

**PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
MEDIA PRODUCTION (BA)**

Since the time of the last program review, RTA School of Media's Media Production program has undergone an extensive curriculum review and upgrade, as well as rebranding itself with a new name. These initiatives have occurred in step with the enormous changes that have taken place within the media industry itself over the past decade. In the 21st century, our industry has transitioned from working in 'traditional' forms of broadcast media (i.e., radio and television) into working with an extremely wide and diverse range of media platforms. As a result, RTA has similarly expanded and evolved to keep pace. Once known as "The School of Radio and Television Arts", the now rebranded RTA School of Media remains Canada's premier facility for media education – but no longer for just radio and TV. Instead, we teach media across an ever-growing range of platforms and delivery systems, and we now offer a wider range of undergraduate programs (Media Production, Sport Media and New Media) than in previous years and an MA in Media Production. Within the Media Production BA program itself, RTA will continue to rework and restructure its curriculum in order to keep pace with the technological developments that are continually reshaping the broadcast industry we serve.

Our student body and graduates feel strongly about the Media Production program. When surveyed, 96% of graduates and 99% of current students would recommend RTA to others. However, this does not mean RTA feels entitled to rest on its laurels.

NEW CURRICULUM

Currently, we are in the midst of rolling out an expanded, refocused curriculum that increases student choice in classes. The new curriculum allows for our diverse and multidisciplinary faculty to teach their specific areas of expertise and allows faculty to bring their enthusiasm, as well as their latest research and industry currency, to the classroom. In turn, this allows students gain a deeper knowledge in their areas of interest.

INCREASING CROSS-FACULTY INITIATIVES

In service of our overall goal of maintaining our status as Canada's premier centre for media education, RTA continues to redefine interactivity and discover new ways to engage audiences. Our most recent successful cross-faculty initiatives include production and research incubators such as the Digital Media Zone and our new Transmedia Zone; the school plans to launch similar initiatives in the forthcoming years, including the "Allan Slaight Radio Institute" and "The Studio For Media Activism".

INCREASING INTERNATIONALIZATION INITIATIVES

We have also worked at internationalizing the Media Production program, through the "RTA in LA" and "RTA in Ghana" initiatives, as well as through leading the Global Campus Network, the world's first collaborative and interactive student world-wide media network.

UPDGRADING OF FACILITIES ON A CONTINUAL BASIS

RTA is committed to ensuring that the technological resources available to our students remain world-class. Accordingly, in addition to the numerous cutting-edge facilities contained within our home building, the Rogers Communications Centre, the newly-opened SportsNet RTA Production Centre is a state-of-the-art sports production facility that will be used by RTA students for decades to come.

ATTRACTING A STRONG STUDENT BODY

As important as technological and pedagogical considerations are to the success of the RTA School of Media, we believe that our core strength is people. First and foremost, we have a strong, dedicated and forward-thinking faculty, as well as a student body that enters the Media Production program with an outstanding record of achievement at the high school level and who respond positively and enthusiastically to the many and varied challenges of our particularly intense university program.

With regard to our student body, some of the most important statistical data highlighting the academic achievement of our students include:

- Higher mean entering average than FCAD and Ryerson (all Faculties)
- Considerably higher percentage of first year students with a high school average of 80% or above than FCAD and Ryerson (all Faculties)
- Higher cumulative GPA of all students (all years) than FCAD and Ryerson (all Faculties)
- Higher cumulative GPA of graduating students than FCAD and Ryerson (all Faculties)

MAINTAINING STRONG TIES WITH INDUSTRY AND GRADUATES

RTA's Program Advisory Council is a body that comprises numerous prominent RTA graduates and industry leaders in television, radio and new media. The Chair and the Steering Committee regularly seek the advice of this Council on matters pertaining to current broadcast industry needs, academic planning, operation, and long-term initiatives. As well, many of our faculty and part-time instructors are actively involved in writing, production or financing of national and international programming, in addition to their teaching and research at Ryerson.

In addition, our network of graduates are a vital part of RTA. For the past 60 years RTA has taught and prepared its graduates to become industry leaders in the production and dissemination of creative content; it is now extremely difficult to find a Canadian production company, network, or broadcast media enterprise without a significant RTA presence at the highest creative and/or management levels. This means that the RTA community spreads far beyond the Ryerson campus, and we will continue to work with our grads to encourage and further develop these community links.

Despite an extremely high number of corporate downsizing initiatives and layoffs in the Canadian media industry from the years 2006-2009 (there were 1152 layoffs in 2009 alone), the employment rate for recent RTA graduates was relatively strong, even when the industry was undergoing an economic downturn.

Finally, the new "RTA UpFront" initiative showcases Media Production students' production and writing to stakeholders in the media industry. With the UpFront showcase, RTA is strengthening the relationship between its students, and the industry as a whole, to the benefit of the entire RTA community -- students, faculty and graduates alike.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the culture within RTA is to embrace change rather than to resist it; to move forward rather than to stay in a place that is comfortable; and to work at exceeding expectations rather than working to merely fulfill them. While we don't wish to minimize the challenges we face in terms of keeping up with a relentlessly changing media landscape, we also cannot forget our core strength: more than the buildings we inhabit, or any technology we have at the school, "RTA" is a collection of smart, dedicated people – faculty, staff, graduates and students – who are committed to keeping this Canada's premier media education school.

Accordingly, our academic plan is built on the following four pillars:

- 1) RTA will foster teaching and learning excellence meeting the evolving needs in 21st century.
- 2) RTA will continue to enhance the student experience, increasing engagement and student involvement.

3) RTA will continue to expand its role as an innovation centre for media.

4) RTA will continue to increase its impact within Canada and abroad.

While the constantly changing nature of the media industry guarantees that there will always be work to be done in order to maintain our position, it is a challenge that, historically, we have negotiated for over a half a century. Far from resting on our laurels, we look forward to keeping up with the standards set by the previous generation of RTA faculty, students and graduates ... and then exceeding them.

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

REPORT OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE TO SENATE

Approved by Senate April 5, 2016

PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW

RTA SCHOOL OF MEDIA, MEDIA PRODUCTION (BA)

Faculty of Communication and Design

1. BASIC INFORMATION

a) Program Description

This undergraduate program review focuses on the **Bachelor of Arts, Media Production**.

The RTA School of Media currently administers the following degrees:

- Bachelor of Arts, Media Production
- Bachelor of Fine Arts, New Media
- Bachelor of Arts, Sport Media (September 2014)
- Master of Arts, Media Production
- The School is also involved in the joint Ryerson/York University graduate program in Communication and Culture, offering both masters level (M.A.) and doctoral level (Ph.D.) programs

The RTA School of Media is recognized throughout Canada and internationally as a leader in media arts education. RTA graduates are some of this country's most respected broadcasting and communications professionals. The School's primary goal for its undergraduate programs is to deliver Canada's premium course of media study in a variety of creative, technical and business areas that relate to both traditional broadcast media and, increasingly, to new media. This includes a commitment to deliver the best production courses available, together with exceptional media contextual courses, including coursework on media theory and media business practices.

b) Program History

The following is a brief summary of the highlights of RTA's 66-year history:

1951 – The Communications Arts course was expanded to a two-year program. It was now administered by the School of Radio, soon to become the School of Radio and Television Arts.

1953 – Ryerson began offering a 3-year diploma in Radio and Television Arts (RTA).

1973 – In September, the faculty of Radio and Television Arts launched its degree program.

1992 – The \$25-million Rogers Communications Centre, a state-of-the-art facility for the Schools of Journalism, Radio and Television, and Computer Science, opened.

1996 – The RTA curriculum underwent a major transformation, and the program became a four-year-degree.

2000 – Ted and Loretta Rogers donated \$10 million to establish the Edward S. Rogers Sr. Graduate School for Advanced Communications. RTA joined with York University to offer joint MA and PhD degrees in Communication & Culture.

2007 – RTA began offering an MA in Media Production.

2011 – In the years leading up to 2011, the School integrated numerous newly-created “new media” courses into its curriculum, as well as added significant amounts of new media study into its already-existing courses. Recognizing that the school had outgrown its previous radio and television focus, Ryerson University Senate approved the new name “RTA School of Media” in June 2011.

2013 – RTA School of Media took over the administration of Ryerson's Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in

New Media.

2. DEVELOPMENTS SINCE PREVIOUS PPR

a) Previous Developmental Plan

Departmental goals at the time of the previous PPR and Response to Recommendations

Overall, the primary goal identified during the last PPR cycle was to ensure that the RTA School of Media (then known as the School of Radio & Television Arts) maintained its reputation as Canada's premier facility for instruction in broadcast media and digital media production, and broadened its reputation for being a top-tier facility for the study of media theory. The actions the School has taken since the last PPR that relate to the departmental goals include:

- Implementing and developing a new curriculum
- Hiring new faculty and ensuring quality of teaching
- Restructuring of Administration
- Increasing SRC Activity
- Creating a Professional Master's Program
- Expanding RTA Outreach
- Expanding RTA Continuing Education Offerings
- Expanding RTA Internationalization Initiatives
- Expanding Outreach to Other Schools

In addition, other changes were more evolutionary:

- Maintaining the School's Reputation: Branding
- Maintaining the School's Reputation: Curriculum
- Increasing Engagement with Industry
- Faculty Development

b) Annual Academic Plan: Evaluation of Progress since Last PPR

The academic plan, at the time of the previous PPR, centered on the continued rollout of a curriculum change that affected all four years of RTA. The curriculum fundamentally changed the way the RTA School of Media operated. From an administrative standpoint, the school switched from a model in which courses lasted a full academic year, to a semesterized model where individual courses each lasted one semester. However, the changes were more than simply administrative – the new curriculum was designed to give much more flexibility to students in terms of course offerings.

