Ryerson University* Graduate Studies

1 YEAR FOLLOW-UP REPORT
Submitted: April 23, 2022
Last Updated: April 23, 2022

Graduate Program:	**Professional Communication (MPC)**
Peer Review Team:	Dr. Jay Dolmage, University of Waterloo; Dr. Terry Flynn, McMaster University; and Dr. Stéphanie Walsh Matthews, Ryerson University.
Site Visit:	June 4, 2020 (virtual)
PRT Report:	September 9, 2020
Program Response:	December 15, 2020
YSGS Response:	March 18, 2021
Approved by Senate:	May 4, 2021
1 Year Follow Up:	March 4, 2022

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.

*Renaming in process
In August 2021, the university announced that it would begin a renaming process to address the legacy of Egerton Ryerson and build a more inclusive future. Let's write the next chapter together.

ryerson.ca/next-chapter

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

PRT RECOMMENDATIONS, PROGRAM/FACULTY DEAN/YSGS RESPONSES + PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND 1 YEAR FOLLOW UP

PRT Recommendation	PRT Rationale	MPC Response	Timeline, Responsibility, and Action Plan	FCAD Response	YSGS Response	MPC 1 YEAR FOLLOW UP
Recommendation 1: **Cross-Graduate Program Collaborations and Course Access**	Students have requested additional access to courses and professional opportunities as they pertain to critical issues (race, gender, political landscape) that are usually provided via elective courses. These need to be enhanced in these courses.	The MPC program will continue to incorporate the expertise of our recently hired and tenured faculty. Additionally, the MPC program will continue to pursue cross-graduate program collaborations (with particular focus on FCAD and Faculty of Arts courses).	2021-2022: MPC GPD, MPC GPA, ProComm Chair Offer a wider range of courses by formalizing cross-graduate program collaborations while actively incorporating newly hired ProComm faculty.	The faculty supports a decision to deepen the program's commitment to exposing its students to critical intersectionality both through course study and professional opportunities.	YSGS is happy to support the program in finding ways to increase student access to courses and professional opportunities. It should be noted that programs can allow their students to take a limit number of courses from other programs with approval from the GPD and the other program.	The MPC program continues to successfully incorporate new faculty as teachers and mentors in the program. These faculty specialize in researching contemporary critical issues. MPC students are also encouraged to seek courses in other programs.
Recommendation 2: **Reduce class size and provide more support for MRP supervision**	Graduate level classes of 25 put an extra strain on the instructor to provide timely and meaningful feedback to students. This is amplified during the MRP supervision process especially when there are a limited number of supervisors available.	The MPC program agrees with the PRT that the size of the MPC cohort – 25 students per year – is causing extra strain on our instructors, particularly their ability to offer timely and meaningful feedback on written assignments and MRPs.	2021-2022: MPC GPD, MPC GPA, ProComm Chair, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (FCAD). We discussed reducing the MPC program's annual intake with FCAD's Associate Dean of Graduate Education. These discussions resulted in an agreed upon initial reduction in	FCAD supports reducing the MPC program's cohort size from 25 students to 22-23 students.	The program and FCAD can choose to reduce their intake targets but need to be aware of the potential resource implications in doing this. YSGS is happy to work collaboratively with the program and FCAD in addressing this concern.	The MPC domestic cohort intake has been reduced to 23 students. The PRT originally suggested a cohort size of 15, so more can be done. In the meantime, we are running 2 parallel sections in some core courses to get class size down to 12 or so.

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			MPC cohort size from 25 students, to 22-23 students.			
Recommendation 3: **Increase writing support and instruction.**	The professional communications sector is based on the written and spoken word. Those that excel in the profession enter the sector with excellent written and oral skills.	The PRT's affirmation of the need to place even more emphasis on writing skills concurs with ProComm's longstanding commitment to writing excellence, but also to their ongoing observation that this is an area that needs ongoing attention and increased resources.	2021-2022: MPC GPD, MPC GPA, ProComm Chair, Ryerson Writing Centre A reduction in class size and offering two sections of core courses will enhance instructors' ability to give individual attention to MPC students and their written work.	FCAD-supported reduction in overall cohort should address some of these problems. The Faculty supports the plan to engage with the Writing Centre for further support.	YSGS recommends exploring all ways to improve writing support including editorial feedback from course work, reducing class section sizes, and utilizing the resources from the Student Life and Learning Support Centre. The program should be aware of the potential impact of reducing enrollment on resource allocations.	More attention is able to be paid to writing instruction and evaluation thanks to increased faculty numbers, reduced MPC cohort size, and dividing the cohort into 2 sections for some core courses.
Recommendation 4: **Move current research methods course to Fall semester.**	This course moved to the Fall would allow students to learn about the various research methods utilized in professional and applied research methods. Those interested in the MRP could then opt to also complete a specialized research course for academic research.	The MPC program agrees with the PRT's recommendation to shift some of the emphasis on research methods to the fall term; however, we do not feel that adding methods to the fall should result in a loss of research methods in the winter, since this is the term that immediately precedes MPC	2021-2022: MPC GPD, MPC GPA, ProComm Chair, MPC faculty We suggest a more deliberate focus on research methods be incorporated into the communication theory	The Faculty supports MPC's innovative approach to solving this problem.	YSGS is fully supportive of introducing the learning of research methodology as early as possible. The program is advised to refer to Policy 127 when making any changes to its policy.	The MPC methods course was divided into two sections and humanities research methods were emphasized in the theory core course in the fall term (PC8002).

