

Communication, Popular Culture and Film Graduate and Undergraduate Program Review Four-Year Report (2018)

A. Summary of Review

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on June 6, 2011.

1. The academic programs offered by the Department of Communication, Popular Culture and Film which were examined as part of the review were:
 - BA Honours Film Studies
 - BA Honours Popular Culture Studies
 - BA Honours Media & Communication
 - BA Honours Business Communication
 - MA Popular Culture
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Christine Ramsay (University of Regina) and David Taras (Mount Royal University) and an internal reviewer: Michael Carter (Brock University).
3. The site visit occurred on March 16-18, 2014.
4. The Final Assessment Report was approved by Senate on December 3, 2014.
5. The reviewers assigned the following Outcome Category: Category 2, "Good Quality".
6. The next review of the graduate and undergraduate programs in the Department of Communication, Popular Culture and Film will be in 2021/22.

B. Recommendations

The reviewers provided 15 recommendations.

Recommendation #1(a)

Add a four-year pass degree...

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and implemented.

Implementation Plan

No further action required.

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Result:

Adding a four year pass degree has certainly increased the number of students who stay for year four. While these students don't qualify for honours, they often stay for and thus populate our experiential learning class. Since they have to be in a four year program to get into the EL course, this has helped staunch attrition. The numbers for the addition of the four-year pass include: 2015 - the first year it was implemented: June 2015 - 10; Oct 2015 - 4; June 2016 - 20; Oct 2016 - 25; June 2017 - 24; Oct 2017 - 16. Clearly, result of this action has been beneficial to the Unit.

Recommendation #1(b)

... and [add] 4th year Film courses to help staunch attrition.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be under consideration and expects that this issue will be addressed during the curriculum review process. The Department response suggests that the Unit is already considering appropriate strategies to move forward on this issue.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic Year 2014/15

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed

Action #1 Department undertook a comprehensive review of the Film curriculum as part of a Department-wide curriculum review. Changes include:	2013	2015
Action #2 Splitting FILM 2F90 into two half courses (FILM 2P90 and FILM 2P99 to help with retention.	2015	2017
Action #3 Adopting several cross-listed courses with MIWSFPA including VISA 2P97: Digital Video Art, VISA 2P99: Into to Sound Design, and DART 1F01: Acting for Non-majors as well as a new cross-listing course with Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures: SPAN 2P95: Latin and Iberian Film as a move to bolster retention and increase choice for our students, particularly in response to demand for more production hands/on experience.	2013	2017
Action #4 Creation of a new fourth year production class FILM 4P28: Special Topics in Video Production to meet with production demands of our students and encourage them to complete the four year degree.	2015	2016

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Result:

Our extensive Department-wide curriculum review has enabled us to accomplish more with less. By eliminating a few courses and putting others into rotation, we have been able to offer a few more courses to our Honours cohort. The new Business/Digital COMM hire has expanded the fourth-year offerings by developing a popular course in Big Data which serves our often underserved fourth year Business COMM majors. We hope our new ILTA hire in Business COMM (July 2018) might enable the development of one more fourth year course principally dedicated to our Business COMM majors, since they are our largest cohort.

The new fourth year media production class (FILM 4P28) is slowly gathering momentum through word-of-mouth and feedback has been very positive. It is our hope that, by expanding our production offerings (see above), we can move toward to keeping all of our best film majors for the four year degree rather than lose the best and the brightest to our collaborative program with Fanshawe College after third year. Feedback from our students about the Fanshawe programs has been on the negative side of mixed.

