students develop proficiency in the skills and learning outcomes associated with this degree.

Dean's Response:
As noted in the response to PRT Recommendation 2, the Dean places a high priority on ensuring that students' learning progresses systematically toward proficiency as defined in the new Program Learning Outcomes and is pleased to note the Program's commitment to achieving this curricular outcome. Consideration of the number of Open Electives, as well as how best to demonstrate proficiency in final year courses (see Dean's Response to PRT Recommendation 5), will undoubtedly coincide with discussions about the Program mission.

Recommendation 9
- Identify obstacles in securing full-time faculty to teach courses in the ACS Program and take measures to overcome those obstacles so as to ensure a more consistent and sustainable delivery of the program.
- Hire one permanent and dedicated faculty member with interdisciplinary expertise and pedagogical breadth to teach across the ACS curriculum.
- Consider retaining the co-teaching model for a carefully considered selection of program courses.

Program Response:
Agreed. While the question of stability in teaching personnel and administration is not directly addressed in the Executive Summary recommendations, it is a key consideration for the effective functioning of the program. Securing full-time faculty to teach in the ACS program has been a recurrent problem for the ACS director. With the development of stand-alone programs in all FOA departments, TFA members tend to teach mainly in their own undergraduate and graduate programs. The ACS director makes a request each year for TFA to teach in the program. Previously, TFA members were attracted by the possibility of team-teaching core ACS courses; however, this option will no longer be available as of Fall 2024. Some TFA members were hired with explicit mention of their teaching duties in ACS; however, as time goes by, and new opportunities emerge, this connection is sometimes forgotten. New initiatives are required to attract TFA to teach in the program, preferably with a 3-4 year commitment for greater continuity.

Another option, previously mentioned, might be to create an interdisciplinary special topics course that could entice TFA to bring their area of expertise to the ACS students.

The ACS program relies heavily on CUPE instructors, many of whom are longstanding members of the FOA, with excellent teaching skills, who have often taught in ACS. They are highly valued members of the program and provide a sense of continuity for our students. While responsible for language on the job posting and generally consulted on the hiring process, the ACS director is not able to hire instructors without the support of a department that has a Contract Lecturer Appointments Committee (CLAC). One way of bringing greater continuity would be to offer multi-year contracts to CUPE 1 instructors who teach ACS core courses.

It has also been suggested in the PPR self-study that the program could be housed in an existing department in the Faculty of Arts to give it greater stability and to facilitate hiring. Both Philosophy and the LLC have been mentioned as possible host departments. This is one possible option that may be considered in consultation with the Office of the Dean of Arts and the relevant departments. Any administrative structure would need to ensure interdisciplinarity and the collaboration of all departments that regularly teach in the program.

a) "Hire one permanent and dedicated faculty member with interdisciplinary expertise and pedagogical breadth to teach across the ACS curriculum."
   This is certainly an interesting possibility to be discussed with the Dean of Arts Office. As previously mentioned, some TFA were hired with an obligation to teach courses in ACS in addition to their program courses. It might be possible to second TFA members from their department to the ACS program either permanently or for a 3-4 year period on a rotating basis. Ideally the Program Director would also teach in the ACS program. It is certainly of great benefit to students to know that there are core faculty supporting the program.

b) "Consider retaining the co-teaching model for a carefully considered selection of program courses."
   Agreed. While the co-teaching option has the benefit of emphasizing interdisciplinarity as well as attracting TFA to teach in the ACS program, it is relatively costly and thus difficult to justify, given current financial constraints. As we concentrate on increasing enrolments in the program and in individual courses, it may be possible, in consultation with the Office of the Dean of Arts, to request team-teaching in a small number of core courses on pedagogical grounds, where numbers warrant such a model. ES Recommendation 8 a) also considers the issue of teaching models, urging the maintenance and enhancement of small-group tutorials in required, core classes. The ACS Director and the Office of the Dean of Arts will work together to ensure the best teaching models for the ACS students.