Annual academic plans throughout the curriculum roll-out focused on evaluating the success of each year's newly-offered courses, as well as making necessary changes to the planned courses yet to be offered, based on student success and achievement in the lower-level courses. RTA's academic plans in succeeding years also ensured that the School would grow and prosper in other ways; goals included developing research and innovation centres such as the Digital Media Zone and the Transmedia Zone, which serve as incubators for a wide range of innovative media productions. As well, RTA continued to plan and carry out initiatives to increase collaborative opportunities with other schools, both within Ryerson and around the world. Perhaps the most fundamental goal of the School's annual academic plans has been to ensure that the Media Production program remains up-to-date with media industry technological and business practices.

3. SOCIETAL NEED

a) Current and Anticipated Societal Need

In 2005 (the time of this school's last Program Review) there were over 45,000 jobs in private Canadian television, radio and television distribution, including cable and satellite companies – an 18 percent increase from 2001. Since then, although some conventional broadcasters have announced job cuts, the overall growth of the industry has continued to increase rapidly. Statistics Canada currently reports on the "film/television industry" as one large group, and "commercial radio" as another, and the statistics show

consistent growth in both sectors. Ontario is also home to Canada’s largest and one of the world’s most diversified music sectors. While specific employment figures are not available, according to Statistics Canada, Ontario’s music sector generated \$429.3 million in revenues in 2011, accounting for 81.9 per cent of total national revenues. A significant number of RTA graduates work in this field.

The growth in New Media is difficult to quantify, as Statistics Canada has not yet begun to track work in “New Media”, “Digital Media”, “Transmedia” or “Interactive Media” as separate employment categories. However, it can be assumed that a significant part of the explosive growth in the television and film sector is actually related more closely to new media, as many production companies and broadcasters are expanding into this area.

Currently, according to a Government of Canada paper on the Digital Media industry, as of 2011 the Canadian interactive media sector (which includes developers of on-line content, gaming content, and other forms of digital media) includes over 3,000 companies, collectively employing more than 52,000 people. The estimated revenue from interactive digital media in Canada is \$3.8 billion.

Ryerson also tracks (via survey) employment trends of recent RTA Media Production graduates. These figures are a direct indicator of societal need, although they are issued by the University with the warning that the figures must also be interpreted in light of economic trends. As well, the response rate to the survey will dictate a margin of error for each figure, which is (depending on the survey year) usually somewhere between 5 and 12%. (The 2006 figures for broadcasting employment rates have a margin of error of slightly over 20%.)

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS: RTA MEDIA PRODUCTION GRADUATES

GRADUATING YEAR	% employed in broadcasting (or related) industry 6 months after graduation	% employed in broadcasting (or related) industry 2 years after graduation	% employed in ANY industry 6 months after graduation	% employed in ANY industry 2 years after graduation
2005	93.8	93.8	100.0	100.0
2006	80.0	78.6	100.0	92.9
2008	78.6	82.1	93.1	96.7
2009	73.5	85.3	89.2	94.3

Overall, while the foundation of the RTA School of Media will always remain media broadcasting, the definition of “broadcasting” no longer encompasses simply radio or television. Without question, the skills required for broadcast professionals are changing, trending towards a “multimedia” or “converged” set of abilities. This means that the RTA School of Media must continue to ensure that its graduates are well-rounded in both theoretical and technological capabilities in order to publish content in a non-platform-specific environment.

b) Existing and Anticipated Student Demand

The most current statistical data place the RTA applicants-to-registrants ratio in line with FCAD (the Faculty of Communication and Design), and on par for Ryerson as a whole.

APPLICATIONS TO REGISTRANTS RATIO

Program or faculty	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
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RTA/Media Prod	7.5	7.9	8.3	8.2	8.5	7.9	7.7
FCAD	9.5	10.3	10.1	9.8	8.8	7.5	7.5
Ryerson (all faculties)	10.4	10.2	10.0	9.2	8.7	8.5	8.4

A decade ago, RTA typically accepted around 150 students per year and acceptances have increased somewhat over the past 10 years. Beginning in 2012, partially because of the intense demand for the program and the large number of qualified applicants, the program now accepts approximately 180 students per year.

It should be noted that the new Sport Media degree is anticipated to have a minimal impact on the number of applicants to the Media Production program. In the first year the Sport Media program was offered, there were perhaps a few dozen students who applied to both the Sport Media and the Media Production programs.

The RTA School of Media is the only institution in Canada offering a university degree in Media Production; nevertheless, it should be noted that there are numerous broadcasting programs at the community college level that are, in some ways, competitive with RTA. Throughout Ontario, there are 13 colleges offering broadcasting programs, and in the Toronto area, there are broadcasting programs at Centennial, Seneca, Sheridan, and Humber Colleges. The community college experience is geared towards building technical skills; the mandate of the RTA School of Media is to teach creative, technical and business skills, combined with a solid academic grounding in media theory, as well as in liberal arts.

We aim not only to teach technical skills; we are training the next generation of broadcasting and communications professionals who will hold key senior creative, business and management positions within the communications industry. Our mandate is therefore distinct from that of the other post-secondary broadcasting schools in Ontario, and we expect both the societal need for the Media Production program and the student demand for it will continue unabated.

4. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

a) Program Learning Outcomes

A graduate of the RTA School of Media with a B.A. in Media Production will be able to:

1. critically analyze media, placing their own work and the work of others in historical, aesthetic, social and commercial contexts;
2. apply critical perspectives to media, media content and the society it reflects while recognizing the limits of current knowledge and understanding;
3. apply advanced principles of storytelling and content development across media genres and platforms;
4. create superior content across various media genres and platforms using proficient media production skills with the ability to pursue specialized areas of interest;
5. analyze, explain and participate in the continually changing landscape of the media industries and related business practices;
6. persuasively convey ideas across various forms of professional communication in visual, written and oral modes to a broad range of public, academic and professional audiences;
7. demonstrate intellectual, interpersonal, leadership and professional skills to create sophisticated media works in order to participate significantly in their communities, academia and their professional lives;
8. demonstrate personal and academic integrity and a commitment to ethical and social responsibility in their work and how they interact with others.

Current required courses and their relation to program objectives and learning outcomes are listed below:

COURSE(S)	OBJECTIVE(S)	PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME #
Media Writing I & II (BDC 102, 202)	Geared to developing specific writing skills for the media industry.	3, 4, 6

Tech Theory I & II (BDC 111, 211)	Geared towards developing an understanding of broadcast technology.	4
Broadcast History (BDC 210)	Geared toward developing an understanding of the broader historical context in which the media industry has developed.	1, 2, 5
Audio Production I, Digital Media Production I, Media Production II (BDC 191, 192, 201)	Geared towards developing production skills in audio, video and multimedia.	3, 4, 6
Introduction to Fiction, Introduction to Non-Fiction (ENG 108, 208)	Introduces students to a variety of historical periods and media in order to examine the underlying mechanisms of storytelling.	1, 2, 3, 6
Information Gathering and Research Methods (BDC 310)	Geared to developing specific research skills for both academic pursuits and the media industry.	5, 6, 7
Communications Theory (BDC 311)	Geared towards developing an understanding of various concepts of communications theory.	1, 2, 5
Media Culture (BDC 401)	Geared toward developing an understanding of the impact of media on culture and vice versa.	1, 2
Business Practices in Creative Media (BDC 402)	Geared towards developing an understanding of traditional and evolving business and ethical practices within various creative media industries.	5, 8
Senior Capstone Lectures (BDC 701)	Geared to analyzing the current and future overarching issues within the creative and cultural industries, and placing them in context within the Canadian milieu.	1, 2, 7
Five (5) English courses, in addition to ENG 108 and 208	Specific learning outcomes will vary by course selected. Overall, these English courses will help refine the student's abilities in writing, research and critical thinking.	1, 2, 3, 6
One (1) of the following: Production: Audio (BDC 301) Production: Digital Media (BDC 302) Production: TV Studio (BDC 303) Production: EFP (BDC 304)	Geared to developing technical proficiency in the selected subject area, as well as fostering an understanding of the teamwork and interpersonal skills necessary to create superior programming	3, 4, 6, 7, 8
Business-oriented courses (ACC 607, BDC 901 to 923, 927, 937)	Geared to developing business skills and an understanding of the Canadian media production regulatory environment.	5
Courses on media ethics and legal issues (BDC 915, 918)	Geared towards developing an understanding of the ethical responsibilities and legal realities of media production.	8
Media writing courses (BDC 940-947)	Geared toward geared to developing specific professional-level writing skills for the media industry.	3, 4, 6, 7, 8
Media and communications theory courses (BDC 903, 921, 924, 928, 950, 960)	Geared towards developing an understanding of various concepts of communications theory.	1, 2, 5
Production-oriented courses (BDC 929, 951-958, 961- 988)	Technical proficiency in the selected subject area, as well as fostering an understanding of the teamwork and interpersonal skills necessary to create superior programming.	3, 4, 6, 7, 8
Practicum I & II (BDC 701/801)	Geared to allow students to produce professional quality audio, television, or multimedia projects. Students engage the support of external industry mentors as well as RTA faculty.	3, 4, 7, 8
Major Research Paper I & II (BDC 790/890)	Geared towards allowing students to refine their writing and advanced scholarly research skills under the guidance of faculty.	2, 5, 8
Internship (BDC 820)	Students develop personal contracts with industry mentors to carry out significant research or gain industry work experience off campus and to explore particular career interests.	5, 6, 7, 8
Special Project (BDC 821)	Geared to allow students to produce professional quality audio, television, or multimedia projects, <u>OR</u> a research paper. Allows students to refine their production skills (or writing and advanced scholarly research skills) under the guidance of faculty.	3, 4, 7, 8 (or 2, 5, 7, 8 with research paper option)

b) Program Consistency with Other Academic Plans

Ryerson's commitment to delivering teaching excellence and curriculum relevance within a framework of delivering a balance between theory and application has been incorporated into the academic plans of FCAD, and all its constituent schools. For RTA's part, this is not done out of a mere sense of duty – this is done because the department firmly believes in the Ryersonian educational ideal. Accordingly, the RTA School of Media has crafted its program outcomes to be consistent with the overall goals of Ryerson.

