Ryerson University Graduate Studies

**Office of the Vice-Provost and Dean**
Yeates School of Graduate Studies

# 1 YEAR FOLLOW-UP REPORT

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| **Graduate Program:** | **Communication and Culture (MA \| PhD)** |
| Peer Review Team: | **External Reviewers**<br>Dr. Brenda Austin-Smith, University of Manitoba<br>Dr. Darin Barney, McGill University<br>**Internal Reviewers**<br>Dr. Annie Bunting, York University<br>Dr. Kamal Al-Solaylee, Ryerson University |
| Site Visit: | January 11-13, 2017 |
| PRT Report: | April 11, 2017 |
| Program Response: | May 18, 2017 |
| YSGS Response: | Oct 10, 2017 |
| PPR Approved by Senate: | May 29, 2018 |
| 1 Year Follow Up Report: | Oct 15, 2019 |

As mandated by Ryerson Senate Policy 126: Periodic Program Review of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs[1], within one year of Senate approval of the PPR, a 1 Year Follow-Up Report is to be submitted to the Faculty Dean or Dean of Record and the Vice-Provost and Dean, YSGS, on the progress of the implementation plan and any further recommendations. This follow-up report will be also be reviewed by Programs and Planning Committee, YSGS Council, and finally Senate. The PPR Report to Senate may also include a date(s) for subsequent Follow-up Reports.

What follows are the PRT recommendations, the program responses, YSGS responses, and the implementation plan, including the 1 year follow-up status reports by the program.

The recommendations are divided into two broad categories: academic and administrative/financial and for simplicity, all of this information is presented in the form of tables.

[1] https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol126.pdf

**Communication and Culture Program; PPR Reviewer Recommendations - 1 yr Follow-up**

| # | Recommendation | Program and Institutional (YSGS and LAPS) Response | Lead and Proposed Action | Proposed Timeline | 1 Year Follow-Up |
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# Academic Recommendations

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| 1 | Clarify field description of “Technology in Practice”. | **ComCult response:** Agreed, in addition to planned curricular evaluation and redesign of electives more widely.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS supports the program-level response.<br><br>**LA&PS response:** We are in favour of this clarity and feel that it may help make connections between changes at the undergraduate level and at the graduate level as well as make the program more appealing to applicants of a particular type. A review of other fields may also be useful at this time. | Executive of Communication and Culture Program<br><br>Convene a committee to revise existing descriptions as well as clearly articulate research creation deliverables, expectations and guidelines for MA & PhD. Work to be based on MA research creation guidelines and review of comparable programs externally. | S2018 Committee to be created.<br><br>Fall 2018 Preliminary Report to ComCult Executive and discussion<br><br>W2019 Changes to be adopted by ComCult Executive. | Discussed as an exec committee, determination made that key issue was to articulate PhD research creation option, understanding that confusion about “Technology in Practice” was largely situated in research creation projects.<br><br>An ad hoc committee to develop Research-Creation Dissertation guidelines has been formed, chaired by Steve Bailey.<br><br>Guidelines are expected to be reviewed and approved by the Executive Council and published on ComCult website in Winter 2020. |
| 2 | Exec Council & Faculty should develop a strategy to address declining applications, especially to the MA, reflecting evolving identity, strengths and aspirations. | **ComCult response:** Agreed, existing efforts can be enhanced, and wider consultation with faculty would assist.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS supports the program-level response. YSGS will also convene a discussion with the interdisciplinary Graduate Program Directors at Ryerson University to explore how it can support recruitment efforts.<br><br>**LA&PS response:** We are in support of the development of a strategy to address declining applications in the Program. A review of "competitor programs" may be helpful in developing a response and strategy. | GPD<br><br>a. Internal review/update of public facing communication assets, including websites and social media feeds.<br><br>b. Discuss recruitment strategies with other interdisciplinary grad programs.<br><br>c. Conduct targeted recruitment pilot project: GA/RA linked to specific faculty member to be advertised externally.<br><br>d. Meet with faculty to discuss more targeted recruitment, work on setting up additional targeted recruitment programs next year and process going forward. | a. Communication assets: updated website and new social media strategy by W2019.<br><br>b. Interdisciplinary grad program discussion by F2018.<br><br>c. Targeted recruitment pilot project by Sping 2018.<br><br>Meet with faculty to plan additional/future targeted recruitment by F2018. | Ryerson-side website has been completed updated.<br><br>Recently initiated recruitment activities include webinars, a December Open House, attending grad fairs, and information sharing through networks of colleagues at other universities.<br><br>Two targeted recruitment pilot projects matching specific PhD student profiles with faculty members, have been completed successfully, we will be encouraging all faculty to consider targeting grant money toward specific profiles as a way to attract strong, well supported students going forward.<br><br>Overall, application numbers remain steady and quality of admitted students is high despite increased competition from |

