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***SUBMITTED TO OUCQA FOR INFORMATION – Oct 12, 2017***

***APPROVED BY TRENT UNIVERSITY’S SENATE COMMITTEE – Oct 10, 2017***

# CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE (CPRC)

# FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**CULTURAL STUDIES**

*(dated Sept 1, 2017)*

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| **DEGREE PROGRAMS BEING REVIEWED** | **BA Cultural Studies** |
| **EXTERNAL REVIEWERS** | **Dr. Steven Bailey, York University**  **Dr. Susan Lord, Queen’s University**  **Dr. Timothy Murray, Cornell University** |
| **INTERNAL REPRESENTATIVE** | **Dr. Nadine Changfoot, Political Studies, Trent University** |
| **YEAR OF REVIEW** | **2016-2017** |
| **DATE OF SITE VISIT** | **December 7 & 8, 2016** |
| **DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT BY CUST** | **March 1, 2018** |
| **DATE OF NEXT CYCLICAL REVIEW** | **2024-2025** |
| **DATE PREPARED BY CPRC** | **April 24, 2017** |
| **DATE APPROVED BY PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC** | **September 21, 2017** |
| **SIGNATURE OF PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC** | Provost Muldoon |

The Department of Cultural Studies offers a BA in Cultural Studies with four Specializations in Writing & Narrative; Film, Video & Media; Social Thought; and Image, Sound & Performance. The BA in Cultural Studies offers critical and creative literacy and deep analytical understanding about the ways in which culture is inextricable to economic, political and social power. The interdisciplinary character of Cultural Studies, its strong commitment to innovation in teaching, and its twin emphases on contemporary cultural and theoretical developments and traditional humanistic values match Trent’s interest in providing critical analytical skills to its undergraduate students.

**SUMMARY OF PROCESS**

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the BA Cultural Studies underwent a review. Three arm’s-length external reviewers (Dr. Steven Bailey, York University, Dr. Susan Lord, Queen’s University and Dr. Timothy Murray, Cornell University) and one internal member (Dr. Nadine Changfoot, Trent University) were invited to review the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to the university on December 7th and 8th, 2016.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR), in accordance with Trent University’s Institutional Quality Assurance Policy (IQAP), provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the undergraduate degree program. The report considers four evaluation documents: the Program’s Self-Study, the External Reviewers’ Report, the Program Response, and the Decanal Response.

A summary of the review process is as follows: the academic unit(s) completed a self-study which addressed all components of the evaluation criteria as outlined in Trent’s IQAP. Appendices included: Curriculum Vitae; Course Syllabi; Learning Outcomes; Enrolment, Retention and Student Data; Calendar Copy; TUFA Collective Agreement; Student Surveys; and Alumni Letters. Qualified external reviewers were invited to conduct a review of two degree programs which involved a review of all relevant documentation (self-study, appendices, IQAP) in advance of the site visit. A two-day site visit took place where reviewers met with senior administration, faculty and students.

Once the external reviewers’ report was received both the Program and Dean provided responses to the report. The Cyclical Program Review Committee (CPRC) reviewed and assessed the quality of the degree programs based on the four review documents and reported on: significant program strengths, opportunities for improvement and enhancement, and the implementation of recommendations.

The Implementation Plan identifies those recommendations selected for implementation, and specifies: proposed follow-up, who is responsible for leading the follow-up, and the specific timeline for addressing the recommendation, if applicable. Academic units, in consultation with the respective Dean(s), will submit an Implementation Report in response to the recommendations identified for follow-up. The Report is due March 1, 2018.

**SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM STRENGTHS**

* The emphasis on both experiential learning and on research creation is a distinct and valuable feature of the Cultural Studies undergraduate program, one clearly appreciated by its undergraduate students and relished by both its full- and part-time faculty complements.
* The 1000 and 2000-level courses, for example, provide a breadth of knowledge in introducing a range of areas within contemporary cultural studies, while the upper-level courses develop skills (both scholarly and creative, depending upon particular courses) that apply the historical and methodological work in the earlier years to more autonomous research (and research creation) practices.
* Both the thinking styles and creative activities evident in the upper-level courses reflect an ability to produce students capable of self-actualization and critical thought, crucial skills for professional life as well as political and cultural citizenship.
* The program is quite diligent in keeping up with current developments within cultural studies. Examples would include course material on gaming (a major area of cultural inquiry and critical thought), tactile media (likewise) and questions of cultural translation. The faculty are active in research across a wide range of areas of cultural studies, but they are consistently working at the forefront of theoretical and methodological developments in the wider meta-discipline and this research activity appears to be translated into pedagogical practice, an ideal state of affairs for an academic department.
* Another innovative aspect worth noting is the program’s close relationship with Peterborough’s growing cultural community, one enhanced by the program’s home within Traill College, providing proximity to much of the area’s cultural life.
* The program benefits from its location and facilities in Traill College, permitting both for intellectual cohesion and for synergy with cultural and artistic centers in Peterborough.
* The faculty are leaders in the respective fields, productive in research and scholarship, and articulating a particular and forceful approach to Cultural Studies.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT**