It is also important to note that one of the central themes of Ryerson's academic plan ("Our Time to Lead 2014-2019") is student engagement and success. In harmony with this theme, the RTA School of Media consequently strives to be an experiential learning environment that encompasses more than just classroom

activities. Theoretical and historical education is strengthened by experience in computer labs, studios, editing suites, and other technical facilities. Students also have the opportunity to increase their knowledge through internship opportunities and international exchange programs.

5. ACADEMIC QUALITY

a) Description of Program Curriculum and Structure

Total courses	40 credits
Required Core RTA Courses	21 credits
RTA Electives	7 credits
Open Electives	6 credits
Liberal Studies	6 credits

Bachelor of Arts – Media Production	
1st SEMESTER REQUIRED: RTA 101: Introduction to Media Theory and Practice RTA 102: Creative Processes RTA 103: Digital Media Production I RTA 104: Sound Production LIBERAL STUDIES: 1 course from Table A	2nd SEMESTER REQUIRED: RTA 201: Video Art and Production RTA 210: Media History RTA 211: Production Theory RTA 212: Media Writing RTA 213: Production: Introduction to Multi-camera
3rd SEMESTER REQUIRED: RTA 315: Business of Creative Media RTA 316: Introduction to Narrative REQUIRED GROUP 1: One course from the following: RTA 311*: Production – Intermediate Audio RTA 313*: Production – Intermediate Multi-camera RTA 314*: Production – Intermediate Single Camera OR both of the following courses: RTA 317: Digital Media for Evolving Audiences AND RTA 312: Production - Intermediate Digital Media CORE RTA ELECTIVE: One course from Table I LIBERAL STUDIES: 1 course from Table A *This course has a weight of 2.00.	4th SEMESTER REQUIRED: RTA 310: Media Aesthetics & Culture CORE RTA ELECTIVE: Two courses required from Table I OPEN ELECTIVE: 1 course from Open Elective Table LIBERAL STUDIES: 1 course from Table A
5th SEMESTER REQUIRED: CORE RTA ELECTIVE: Two courses required from Table I OPEN ELECTIVE: Two courses from Open Elective Table LIBERAL STUDIES: 1 course from Table B	6th SEMESTER REQUIRED: RTA 501: Project Development CORE RTA ELECTIVE: 1 course from Table I OPEN ELECTIVE: Two courses from Open Elective Table LIBERAL STUDIES: 1 course from Table B
7th SEMESTER REQUIRED: One selection from the following: RTA 710*: Thesis Project OR RTA 712: Thesis Paper AND 1 course from Open Elective Table OR 2 courses from Open Elective Table CORE RTA ELECTIVE: 1 course from Table I OPEN ELECTIVE: 1 course from Open Elective Table LIBERAL STUDIES: 1 course from Table B *This course has a weight of 2.00	8th SEMESTER REQUIRED: RTA 711: Master Class REQUIRED GROUP 1: One selection from the following: RTA 810*: Thesis Project OR 2 courses from Open Elective Table REQUIRED GROUP 2: One course from the following: RTA 811*: Internship RTA 812*: RTA Productions RTA 813*: Directed Readings *This course has a weight of 2.00

CORE RTA ELECTIVE TABLE I	
RTA 220 New Media Art History RTA 221 Experiential Media/Interdisciplinary Practice RTA 222 Intro to Computational Arts	RTA 941 Dramatic Writing RTA 942 Advertising Copywriting RTA 943 Comedy Writing

RTA 320 Interactive Storytelling	RTA 944 Writing for Animation
RTA 321 Intro to Tangible Media	RTA 945 Writing for Factual and Reality Programs
RTA 322 Technology, Identity and Creativity	RTA 946 Issues in New Media Theory/History
RTA 323 Digital Narratology	RTA 947 Live Event Media
RTA 330 Advanced Live Production	RTA 948 Interactive Spaces
RTA 521 #Activism: Media for Social Change	RTA 949 Directed Study
RTA 901 Advertising	RTA 950 Selected Topics in Media
RTA 902 Social Media	RTA 951 Presentation I
RTA 903 News and Current Affairs Theory	RTA 952 Presentation II
RTA 904 Advanced Media Management	RTA 953 Mobility and Mixed Reality
RTA 905 History and Culture of Popular Music	RTA 954 Empathy Machines
RTA 906 Marketing for Media Professionals	RTA 955 Sports Broadcasting
RTA 907 Sound Media	RTA 956 Children's Programming
RTA 908 Business of Producing I	RTA 957 Documentary Production
RTA 909 Business of Producing II	RTA 958 Communications within Hybrid Environments
RTA 910 Production Management	RTA 959 Visualization and Generative Processes
RTA 911 Directing and Performance	RTA 960 Selected Topics in International Media
RTA 912 The Audience	RTA 961 2-D and Object Animation
RTA 913 Media Entrepreneurship	RTA 962 Interaction Design
RTA 914 Business Case Studies in Communications	RTA 963 Digital Graphic and Web Design
RTA 915 Legal Issues in Media	RTA 964 Emerging Technology for Media Makers
RTA 916 Advanced Media Marketing	RTA 965 Advanced New Media Topics
RTA 917 Public Relations	RTA 966 Cooperative Internship
RTA 918 Ethics in Media	RTA 967 Interactivity and Net-working
RTA 919 The Art of Negotiation	RTA 968 Malleable Media
RTA 921 Advanced Audio Theory	RTA 969 Television Technical Producing
RTA 922 Transmedia Writing	RTA 970 Lighting, Grip and Effects Specialty
RTA 923 Intro to Writing for Video Games	RTA 971 Audio Post Production and Sound Design
RTA 925 Making Objects	RTA 972 Sound Synthesis
RTA 926 Studies in Genre	RTA 973 Independent Production
RTA 927 Business of Music I	RTA 974 Radio Production
RTA 928 Gaming Theory and Practice	RTA 975 Video Compositing and Special Effects
RTA 929 Multi-platform Narrative	RTA 976 Radio Broadcast Journalism
RTA 930 Social Practices in Hybrid Media Spaces	RTA 977 Factual and Entertainment Features
RTA 931 Inside the Frame	RTA 978 Editing Specialty
RTA 932 Hacking, DIY and Open Source Cultures	RTA 979 Advanced Television Editing
RTA 933 Hacking, DIY and Open Source Studio	RTA 980 TV Broadcast Journalism
RTA 934 Virtual Identities and Communities	RTA 981 Advanced Audio Production
RTA 935 Institutional/ Personal Media Platforms	RTA 982 Advanced Digital Media Production
RTA 936 The Business of Art	RTA 983 Multi-Camera Production -Advanced
RTA 937 Business of Music II	RTA 984 Single-Camera Production - Advanced
RTA 938 Digital Popular Cultures	RTA 985 Sound for Video Producers
RTA 939 Aboriginal Media	RTA 990 Intro to Documentary Theory
RTA 940 Canadian Televisual Studies	RTA 999 RTA in LA

Through the core required courses in the curriculum, Media Production students gain a crucial understanding of the law, business and regulatory landscape of the media industry in order to succeed in the industry. In addition, they hone their media writing and production skills, and they gain a greater understanding of the aesthetics, historical context and potential cultural impact of their own work. This knowledge base is then enhanced by the other courses they take while in the program – both the RTA elective courses, as well as liberal studies electives.

YEAR 1: The first year of the program serves as a foundational year, in which Media Production students are exposed to content creation/storytelling, media production, critical theory, technical theory and media history.

YEAR 2: Second year required courses delve deeper into the nature of narrative and media aesthetics, as well as introducing students to current business practices within the media. As well, beginning in second year, students begin to take RTA electives, which include a range of production-oriented courses (of which they will take at least one), in addition to elective courses that cover issues in business, writing, performance, animation, and a wide range of other media disciplines.

YEAR 3: Third year is primarily a chance for students to explore various RTA electives, according to their interests. A required third year course in Project Development allows students to explore the creative and

practical processes needed to take an idea from inception to script or prototype. This course prepares students to produce their major culminating fourth-year Major Thesis project.

YEAR 4: In fourth year the BA students' learning culminates in a major production or research paper in which they apply all they have learned (the "Thesis Project"). Select students may opt out of their Thesis Project, in part to take other courses or to delve deeper into an academic area, perhaps completing a minor or concentration. Most students also take on a full-time internship in the media industry that provides them with "real world" skills and often a smooth transition from Ryerson into their chosen careers. In addition, in their final year, Media Production students take a Master Class examining key issues affecting media, as well as the artistic issues in media.