Recommendation #1(c)

Consider raising the entrance requirement to enhance program prestige.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #1(d)

Ensure more egalitarianism in supervision.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee’s jurisdiction. However, the Committee considers it to be worthy of consideration. ARC believes the Department is best-positioned to determine strategies to move forward on this issue within Collective Agreement guidelines.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #2 (a) and (b)

- a) Classrooms are overused and the 15-year-old technology needs to be revamped and
- b) Create a dedicated screening facility for film

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee’s jurisdiction. However, the Committee agrees that updated technology and access to the dedicated screening facility are essential requirements for the delivery of the program. The Committee believes that access to AS215 should be prioritized for classes in the program even if there are small numbers of students in the room. The Committee will bring this recommendation to the attention of Senate’s Information Technology and Infrastructure and Teaching and Learning Committees.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<p>Action #1 ARC considered these recommendations to be not accepted as they lie outside of the Committee’s jurisdiction, but undertook to bring them to the attention of relevant Senate committees.</p>	2015	2016
<p>Action #2 Redeployment of space following the move of MIWSFPA allowed for a dedicated screening space to replace AS 456. This room, ST 102, was renovated with updated equipment and made ready for Fall 2016</p>	2015	2016

Recommendation #2(c)

Maintain ongoing support to the learning internship with This is My Niagara.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC acknowledges the challenges faced by the Department due to changes in the budgeting process which have resulted in a net decrease of support for the learning internship. The Department and Deans have indicated that they remain committed to ongoing support for this program and therefore the Committee considers the recommendation to be accepted and implemented.

Implementation Plan

No further action required.

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Support for the internship program has been entrenched in the Departmental budget and in responsibilities of Departmental staff.	2015	2016
Action #2 Supervision of internships is included among the potential possibilities of the new ILTA position.	2017	2018

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Result:

Maintaining existing community contacts, and the ongoing work of recruiting new ones, remains a critical component of our EL course and we rely very heavily on the hard work of our administrative staff for this task. Since we are now adding a similar course to our M.A. PCUL degree, we would like to make a strong case for reassessment of the CPCF Coordinator's job description. While each faculty has a dedicated EL person, the time-consuming work required to run an experiential learning course with 50+ student placements per year is significant and well beyond the purview of the FOSS-Faculty-wide assistance available to us.

Recommendation #2(d)

Move TA offices closer to the department offices.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside the Committee's jurisdiction. The Department and Deans have indicated they are proceeding through normal channels of advocacy for these resources.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation not accepted.

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<p>Action #1 As a result of the move by certain units to the Marilyn I Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, space on the main campus has been freed up for TA offices. This new space is adjacent to departmental offices.</p>	2014	2016

Recommendation #3(a)

Hire a Business Communication specialist.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. The Committee expects that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these resources.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<p>Action #1 Although ARC did not accept this recommendation, the Department sought this position through normal channels and a tenure-track position in Business Communication with a Digital focus was advertised and a person was hired.</p>	2015	2015
<p>Action #2 We also made a successful request - through normal channels - for an ILTA position in Business Communication in Fall 2017 and are currently waiting for the deadline for submission of applications for that position.</p>	2017	2018

Recommendation #3(b)

Hire a Digital Culture/Media specialist (possible specialties include emerging technologies; transmedia, games studies, social media; media literacy)

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. The Committee expects that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these resources.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The new tenure-track faculty member was hired in July 2015 for the Business Communication position. This person's area of research greatly enhances the digital expertise available in the department.	2015	2015

Recommendation #3(c)

Explore the possibility of a CRC in one of the areas of strength (Film or Popular Culture) or in the new area of Digital Culture/Media.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic Year 2014/15

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<p>Action #1 The Department submitted an application in the internal competition in Summer/Fall 2014 for a Canada Research Chair in Digital Media. The application was unsuccessful.</p>	2014	2015

Recommendation #3(d)

Replace the 10-year LTA in Film with a tenure-track position.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. The Committee expects that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these resources.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Result:

We underscore the fact that even as our department continues to grow and we have been granted two retirement replacements, we have lost two long term LTAs in the past five years.

Recommendation #3(e)

Create a plan to manage the transition into retirement of several key senior faculty members (particularly in Film).