Dean's Response:
The Dean recognizes that a lack of TFA teaching in ACS has been a longstanding issue and concern and is hopeful that a re-imagined, innovative Program and curriculum will attract TFA to teach in the Program. There needs to be clarity on what it would mean to second TFA into ACS before such an option would be considered by the Dean. Issues of equity in teaching loads would be considered as part of any such discussions.

As noted by the Program, co-teaching is an expensive endeavour, especially in the face of serious budgetary constraints. This is a primary reason that the Faculty of Arts has moved away from this model

of teaching. Co-teaching can also raise issues of equity in teaching loads. Any proposal to re-institute co-teaching for the Program would need to have a strong pedagogical rationale to be considered.

There is nothing in the CUPE 1 Collective Agreement to prohibit multi-year appointments, but doing so means that we would need to commit to a certain teaching load for each term (and year) of the contract. That is difficult to do when CUPE sections are generally driven by demand (or replacements for faculty who are on leave) and in light of current fiscal constraints.

Recommendation 10
Recognize the extent of the work required to implement the recommendations in this report and in the self-study by means of extra short-term supports for the Director, perhaps in the form of an additional course-release or increased stipend.

Program Response:
The Interim ACS director appreciates the PRT's consideration in this matter but is not hopeful of a positive outcome.

Dean's Response:
Under the current significant financial constraints, the Dean of Arts is not in the position to support this recommendation.

Recommendation 11
Enhance student access to academic advising by providing additional training and support for the Program Coordinator.

Program Response:
Agreed. The lack of stability in the Program Coordinator position has been a significant issue over the last two years of the program. Our current interim Program Coordinator is a former ACS graduate who has useful insights into the program and is very supportive of students but is currently shared with the English department. A process is underway to hire a new Program Coordinator. The FOA provides some training support to staff. In the past, the Office of the Registrar's Advising Network has offered a number of useful training opportunities for academic advisors. There may be other training opportunities to be explored.

Dean's Response:
The Dean of Arts supports efforts to improve academic advising, with an attentiveness to budgetary constraints

Recommendation 12
Assign space dedicated to the program students to help establish a sense of belonging within a community and supportive network.

Program Response:
Agreed. Space is a rare commodity at TMU. However, we recognize that in an interdisciplinary program such as ACS, students would benefit greatly from space reserved specifically for them. It is also preferable that the ACS Director and the ACS Program Administrator be on the same floor, which is currently not the case. As with all programs, ACS students may book space in the Arts Lounge and this is an option that we will exercise so that our students can develop a sense of community. We will work

with the Office of the Dean of Arts to ensure greater opportunities for students to meet and, hopefully, a common space for students to gather.

In the Executive Summary, Recommendation 8 also deals with refreshing Student Engagement in a number of ways. Following the example of previous ACS Directors, the Interim Director of ACS has begun work with ACS students, particularly the ACS Director in the Society of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (SASSH) to renew student engagement. A student has been hired to work on ACS social media and provide student blog content to our website. This will be a matter of continuous engagement. Recruiting students to the ACS Program Council and ACS Course Union has begun. ACS students will no doubt participate in the SASSH project to restart the ARTeries conference, now named Kaleidoscope. The "Mix and Mingle" career night will be resumed in a more frugal but effective format.

Dean's Response:
The Dean recognizes that student engagement is an important contributor to the reputation and ongoing health and vitality of the Program and commends ACS for its commitment to fostering such engagement. As noted by the Program, space is an ongoing issue at TMU. Notwithstanding, the Director, Strategic Planning, Finance and Administration in the Faculty of Arts is available to work with the Program to meet its space needs when opportunities to do so arise.

Recommendation 13
Allocate resources for developing an alumni network and strengthening the Program Advisory Committee.

