

## Arts and Contemporary Studies

### 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

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report: (To be added as an update 1 year following Senate approval of PPR)**

Following the PPR, many discussions took place among the various stakeholders including the Interim Associate-Dean, ITL/ACS, the Associate-Dean, Undergraduate Studies, the Interim Dean of Arts, the former Directors of ACS, the VPA, the Director of the CQA, the members of the ACS Program Council, newly appointed, in accordance with the new by-laws approved by Senate in Fall 2024. These discussions culminated in the Major

Modification proposal submitted to the Academic Standards committee on May 30, 2025. The modifications to the program followed recommendations from the PPR self-study, the PRT report and from the subsequent discussions. While there is not a formal mission statement, the revisions were made according to the following principles:

- 1) The intentional focus on **interdisciplinarity** from the very first year of the program with the revision of ACS 103 Intro to the Humanities to ACS 103 Intro to Interdisciplinary Studies. Although we have removed all nine of the 13-course options mainly with the intent to streamline the curriculum and to distinguish the program from the Humanities degrees, their removal does bring the program closer to its original balance of Humanities and Social Sciences. The three proposed 8-course concentrations are all interdisciplinary: Anthropology, Culture and Media Studies and Global Studies. ACS students will be able to take any core elective course on Table II, although students taking a concentration will need to take at least 8 core electives from their specific concentration, including the introductory course. All students will be required to take at least one introductory course from the interdisciplinary concentrations: ANT 100 Intro to Anthropology; ACS 302 Intro to Culture Studies; ACS 402 Intro to Global Studies.
- 2) The integration of **social equity** as a principle throughout the curriculum, most notably by making ACS 403 Intro to Diversity and Equity a required course and centering the program on the PLOs of the Diversity and Equity option. The addition of a thematic group of core electives entitled Society, Equity and Ethics also reinforces this principle as does the addition of the required course PHL 307 Business Ethics.
- 3) The **decolonization** of the curriculum, a principle emphasized by our current students and furthered by a) the removal of the requirement to take ACS 210, 220, 300, 400, all based largely on European intellectual history and now moved to the thematic group Society, Equity and Ethics; b) the requirement for all students to take an Indigenous studies course from a list of electives.
- 4) The emphasis on **experiential and on career-integrated learning**. The revised program encourages students to articulate their career interests and to build skills for the workplace; for example in ACS 201 Conflict Resolution, ACS 310 Introduction to Digital Studies, ACS 401 Intro to Research and Statistics, PHL 307 Business Ethics and ACS 800 Senior Group Project. At the same time, the major modification proposal to add co-operative education to the ACS program enhances opportunities for career training.
- 5) The continued emphasis on **flexibility and customizability** of the degree remains with just over 100 core electives on Table II rather than approximately 400. Students may take a concentration or two; a concentration with a minor; two minors or choose not to have either a concentration or a minor. The accumulation of “teachables” is easily within reach thanks to core electives, open electives and Liberal Studies.

The program learning outcomes for the program are thus reorganized and reprioritized rather than replaced. See major modification proposal. The program is to be revitalized rather than reformed. Western intellectual history is to be decentered rather than erased. Overall, in many ways, the proposed changes bring the program back to the original emphasis on interdisciplinarity in the Humanities and Social Sciences while maintaining the flexibility of the degree.

The search for a new name for the program is ongoing. We have consulted a number of stakeholders and potential stakeholders: the Office of Student Recruitment and Admissions; the VPA Office, a focus group of high school students; ACS program council; ACS current students and some ACS alumni. Student Recruitment is about to consult guidance counsellors as well. The current contenders for the name are: Arts and Contemporary Studies; Interdisciplinary Studies; Society and Culture.

In Fall 2025, the Program Council approved the name "Interdisciplinary Studies"; however, there was concern about conflict with an existing set of courses in Interdisciplinary Studies, generally offered by FCS, FOA and the Chang School. The Council that governs those courses has no objection to the program name Interdisciplinary Studies. We have in fact included a couple of C/INT courses in the thematic group Society, Equity and Ethics. If we adopt the name "Interdisciplinary Studies", we could use the course code IDS or simply keep the ACS course code.

**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

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report:**

The major modification proposal for Arts and Contemporary Studies was submitted on May 31st, 2025. From the Registrar’s office, the Calendar / Curriculum Advising unit was consulted on the changes and provided useful advice.