RTA also:

- offers a joint minor with English called Global Narratives
- offers a large number of courses on the open electives table
- offers some liberal studies courses to other programs
- offers three modules to Creative Industries students
- is exploring potential involvement with the Chang School of Continuing Education

b) Diversity and Inclusion

The RTA School of Media believes that having a staff, faculty and student body that models the Canadian ideal of diversity and inclusion (EDI) is extremely important. Accordingly, the faculty has worked hard to attract qualified applications from – and to hire – a broader spectrum of diverse candidates at the faculty level. On a student level, RTA endeavours to recruit a student body that models diversity and inclusion through the use of scholarships aimed at students from underrepresented, equity-seeking groups. Inclusion is also maintained by ensuring (in conjunction with the Rogers Communications Centre) that our studio facilities are fully accessible to wheelchair users or those with other mobility issues. Over the years, we have had many students who have required accessibility accommodations. A RTA student recently won the Barbara Turnbull Award, awarded each year to a deserving Ryerson FCAD student with a disability. Our faculty provides modifications as necessary, on a case by case basis, as required by individual needs.

The Media Production program is currently rolling out a new curriculum that includes a number of courses that help to develop students' cultural competence. The faculty have had many discussions on the importance of equity and diversity in media and in society as a whole.

RTAIMS, the RTA Inclusive Media Society, has been created which encourages students, faculty and media professionals to rethink their choices in representation of people and groups in media. This is a coalition of RTA students and faculty dedicated to challenging stereotypes through media and working on bringing messages of inclusiveness to productions by both students and by the industry in general. As well, the organization includes a curriculum committee, which will make recommendations to the RTA faculty about RTA courses and coursework in which issues of equity, diversity and inclusion could be addressed more fully.

Other EDI initiatives:

- In March 2015, our Allan Slaight Radio Institute will host a panel discussion entitled, "Diversity on Radio".
- The Studio for Media Activism & Critical Thought, housed in the RTA School of Media, promotes media activism through community-based research, conferences, media art, scholarly publication, solidarity cultural work, and the creation of social justice content for Canadian broadcast. Unique among research centres in Canada, the Studio works to blur the boundaries between media artmaking, activism, and theoretical /scholarly investigation in the areas of media studies, critical theory, cultural studies, activism, Aboriginal, critical race, feminist and queer studies and social justice.

- The Aboriginal Media Project, which will explore Aboriginal media in a socio-political context, as well as exploring Aboriginal aesthetics and culture, including views of two-spirit, gender, class and race issues as seen through the lens of Aboriginal media.
- Through a course in International Development students have gone to Ghana and Honduras to engage in community development projects.
- The Global Campus Network, which is an alliance of post-secondary institutions around the world, is led by Ryerson University. The latest internet-based technologies are used to create real-time live programming and international content. Current institutional partners include the Danish School of Media and Journalism (Denmark), the Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand), Rutgers University, Annapurna International School of Film and Media (India), University of Johannesburg (South Africa) and Tel Aviv University (Israel).
- In addition, students may take part in an international exchange, taking courses abroad for one term in their third year of study.

The following courses are required courses for all Media Production students. Each of these courses has components in them encompassing equity, diversity, and cultural competence:

RTA 101 Introduction to Media Theory and Practice

RTA 210 Media History

RTA 310 Media Aesthetics and Culture

RTA 315 Business of Creative Media

RTA 316 Introduction to Narrative

c) Curriculum and Structure – Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations

The RTA School of Media has ensured that the learning objectives for each year of study correspond to the provincial UDLE standards. The RTA School of Media adapted the 6-point UDLE template into its own 8-point plan. Our eight graduate expectations take all the points contained in the provincial UDLEs, which are written to cover any undergraduate program, and give a specific media focus to the expectations. In this way, RTA can ensure that Media Production students are not only meeting the provincial UDLEs, but are also meeting the media industry's expectations of an RTA graduate.

The curriculum was then mapped to ensure that each of the eight points was covered. Attention was paid to ensuring that each point was introduced in required first and second year courses, before being reinforced in upper level required and elective courses. The completed Courses to Learning Outcomes matrix confirms that all Media Production students will be introduced to all eight points in the early years of the program, then will receive reinforcement in these points in required courses in second and third years. By the time of their fourth-year required courses, students will find their required coursework allows them to demonstrate proficiency in all eight areas. Elective courses will also allow students to receive instruction in all eight points, while allowing each student to focus on specific elements of media production of personal interest.

d) Curriculum Development

Because we serve an industry undergoing constant change, the RTA School of Media is committed to reviewing, renewing and reinvigorating its curriculum on a regular basis. An ongoing Curriculum Committee is responsible for curriculum review and development, long-term-planning, course modification, and calendar copy. On a program-wide basis, when more overarching curricular changes are called for (typically every 5-10 years), the RTA faculty takes a collective approach to curriculum development, with the entire faculty working on the changes.

e) Enrolment in Program Courses

RTA's consistently low attrition rate, coupled with our students' marked enthusiasm for the courses we offer, means that annual enrolment numbers in all required Media Production courses follow an extremely

predictable pattern. All required courses are offered once each year and very quickly reach full enrolment (or very close to it).

In general, the majority of elective courses in the “900” series (i.e., those numbered 900 or higher) are offered once every four semesters, although some especially popular 900 series courses are offered once every two semesters. As well, a few “900” series courses are only offered if there is sufficient evidence of student demand – which means that there are a very few courses that are on the books that have never run. Nevertheless, these specialized courses in media practice and theory are kept as options within the curriculum as a way of ensuring maximum flexibility in our course offerings. Should a demand arise for these courses, we will be prepared to integrate them into our curriculum offerings – they are already approved and can be offered as and when necessary. Elective courses with lower course numbers (i.e., under 900) are, as a rule, offered once every two semesters.

Some non-production courses, such as BDC 908 and 909, also utilize other scarce resources, making it difficult to create new sections. (These two courses in particular bring in industry leaders to act as adjudicators and mentors to students; it is simply not possible to find a large number of additional mentors at the level we are seeking.) In cases where heavy demand for certain courses has outstripped our capacity to supply spaces for all applicants, RTA has used student GPA to determine the successful applicants. Students are advised during the first year of the program that some upper level courses may have the possibility of GPA-based student selection, depending on demand.

f) Relationship to Current Discipline and Profession

The RTA School of Media fosters very close ties with the industry that we serve, and RTA has long been known for the high quality of its undergraduate and graduate programs that link our students’ studies to the media profession. This is primarily due to our faculty’s commitment to staying current with industry practice – many of our faculty members pursue successful parallel careers as creators of media content, and we strive to ensure that our programs are continually updated to reflect the latest technical, social and creative industry trends. Overall, RTA relies on the strong industry ties possessed by members of the faculty and Advisory Council (as well as the industry ties of our graduates) to allow us to keep current with industry trends. As well, we actively seek feedback from current students and graduates to confirm that the educational and delivery methods used are the most effective ways of engaging our core constituency.

RTA’s curriculum also continues our strong tradition of entrepreneurship and innovation; the advanced Marketing for Media elective course and other elective courses explore how the business of media unfolds on the global stage.

Being on the leading edge requires continual forward movement, and RTA is committed to maintaining its hard-won reputation for being Canada’s leading centre for media study. RTA will therefore continue to tweak, modify or even restructure its curriculum (and the individual courses within it) as necessary, in order to meet our goal of providing courses that are technologically, sociologically and pedagogically current and relevant.

Professional Practice

The RTA School of Media is committed to ensuring that students are made aware of the role of practicing professional media content creators and producers in society, and their ethical responsibilities. An awareness of these issues is instilled in students in their initial required courses and is developed throughout the program, culminating in opportunities to practice and refine their professional-level media knowledge in their Thesis Project in fourth year.

Discussions of ethical responsibilities are integrated directly across most of our first-year required courses. In introducing standards of ethical behaviour, the discussions include issues in content creation and

gathering of information but, at this introductory stage, focus especially strongly on the ethical standards expected of students in group work situations. Further business and ethical considerations are introduced in the required second-year course, RTA 315 (Business of Creative Media). This course explores ethical considerations in media in terms of business practices, rather than strictly in terms of content creation. Lectures in the required third-year course in Project Development (RTA 501) reinforce the ethical precepts introduced in earlier years of the program, as students use this course to prepare for their thesis project.

The writing and production-based courses in the '900' series of courses are strongly oriented towards modeling ideal professional industry practices and behaviours, as are business courses such as RTA 908/909 (Business of Producing I/II). With their thesis project, all fourth-year students take a Master Class (RTA 711) that analyzes and discusses current and future overarching issues within the creative and cultural industries, including issues of ethics and current business practices.

As students progress through the Media Production program, almost all of the production-focused coursework they take is designed to mimic the professional media environment as closely as possible. In all production courses and all writing courses, students are expected to create material that adheres to contemporary broadcast standards in terms of content, as well as production/composition technique. Furthermore, as is the case in the industry, students are given strict (although reasonable) deadlines within which to deliver their finished material, as well as being assigned industry-focused expectations for each assignment's required length and appropriate format(s) for delivery.

g) Student Engagement

i) Teaching Methods and Innovative/Creative Content/Delivery

RTA believes in ensuring that students receive ample practical, professionally-oriented learning, and our teaching methods reflect that. Nevertheless, there are traditional university lecture courses within the Media Production program, and 97.1% of Media Production students surveyed found RTA's classroom instruction to be "effective" or "very effective".

