



February 18, 2025

**To:** UBC Okanagan Senate

**From:** Rehan Sadiq, Provost and Vice-President Academic

**Re: Report to senate on external reviews of academic units, 2022 - 2024**

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**For information:**

External reviews were conducted on the following academic units and programs at UBC Okanagan between September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2024, pursuant of UBC's Senate policy on external reviews ([J-305](#)). Units and programs reviewed provided the following summaries of the recommendations made by the external reviewer teams, their response and action plan. Detailed information about the review may be requested from the Senate Office or the unit's head/dean.

The schedule of future reviews can be found on the [Office of the Provost's website](#).

**External Review Summaries**

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## Faculty of Management

**Last review:** 2017

**Site-visit:** January 10, 11, 12, 2023

**External Review Committee:** Carla Carnaghan (University of Lethbridge), Kyle Murray (University of Alberta), John Perrott (City of Vernon)

### Summary

The reviewers noted four chief concerns relating to: strategic positioning, leadership of the faculty, faculty size, and research support. They made 28 recommendations organized by the review's Terms of Reference noting that many of them were similar to the previous review.

The Faculty of Management submitted a detailed action plan available on the [Office of the Provost's website](#). Many actions have been completed to date. The below table summarizes the highlights.

Recommendation (short text)	Action	Timeline/Responsibility
<b>UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION AND STUDENT LEARNING</b>		
Curriculum Renewal for the BMGT program; clarify and recognize specializations	Completed peer school analysis. Will work towards approvals for specializations in transcripts. *In 2025 we are proposing a new BCOM program to replace the BMGT. The BCOM program includes Majors and aligns with Sauder's BCOM program facilitating cross-campus student transfers and enhancing attractiveness to applicants.	2025/Undergraduate Committee Working Group
Develop and implement Indigenous content and a strategy to recruit Indigenous students	Hired part-time Indigenous adjunct professor. Actively participating in 3 summer camps for Indigenous students	2024/Dean's Office
<b>ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AND SUPPORT</b>		
Actively engage with MSA and other management students	Coordinate events with MSA. Develop events and programming for all students.	2024/Dean's Office
Resume co-curricular activities	Identify relevant offerings on campus and coordinate communications to students for relevant offerings. Develop speaker series	2024/Dean's Office
<b>GRADUATE EDUCATION</b>		
MM Curriculum Review	Begin development of new dual-degree MM program. Gather data from students, employers, similar programs to inform curriculum changes.	2024/Dean's Office and Faculty Council
Revisit IGS Themes	Engaged with CoGS in discussions regarding potential themes. Will continue discussions.	2024/Dean's Office
<b>RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY</b>		
Hire additional faculty	Received approval for two new faculty hires	2024/Dean's Office
Attract funding for professorships/chairs and increase funding for post-doctoral positions	Work with DAE (Development and Alumni Engagement).	Ongoing/Dean's Office
<b>LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION</b>		
Dean's office highly visible and accessible	Renovation project started to provide space for the Dean's office	2023/Dean's Office

Develop a 5-year strategic plan	Continue to rebuild relationships with students and internal and external stakeholders to facilitate strategic planning process. Strategic plan to be completed in 2025	2025/Dean's Office
<b>PEOPLE, ENVIRONMENT AND ADMINISTRATION</b>		
Re-engage faculty and staff to improve camaraderie	Offer social events and initiatives. Launch internal communication initiative	2023 and ongoing/Dean's Office
Review non-academic staff levels and roles	Limited hiring into existing or new vacancies. Work with HR to ensure staff compliment is organized effectively and efficiently	2023 - 2024/Dean's Office
Intentionally respond to the TRC Calls to Action	Engage with potential BMGT students;hired an Indigenous adjunct professor; and, building resources and offering regular sessions to help faculty consider how to decolonize and Indigenize BMGT and MM curriculum	2023 and ongoing/Dean's Office
<b>SUPPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY'S AND CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLANS</b>		
SE-Change requires a full governance review	Initiatives and programs that had previously been communicated as being part of SE-Change have been correctly attributed to the Faculty of Management. The Faculty provides no direct financial support for SE-Change. Given the actions taken, a governance review is not required	N/A

**Last review:** 2014

**Site-visit:** April 10 and 11, 2024

**External Review Committee:** Cameron Cartiere (Emily Carr) and Suzette Mayr (University of Calgary)

### Summary

The reviewers acknowledged that the department is highly accomplished and is a real asset to both the Faculty and UBC Okanagan. They identified challenges that need to be addressed urgently having to do with the steady erosion of institutional support due to budget cuts and outdated funding models. Despite these challenges, the department has continued to deliver on its commitments, though this has come at a significant cost. The reviewers noted that the faculty and staff are physically and emotionally exhausted, yet remain deeply committed to supporting students and contributing to the broader university community.