As mentioned above, the curricular changes include the removal of the disciplinary options in English, French, History and Philosophy as well as the removal of the option in Innovation and Inquiry, which has always been undersubscribed. The Diversity and Equity option is dissolved and its elements recentered across the new curriculum. The options in Anthropology Studies, Culture Studies and Global Studies become three 8-course concentrations in Anthropology, Culture and Media Studies and Global Studies, with a significantly reduced number of electives, for the most part.

The current version of the program gives students a choice of capstone courses: ACS 800, ACS 900 or a capstone from their disciplinary option. In the new program, all students will benefit from the skills and learning outcomes of the capstone ACS 800 Senior Group project and ACS 900 Senior Seminar.

The transition from the current program to the new program should not be particularly difficult. While some course descriptions and titles have been updated (e.g. ACS 100, 500), there is enough overlap with current versions that the courses will meet the purposes of

both curricula. For example, ACS 100 Ideas that shape the world I would become ACS 100 Canadian Cultural Perspectives, which more aptly describes its content. The core required courses of the current ACS program, ACS 210, 220, 300, 400, are still included in the program and will continue to be offered, with space for students outside ACS who wish to take the courses as open electives. Current ACS students will have the option of transferring to the new curriculum, if they wish to do so. Students admitted in Fall 2025 will be able to transfer to the new curriculum and join the co-op stream, provided they do so before the start of their third semester when they are required to take SSH 104 Co-op Preparation. According to the Career, Co-op and Student Success Centre, such requests are relatively rare and are handled on a case-by-case basis.

It should be noted that minor changes were made to the ACS curriculum in Fall 2024 in order to facilitate completion of the degree: 1) prerequisites for the ACS Ideas courses have been adjusted to help students fast-track more effectively; 2) the Anthropology Option was modified to include the existing courses HIS 501 and ANT 306 as part of the required group to compensate for the low availability of BLG 133 and BLG 233, the latter taught only through Directed Studies and the former currently not available in any form; 3) Mohawk MHK 101 and 201 were added to the list of language courses available to the students.

**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.

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

**Responsibility for**

**a) leading initiative:** ACS Interim director

**b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** ACS Program Council, Dean of Arts Office

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report:**

The proposed new version of the ACS curriculum centers social equity and diversity in a number of ways. The ACS 100 description has been modified to emphasize social issues, although in fact this has always been a focus in ACS 100. The ACS Ideas that shaped the world courses are now electives rather than required courses, decentering the hegemony of Western thought. All students are now required to take ACS 403 Intro to Diversity and Equity. All students are required to take the ACS 800 Senior Group project in which students prepare presentations on social issues such as decolonizing the curriculum, solving the student housing shortage, measuring your carbon footprint, etc.

Furthermore, all students will be required to take one Indigenous Studies course from Table III, which includes most of the Indigenous studies courses from the Arts-based minor in Indigenist Thought. The Indigenous Education Council has been consulted on this decision. By giving students a choice of Indigenous studies courses, we re-emphasize interdisciplinarity and social equity, hopefully without any negative impact or backlash, a concern of the IEC. Allowing student choice should mitigate any sense of constraint in being required to take a course in Indigenous studies.

**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)

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report:**

As mentioned earlier, scaffolding of learning outcomes is part of the proposed revitalized curriculum. The focus is on interdisciplinarity, social equity and ethics, research and communication skills as well as skills in areas such as teamwork and leadership and digital studies.

From the first year, with ACS 103 and ACS 100, students will be given a clearer sense of the principles of interdisciplinarity and the study of social problems from a variety of

disciplinary perspectives. Although team-teaching is no longer a feature of the program, the use of guest lecturers is highly encouraged to ensure a diversity of perspectives and to heighten experiential learning. Guest speakers include staff from the Student Experience Centre and the Career/Co-op Office. Both the Dean's office and ACS have funds to support guest lecturers in required courses. Currently, students in ACS 800 often collaborate with students from ACS 106 and this practice will continue with ACS 100, 103 and/or ACS 106, ensuring a continuity of focus around issues of social equity and career-oriented learning. All students will be required to take an introductory course to one of the interdisciplinary concentrations, even if they prefer not to take a concentration.