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		students beginning work on their MRPs.	core course (PC8002) that MPC students take in the fall. This course would become a blended theory and methodology course.			
Recommendation 5: **Better onboarding of new faculty members.**	The PRT recommends that when new ProComm faculty are hired to teach at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, a specific orientation program is developed to ensure that there is a fit between the new faculty and the MPC instructional and supervisory requirements.	The MPC program agrees that new faculty members should be contributing to the MPC program early in their career through teaching MPC courses and supervising MPC students.	2021-2022: MPC GPD, MPC GPA, ProComm Chair, MPC faculty The MPC program will ensure that new faculty are made aware of local teaching norms and graduate supervision expectations, and that new faculty are given early opportunities to contribute to the graduate curriculum.	FCAD supports the program in onboarding new faculty members to engage in graduate education and has contributed to this endeavor by connecting directly with them to underscore their roles as potential supervisors and to encourage them to become members of YSGS.	While the recruitment and training of new faculty members is outside the purview of YSGS, it agrees that raising awareness of graduate education with new hires will be for the benefit of all.	New MPC faculty are teaching core courses and supervising MPC MRPs. They are being encouraged to be as involved as possible in the MPC program as early as possible in their careers. So far it's been a success, with new faculty enthusiastically becoming involved in the MPC program.
Recommendation 6: **Consider a course-based MPC option**	For those students who are not intending to pursue further graduate studies and are interested in gaining further industry knowledge and skills, the MRP doesn't seem like a proportional and	The MPC program is committed to the Major Research Paper / Project component of the program, particularly since it requires MPC students to engage in original	2021-2022: MPC GPD, MPC GPA, ProComm Chair	The Faculty supports the curriculum changes that the program deems necessary for serving the diverse interests of the students provided that these are academically sound, economically feasible and	YSGS notes that, if pursued, this would be considered a major curriculum modification that should be worked on about 1 year in advance of the planned	The MPC MRP remains a critical part of the MPC program.

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	effective use of their summer term. Industry/sector specific courses could be offered as electives during this time, which would also require fewer MRP supervisors.	research in an area related to professional communication.	The PRT's recommendation will be brought to the MPC Curriculum Committee for discussion; implementing this change would require support from the committee as well as our Graduate Program Council and would likely take several years for the approval of curriculum changes and the development of new courses.	supported by input from industry partners.	implementation date. Policy 127 and the YSGS Associate Dean, Programs, should be consulted when working on major curriculum modifications.	
Recommendation 7: **Enhanced Internship Opportunities**	In discussions with current students and alumni of the program, there was a general sense that the MPC internship course/program was under-resourced and dependent on individual students to source their own opportunities. Current students commented on cancelled events in 2019 and	The MPC program is pleased the PRT identified the MPC internship program as needing additional resources and support. The staff position devoted to MPC internships has been made permanent and now resides under the umbrella of FCAD. This move to centralize and administer internships at the faculty level will create synergies across FCAD	2021-2022: MPC GPD, MPC GPA, ProComm Chair, MPC Internship Coordinator, MPC internship faculty representative The MPC program convened a meeting with the GPD, MPC internship coordinator, and MPC	The Faculty supports the MPC in strengthening internship opportunities between the program and hosts.	YSGS supports the program and Faculty responses.	The MPC internship requirement has been improved thanks to the Creative School's investment in creating an internship coordinator position that oversees internships in the faculty as a whole. The internship requirement has also been diversified during the pandemic due to the need to pursue virtual, and even

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	a lack of support from the MPC program. With the decision to hire and support a dedicated Internship staff member, this should provide future students with greater clarity and assurances of obtaining an internship at an earlier time in the program. Furthermore, observable and reportable learning objectives should be established and discussions with the host employer should be established to ensure agreement on the terms and outcomes of the internship. The PRT strongly recommends that the MPC program endorse paid internships for its program students.	departments and internship programs.	faculty internship representative to discuss how to improve current internship learning objectives, as well as ways to refine and clarify the host employers understanding of internship terms, outcomes, and objectives. We agree that all MPC internship opportunities should be paid.			long distance, internship options.

Summary Statement/Conclusion:

The School of Professional Communication heartily thanks the external reviewers and our ProCom colleagues and students for a very thorough assessment of the strengths and opportunities that define the MPC program. This was the MPC program's first external program review and thanks to this inaugural external evaluation the PRT and ProCom community were able to identify the program's many successes while, at the same time, providing us with a mandate and vision that we can use to shape the MPC program's future.