Program Response:
Agreed. This recommendation corresponds directly to ES Recommendation 9. Some work has been done on the creation of an alumni network, largely based on information gleaned from LinkedIn. We will continue this work to foster a greater sense of community. ACS has the resources for such a project, which may require us to hire an RA. ACS does not currently have an up-to-date Program Advisory Council, as stipulated in Policy 158, but intends to develop the PAC to create a group that can provide support, advice and active participation in ACS events. We anticipate that a number of alumni will agree to join the PAC, which can be very helpful in supporting events and initiatives, bringing in new ideas from outside the university, and offering mentoring opportunities.

Dean's Response:
The existence of Program Advisory Councils (PACs) is a defining feature of undergraduate programming at TMU and the Dean is pleased to note that the Program will create a PAC in compliance with Policy 158. The Dean commends the plans to launch an alumni network and encourages the Program to consult with the Director of Advancement in the Faculty of Arts, as well as the Manager of Student Relations and Development for the Society of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities, for support in this work.

Recommendation 14
Feature highlights of the research and creative accomplishments of the teaching faculty on the program website, and establish an ACS Speakers Series in which faculty could present their work to the ACS and wider TMU community.

Program Response:
Agreed. ACS can certainly develop its website to reflect the research strengths of our teaching personnel. The idea of an ACS Speakers series is also excellent. We may call upon our PAC as well as our Course

Union and the FOA Student Society SASSH to support such an initiative. The ACS website will be greatly improved by including stories about our students, our teaching personnel and our faculty.

Dean's Response:
The Dean of Arts encourages the Program to consult with the Faculty of Arts' Communications Team to develop strategies that enhance the Program's website and social media promotions. The Director of Communications will also be able to provide advice on how to disseminate and promote information on faculty research and other forms of work.

Recommendation 15
If the program decides to keep the language requirement, they should include a consideration of students' heritage languages, additional sections of the popular American Sign Language course, and Indigenous languages.

Program Response:
Agreed. Since the program's inception, ACS students have been required to choose between ACS 106 Introduction to Language or a language course. Unfortunately, the current list of languages is out-of-date and does not include newly developed courses in Mohawk that are currently offered by the LLC Department. The courses in Mohawk have been formally submitted as a calendar change for the 2024-2025 calendar. Students are also able to take university-wide courses in other languages to fulfill this requirement. The LLC department has several courses in ASL with course offerings largely reflecting student demand and course intentions. The requirement to take ACS 106 Introduction to Language or a language course reflects the Humanities perspective in the ACS curriculum, countering the discourse of linguistic privilege and linguistic majoritarianism.

Dean's Response:
Questions about the necessity of a language requirement to meet the new Program Learning Outcomes will be addressed as part of the discussions surrounding the re-imagining of the Program's mission. If the Program finds that retaining a language requirement aligns with the Program's new mission, the Dean supports the expansion of the list of languages that students can use to fulfill this requirement.

Implementation Plan

Priority Recommendation - Curricular renewal # 1: MIssion statement Clarify and develop program mission statement, program goals and curricular learning outcomes.
Rationale: Both the ACS self-study and the PRT report have identified a sense of mission drift in the Arts and Contemporary Studies program as it has developed over time, particularly with the repeated addition of new "options" from four 8-course options in 2004 to nine 13-course options at present. As we prune an overgrown curriculum with more than 400 core courses, the ACS Program Council, in consultation with the Dean of Arts Office, must identify the core goals of the Faculty of Arts undergraduate interdisciplinary program.
Implementation Actions: ● Create a mission statement based on program strengths to meet the needs of students ● Underline the specificity of Arts and Contemporary Studies as an undergraduate interdisciplinary

program in the Humanities and Social Sciences
● Review current curriculum and learning outcomes in terms of consistency with mission statement and program goals
● In consultation with Student Recruitment and the Dean of Arts Office, consider a new name for the program that would clearly express the scope of the program and enhance student recruitment.

Timeline: High priority: Winter 2024 term with collaboration of Program Council Members with results presented at Program Council by April 2024; a name change would not likely be achieved before 2025.