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted. The Committee expects that this planning will form part of the curriculum review process.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Chair successfully negotiated with Dean and Provost for replacements for two retiring faculty after undertaking a comprehensive review of curriculum to determine areas of greatest need.	2015	2016
Action #2 The department hired a new tenure-track Film Studies colleague to replace one of our two retirements (July 2016).	2015	2016
Action #3 The department hired a new tenure-track Film/Popular Culture colleague to replace our second retirement (July 2017).	2016	2017

Recommendation #3(f)

Encourage current faculty of the importance of securing funding to enhance graduate and undergraduate programs.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction and has implications with regard to the Collective Agreement. The Committee recognizes that the Department and Deans have indicated support for this recommendation in their responses.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Result:

While this recommendation was not accepted by ARC, here is a sample of some of the successful grant applications of our Faculty in the past three years:

Karen Smith - Mozilla Research Grant - 2017 - "Ad-ons for Privacy: Open Source Advocacy Tactics for Internet Health" - \$32,250

Karen Smith, "Project Open Source Open Society," Social Justice Research Institute - 2017-2018 - \$7,000

Karen Smith - Council for Research in the Social Sciences - 2015-17 - "Leaning to Code and Engage with Open Data" - \$2000

Peter Lester - CRISS - March 2017 "Gauges of War: Sixteen Millimetre Film in Wartime Canada" - \$2921

Peter Lester - BSIG - December 2017 - "Reconstructing the Past, archiving the future: An Institutional Memory Project" - \$4568

Scott Henderson, CRISS - 2017 - Research Assistant Program - \$2000
 Cristina Santos - CRISS - 2017 - Research Assistant Program - \$5000
 Marian Brediin - CRISS - 2014 - Transmedia Research Group - \$2000

Recommendation #4(a)

Institute one third or fourth year production course with two editing suites (high end Macs).

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be under consideration. The Committee expects that this issue will be addressed during the curriculum review process.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The Department undertook a comprehensive review of the Film curriculum as part of a department-wide curriculum review. Among a host of new cross-listings (see comments under recommendation 1(b), a new fourth year production class was introduced in Fall 2016 and has now successfully run twice.	2015	2016

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Result:

Thus far, we have not had to update our editing suite, since it continues to perform well with the existing software. An upgrade in the near future will likely be necessary, given the endless often minor teach upgrades and forced obsolescence of information and communication technologies and their ruthless, unsustainable business models.

Recommendation #4(b)

[Curriculum changes in emerging fields such as:] Digital cultures/media/e-commerce.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be under consideration. The Committee expects that this issue will be addressed during the curriculum review process.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The tenure-track faculty member hired in July 2015 has added a course in Big Data at the fourth year level.	2015	2016
Action #2 Following extended consultation, our UPC submission for 2016-17 led to modification and revisions to the language of all of our COMM courses that incorporate digital media and digital culture studies. This includes COMM 1F90, COMM 2P90, COMM 2P91, COMM 3P90, COMM 3P92 as well as changes to our Concentration in Digital Culture and our Minor in Digital Culture.	2015	2017
Action #3 A second-year digital culture course (2P26, 2P90 or 2P91) is now required by both Business Comm and Media Comm majors to provide sufficient background for upper year courses.	2017	2018

Section C - Summative Analysis and Evaluation

1) To what extent has the Unit achieved the improvements suggested by the reviewers?

Overall, the impact of the program review was a productive exercise for CPCF and we have responded to all of the reviewers' recommendations that fell under the purview of our responsibilities. We have acted upon "First Priority" Recommendations 1 b) adding fourth year film courses to help staunch attrition; 3 c) making a bid for a CRC in one of our areas of strength (unsuccessful); 3 e) managing the retirement and replacement of three faculty members in the past five years; and 4 b) making several significant changes after extensive Department-wide curriculum review by adding to our digital cultures/media/ecommerce offerings. And we have eliminated or moved other courses into rotation for greater efficiency. In sum, we have responded to

suggestions for improvement offered by the reviewers in a timely and dedicated manner.

2) What overall impact has it had on the Unit's programs?