The media writing courses have lecture components, but also focus on writing labs in which students operate in "writing rooms". Depending on the course, these writing room environments will be patterned after those found in advertising agencies, newsrooms, new media companies, or sitcom or drama production offices, and will mimic as closely as possible the collaborative peer feedback and rewrite processes found in the industry.

Many of the upper-level business courses also have a strong "real world" focus to them, notably Business of Producing II (RTA 909). Other business-oriented courses use a mixture of lectures and case studies to convey the basic underpinnings of media business theory, but also almost always include a practical component wherein students create financial models and business plans for their ongoing Ryerson and/or outside media production activities.

Whether in audio, video or transmedia, all RTA production courses feature a strong experiential lab component in which students are responsible for creating media content, generally in small production groups. Students consider the production courses (studio-based courses) to be one of our strongest assets, with 98.5% of students surveyed identifying them as "effective" or "very effective".

While there are lecture components to our production-based courses, the RTA School of Media has also produced an ever-growing library of tutorial videos to help students learn (or remember) the basic functions of various pieces of equipment and software.

Traditionally, theoretical courses are the ones that RTA students tend to be less engaged with, as practical, hands-on learning opportunities are less present in these courses. Accordingly, for several years, certain

professors in the RTA School of Media have been developing innovative teaching methods to deliver curriculum in our theory-based courses using online collaborative software and e-textbooks.

ii) Partnerships or Collaborative Agreements

RTA recognizes the importance of providing students with the opportunity to develop a global media perspective, and participates in FCAD's International Exchange Program. Current exchange partners for RTA include Auckland Institute of Technology (New Zealand); Curtin University of Technology (Australia); University of Technology, Sydney (Australia); University of South Australia (Australia); Queensland University of Technology (Australia); RMIT University (Australia); Bournemouth University (UK); University of Westminster (UK); Edinburgh Napier University (UK); Danish School of Media and Journalism (Denmark); Roskilde University (Denmark); Karlstad University (Sweden); Fachhochschule Stuttgart (Germany); Nanyang Technological University (Singapore); and City University of Hong Kong (China).

RTA participates in other collaborative programs across the university, including the Digital Media Zone and the Transmedia Zone, which are partnerships with other Ryerson schools that serve as incubators for cross-disciplinary projects.

iii) Experiential Learning Opportunities

Many Media Production courses in the lower years of the program are designed to mimic professional media environments as closely as is practical. As students progress through years two and three, an increasing number of RTA courses they take will allow them to write, create and produce material that can be entered into short video/media festivals; used as real-world public service announcements; or (in writing courses) submitted to professional TV or radio story editors/commissioning editors as industry-quality writing samples.

After these media experiences, the Media Production program culminates in fourth year over the course of the two-term Thesis Project (RTA 710/810). In these two courses, students engage in creating professional level media content for an external audience. In these courses, students are ultimately responsible for the writing, production, distribution and commercial exploitation of their group project, utilizing all the creative, technical, and business knowledge they have acquired over the course of the Media Production Program to help create a successful production, and a successful production company. The minority of students who elect to pursue a written thesis instead of the production-oriented Thesis Project (by taking RTA 712 and other electives in place of RTA 710/810) focus more narrowly on creating academic content that allows them to display the breadth and depth of their knowledge in an academic context.

In the final six weeks of fourth year, students have the opportunity to pursue an internship within the media industry. RTA's internship partners include major broadcast networks and companies, advertising agencies, new media companies, animation houses, independent production companies, post-production houses and much more.

In the student survey 83.6% of students who had taken the internship course found it effective or very effective. RTA students found their experiences to be effective or very effective well over 90% of the time in studio experiences (98.5%), lab experiences (98.0%), computer-based experiences (95.1%) and group work (92.6%).

h) Student Assessments

Student assessments in production courses are generally focused on the content that is created, with students receiving critiques and feedback at various stages of production. Initial assessment and feedback on a media project will usually occur at the paperwork stage. Generally, students will submit an initial package consisting of blocked scripts and/or storyboards and/or other production documents for review, marks and

comment before receiving permission to actually mount their productions. Once in production, students will receive feedback from faculty as they work on their projects. For more complex productions, students may also receive a mark-based assessment of interim material they have created -- potentially some individual scenes, a portion of a website, a rough cut, or some other announced interim benchmark. A final mark-based assessment with critique will be delivered for the project in its final form.

Introductory production based courses will also have short quizzes and/or practical hands-on supervised testing procedures, to ensure that students are familiar with the competent and safe operation of various forms of production equipment. Testing and assessment in production-based courses are designed to align with Program Outcome goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

In the media writing courses, generally students will submit a story synopsis and/or other production documents for review, marks and comments before receiving permission to actually 'go to draft' with their script. Once they are engaged in scriptwriting, students will receive feedback from faculty as they work on their projects. As much as possible, the assessments in our media writing courses are patterned after the experiences of real-world media writers, who will receive feedback and critiques on their work at the pitch stage, the outline stage, and at each draft. A final mark-based assessment with critique will be delivered for the project in its final form. Testing and assessment in the production and media writing courses are designed to align with Program Outcome goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

In most business-oriented courses in the Media Production program assessments are done through testing, and through essays and other written material that allow students to explore specialized business topics in depth. Most of the business courses also include a practical component wherein students create financial models and business plans for their ongoing Ryerson and/or outside media production activities. Overall, assessment in the business courses is designed to align with program goals 5, 7 and 8.

Student surveys show that 73.7% of students find tests and exams contribute to their learning; 81.8% say the same of term papers and other written assignments; but 97.1% find classroom instruction is effective or very effective in this regard, while 98% find our lab experiences to be effective or very effective

Assessment in theory-based courses tends to be focused on tests, essays, and other written assignments; due to their theoretical nature, practical, hands-on learning opportunities are understandably less present in these courses. In order to increase the level of student engagement with these courses, where possible, faculty have created opportunities for students to deliver certain assignments in modern media formats such as a group-produced radio documentary or assignments in a visual media, audio or transmedia format.

i) Student Success and Achievement

Strong competition in acceptance into the Media Production program nets a very strong student body. Because the RTA faculty assesses not just an applicant's marks, but also the applicant's entrance essays, CV and in-person interview, the result is a group of students that are more motivated, better prepared for university and have a broader range of experience. On average, Media Production students graduate with a higher cumulative GPA across all their courses than other students in FCAD, or students at Ryerson as a whole. Similarly, Media Production students exceed the standards set by FCAD and Ryerson in terms of cumulative grade point averages during all years of the program, for all Ryerson courses taken.

As well, the percentage of students who maintain "clear" academic standings within the RTA Media Production program is consistently higher than the percentage of "clear" students in FCAD and Ryerson as a whole. The GPAs and the academic standings achieved by our students are a strong measure not only of their overall academic performance, but also of their engagement with the Media Production program.

j) Variation from GPA Policy

RTA School of Media has no variations from Ryerson's overall GPA policy.

k) Library Resources

Highlights of the report indicate that the Ryerson University Library and Archives (RULA) resources and services adequately support RTA School of Media's bachelor's level Media Production program, as well as our program in New Media and our M.A. in Media Production. The current depth and breadth of print and electronic resources is the result of collection development efforts by the Library with input from faculty. A profiled content delivery service (YPB Library Services) is utilized to ensure the latest and most relevant books/e-books are available in a timely manner, and the Electronic Resources and Serials Review Committee monitors and manages all other acquisition activity.

It should be noted that the RTA student survey found a significant number of respondents (40%) identified the print resources of the Ryerson library to be "ineffective" or "very ineffective". The faculty believes this to be representative of the swiftly-changing nature of the media industry—the Ryerson library is often hamstrung by the fact that media technologies and platforms change so quickly that by the time print material is written about these new technologies, the print material is almost instantly out-of-date. The faculty supports the library's current practice of, when possible, purchasing new content in digital format to ensure a greater level of currency.

6. ACADEMIC QUALITY INDICATOR ANALYSIS

a) Faculty

The full-time RTA School of Media faculty consists of 26 faculty members and 8 part time instructors.

The scope and range of the program's SRC activities has broadened considerably since the time of the previous PPR. The Faculty has long held a policy of recruiting people who have a strong history of high-level creative and management experience within the media industry. Our current faculty includes industry practitioners who are media writers, directors, producers, and creative technicians; work the faculty have written, produced, or creatively contributed to includes (but is not limited to) TV shows, new media projects, computer-oriented projects, newscasts and informational programming, and a wide range of other creative projects.

Elsewhere, the Transmedia Zone has been an especially fertile incubator for both creative and research-oriented initiatives in various forms of media. With a focus on emerging platforms and true innovation, the Zone supports projects from students or industry through mentorship, co-working facilities, and access to equipment.

On a scholarly and research level, grants and partnerships include:

- Ontario Centres of Excellence
- Ontario Ministry of Transportation
- Prosperity Initiative
- external partnerships with Intel, Steelcase, Google, the Writers Guild of Canada
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

b) Students and Graduates

i) Admission Requirements

Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent with a minimum of six Grade 12 U or M courses. A minimum grade of 70% or higher will be required in Grade 12U English (ENG4U/EAE4U).

Applicants are also required to submit a CV and original essay material.

ii) Student Qualifications

Data from Ryerson's University Planning Office shows that between 2005/06 and 2013/14 the mean entering average high school grades of first year RTA Media Production students increased from 83.5% to 88%.

As well, in the same timeframe, the percentage of RTA Media Production entrants with a high school average of 80% or higher rose from 74.1% to 100% between 2005 and 2013.

iii) Enrolment, Retention and Graduation Data

Partially because of the intense demand for the program and the large number of qualified applicants (and partly at the specific behest of Ryerson's Admissions Office), acceptances have increased over the last 10 years from 160 in 2005 to 184 in 2014.