Finally, ACS 800 the capstone course brings together all ACS students, who will have taken their own distinct interdisciplinary pathway allowed by the flexible ACS curriculum, and has the students work together on researching and presenting solutions to complex social issues. The capstone function of ACS 800 is fully demonstrated in the final public showcase of presentations, which concluded this year with the ACS Awards Ceremony. ACS 900 is also a required course, reinforcing research and communication skills, allowing students to deepen their knowledge of a social issue of particular interest to them.

The new curriculum focuses on society, social equity and ethics. All students will be required to take ACS 403 Intro to Diversity and Equity, previously only required for students in the Diversity and Equity option. ACS 100 and ACS 400 are also centered on issues of society, equity and ethics. ACS 201 Conflict Resolution provides a local and global perspective on the nature of conflict, using case studies and live actor simulations to ensure hands-on learning. All students are required to take PHL 307 Professional Ethics to reinforce the focus on equity, specifically in the workplace. The thematic group in Table II, Society, equity and ethics, allows all students to specialize further in ethics, human rights, diversity and inclusion, and potentially to complete a minor in Ethics as part of their customized academic pathway. ACS students have access to many core electives that may be the start of a minor in Black Studies, Indigenist thought, LGBTQS+ studies. Also available are professionally-related core electives to deepen their knowledge of digital humanities, including the ethics of AI. Again, ACS 800 and ACS 900 provide opportunities to wrestle with socially relevant issues and wicked problems.

Students have the option of taking a concentration in Anthropology, Culture and Media Studies or Global Studies, which include a variety of courses from a number of disciplines, primarily in the FOA. All ACS students have access to the core electives in these categories to customize their academic pathway.

In the past, there were no restrictions to prevent ACS students from accumulating lower level core electives. Among its very numerous electives, the current Table I had a wide range of lower level courses to choose from. The new core elective table (now Table II) contains very few lower level courses. One of the advantages of moving the ACS program to the First Year Common platform is that ACS students will be required to take at least 2 core electives in the Social Sciences and 2 core electives in the Humanities in addition to ACS 100 and ACS 103. Consequently, with few exceptions, there is little reason to include lower level courses on Table II. Students can take courses in first year core electives and

open electives to ensure they have the necessary prerequisites to take more advanced courses in various disciplines after the first year of studies.

**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

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report:**

As stated earlier, the proposal for a revitalized curriculum includes moving ACS to the First Year Common Platform, with all the benefits that entails, including access to co-op on the same model as other FOA programs such as English and LIR. One of the benefits for students is the possibility to transfer easily into or out of other Arts programs, if they choose to do so. Students may signal their intent to transfer into ACS or out of ACS at the end of the second semester without having to pay a fee to apply for readmission, as is currently required.

ACS 100 and ACS 103 will be required in first year for all ACS students, although the courses will also be available on Table I to other students in the FOA. The current Table I will become Table II Core electives, including a thematic group Society, Equity and Ethics and the courses for the three concentrations, all of which will be available to all ACS students.

**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

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report:**

The major modification proposal submitted in May 2025 included a proposal to join the Faculty of Arts co-op program along the same model as English, LIR and Sociology. This includes the addition of SSH 104 to the third semester of the program for students taking co-op, while other students will take an open elective. At the same time, the ACS program in general will feature a greater focus on career-integrated learning, in collaboration with the FOA Student Experience team and the Career, Co-op and Student Success Centre. Already, such collaboration takes place in ACS 800, where FOA Career Counsellor Sonny Wong routinely speaks to the students, but this will soon be a feature of ACS 103 and possibly ACS 100 as well. In particular, we anticipate greater collaboration with Megan MacLennan, Career Education Specialist. Along with ACS 800, ACS 201 on Conflict Resolution emphasizes teamwork and leadership. In addition, the new thematic group on the core elective table includes many courses related to the workplace, particularly EDI in the workplace.

The required course ACS 401 has been modified to include a more practical career focus where students gain experience in quantitative methods, using Excel, a common software tool. ACS 201 Conflict resolution deals with conflict at a local and global level, using negotiation simulations as an experiential tool for learning. The FOA and the ACS program encourage and finance the inclusion of guest lecturers in our courses. For example, this year Dr. Chris Zeichmann invited an expert on residential schools to speak to students in ACS 100. ACS 800 also typically includes guest speakers, including this year a community organizer and an interdisciplinary artist and entrepreneur.

**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 2025; teaching assignment strategies to be discussed with the Dean of Arts Office in time for Fall 2024 and ongoing.