Responsibility for
a) leading initiative: ACS Interim Director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: ACS Program Council, Associate-Dean (US), Dean of Arts Office

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Priority Recommendation #2 - Curricular renewal: Review program options: Review, remove or revise the disciplinary and interdisciplinary options in the light of the program's mission statement and distinctive learning outcomes. This will entail the elimination of a number of the existing options and the conversion of existing 13-course options into 8-course concentrations, in order to streamline the curriculum and provide students with flexible yet focused curricular choices.

Rationale: Both the ACS PPR self-study and the PRT report have questioned the role of the disciplinary and, to a lesser extent, the interdisciplinary options, especially given the low number of students who choose to enroll in the 13-course options. Program students often praise the program for its flexibility and considerable student choice; completing a 13-course option in addition to the required core courses of the ACS program is overly constraining. Furthermore, with the introduction of discipline-based options in English (2011), History (2012), Philosophy (2013) and LIR (2016), the disciplinary options in ACS have become redundant, leading to a lack of clarity in student recruitment goals in the Faculty of Arts. At the same time, the interdisciplinary options offer a sufficient number of discipline-based courses for interested students, for example, those who wish to pursue a career in teaching.

Implementation Actions:
● Review of disciplinary and interdisciplinary "options" with the intent to eliminate any that do not serve the overall goals of the ACS program.
● Renewal of remaining "options" through conversion to 8 course concentrations with well-defined learning goals and outcomes; deletion and addition of relevant courses; review role of capstones; limit number of core electives per concentration in order to further streamline curriculum and ensure adherence to academic mission.
● Consult with Curriculum Advising on the best way to ensure academic continuity for students while eliminating some options and converting others to concentrations
● Prepare and submit curricular changes to the Academic Standards Committee

Timeline: High priority: 2023-2024 academic year with submission of proposal to VPA by May 31, 2024; beginning in Fall 2025

Responsibility for

a) leading initiative: Interim ACS Director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: Program Council, Dean and Associate-Dean, Faculty of Arts; Registrar's Office, Curriculum Advising

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Priority Recommendation #3 - Curricular renewal: Centering of Equity and Diversity in Teaching and Curriculum

Rationale: The PRT report and the ACS self-study, including the SWOT analysis, have criticized the existing curriculum as being overly eurocentric. The PRT members recommend the centering of a more inclusive, critical focus across the entire curriculum, favouring a thematic approach over an approach based on historical periodisation.

Implementation Actions:
● review ACS Core courses to decenter eurocentric approaches in favour of EDIA perspectives; ensure that ACS 100 introduces students to anti-racist, decolonial, EDIA perspectives, followed by more advanced courses ensuring reinforcement and proficiency at the advanced level.
● promote a hands-on approach to EDIA, with community-based action, team-building and leadership skills
● consider the introduction of a required course in Indigenous Studies taken from existing Faculty of Arts and/or TMU courses as appropriate.
● consider the creation of an ACS XXX Special Topics course that would include and create curricular space for instructors of Indigenous Studies, Black Studies, LGBTQ studies, Critical Cultural Studies, and other areas that highlight research by equity-seeking groups.
● add Indigenous language courses to the list of language courses offered in first year ACS. **ACS Program Council has voted in favour of adding Mohawk courses as of Fall 2024. This change will appear in the 2024-2025 calendar.**

Timeline: High priority: approvals in place for submission by May 31st, 2024 for 2025 calendar changes

Responsibility for
a) leading initiative: Interim ACS Director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: ACS Program Council, Dean of Arts Office

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Priority Recommendation #4 - Curricular renewal: Review and revise the ACS curriculum in order to ensure rigor and appropriate progression of learning outcomes from introduction to reinforcement to proficiency throughout the curriculum.

Rationale: Both the PRT and PPR self-study identified weaknesses in the ACS curriculum; for example, the ability for students to include an excessive number of lower-level introductory courses as core electives, exacerbated by access to nine Open electives, which also place no constraints on level of study. The analysis of learning outcomes in the self-study also indicated that both the ACS 800 and the ACS 900 or equivalent capstones were required for full proficiency. As with all programs, review of

curriculum is an iterative process to ensure that rigor is being maintained.