As several senior faculty members in Film have retired, it has been crucial to think about how the department can simultaneously remain true to its strong disciplinary roots in Film Studies and keep pace with emerging media, digitization, and the changing field of media studies more broadly. The review process enabled this kind of critical, self-reflective thinking about potential academic and scholarly responses to the rapidly changing media environment. As part of our curriculum review, we eliminated several courses, modified and moved others into rotation, increased our fourth-year offerings, and split a second-year full credit film course into two halves to help staunch attrition.

We have also mobilized the Department to re-engage with other disciplinary units at Brock with whom our previous partnerships had lapsed (for example, VISA and DART). This allowed us to increase choices for our majors by giving them more course options from these other units. It is our hope that by better servicing the student demand for more hands-on media production experience through MIWSFPA and our own offerings, we can keep our strongest cohort of Film majors here at Brock for all four years of their degree program rather than have them move on to collaborative programs such as Fanshawe after year three. We have done all of this with a relatively small increase in our full-time faculty. While we have hired two new faculty to replace retirements in Film and Popular Culture and added a new tenure track position in Business Communication and Digital Media, we have also lost two consistently renewed LTA positions, one in Film and one in COMM/Popular Culture.

3) Is the Unit adopting a process of continuous quality improvement for its programs?

As part of the expansive review process, we have been compelled to think about *how* we want the programs we offer to evolve and grow. Business Communication continues to be our area of strongest growth and we are challenged to find ways to best serve those students. As part of that effort, we hope the addition of a three-year ILTA position (July 2018) will help to provide greater consistency and stability in the course requirements for those majors, particularly in first and second year. Since we experience a significant influx of Business Communication majors in second year - particularly students migrating out of the Goodman School - it is crucial for our majors to get the necessary background and supports to succeed in their upper year courses in Communication. The Digital media component of the COMM program is also showing enormous strength as a result of our revamped course offerings, our new hire, and increased student demand.

4) How well do the programs now align with Brock University strategic priorities?

CPCF has been a leader in the development of Experiential Learning for the past seven years and this student-centred, experience-based course in fourth year continues to be supported by the unit and by FOSS more generally. This clearly aligns with both the Experiential Learning and Community Engagement aspects of Brock's Strategic Plan, as does our ongoing Brock University Film Society (BUFS), now in its third decade. The experiential learning course is in high demand and is a hugely beneficial component of the degree for all of our majors and for the community more

broadly. It is keeping many students, who might otherwise leave with a three-year degree, at Brock for a fourth year in order to gain valuable workplace experience and to engage with various organizations around the region: a win-win situation. We hope that the staff and resources required to maintain community contacts and run a complex course such as this will continue given the increasing enrolments that this course continues to garner, and our recent decision to add a graduate level experiential learning for our MA PCUL degree.

5) How does this review and its results position the programs as the Unit moves into the next review cycle?

Looking forward, to help prepare for the next review cycle, the Chair of our Curriculum Committee will begin the process of curriculum mapping this spring in advance of our annual department retreat (May 2018). We are also facing two more retirements in 2019/20 for which we must prepare. Overall, this review has enabled the kind of critical self-reflection and decisive action that has made CPCF simultaneously stronger and more nimble. We have come together to respond to recommendations in a consultative and productive way.

We are a growing department, ever mindful of working collaboratively to deliver the best student experience we can provide and modifying our curriculum accordingly. We are cultivating new relationships with programs across the university and working to improve paths to student retention and success. We have participated in a FOSS-wide retention initiative (2017/18) geared specifically to our first-year students by hiring a TA/facilitator to run workshops for those students struggling in our large intro classes (COMM 1F90 and FILM 1F94). Finally, we would add that CPCF runs as a financially sound, efficient and responsible unit. We believe that this positions us well moving into the next Program Review (2021/22) and into the Provincial Enrolment Corridor regime.

D. ARC Final Summary

In final summary of the 2013/14 cyclical academic review of the programs offered by the Department of Communication, Popular Culture and Film, ARC has determined the following:

1. The Reviewers' Recommendations have been addressed satisfactorily.
2. The Unit has established a direction for next steps as it prepares for the next review cycle.
3. The Unit has achieved a broad-based, reflective and forward-looking self-assessment.