**Responsibility for**

**a) leading initiative:** ACS Interim Director

**b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** ACS Program Council, Dean of Arts Office, Faculty of Arts Chairs

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report:**

The revised program bylaws for ACS were approved in March 2024 by ACS Program Council and again by the AGPC in September 2024 before the approval at Senate in October 2024. The bylaws were updated to be more inclusive and representative of the program's interdisciplinary nature. Notably, Chairs and representatives from the Departments of Economics and Politics and Public Administration were added along with TFA representatives as these departments regularly provide instructors for courses such as ACS 401, ACS 302, ACS 402, ACS 500 and ACS 900. Also, two CUPE instructors have been added as voting members of Program Council.

At present, securing faculty members as instructors for ACS courses remains the responsibility of the ACS Director, working in collaboration with FOA departments. In 2024-2025 the following courses ACS 106, ACS 210, ACS 302, ACS 400, ACS 403, ACS 500, ACS 900 were taught by TFA from LLC, Philosophy, Sociology and Economics. The revitalized curriculum is designed to include a much shorter list of core electives, the great majority of which are taught by FOA TFA annually or biannually: the best of the best of Arts. New courses such as the revised ACS 201 and ACS 310 were developed by TFA members (Politics, English, LLC) who are eager to teach them.

By September 2026, we anticipate a new governance structure situating the program within a single department in the Faculty of Arts. There are currently two departments under

consideration for this role. It is anticipated that such a structure will facilitate assigning both TFA and CUPE instructors, while maintaining the interdisciplinary nature of the program and allowing for the continued hire of instructors from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. The inclusion, according to the revised bylaws, of Chairs and representatives from English, History, LL, Philosophy, Politics and Public Administration and Sociology, will help to maintain the program's interdisciplinary nature.

While it is useful to consider assigning TFA instructors to specific courses on a longer-term basis, in fact, there is considerable continuity at present. When we needed to replace Dr. Isbister from Economics unexpectedly for 2025-2026, a number of TFA expressed a strong interest in teaching ACS 500 and ACS 900, provided they would be able to teach the course more than once. We had no problem finding TFA instructors for the two courses. There is considerable motivation to teach key ACS courses, given the flexibility of the curriculum and the potential to include one's own research interests, just as one does in a Special Topics course. The ACS Social Media assistant created a number of Instagram profiles for professors teaching in the program as a way of advertising ACS courses and promoting the program.

The co-teaching model, while very effective, is not an option in this time of fiscal constraint. The inclusion of guest speakers can be a good way to ensure that courses include different perspectives. It may be helpful to invite colleagues from various disciplines to visit the core ACS classes to talk about their research. Interdisciplinarity may be reflected in the course readings, instructional materials, experiential and community-engaged components as well as in the lectures. It remains to be seen if certain courses, such as the capstone seminar course ACS 900, could have 2 sections taught alternatively by instructors from different disciplines, depending on enrolment numbers.

**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:** ACS Interim Director

**b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** ACS Program Council, Dean of Arts, Manager of Student Relations and Development, Development Officer

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report**

Establishing a Program Advisory Committee is one of the requirements outlined in the Periodic Program Review for Arts and Contemporary Studies, approved by TMU Senate in April 2024. Currently, although there is a PAC in name that exists in the TMU calendar, these PAC members have not been consulted in many years and the committee can be considered defunct. An ad hoc PAC was assembled by a previous program director and was consulted as part of the PPR process. While some discussions have taken place in 2024-2025 regarding the creation of a new PAC, it should be noted that the ACS curriculum is currently undergoing a major curriculum revitalization and that the outcome of that revitalization will influence the selection of PAC members. Nonetheless, members of the ACS Program Council as well as ACS students have provided the names of some potential members, including alumni and faculty from other universities. It would be helpful to have some community or corporate members on the PAC as well. We anticipate that a new PAC will be recruited in Fall 2025.

**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.

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report:**

A number of initiatives have taken place in ACS over the last year to enhance student engagement, notably in collaboration with SASSH and the new ACS course union.