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| | | | e. Review competitor programs offerings | | many new programs in the space. |
| 3 | Convene a Joint "Task Force" with York and Ryerson officers to address structural barriers to fulsome participation in the program's supervision, service and teaching. | **ComCult response:** Agreed, unreservedly. Systematic planning, with greater imperatives or incentives for interdisciplinary participation is urgent.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS agrees that interdisciplinary programs, including ComCult, face challenges in securing faculty participation to meet their teaching, supervision, and service needs.<br><br>YSGS notes that these issues have been formally recognized at Ryerson University. For example, the Senate Task Force on Interdisciplinary Programs released its final report in December 2013. The Provost's response to that report was issued in May 2015. Nonetheless, YSGS agrees that further action is needed, particularly given the unique challenges ComCult faces as a joint program with York University. YSGS notes that active efforts are ongoing to address challenges related to supervision, teaching, and service in interdisciplinary programs at Ryerson. YSGS supports a meeting between ComCult's GPDs and the responsible Associate Deans at both universities to discuss these issues.<br><br>**LA&PS response:** There is general agreement that participation in joint programs needs review and renewal in a structured way. Other interdisciplinary programs within York review faculty participation on a regular basis and we recommend some sort of structured review on | GPD, with Dean's offices<br><br>Convene meeting to discuss the recommendations of the peer review team. Also, there should be a regularized review of the participation of faculty in the programs and discussion of possible responses to these issues. | F2018, have held meeting to discuss next steps. | Targeted hiring to ComCult is underway- we are currently recruiting an RFA colleague jointly with the School of Professional Communication in FCAD, this colleague will split teaching and service with ComCult. We hope there may be additional hires and or cross-appointments of faculty to ComCult.<br><br>GPD has undertaken meetings and presentations with department chairs and Deans in the effort to ensure commitment of faculty to ComCult, however, predictability and full support from all parts of the university remains an ongoing challenge, and this process- in particular loading ComCult courses- is labour and time intensive. |

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| | | an ongoing basis to find out both why this is an issue as well as what the faculty believes would be productive responses to this issue. | | | |
| 4 | Increased diversity and equity in the curriculum and supervisory faculty membership, achieved by better employment of existing faculty, new faculty recruiting, crossF listing and other crossF appointments, including dedicated hiring for the grad program. | **ComCult response:** Agreed, with first reparative steps underway, and new faculty recently appointed members of the program.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS supports the program's efforts to appoint new faculty currently at York and Ryerson that address the identified areas of need. YSGS also acknowledges the arguments for an increased number of cross-appointed faculty, either through new faculty recruiting or the secondment of existing faculty. YSGS notes, however, that these appointments need to be considered in the context of departmentalF and faculty-level planning. The appointment of new faculty is outside of the purview of YSGS. Working with the interdisciplinary GPDs, YSGS will coordinate the development of a proposal for increased cross-appointments in Ryerson's interdisciplinary programs, including ComCult. This proposal will be presented to the Provost during the 2017F2018 academic year (Note: the proposal is currently with the Provost).<br><br>**LA&PS response:** We are in support of this suggestion as well as the process outlined above. | Continue outreach efforts to bring supervisors and instructors into key roles in the program whose work represents key areas of EDI, in the underlined gaps of Black studies/critical race scholars and Indigenous methods scholars. Conduct informal evaluation of how representation of these key areas has evolved since PPR process 3 years on. | F2019: report on activities since PPR to ensure that program has added additional affiliated and active faculty that enhance EDI in the program, in particular in underlined areas of Indigenous methods and critical race/Black studies scholarship. | Colleagues in race\black studies have been either hired or recently affiliated with ComCult, in creative industries at Ryerson, Ryerson English as well as at York. York also recently recruited a tier ICRC in Black Studies who we hope will join ComCult once appointed.<br><br>Whilst both York and Ryerson have recently hired scholars working in indigenous methods in various departments (FCAD at Ryerson, Fashion at Ryerson, Communications at York, Sociology at Ryerson etc.), not all are available to ComCult supervision and teaching at this point and certain colleagues working in indigenous methods who were highly active in ComCult have left Ryerson as well in the interim. In short, steps are being taken to provide options and faculty resources to support this objective, however, continued focus is required as is additional negotiation to ensure the active engagement of newly hired colleagues in these areas in ComCult. The program notes, in particular: that the involvement, time and attention of minority colleagues, indigenous colleagues above all, are highly in demand across campus by students and programs and that the increased numbers of colleagues in these profiles has been accompanied by great demand for their involvement. Targeted hires of these profiles with specific |