Implementation Actions:
●Introduce greater scaffolding of courses, ensuring introduction, reinforcement and proficiency coverage of learning outcomes.
● Limit the number of lower level courses that students may select from the Core elective Table (currently Table I).
● Require all students to take at least one of the introductory courses to the concentrations to enhance interdisciplinarity.
● Ensure that students are required to take both the ACS 800 experiential learning capstone and ACS 900 or equivalent seminar capstone.
● Ensure that the overall mission and nature of the program is clearly articulated to students at all levels of study

Timeline: High priority: 2023-2024 academic year with submission of proposal to VPA by May 31, 2024; beginning in Fall 2025

Responsibility for
a) leading initiative: Program Director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: ACS Program Council, Dean of Arts Office: Associate-Dean (US)

Priority Recommendation #5 - Curricular renewal: Common Platform: Integrate the ACS curriculum with the Faculty of Arts first year Common Platform

Rationale: The PRT, the PPR self-study and the previous PPR self-study all recommend that the ACS program join the first year Common Platform in order to ensure greater flexibility for first year students who may wish to transfer from one Faculty of Arts program to another. While ACS contains many elements of the Common Platform, including the required core courses SSH 105, SSH 205 and SSH 301, it is the only Faculty of Arts program that is not on the Common platform. The move to the Common Platform will also facilitate the addition of a co-op option to ACS.

Implementation Actions:
●Modify ACS curriculum to limit the number of ACS-coded courses in first year to two.
● Add Common Platform Table I to ACS; ACS Table I will become Table II (Concentrations).

Timeline: High priority: by May 31st, 2024 for 2025 calendar changes

Responsibility for
a) leading initiative: Interim ACS director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: ACS Program Council, Dean of Arts Office, Associate-Dean (US), Curriculum Advising

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Priority Recommendation #6 - Curricular renewal: Experiential learning: Expand and entrench

experiential learning throughout the curriculum, most notably through the addition of ACS to the existing Faculty of Arts co-op.

Rationale: Both the PRT and the PPR Self-study emphasize the importance of experiential learning and specifically recommend the addition of co-op, which students have requested for some time. Because ACS is the only remaining Faculty of Arts program not yet approved for co-op, this creates issues for student recruitment in a program where enrolments have become a challenge, as in many other Liberal Arts programs. At the same time, our experience in the Faculty of Arts demonstrates that not all students will participate in co-op. It is important for experiential learning and community engagement to occur at all levels in the program, given its importance for career-focused learning as well as the development of leadership and interpersonal skills.

Implementation Actions:
1) Addition of ACS to the Faculty of Arts co-op
● Add ACS to the group of programs joining the current Faculty of Arts co-op option in Fall 2026.
● Add SSH 104 Co-op Preparation to the current curriculum in Term 3 in place of the Open elective slot for non-co-op students.
2) Other experiential learning initiatives
● Require ACS 800 of all graduates; review the course to ensure its experiential, career-related content. This may include collaboration with the TMU Career & Co-Op Centre.
● Integrate leadership, teamwork and interpersonal skills into the curriculum as part of experiential learning in a professional context.
● Consider revising ACS 401 as a community-action research course with mixed-quantitative and qualitative applied methods.
● Enhance experiential learning in other required courses at all levels; e.g through guest lectures and field trips.

Timeline: The addition of co-op is high priority for the ACS program, given the competitive disadvantage of being the sole Faculty of Arts program without co-op. Co-op proposal by May 31st, 2024 for 2025 calendar changes; other curricular changes (e.g. requirement of ACS 800) may need to wait until May 31st, 2025.

Responsibility for
a) leading initiative: Interim ACS director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: Dean of Arts Office, Curriculum Advising, Career and Co-op Office

Priority Recommendation #7 Governance Structure: Strengthen the governance structure of ACS in its relation to the Faculty of Arts departments in order to ensure greater continuity for students, teaching personnel and staff, in collaboration with the Office of the Dean of Arts.