* There is some concern that one of the areas of specialization, “social thought,” attracts very few students and the program may wish to reconfigure the specializations so that this imbalance is corrected, particularly as many of the scholarly concerns reasonably grouped as “social thought” are present through virtually all of the program’s course offerings.
* The Program needs to better publicize its offering of experiential education opportunities.
* The program has developed excellent synergy with the new undergraduate program in Media Studies, and benefitted in spirit and production from its two new hires.
* Students express the need for a more seriously equipped and maintained multimedia creation space.
* Explore potential to increase enrollment in the honours program.

**COMPLETE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION 1**

**That adequate faculty resources be provided, with consideration for a Canada Research Chair in Cultural Studies.**

Program Response

The Program is in agreement with this recommendation.

Decanal Response

A number of recommendations focus on resources provided to the Department of Cultural Studies. While resources are clearly relevant to the operation and success of teaching and program design, the focus of the review is on the quality of the undergraduate program. The department is encouraged to submit proposals for future CRC positions.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

**That additional space and technical resources be provided to the program, including: studio space and editing suites; dark room and photo-chemical lab; MacBook Pro x 4 with software; scanner; 4K Still camera; lighting; tripods, and video projector.**

Program Response

The program commented that the acquisition of equipment is necessary in order for the Media Studies degree program to grow. The program will work with Traill College to develop ancillary space on that campus.

Decanal Response

The new makers and technological spaces proposed for the Bata Library renovation were developed with the needs of Cultural (and Media) Studies in mind. It is envisioned that the new technologies in these spaces will enable us to keep pace with the evolution of media to new forms, including for example haptic technologies, as resources permit. Some additional investment in technology was provided in conjunction with the most recent faculty hire, and the department will continue to be encouraged to use its discretionary funds to support modest purchases. Additional funds will depend on their availability, but the desirability for additional technological resources is recognized and understood.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

**That additional administrative support be provided.**

Program Response

The program could link the recommendation of a 0.5 administrative assistant to the previous recommendation of infrastructural improvements. A 0.5 administrator could split their time between managing the program’s maker space(s) and assisting in the office at peak times of year.

Decanal Response

The Dean’s Office will continue to work on improving processes and providing training to better support Academic Administrative Assistants and workflow at Trent.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**

1. **That a School of Media, Art and Cultural Studies be created.**
2. **That the BA and PhD programs be closely linked with the MA Theory, Culture and Politics.**
3. **That the PhD program consider offering a MPhil.**

Program Response

The Cultural Studies program is interested in investigating the recommendation of a School of Media, Art and Cultural Studies. Because it will entail extensive consultation with the stake-holding programs and then a lengthy approval process, we would like to leave the time-line for acting on this recommendation open. The program is also investigating options for an accelerated BA/MA.

Decanal Response

An accelerated BA/MA is an interesting idea and should be explored. The matter of adding another school to an already small humanities division raises complicated academic and resource issues that are outside the purview of this review.

**RECOMMENDATION 5**

1. **That increased communication take place between the undergraduate chair and graduate director to facilitate teaching, recruitment and experiential learning opportunities.**
2. **That program options, internship possibilities and graduating requirements be clearly communicated to students.**
3. **That website and social media be developed for purposes of recruitment, outreach and collaboration opportunities.**

Program Response

The program is not entirely clear what additional communication is required nor how greater communication between the Chair and the Director of the PhD program will facilitate teaching, recruitment or experiential learning at the undergraduate level.

1. The program agrees that more clarity is required.
2. The departmental website is due for redevelopment. Student assistance may be an option. The program will continue to work with the recruitment office to promote the humanities.

Decanal Response

With regard to 5 b), it is agreed that greater communication with students regarding their options, graduating requirements, internship possibilities, is important. There is some evidence that students find it difficult to navigate the program requirements and increased communication can assist with this issue.

Institutional knowledge regarding the new internship course will develop over the next few years and the department has already made significant inroads in this area. Clear, active communication about the internship opportunities will be required on an on-going basis.

**RECOMMENDATION 6**

**That a curriculum review take place, with a focus on streamlining the specializations.**

* **Rearticulate the ‘specializations’**
* **Remove ‘social thought’ as a specialization and make it an essential element of the other specializations**
* **Integrate or rename the other specializations**
* **Integrate ‘theory’ into the other streams**

Program Response

Without responding to the specific recommendations made by the Externals, the program recognizes the need to revise its specializations. Discussions will begin immediately with a view to submitting changes to the Undergraduate Studies Committee before October 2017. The university’s review of the nomenclature for Specializations, Options and Emphases will facilitate this discussion.