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| | | | | | responsibilities to ComCult should be considered in the future.<br><br>Program commits to an informal evaluation of progress in this area in 2021 as promised in the original response. |
| 5 | Seminar on Grant Applications in Fall prior to deadlines. | **ComCult response:** Agreed, existing programming can be better communicated.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS supports the program-level response on improving communications. YSGS also notes that ComCult has been actively supporting students with grant applications.<br><br>**LA&PS response:** LA&PS supports this desire to improve communication on this issue. The active support of student grant applications is important. | GPD<br><br>Continue to hold and clearly communicate this workshop. Update of website/social media assets will help. | Spring 2018 reflect on workshop process, plan F2018 workshops. | Two joint SSHRC Doctoral workshops are held before the deadline in October<br><br>Two SSHRC Masters workshops held before the deadline in December. |
| 6 | Better advising on MA options and distinctions among MRP and Thesis choices | **ComCult response:** Agreed, with policy changes, deadline adjustments, and practical changes underway.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS supports the program-level response.<br><br>**LA&PS response:** We are in support of these changes. | GPD<br><br>Revisit MA options as part of committee devoted to articulation of PhD research creation options. | S2018 Committee to be created.<br><br>Fall 2018 Preliminary Report to ComCult Executive and discussion.<br><br>W2019 Changes to be adopted by ComCult Executive. | The Ryerson-side website has been updated and now clarifies the various MA milestone options and expectations.<br><br>This is now a more explicit focus in MA required courses. |
| 7 | Library liaisons assigned to ComCult at both Ryerson and York should participate in a joint library orientation session. | **ComCult response:** Agreed.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS supports the program-level response.<br><br>**LA&PS response:** Agreed. | GPD<br><br>Consider/plan joint library orientation session for F2018 | F2018, plan/conduct session or else plan/conduct feasible substitute event if not logistically possible for library staff. | Ryerson subject librarian participates in the completely updated orientation program. |

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# Administrative and Financial Recommendations

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| 1 | Program Review Site Visits should provide adequate time to prepare and deliberate collectively, preceding and following consultations. | **ComCult response:** Agreed, adding that advance consultation with the program may also be helpful.<br><br>Further, the rarity of a joint, bicampus visit led to inadequate timing because of unavoidably duplicated meetings at both campuses.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS supports the program-level response.<br>**LA&PS response:** Agreed. | GPD and Associate Dean of YSGS<br><br>Hold planning meeting with GPD and Dean's office to involve GPDs in planning for next PPR cycle, ensure schedule takes into account joint evaluation and lessons learned here. | 1 year prior to internal planning for PPR cycle, hold meeting to make sure schedule /process is set up to allow for full evaluation of joint program. | No action item prior to next PPR cycle, but noted. |
| 2 | Decanal and Provostial strategy at Ryerson to Ameliorate discrepancy in PhD financial support and GA opportunities. | **ComCult response:** Agreed, existing ad hoc planning is insufficient. Systematic changes in practices are urgent.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS supports the principle of increasing student funding levels. However, YSGS also notes that the levels of financial support for ComCult students are consistent with norms at Ryerson University.<br><br>Funding provided to the program through Ryerson Graduate Fellowships (RGFs) is consistent with that provided to other interdisciplinary programs at Ryerson. YSGS notes that most GA positions are controlled by departments and other faculties at Ryerson. YSGS also notes that it does provide financial | GPD<br><br>As above:<br><br>Conduct targeted recruitment pilot project: GA/RA linked to specific faculty member to be advertised externally.<br><br>Meet with faculty to discuss more targeted recruitment, work on setting up additional targeted recruitment programs next year and process going forward.<br><br>In addition:<br><br>Work with departments and schools to earmark GA/lectureship opportunities for | A. Targeted recruitment pilot project by Spring 2018.<br>B. B. Meet with faculty to plan additional/future targeted recruitment by F2018.<br>C. Find slates of earmarked GA positions by recruitment for F2020 class. | Significant investment in additional grad support at Ryerson through the RGS scholarship program launched for 2019-20 academic year. ComCult Ryerson students have more funding now then at time of PPR. |