The external review includes a total of 22 recommendations across several categories, many of which have already been addressed through the Department's 5-year Strategic Plan (2024-2029). In summary:

Recommendation from the External Review Committee	Response/Status
1.1 We recommend that keeping CS courses small remain a priority as it directly supports the unique pedagogy of this area. Keep the small course sizes and small studio classes (maximum 20 students).	Agreed & completed
1.2 We recommend that there be an additional hire in Theatre, as currently there is only one Associate Professor and one Lecturer in the area.	Funding required
2.1 Recommendations for replacement hires are expressed in detail throughout this report, but the need for replacement hires within the faculty membership is particularly pressing.	Funding required
2.2 Hire more technicians to relieve the technician workload, and so that metal- and wood-shop hours can be expanded to evenings and weekends for students.	Funding required
3.1 Recommend that CS programs investigate the possibility of partnering with community-based workshops that might already be providing professionalization information that would be useful for both MFA and undergraduate students, or investigate the possibility of a professionalization workshop series that could occur throughout the school year.	Agreed & in progress
5.1 Recommend an annual FCCS retreat be held to allow for the full participation of the faculty and staff to engage in discussions across departments, areas of work and disciplines to address some of the common concerns and potential oversights in operations that could be amended by clearer communication, possible collaboration, and fuller community involvement in long-term decisions that impact the daily operations of FCCS. An alternative would be a retreat for just CS, but the reviewers believe there would be tremendous benefit in bringing the entire faculty together.	Agreed & CS-only retreat planning in progress
6.1 The Art History program would benefit from more inclusion in all the CS promotion materials.	Agreed & in process
6.2 Art History has undergone some serious personnel issues and would benefit greatly from at least one additional hire to help the program reach its fullest potential.	Funding required
6.3 Delay the roll-out of Workday and provide in-person hands-on workshops for staff to learn Workday as an alternative to the self-paced, remote online teaching model. Have UBCO dedicate more resources to alternative forms of learning for the Workday platform, and slow down the rollout to students.	N/A

6.4 Rename the Bachelor of Media Studies to reflect the courses that are actually being offered and the kinds of outcomes that students can expect when they enroll in the BMS degree program. We recommend a name change for the program along the lines of “Creative Computing”.	Agreed & in discussion
6.5 Recommend that a course such COSC 111 (Computer Programming I) be a foundation course for the BMS major.	In discussion
6.6 Recommend BMS faculty members, as a group, meet to draw up what the outcomes should be of each required course in the program in order to prevent inadvertent duplication of material in courses, to determine ways to address potential gaps in student knowledge (especially for new, incoming students), and to ensure that there is a steady and consistent progression in the material as the students complete each year of the program.	Agreed and in process
7.1 Recommend the design of additional collection storage spaces in the gallery, with budgets and support coming from central administration – not the CS faculty, as this collection serves the whole campus.	Funding required
7.2 Expand the budget to properly manage the collection (including public art) and support the mandate of the gallery to also preserve and promote Indigenous works. This will be central to the development of the gallery program overall.	Funding required
8.1 Moving the nursing program into one of the new buildings and allowing CS to reconfigure and expand its programming into the old nursing facilities would greatly improve the site needs for both departments.	Agreed & plan created
9.1 We recommend a space allocation discussion across the entire CS Department.	In process
9.2 Ensure that CS is guaranteed more space in the new buildings on campus and downtown. Actively explore other nearby options on campus for space.	Funding required
9.3 Establish a more frequent and regular cleaning schedule with the janitorial staff. Clearly communicate with the janitorial staff regarding what is art and what is not art and what to do if in doubt.	Completed
10.1 Revamp the funding model for the Department of Creative Studies to reflect the Department’s value and uniqueness within UBCO. It is not pedagogically effective <i>or</i> ethical - or in some cases, physically possible - to teach studio and workshop courses with large numbers of students, and still maintain the high quality Fine Arts program that is currently being offered.	In discussion
11.1 A hire in Theatre could be used to help develop and expand the connection between Sustainability and the Theatre programs. Well-enrolled theatre courses that help students with public speaking could help buttress the smaller theatre courses. This hire might also help with the student desire for theatre courses that cover acting in film.	Funding required
11.2 Rename film-specific courses that are currently included under the “VISA” category.	In discussion
11.3 Hire permanent replacement faculty for programs that are losing faculty members due to retirement or extended leaves over that past few years.	Funding required

## Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies (IGS)

**Last review:** N/A

**Site-visit:** Jan 24, 25 & 24, 2024

**External Review Committee:** Debby Burstyn (University of Saskatchewan), Jason Camlot (Concordia University)

### Summary

The reviewers noted that the IGS program has reached a new level of success and potential through the curricular, thematic, and structural changes it has implemented in last several years. It is currently administrated by an extremely strong and committed team of administrators, faculty, and staff and their students are generally satisfied. The program supports UBC's Strategic Plan, particularly strategy 10 (research culture), strategy 14 (interdisciplinary education) and strategy 16 (public relevance).

A total of 51 recommendations were noted by the reviewers organized into the nine sections of the Terms of Reference for the review. They highlighted five key areas that can have the greatest impact on the identity, excellence, and sustainability of the program. Those are noted below along with the response and action plan submitted by the program.

Key Area	Response/Action	Timeline
Strengthening the conception and enactment of interdisciplinarity to ensure the integrity and uniqueness of the program.	To continue to encourage new theme led interdisciplinary curriculum. Several themes have embraced team teaching or courses that illuminate interdisciplinary exchange. Several themes have adopted an approach of requiring students to take one or more methods or theory classes dedicated to understanding the particular disciplines in play to enhance their own particular approaches. Due to the different nature of themes and research programs, flexibility and diversity of approaches to this will be key to success	Ongoing
Exploring and embracing greater flexibility in structures of degree requirements and assessment practices.	The IGS program will continue to explore flexible structures within and between the IGS themes. Some current initiatives include the Indigenous Knowledges theme that has introduced the IK capstone course. DAHU has been exploring alternative format thesis projects. Preliminary discussion of how to incorporate collaborative and team research in thesis projects has been initiated across themes.	IK capstone will commence in 2025-26
Ensuring the visibility and clarity through optimal communication to all constituents of IGS program requirements, funding and professional opportunities, faculty roles and responsibilities and other relevant processes.	Improve communications in the program between IGS administration, IGS themes and faculty within them and IGS students. For example, continue existing focus off IGS staff toward optimal communication of deadlines and opportunities and keep websites and online calendars from COGS and IGS up to date. Support external resource development through graduate student committee/association. Clarify and enhance separate support for PhD students as differentiated from MA students.	2024/2025 onwards
Securing and developing significant, well-situated, devoted IGS	The most urgent need of the IGS program is for student space. Having dedicated space is more likely to enable students to build community, develop a sense of belonging, and to	The Interdisciplinary building with IGS

program spaces in the Interdisciplinarity building under construction, including offices for IGS program administration and staff, and devoted multi-function rooms for faculty and student gatherings, events, and other relevant activities.	collectively work on or ask for initiatives that they themselves identify as useful. It has been noted that TAs and RAs benefit greatly from having privacy to conduct sensitive or confidential work. Informal efforts to promote interdisciplinary research collaborations are actively being pursued among several groups on campus. Not all require dedicated research space. However, having access to bookable classrooms or meeting spaces would allow for increased contact.	student space will be completed in 2026
Leveraging the research-potential of the IGS program by positioning faculty and students to access seed and external funding for interdisciplinary research collaborations and partnerships.	Coordination between IGS and VPRI regarding alignment of research opportunities with targeted support of IGS graduate students. Greater efforts to make GRAs and other research opportunities visible to students and to allow students to circulate their interests and skills. Faculty encouraged to incorporate graduate training into SSHRC and other major grant applications, using the strength of IGS methods and outcomes to enhance their competitiveness.	Ongoing