Decanal Response

The dean has also encouraged revision of the specialization streams and the suggestion here regarding the social thought stream sounds promising given its infusion throughout the other streams. It matters that these specializations are confusing to the “unstudied eye,” as this is the situation of many students in first and second year—the years for which retention and attracting existing Trent students to the program is most pressing.

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

**That the first year course include basic literacy skills, including: note-taking, basic reading skills, critical reading skills, argumentation, essay writing, citation and principles of critique.**

Program Response

The program agrees that note-taking, basic reading skills, critical reading skills, argumentation, essay writing, citation, and principles of critique should be emphasized in first year. Whether this is best done in the context of existing courses or in a dedicated ‘writing for the humanities’ course needs further discussion.

Decanal Response

It seems a bit odd to say that universities are “forced” to provide instruction in these areas given that learning, discovery, and creativity, is our reason for being. Such activities are not less important when undertaken by struggling first year students. In any case, the reviewers indicate that the department review the quality of learning in the first year courses with respect to these particular skills. The dean agrees that the department should look into this question with regard to first year instruction.

**RECOMMENDATION 8**

**That a separate Theatre program in Cultural Studies be developed only if resources are made available.**

Program Response

Currently CUST, ENGL, INDG and AGRS collaborate in the Emphasis in Theatre Studies. If the University eliminates the “Emphasis” category (as has been proposed as part of the review of nomenclature), we will need to find another way to offer a concentration in Theatre. If the university is able to act on the recommendation to support it, a program in Theatre Studies would be an excellent addition to the humanities at Trent. If that support cannot be guaranteed, the development of a Specialization within Cultural Studies and/or Options offered by several departments may be ways forward.

Decanal Response

While a theatre program is very desirable, it is presently very unlikely that Trent will have the resources to support one. As the university moves to the specialization and option nomenclature, the department will be encouraged to rename the emphasis as an “option.” (Unlike specializations, options will be interdisciplinary.) Because students will enroll in options upfront (unlike emphases which are only “chosen” upon graduation), the courses associated with the option may grow. If so, we may be able to attract more resources to support theatre programming at Trent. If it is not able to grow, the option will nonetheless continue to provide an exceptionally important educational experience and resource for students.

**RECOMMENDATION 9**

**That the department articulate ‘research creation’ for itself and integrate that understanding into the curriculum.**

Program Response

This is a very good recommendation. The undergraduate program already emphasizes research creation in a series of workshop and studio courses. We will explore ways in which we might better highlight this research creation in the undergraduate curriculum (without complicating the program requirements). Realigning our specializations may give us a way to do this.

Decanal Response

The dean agrees that this is a good recommendation, and worth communicating broadly. The challenge will be providing instructional and physical resources to support improvements and/or expansion in workshop and studio courses. As is true for fine art programs, courses in these areas can be exceptionally expensive. To grow further in this area is not possible for Trent at this time.

**RECOMMENDATION 10**

**That the program articulate clear and consistent pathways for internships in the community.**

Program Response

This work is underway; we have recently introduced 4000-level internships in Media Studies and plan to extend these internship options to include placements with arts organizations.

Decanal Response

The CUST department provides high quality experiential learning opportunities for students and has added to their offerings over the past year. As Trent’s experiential learning initiatives expand in the coming years, there should be greater institutional sources of support for internships and other forms of community-based education. CUST is very well-placed to take advantage of these increased opportunities.

**RECOMMENDATION 11**

**That the program considers adding a 4th year honours course which could also bridge to the MA degree program.**

Program Response

A single Honours capstone course may be impractical because of the pluralistic nature of Cultural Studies at Trent, but we will discuss the possibility. Realigning our specializations may lead to the identification of a capstone course for each specialization. An accelerated BA/MA option is under discussion. This entails negotiations with MA in Theory Culture and Politics, which is not part of the Cultural Studies department, so there is likely to be some delay in implementing this recommendation. However, we anticipate moving forward with this recommendation.

Decanal Response

The merits of such a course will need to be decided by the department. Given the various areas of study in the program, it may strain resources to provide capstone offerings without offering any truly appreciable benefit for students. (Capstones, which tend to sound very attractive, sometimes deliver much less than programs hope—and less than regular fourth year courses offer.) The department has very creative ideas for program design, however, and so may wish to develop something new that fits their existing strengths.

**RECOMMENDATION 12 – Dean of Humanities recommendation**

1. **That TAs receive support in pedagogy**
2. **That faculty receive support for research and community-based activities.**
3. **That greater communication be provided by Research Services to faculty in support of research programs, ie support of initiatives such as SSHRC Connections Grants for conferences and collaborations.**
4. **That cross-listing of courses between units be easier.**

Program Response

The Program supports these recommendations and comments further:

* The graduate programs in the humanities which produce TAs and the undergraduate programs which employ them should collaborate to offer formal pedagogical training to TAs.
* Disputes about cross-listing courses are overdetermined. They are both institutional (concerning resource allocation) and disciplinary (concerning program coherence and integrity).