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| | | support for interdisciplinary GAs, including for ComCult. YSGS also encourages the program to explore increases to other sources of funding, including external scholarships and stipends from faculty supervisors.<br><br>**LA&PS response:** We are in general supportive of strong funding packages for graduate students but note that our financial support is largely determined by the CUPE 3903 collective agreement. There are other scholarships which are available to students on a competitive basis which may improve their funding. | ComCult students. | | |
| 3 | Joint institutional strategy for Cluster-hires in areas of Communication and culture, dedicated service to ComCult. | **ComCult response:** Agreed. We are willing and eager to coordinate with departments and faculties.<br><br>**YSGS response:** As noted above, the appointment of new faculty is outside of the purview of YSGS. YSGS also notes that, given the institutional differences in structures between York and Ryerson, it may not be practical to pursue a joint strategy on hiring. YSGS would be prepared to discuss these issues in a meeting between ComCult's GPDs and the responsible Associate Deans at both universities. YSGS will, however, coordinate the development of a proposal for increased cross-appointments in Ryerson's interdisciplinary programs, including ComCult. This proposal will be presented to the Provost during the 2017-2018 academic year (Note: the proposal is currently with the Provost).<br><br>**LA&PS response:** The issue of joint hires is outside of the purview of the Dean's Office however we would argue that the program could try to work creatively in terms of | GPD<br><br>Follow up with YSGS on progress of this initiative. | Meeting to be held in F2018 on progress of this initiative and its implications for the faculty hiring going forward. | A cross-appointment hire with the School of Professional Communication (in FCAD) is currently in process. A new hire is expected to start Winter 2020. |

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| | | strategically planning hires at each institution to address the perceived needs of each institution as well as the graduate program | | | |
| 4 | Maintain staffing levels, with additional support at peak times. | **ComCult response:** Agreed.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS notes that ComCult has a full-time Graduate Program Administrator. Staffing levels are consistent with the norms at Ryerson University. YSGS will continue to monitor whether staffing levels are appropriate and will consider well-substantiated proposals from the program for any adjustments.<br><br>**LA&PS response**: The staffing for the program is in accordance with faculty wide practices. Should a situation arise where more staffing is required a request can be made to LA&PS's Executive Officer to address the issue. | GPD<br><br>Hold meeting with YSGS to discuss monitoring of ComCult staffing levels. | Spring 2019 hold meeting to discuss ComCult staffing levels. | GPD will meet with new Dean of YSGS upon appointment to review comcult operations and support, including staffing level. |
| 5 | Ryerson Provost should renovate 111 Gerrard as a<br>Dedicated Program space at Ryerson. | **ComCult response:** Agreed, or a similar initiative. This is an urgent concern, and an embarrassment for doctoral recruitment, a detriment to retention.<br><br>**YSGS response:** YSGS notes that 111 Gerrard was recently renovated. ComCult students do currently have access to the facility, including a large open area, 4 offices (each with 2 desks) assigned to ComCult PhD students, and a kitchen. The space at 111 Gerrard is also available to the students of other interdisciplinary programs. YSGS notes that ComCult students also have access to study space in the Student Learning Centre (SLC). | GPD-YSGS<br><br>Continue working to find additional dedicated space for ComCult, understanding that: a) Lack of space undermines our recruitment pitchesi b) Since the PPR the ComCult lounge on the 3rd floor of the RCC was repurposed as RTA offices, meaning there is less workspace now than when the review underlined a lack of space at Ryerson as a major issue c) The future of 111 Gerrard is, at present, unclear.<br><br>Hold meeting to confirm the future of the 111 Gerrard building and space and its | F2018. Hold meeting to discuss ComCult space, including 111 Gerrard Street, Toronto. | New dedicated interdisciplinary space in the Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Complex<br>288 Church Street is expected to open by Winter 2020.<br><br>Students are also using The Catalyst at FCAD and the grad spaces in the SLC.<br><br>111 Gerrard Street continues to have office space for some ComClt PhD students on a first-come-first-served basis.<br><br>Since PPR, work-space ComCult students on Ryerson campus has shifted from a weakness to a strength of our support for |

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| | | | implications on ComCult student work space. | | the program, this was a major improvement. |