In terms of retention rate, Media Production is exceptionally strong, partly due to the motivated nature of our student body. Retention data shows that Media Production consistently exceeds the retention rates of both FCAD and of Ryerson as a whole.

The University Planning Office has provided statistics that show approximately 90% of students who enter the first year of the Media Production degree straight out of high school will graduate within 6 years.

iv) Student Survey

In a 2013 Student Survey, a total of 205 responses were received from across all years of Media Production. The highlights of the survey include the following:

- In response to the question "Would you recommend RTA to others?", 99% of the respondents indicated "yes".
- Student consistently indicated that they "agreed" or "agreed strongly" that the Media Production program, or individual professors, were of high quality, well-organized, etc. (over 90%).
- Students rated the classroom, lab and studio environments as especially effective, as each one of these were overwhelmingly rated "effective" or "very effective" (Classroom: 97.1%; Lab: 98.0%; Studio: 98.5%)
- An area in which Media Production needed to improve was in fostering entrepreneurship
- Another area of concern was Media Production's weaker showing in placing broadcasting within an international context for our students
- 36.7% of respondents felt that Media Production helped them "very little" or "not at all" in improving their understanding of people from other cultures. This could indicate that the faculty is not giving proper weight to teaching media across a broad range of experiences and cultures. However, because of the way the question was worded by Ryerson, the response could also be interpreted to indicate that numerous students felt that they already had a broad, inclusive understanding of other cultures before they arrived here.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), conducted in 2014 could be used to back up this argument. This survey, which targets first and fourth year students, indicated that, during their time in university, Media Production students were "often" or "very often" exposed to people from:

- different ethnicities (first year 84%/ fourth year 88%);
- economic backgrounds (first year 80%/fourth year 82%),
- religious beliefs (first year 80%/fourth year 82%), and
- political views (first year 56%/fourth year 72%) than their own.

The same survey showed that 74% of first year Media Production students and 87% of fourth year Media Production students felt that their university experience helped them to understand people of different ethnicities, economic backgrounds, religious beliefs and political views at least somewhat, and 49% of first years and 64% of fourth years felt it helped them "quite a bit" or "very much". The NSSE survey showed that only 26% of first year Media Production students and 13% of fourth year Media Production students felt that their university experience helped them "very little" in this regard.

v) Graduate Survey

During the academic year 2013/2014 a total of 109 survey responses were received, from RTA Media Production graduates across several decades. The highlights of the survey include the following:

- In response to the question "Would you recommend RTA to others?", 96% of the respondents indicated "yes".
- 85.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The media theory that was taught in RTA is relevant to my career."

- 77.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*The production technology that was used and taught in RTA is relevant to my career.*”
- 92.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*The writing skills that were taught in RTA are relevant to my career*”
- 48.5% felt that RTA could have offered them more business courses during the program, in order to best prepare them for their current career.

vi) Employer Survey

During the academic year 2013/2014, a total of 24 survey responses were received from a spectrum of employers in audio production, hardware and software sales, video production, and media sales. In brief, the survey showed that the industry valued the skills and qualities that we endeavour to instill in our students: teamwork, problem solving, effective communication, time management and currency with industry trends. On an equipment/tools level, AVID was the most essential technology favoured by both audio and video broadcasters.

7. RESOURCES

i) Faculty

The RTA School of Media currently houses 26 full-time faculty members to serve the four different degree programs it runs (BA and MA Media Production, BA Sport Media, BFA New Media). As well, several faculty members are involved with the joint Ryerson/York University graduate programs (MA and PhD) in Communication and Culture. The current faculty complement, with its varied background in both academic research and practical industry experience, continues to serve the needs of the Media Production program. Going forward, the school will be looking to ensure that future faculty hires are able to contribute to the mix of the practical and the theoretical that is at the heart of RTA. In addition, some of our recent hires who are more strongly associated with the New Media and Sport Media programs still bring the benefit of their differing experiences to the Media Production program. As well, some introductory courses in media writing and media production are common to all three undergraduate degrees, allowing professors to teach students in more than one undergraduate degree program.

There are plans to add to the school’s full-time faculty complement, as three additional faculty hires are planned over the next four years. While these new hires will be focusing on the Sport Media degree program, because of the overlap mentioned above it is expected that these new faculty members will also have some involvement with the Media Production program.

ii) Administration

With the recent addition of the Sport Media degree, the position of Associate Chair has been eliminated for the 2014/2015 academic year. This position has been replaced within the administrative structure by four Program Directors, one for each undergraduate and graduate degree.

The School’s support staff has expanded since the time of the last PPR, in conjunction with the expansion of school’s program offerings. On an administrative level, the position of Project Assistant has been created. For the technical staff, over the past six years RTA has added a production intern and several technical support staff positions.

iii) Teaching and Graduate Assistants

RTA School of Media typically employs a limited number of academic assistants during the school year. These assistants are usually employed to mark papers in large lecture-based courses. Graduate Assistants are also hired on an as-needed basis as research assistants, or to help with administering extra-curricular RTA initiatives, such as lecture series that are open to the general public. In a typical semester, RTA may hire eight to ten graduate assistants, for work across all the programs; six or seven of Graduate Assistants will have academic responsibilities that centre on marking.

iv) Curriculum Counseling/Advising

RTA School of Media has a dedicated Student Affairs Co-ordinator, whose responsibilities include curriculum counselling and advising. Additionally, as many of the faculty are employed in media, students are encouraged to talk to specific faculty members about media careers that are of specific interest to them. The faculty also takes the opportunity to weave general career advising into many writing, production and business-oriented courses, as well as the fourth-year Senior Capstone Lectures. Guest lectures from industry professionals are another source of “inside” industry career information from students. Finally, the school has offered a number of extra-curricular special day-long conferences related to various media career fields, featuring professional industry speakers who offer a wealth of career tips and insider info.

v) Program Advisory Council (PAC)

The Program Advisory Council consists of prominent RTA graduates and industry leaders in television, radio and new media. The Chair and the Steering Committee regularly seek the advice of this council on matters pertaining to current broadcast industry needs, academic planning, operation, and long-term initiatives. The PAC meets at least once a year - usually more often, especially in recent years as special meetings are called to discuss new industry developments when appropriate.

vi) Physical Resources

RTA School of Media is primarily housed within the Rogers Communications Centre (RCC) a fully interactive and highly adaptable communications world, featuring state-of-the-art computing laboratories and networked media and print facilities housed within its 140,000 square foot structure. RCC space and facilities are shared amongst several FCAD schools, primarily RTA and Journalism and Professional Communication, all of which are headquartered in the building. All of RTA’s office space for staff and faculty is located within RCC. While space is at a premium for both staff and faculty, the faculty feels that the current office space allocation for RTA is adequate to meet the needs of the program.

The Rogers Communications Centre has numerous computer facilities for audio and video editing, with Media Production students having access to dozens of dedicated computer editing stations for either video or audio. In total, across the RCC there are over 110 lab-based computers that are equipped with video editing software to support the video editing needs of students across FCAD and in RTA. Audio editing software is also available on several dozen computers throughout RCC. Other dedicated computer facilities are available for 3-D rendering, animation, graphics and other forms of visual computing. The new RTA Sportsnet Production Centre should serve to encourage an even greater level of technological and production sophistication amongst our student body.

8. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES

i. STRENGTHS

Student Body – In general, the strengths of the Media Production program were felt to centre on the people connected with the program – both the faculty and the student body. Strong competition in terms of getting in to the Media Production program is an enormous strength for the program as a whole.

Experiential Learning – RTA’s ability to deliver a practical “hands-on” education in media production, mixed with a strong grounding in the theoretical, is also regarded as one of our strengths – indeed, it is almost the very signature of the program.

Faculty And Instructors – Many faculty members and instructors currently work in senior administrative and/or creative positions with the media industry; it is an ongoing practice within the RTA School of Media to hire people with current media experience to teach the courses within the Media Production program that have a strong practical component (i.e., media writing courses, digital production courses, audio and video production courses, business/management courses). As well, the faculty working on the more theoretical side have had numerous scholarly papers published.

Other Strengths

- RTA's excellent reputation within the broadcast industry
- Strong ties to various broadcast and new media industry players and government regulatory agencies
- RTA's continuing excellent reputation within the Canadian university system
- The range of technology (and access to that same technology) that is offered
- RTA's dedication to keeping the program current with the particular focus on striving to be in the forefront of incorporating the latest new media elements into the program

ii. WEAKNESSES

Focus on Traditional Media – An area that came up for repeated discussion was RTA's occasional propensity to rely on offering subjects and courses that focus too strongly on traditional broadcast media. It is partly for this reason that the school is now known as "The RTA School of Media". This re-branding has been undertaken by the school in part to de-emphasize the subject areas of radio and television. It is one way the school is seeking to make it clear both internally and externally that our focus is now on all forms of modern media, not simply on radio and television.

The RTA School of Media has committed to, and will continue to commit to, updating and overhauling existing all current courses to include technology and teaching material that is in line with modern digital media practices. They are furthermore committed to creating and offering entirely new 'digital media' courses (dealing with both theory and practice) as necessary.

It is an ongoing challenge for Media Production is to keep up with the enormous changes that are transforming the industry it serves. A weakness that the faculty has therefore identified within Media Production is a tendency to sometimes rely too heavily on what has worked before. The key potential weakness for Media Production is that we must keep up with the rate and pace of change in the broadcast industry *as it is happening*.