Decanal Response

Formal training for TAs is offered at Trent and improved communication should help students access these resources. High quality faculty mentoring is also very important, as faculty best know their courses and learning objectives. The graduate director will also assist with mentoring TAs and directing them to the appropriate resources.

Faculty are strongly encouraged to make use of the services of the research office and to apply for external funding. The faculty representative for the research office is currently a humanities scholar and has provided support and grant-writing assistance throughout the year. External funding can assist greatly with providing technological and other resources for faculty research, and faculty should apply yearly for such support.

Cross-listing is not a concern from a resource standpoint. Intra-divisional cross-listing has no effect on resource allocation. Inter-divisional cross-listing potentially has resource implications, but mechanisms exist for the fair distribution of resources in such cases. This said, the practice of cross-listing is worth further academic consideration at the institutional level.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The applicable Dean, in consultation with the Department Chair/Director of the relevant Academic Unit shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The Reporting Date for submitting a follow-up Implementation Report is indicated below and is the responsibility of the Academic Unit in consultation with the Dean.

**DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT: March 1, 2018**

The Implementation Report should be submitted to the applicable Dean(s) who will then forward the Report to the Office of the Provost.

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| Recommendation | Proposed Follow-Up  *If no follow-up is recommended, please clearly indicate ‘No follow up report is required’ and provide rationale.*  *If applicable, indicate specific timeline for completion or addressing recommendation* | Position Responsible for Leading Follow-up  ie Chair, Director, Dean |
| Recommendation 1  That adequate faculty resources be provided, with consideration for a Canada Research Chair in Cultural Studies. | No follow-up report is required. This is a faculty resource issue. |  |
| Recommendation 2  That additional space and technical resources be provided to the program, including: studio space and editing suites; dark room and photo-chemical lab; MacBook Pro x 4 with software; scanner; 4K Still camera; lighting; tripods, and video projector. | Program should provide update. | Undergraduate Chair with Dean |
| Recommendation 3  That additional administrative support be provided. | No follow-up report is required. This is a common structure at Trent University and is not considered to be a quality issue. |  |
| Recommendation 4   1. That a School of Media, Art and Cultural Studies be created. 2. That the BA and PhD programs be closely linked with the MA Theory, Culture and Politics. 3. That the PhD program consider offering a MPhil. | 1. No follow-up report is required. This does not affect the quality of the program.   b) & c) - No follow- up report is required. These recommendations are more relevant to related graduate programs. |  |
| Recommendation 5   1. That increased communication take place between the undergraduate chair and graduate director to facilitate teaching, recruitment and experiential learning opportunities. 2. See Curriculum Review below 3. That website and social media be developed for purposes of recruitment, outreach and collaboration opportunities. | Program to report on a) through c). |  |
| Curriculum Review  Recommendation 6  That a curriculum review take place, with a specific focus on streamlining the specializations.   * Rearticulate the ‘specializations’ * Remove ‘social thought’ as a specialization and make it an essential element of the other specializations * Integrate or rename the other specializations * Integrate ‘theory’ into the other streams   Recommendation 5 b)  That program options, internship possibilities and graduating requirements be clearly communicated to students.  Recommendation 7  That the first year course include basic literacy skills, including: note-taking, basic reading skills, critical reading skills, argumentation, essay writing, citation and principles of critique.  Recommendation 10  That the program articulate clear and consistent pathways for internships in the community.  Recommendation 11  That the program consider adding a 4th year honours course which could also bridge to the MA degree program. | Program to consider recommendations related to curriculum and report on actions taken. | Chair |
| Recommendation 8  That a separate Theatre program in Cultural Studies be developed only if resources are made available. | No follow-up report is required. At this time resources are not available.  The department will be encouraged to rename this emphasis as an option. |  |
| Recommendation 9  That the department articulate ‘research creation’ for itself and integrate that understanding into the curriculum. | Within the available resources, the program should explore how to meet resource needs for Research-Creation. |  |
| Recommendation 12 - DEAN   1. That TAs receive support in pedagogy. 2. That faculty receive support for research and community-based activities. 3. That greater communication be provided by Research Services to faculty in support of research programs, ie support of initiatives such as SSHRC Connections Grants for conferences and collaborations. 4. That cross-listing of courses between units be easier. | TAs do receive support. Program may wish to ensure graduate students are informed of available courses/workshops.  No follow-up report is required for b) and c). Faculty support is available through the Office of Research.  No follow-up report is required. Cross-listing of courses is not a concern with respect to resources. |  |