Rationale: The PPR self-study and the PRT both emphasize the difficulties that the ACS program faces in ensuring a greater balance of teaching between TFA and CUPE 1 Contract Lecturers. This requires greater coordination with teaching departments. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of representation of all ACS teaching departments in the ACS Program Council, as well as lack of CUPE 1 representation, according to current by-laws.

Implementation Actions:
● Revise Program by-laws to include greater participation from all departments teaching in the program; obtain necessary approvals, including Senate approval by June 2024
● Identify obstacles in securing full-time faculty to teach courses in the ACS program and take measures to overcome those obstacles so as to ensure a more consistent and sustainable delivery program of the program.
● Assign a limited number of dedicated faculty members and long-term sessional instructors with interdisciplinary expertise and pedagogical breadth to teach the ACS curriculum for specific time periods. To support recruitment, individual faculty members would be invited to showcase their research; for example, by teaching ACS XXX Special Topics in Interdisciplinary Studies.
● Consider retaining the co-teaching model for a carefully considered selection of program courses.

Timeline: High priority for Program by-laws: to be approved by Program Council in Winter 2024 and by Senate for ; teaching assignment strategies to be discussed with the Dean of Arts Office in time for Fall 2024 and ongoing.

Responsibility for
a) leading initiative: Interim ACS director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: ACS Program Council, Dean of Arts Office, Faculty of Arts Chairs

Priority Recommendation #8 - Program Advisory Council: Establish a Program Advisory Council by reaching out to alumni and other professionals from relevant fields.

Rationale: Policy 158 stipulates that all TMU programs must have a Program Advisory Council. The PAC for ACS indicated in the current TMU calendar has not been contacted in many years. An ad hoc Program Advisory group was gathered together for the purposes of the PPR but there is currently no official PAC with members approved by the Dean of Arts Office. The PAC can be useful in providing advice and networking opportunities for students.

Implementation Actions:
● In consultation with the ACS Program Council, the Manager of Student Relations and Development, and the Faculty of Arts Development Officer, draw up a list of potential candidates to propose to the Dean of Arts for inclusion in the PAC.
● Follow up regularly with newly established PAC; prepare yearly report of networking activities with the PAC

Timeline: The composition of the PAC should reflect the revised ACS curriculum. A new PAC should be set up by Fall 2024 at the latest.

Responsibility for
a) leading initiative: Interim ACS director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: ACS Program Council, Dean of Arts, Manager of Student Relations and Development, Development Officer

Priority Recommendation #9 - Student Engagement: Refresh Student Engagement in collaboration

with the Office of the Dean of Arts and the Student Experience Team
Rationale: As noted in the PPR self-study, attention to student engagement in the ACS program has suffered recently in the wake of changes in administration. The PRT also notes the importance of student engagement in a program that does not have its own faculty or its own space. In consultation with the Dean of Arts Office, ACS will endeavour to enhance the student experience by various means, as indicated below.
Implementation Actions: ● Maintain and enhance small-group tutorials in required classes where appropriate and feasible. ● Create dedicated sections of the required first-year program courses, where feasible, so that incoming ACS students can benefit from the peer-support of a cohort. ● Renew student participation in ACS Program Council by Winter 2024 ● Relaunch and renew the ACS Course Union by Winter 2024 ● Pursue a range of co-curricular activities such as alumni panels, field trips and experiential learning, in collaboration with the Manager of Student Relations and Development, ACS Course Union and SASSH
Timeline: Medium Priority and iterative: Consultation with the Dean of Arts office regarding tutorial groups and dedicated sections is ongoing; students have been elected to Program Council, which will meet in Winter 2024; names have been collected for the ACS CU, which should be set up in Winter 2024; discussions on co-curricular activities will be ongoing.
Responsibility for