Potential for Insularity – Another potential weakness identified within the faculty stems from Media Production's unique position as the only Canadian university program of our type. As well, because of Toronto's prominence as a media centre within Canada, many faculty members and instructors have spent their broadcasting careers entirely within the Greater Toronto Area. This can lead to a certain insularity within the faculty, and a focus on teaching material that encompasses local or regional media concerns, rather than teaching material that has a broad national or international scope. As well, our faculty identifies itself as one that, while strong in practical (and often award-winning) industry experience, is lighter on experience in academic research.

Diversity within the faculty is also of concern; recruiting a broader range of faculty with regard to visible minorities and/or disabilities is something that RTA will continue to pursue.

Business/Media Theory Courses – In the graduate survey nearly half of those surveyed felt that being offered more business courses while in Media Production would have helped them in their media career. As well, we need to ensure that students understand the importance of theory, management and business courses, and the necessity of including them in studies undertaken at the university level.

Applications Process – Even with the current change to the applications system, there is still the possibility of fraudulent admissions essays. Accordingly, the faculty is committed to reviewing the overall application system on an on-going basis.

iii. OPPORTUNITIES

Increasing Focus on Digital Media – The changing nature of the media industry, and consequently of Media Production’s curriculum, brings with it the opportunity for Media Production to better position itself as a major force in digital media education. RTA must also take the opportunity to continue encouraging students to think digitally, and to make digital programming skills a fundamental part of the production process across all production-based courses.

International Partnerships – Other opportunities exist for RTA in terms of pursuing more international partnerships with universities, or strengthening the ones we already do have.

Encouraging External Engagement – There is the potential for students to have greater engagement with outside media producers. Students should be encouraged more than they already are to enter contests, film festivals, and similar media showcases run by online sites. Pursuing further alumni outreach is also another opportunity that could pay excellent dividends for RTA as a whole. While RTA has strong relations with many of its grads, and the alumni association is more active in recent years than it has been previously there is still much that could be done in this area.

Increasing Academic Rigor – RTA is always cognizant of the need to work on increasing the academic rigor of our program, and the academic level of our student body. As the industry changes and develops, there will continue to be increasing demand for more academically accomplished graduates.

iv. THREATS

Digital Media Expenses – The flip side to the opportunities presented by the explosion of new digital media technologies is the threat these technologies present: the potentially enormous expenses involved in acquiring new technology, as well as the expenses (in terms of time, energy and money) in ensuring that faculty and support staff are trained well enough to both operate and teach the technology as it becomes available.

Even more of a concern is the risk that the amount of training required to ensure complete faculty familiarity with every single available technology could potentially lead to faculty and staff burnout. This is because there is risk of spreading courses and faculty too thin to adequately cover all media production techniques, methodologies, academics and skills properly. We must focus on the technologies and theories that will become the most widely used and important.

Succession Plan – Looking long term it is important that the next RTA Chair is also able to engender/continue that same sense of faculty buy-in and loyalty to the overall school. It is vitally important for RTA to have a Chair selection committee that is actively seeking strong candidates, from both inside and outside the RTA community.

External Threats – Any changes in the Canadian telecommunications industry that would serve to weaken the Canadian independent film, TV and/or digital media production sector will also weaken RTA. Concentration of media ownership and relaxation of Canadian content requirements are two threats that are especially worrying, as both these situations can serve to reduce production activity within Canada.

9. DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN

Priority 1: Implementing and developing the new curriculum

The major immediate thrust of the current Media Production developmental plan is focused on the roll-out of our new curriculum. The RTA faculty has created a stronger, more balanced and more flexible new curriculum. Major improvements include further emphasis of digital media as a core subject within the program; stronger integration throughout the program of a variety of media platforms, both traditional and new; a greater range of business courses, and stronger emphasis on financing and production management in modern media throughout the program; and the provision of more overall choice for students, while still

ensuring a range of ‘core’ media courses to ensure a solid grounding in both theoretical and practical aspects of media production.

**Priority 2: Expanding RTA outreach, and
Priority 3: Strengthening our administrative structure**

Priorities 2 and 3 are interconnected, as in order to effectively achieve priority 2, RTA needs to create a new administrative position. The nature of the broadcast industry is one of constant technological change, and RTA needs to remain aggressive in ensuring that both our traditional and new media facilities remain up-to-date in order for these facilities to continue to be counted as one of our strengths. One of the keys to achieving this is by expanding our partnerships with the broadcast industry so that we can continue to foster successful partnerships with Canadian media enterprises. Therefore, we are looking to create a new administrative position of Industry Relations Co-ordinator. As well, this newly-created position would be able to assist current students to identify and apply for relevant industry internships, and act as an information centre for recent graduates looking for industry jobs.

We also expect to be hiring additional dedicated lab and/or technical assistants for the new Mattamy Centre production facilities over the following months. This facility, and the staff employed there, will be dealing primarily with students from our Sport Media program, but there will be some Media Production activity within this facility as well.

As well, existing staff will continue to actively promote Media Production to potential students across all backgrounds and income levels, and work with external partners to create additional scholarship opportunities for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

**Priority 4: Continuing to foster SRC activity, and
Priority 5: Continuing to ensure quality of teaching**

In order to fulfill developmental plan Priority 4, RTA will look for opportunities to create other “zones” that foster research and innovation. The school currently plans a new initiative of this type called “The Allan Slaight Radio Institute”, that will foster creativity within the realm of audio production with a specific focus on radio and internet radio platforms.

A second initiative, “The Studio for Media Activism”, will encompass a wide range of media, with a focus on creating content that addresses (sometimes provocatively) issues of political, social, economic and cultural importance. The school will also look to help in the creation of other cross-school “zones” in various areas of communication in the forthcoming years.

With specific regard to ensuring teaching quality, the faculty has committed to offering a series of regular faculty-focused workshops in various aspects of media production. Over the next year, RTA will also be joining the YouTube program “Educating the Educators” to offer (and receive) instruction in new media training. This initiative is a partnership between YouTube and numerous educators worldwide.

With regard to both Priorities 4 and 5, we will also continue to support faculty who have aspirations to pursue additional academic qualifications when these qualifications support the School's and Faculty's research and/or teaching interest.

Priority 6: Upgrading of facilities on a continual basis

The major focus of expanding and upgrading RTA production facilities in the next few years will be the continuing roll-out of the SportsNet RTA Production Centre facilities within the Mattamy Centre. The SportsNet RTA Production Centre will have a substantial impact across all RTA programs over the coming decades.

Priority 7: Expanding RTA internationalization initiatives

We will be continuing the “RTA in LA” and “RTA in Ghana” initiatives, although “RTA in Ghana” is currently on hold (temporarily). RTA is also the founder and lead institution behind The Global Campus Network. As part of RTA’s developmental plan, The Global Campus Network is expected to bring several more universities into the fold in the forthcoming years. RTA also plans to partner with one or more European, Asian and/or Latin American academic partners, in order to offer joint graduate programs in various aspects of media production and theory

10. PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT – MEDIA PRODUCTION PROGRAM

1. Outline of the Visit

Reviewers:

Dr. David Ogborn, Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia, McMaster University

Barbara Jones, Professor of Practice, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University

During a campus visit on March 12/13 2015, the PRT met with the Provost, Vice Provost Academic, Dean FCAD, Associate Dean FCAD, Chair RTA School of Media, Director Sport Media Program, four instructor/faculty members, Program Manager, Student Affairs Coordinator, Manager of Production & Facilities, Chief Librarian and Subject Librarian, two current students, one recent graduate, and two Program Advisory Council members.

2. General Overview

Ryerson’s undergraduate program in Media Production has gone through far-reaching changes in recent years, as it adapts to this shifting landscape. The name of the program has become the much more comprehensive “Media Production”, the curriculum has been comprehensively revised, and the program is now positioned in a larger departmental structure that includes a graduate program in Media Production and a directly adjacent undergraduate program in New Media. The program is going through these changes in a timely way, and from a position of considerable strength.

It is evident that the faculty, staff, administrators and students of the RTA School of Media are overwhelmingly and fiercely proud of, and committed to, the Media Production program. The quality of applicants and accepted students is consistently high, as are the retention and graduation rates. Students speak of RTA as a “dream school” and as a “safe place to experience and learn” where they are able to create “from day one”. The School’s technical facilities are impressive and there is a strong commitment to keeping them current and effectively managed. The School is committed to developing and strengthening partnerships with the media industries and is open to feedback from the industry and its students.

To a large extent, the key challenges identified by the PRT are those arising out of the program’s successful adaptation to a rapidly changing industry, together with its growth – in short, challenges arising out of the strength and initiative taken by the School of Media and its people. The evolution of the program into a broader Media Production program complicates the positioning of the program both in relation to adjacent programs at Ryerson, and in relation to other programs in Canada and internationally. The positioning of the program in a growing School of Media places strains on staff that need to be addressed with new hires. While these are issues to be addressed directly within the School of Media, they will require the support of the wider Ryerson community.

3. Feedback on Evaluation Criteria

3.1 Objectives (alignment with institution’s plans)

The Self Study provides a number of tables showing extensive alignment of the Media Production

program and Ryerson University's strategic themes and undergraduate Degree Level Expectations. Moreover, the recent curricular revisions connect strongly with University and FCAD emphases on "nimble" and "flexible" academic programs.