In terms of small group tutorials, ACS students continue to benefit from tutorials in ACS 100, ACS 210, ACS 220 and ACS 400 as well as SSH 105 and SSH 205. ACS 103 is dedicated specifically to first year ACS students. However, as ACS 103, along with ACS 100, becomes part of Table I on the common platform, it will also be available to all students across the FOA, introducing first year students to Interdisciplinary Studies. The inclusion of guest speakers from the Student Experience Centre and the Career, Co-op and Student Success Centre in core courses such as ACS 100, ACS 103, ACS 201 and ACS 403 will be used to foster a sense of cohort belonging by emphasizing the program objectives and career options for ACS students. Because students will no longer have 9 options and over 400 core electives, we anticipate that the ACS students will be a greater presence in a smaller number of elective classes and will be more likely to find themselves in classes with their ACS peers. However, ACS students place a high value on flexibility, student choice and the possibility of customizing their degree, which may be more important to them than the cohort effect.

ACS students have been very active in the ACS community in 2024-2025. There were 4 student representatives, as stipulated in the bylaws, and they participated in the Program Council meetings, which are now held online to ensure greater participation by both students and instructors. The ACS Course Union fully

relaunched in Winter 2025 and held events for students including a combined Mix and Mingle and Alumni event in March. The ACS Course Union took third prize in the Annual Course Union competition held by SASSH in 2025. The program also benefited from the support of the Manager of Student Relations and Development, an ACS alumna, who held an alumni event in Winter 2024. ACS also maintained a strong presence on social media, with our Instagram receiving the greatest number of hits compared to other FOA programs this year.

**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 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

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report:**

With the assistance of student staff since 2023, ACS has been able to establish a list of ACS graduates. We have also set up a LinkedIn group for ACS alumni. The Alumni panels in 2024 and 2025 were very successful, particularly in giving students an idea of the diverse career paths of our graduates; for example, in teaching, law, strategic marketing, academic administration, sports administration, entrepreneurship, broadcast media. These events have been supported by the FOA Manager of Student Relations and Development, the SASSH and the ACS course union. The Program Advisory Council, currently in development, will include alumni; a number of names have been proposed to date. Although the ACS website has received a number of updates, further development is needed, as part of the overall redevelopment of the FOA website.

**Priority Recommendation #12 - 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

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report:**

Space for student gatherings continues to be an issue across the Faculty of Arts. In the last year, ACS events have been held in the FOA Student Lounge POD 349, the Sandbox and in CUI, a popular space for FOA events. The Mix and Mingle event organized by the students was held at the Jazz Bistro, in collaboration with students from LIR.

Currently, the offices of the ACS Director and the Undergraduate Program Administrator are on the fifth floor of Jorgenson Hall although not in a contiguous space. Students do not appear to see this as an obstacle, although it is less than optimal. The program would have a more recognizable presence if it had its own space with the Director and UPA close by, along with a lobby for students where students can gather.

**Priority Recommendation # 13 - 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: e.g.**

- **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.

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report:**

The Manager, Faculty Administration and Operations, recently changed the allocation of the UPAs in the FOA so that there are at least two UPAs for each program, ensuring that students have access to a UPA regardless of vacation days or turnover of personnel. Many ACS students have complained in the past about lack of coverage and consistent support due to staff turnover. This reorganization will provide greater consistency. The primary UPA for ACS has been with us for almost a year now. Her dedication to students and her proactive thinking are greatly appreciated.

The relatively new role of Manager, Faculty Administration and Operations, has been very effective in bringing together the UPAs to work as a team and to share their knowledge and experience with others. There is much greater consistency in training and operations, thanks to a single manager working with all UPAs rather than having the UPAs under the direction of department chairs.

**Priority Recommendation # 14 - 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

**Status for 1-year Follow-up Report**

As mentioned previously, a number of improvements have been made to the current ACS website. However, as the FOA overhauls its current website, we anticipate new changes for a consistent look and message. The change in curriculum and change in name will require changes to the website to better reflect the interdisciplinary focus. We will also be looking for further assistance from the FOA Communications team and Student Recruitment.

While we have not created a Speaker Series in 2024-2025, our Social Media Assistant has created Instagram profiles of faculty members teaching ACS courses, including Dr. Nicole Neverson for ACS 403; Dr. Hongbing Yu for ACS 302. We anticipate reusing these profiles in order to promote ACS courses, particularly certain electives which are sometimes undersubscribed. With the new curriculum, we anticipate fewer undersubscribed sections as ACS 403 will become a required course and ACS 302 and ACS 402 will be part of a required group of courses along with ANT 100. The Instagram format has been quite effective. A next step will be in creating faculty profiles on our website along with videos and student testimonials to better communicate the interdisciplinary nature of the program and the appeal of a program that promotes itself as the best of the best of Arts,