Priority Recommendation #10 - Student Engagement: Launch an Alumni Network for mentorship and engagement to the benefit of past and current students
Rationale: Enhanced alumni experiences can contribute to student extracurricular engagement and help sustain a variety of priorities and objectives above, especially professional and experiential learning.
Implementation Actions: ● Follow up on work previously done, in collecting the names of ACS graduates from 2007 to 2022, by searching LinkedIn profile for contact information. ● Reach out to alumni on social media and email to include them in ACS initiatives and events, including the Program Advisory Council; highlight ACS alumni on a renewed ACS website. ● Launch student-alumni networking and mentoring opportunities
Timeline: Medium Priority and iterative: Summer 2024
Responsibility for a) leading initiative: ACS Program Director with RA assistance b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: Office of the Dean of Arts, Manager of Student Relations and Development

Priority Recommendation #11 - Student Engagement: Assign space dedicated to the program students to help establish a sense of belonging within a community and supportive network, in collaboration with the Office of the Dean of Arts.

Rationale: The PRT and the PPR underline the need for a common meeting space for ACS students especially since, as an interdisciplinary program, ACS instructors belong to many different programs. Furthermore, although the ACS Director and the ACS Program Administrator are currently on the same floor, they are not in a contiguous space, which impedes the sense of a program home.

Implementation Actions:
●Maximize access to the Arts Lounge for drop-ins and events.
● Organize events where students can meet with other ACS students, alumni and instructors
● Discuss with the Dean of Arts Office, the possibility of creating gathering space for students in ACS as well as ensuring greater proximity between the offices of the ACS Director and the Program Administrator

Timeline: Medium Priority: ACS has started to bring together ACS students on campus for events in the Faculty of Arts lounge and elsewhere on campus. Given the constraints on space at TMU, the possibility of dedicated space for the ACS program is a long-term project and may be discussed in the next PPR.

Responsibility for
a) leading initiative: ACS Interim Director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: Dean of Arts Office, Manager of Student Relations and Development

Priority Recommendation #12 - Staff Support: Enhance student success to academic advising by providing additional training and support for the Program Administrator.

Rationale: The PPR self-study and the PRT report underlined the importance of staff support for the program, specifically the Program Administrator position, reflecting the importance of student advising.

Implementation Actions:
● Support staff initiatives in ensuring access and time allowed for training courses.
● Encourage collaboration with other Program Administrators, under the direction of the new Manager, Faculty Administration and Operations.

Timeline: Medium Priority: With the arrival of a new Manager, Faculty Administration and Operations in Winter 2024, we anticipate improved and ongoing training of administrative staff to be an iterative process.

Responsibility for
a) leading initiative: ACS Interim Director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: Dean of Arts Office, Manager of Faculty Administration and Operations.

Priority Recommendation #13 - ACS website and Speaker Series: Renew ACS website to feature highlights of the research and creative accomplishments of the teaching personnel on the program website, and, in collaboration with the Office of the Dean of Arts, consider the establishment of an ACS Speakers Series in which instructors could present their work to the Faculty of Arts and the wider TMU community.

Rationale: As part of community creation, the PRT recommends that the program website be redeveloped to highlight teaching personnel in the ACS program and that an ACS Speakers Series be developed to raise the profile of the program. These initiatives will be important to enhance the sense of community in the ACS program and to showcase its distinctiveness.

Implementation Actions:
● Consult with the Faculty of Arts Communications Strategy team on how to improve the ACS website
● Consult with ACS students, ACS Program Council, and instructors on how to best showcase faculty and student accomplishments
● Consult with ACS students, program council, Program Advisory Council, instructors and Manager of Student Relations and Development on the establishment of an ACS Speakers Series and the selection of guest speakers

Timeline: The improvement of the ACS website has begun but will take on momentum in Spring and Summer 2024; the development of a Speaker Series may be feasible for Fall 2024.

Responsibility for
a) leading initiative: ACS Interim Director
b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: Faculty of Arts Communications team, Management of Student Relations and Development, Dean of Arts Office, Student Advancement, Student Recruitment