Within this, the PRT believes more can be done to engage with "the international". Internationalism can be seen as a fundamental issue that runs through curriculum and pedagogy, involving the globalization of the industry, academic opportunities and the recruitment of international students, and was mentioned in some comments in the survey of students. There is some sense that the Media Production program is particularly oriented to a Canadian, or even Toronto-specific, media industry. International dimensions could be more clearly articulated as key elements of the curriculum, so that all Media Production students, and not simply those who are able to participate in exchange experiences, could benefit.

3.2 Admission Requirements

Admissions to the Media Production program are aligned with learning outcomes for the completion of the program, and encompass demonstrated academic excellence as well as written and verbal communication skills. The minimum high school average of accepted students is consistently high, with the program attracting students with strong communication skills.

3.3 Curriculum

The RTA Media Production program has recently undergone substantial and carefully conceived curricular revisions that directly reflect the media production landscape that is rapidly evolving to include new types of media production. While the effects of these revisions are only beginning to take effect, the PRT can certainly confirm that the new curriculum reflects the state and evolution of our discipline.

The new curriculum has an excellent breadth of offerings. While the traditional strength of the program in radio and television broadcasting remains strongly present in the new curriculum, it is joined by additional emphases that reflect the new channels by which professional media content reaches audiences. The new curriculum develops from year to year in an appropriate way, with a good balance of requirements/standardization versus flexibility/choice.

This includes a well thought out system of concentrations within the overall curriculum, with concentration options including Screenwriting, Radio and Sound, Digital Media, Television and Video, Business and Critical Media Theories. The PRT feels that measures should be taken to ensure that students understand the new system, and that, in particular, that they understand how often specific courses in each given concentration are expected to be offered.

Course offerings and co-curricular activities provided to Media Production students are broad and closely linked to the media industries. Media Production students are also able to participate alongside Sports Media majors producing live programming from Ryerson's Mattamy Centre. The School is investigating online education by developing an e-learning course with York University focused on "digital theory". Given the necessarily experiential "hands on" nature of media production as a field, it makes sense for such a theory course to be the focus of these initial explorations.

This curricular evolution leads to the emergence of an issue with the program's conception of its positioning within the Canadian post-secondary landscape. When the Media Production program (as Radio and Television Arts) was strictly focused on broadcast radio and television situations, it was probably true that the program was without direct comparator programs in Canada. As the program has broadened in scope, however, that scope has merged substantially with the scope of an extended family of programs connected with media production at publicly funded universities across the country. While these programs all have distinct contexts and emphases, and go by a wide variety of

names, they have in common that they involve innovative, high quality “hands-on” media production as their key outcome.

The PRT notes a puzzling tendency to conceive of the Media Production program as largely without Canadian comparator programs. This tendency could deprive ongoing curricular and pedagogical improvement of valuable support and inspiration, and could impede specific collaborations with programs at other institutions. Most significantly, it could confuse students about the significance of their degree and their preparedness for a very complex national and international landscape. The PRT encourages the program to undertake an ongoing reassessment of the connections and contrasts between its program and the wider universe of production-related programs across Canada.

A related dynamic exists in relation to adjacent programs within Ryerson’s slate of offerings at the RTA School of Media. The Media Production program has evolved, in part, to embrace more of what is sometimes referred to as “New Media” – which makes perfect sense given the evolution of the field and industry. At the same time, the RTA School has acquired stewardship of a dedicated undergraduate program in New Media. The distinction between these two programs is rather easily lost to an outside eye. The PRT encourages the RTA School to take steps to clarify the relationship between these two programs, and, moreover, to reinforce efforts to integrate and facilitate mobility between them.

3.4 Teaching and Assessment

The assessment of media production projects is a principal means of assessing student learning. Media production projects are simultaneously a site of experiential learning and the site of the assessment of that learning. Some instructors are deploying “flipped” classrooms.

During the PRT site visit, students and faculty tended to confirm that project constraints were predominantly, albeit not exclusively, technical rather than “conceptual”. Faculty members may wish to consider increasing, at least in a limited and experimental way, the number of projects and courses that are aimed at particular human challenges and contexts, but are flexible in terms of medium/technique – especially for more senior students. This could reinforce the connections between a wider Liberal Arts orientation and media production skills. The FCAD Preliminary Division Plan seeks to ensure “that FCAD graduates become responsible global citizens able to effect positive change not only in their fields of practice but also in their broader communities.” This can begin with individual media production projects.

Students in the Media Production undergraduate program are given three options for their senior coursework: an internship in the media or creative industries, a practical project (audio, video or interactive media) or an advanced academic paper. These are consistent options across both the existing and newly implemented curriculum. The assessment processes appear appropriate and effective. Roughly three quarters of the 150 fourth year students chose to undertake internships as their culminating experience. Administering and supporting that large a group of internships reinforces the need for the Industry Relations Coordinator as outlined in the School’s Development Plan.

3.5 Resources

Faculty

The RTA School of Media includes 26 full-time professors whose teaching responsibilities may lie within one or several of the four programs offered within the school. Gender balance statistics presented in the Self Study, and a review of images on the RTA website, tend to support the School’s interest in and commitment to diversity and equity. Search Committees should continue advancing diversity during the recruitment of the School’s instructors, and the School should

implement formal tracking of diversity in its hiring, including other factors in addition to gender.

Based on the results provided in the Self Study, the Media Production students rate the faculty teaching in the Media Production program as outstanding against key academic and advising effectiveness criteria.

Support Staff

The RTA School of Media boasts a robust administrative and technical support team. The Self Study indicates plans to hire to support the new Sports Media program. The Self Study document does not indicate current plans to change the structure of the administrative staff.

Four administrative staff roles exist to support the School's operation; however, as the PRT understands it, only three full-time positions are currently filled. This represents a clear area of weakness. Although the School has increased in size with the launch of the Sports Media program, it has not proportionately increased the size of its administrative support. In particular, the Student Affairs Coordinator is being asked to cover a surprisingly large range of responsibilities. This is of particular concern as the School's new curriculum moves forward, with the potential for an increased requirement for academic advising support. The PRT strongly supports the hiring of additional staff positions (beyond the planned Industry Relations Coordinator) to deal with the capacity issues that have emerged.

The survey of current students included only two questions regarding advising (within question 6) and these questions are broad in scope in that they include both faculty and staff advising services. 81% indicated "Providing helpful academic advising" was currently effective/very effective. Only 54.4% of respondents agreed "directing you to academic advising outside your program department" was effective/very effective. These results substantiate the need to improve advising support moving forward, particularly in light of the move to defined concentrations and increased 'minor' options for all students in the School.

The School has an appropriate number of technical staff to support its current operation. As the Sports Media program gears up, the School plans to hire additional production staff.

Technical Resources

The results of the Student Survey included in the self study document clearly indicated the students perceive their breadth and quality of the lab and studio facilities are among the School's strengths. The PRT can only concur: the program boasts access to world class production facilities.

Cross departmental planning systems are in place ensuring efficient purchase and maintenance of equipment, across the whole of RCC and serving all FCAD programs. As the School works to remove departmental silos and increase the number of courses open to other FCAD students it will be essential these processes are continued, and that ongoing student feedback regarding shared services is gathered.

Library Resources

The University library receives many student requests to film in the new Student Learning Centre. The PRT feels that there are further unexploited possibilities for collaboration between the Media Production program and the library. Class projects, or even competitions, could be devised that use specific library resources, such as special collections/archives.

4. Quality Indicators

It can be inferred, based on responses to the Student Survey, that the program is sufficiently rigorous academically. Students were asked, "To what extent has RTA helped you improve your ability" across a

broad spectrum of communication milestones. Responses were positive across the majority of categories from critical thinking and written communication to computer proficiency and employment related skills.

Efforts since the last Periodic Program Review to hire faculty with greater academic qualifications and to improve the level of scholarly work completed by faculty appear to have been successful.

The School is quite successful in attracting and retaining strong students. Data tables outlining the strength of applicants to the program reflect an increase in the quality of registrants over recent years. The figures also demonstrate the continued competitive nature of acceptance to the School. The Self Study also demonstrates the RTA School of Media's exceptional success across several key measures assessing "newly admitted secondary school students": retention rates, graduation within six year of program commencement, satisfaction rates and assessment of the quality of their Ryerson education.

The rates of graduation and reported program quality are consistently high, based on data presented in the Self Study. The School should implement annual surveys to track this critical success measure. The increased diversity of media channels and roles, and the corresponding broadening of the Media Production program, could require that the relationship of employment to the program be articulated differently and more broadly.

No measurement of the number of students entering post graduate programs was provided in the Self Study. In concert with the implementation of graduate programs within the School, it would be appropriate to add this question to annual measurement.

5. Quality Enhancement

This section highlights additional measures, known to the PRT, which underline the commitment of the faculty in this program to creating strong experiences for their students.

There is some evident confusion among students about the purpose and utility of the course intentions system. This leads us to suggest that (a) better messaging to students about the nature and results of the process is required and (b) the system should be augmented by a first round survey, before *any* courses have been tentatively assigned. The latter measure, in addition to providing a more accurate measure of student sentiment, should also help the student body to feel more engaged with the course intentions process, by virtue of seeing their expressed opinions having an amplified effect on decision making.

Commendably, the PRT learned of an Aboriginal Media course that received low interest in the survey process (the first time it was offered) but was run nevertheless because the program felt that it was pedagogically and culturally important (and also because the program recognized that demand for such an offering could follow a successful delivery).

Finally, the RTA Media Production program has been an early and enthusiastic adopter of the University-wide models of open electives, thus contributing to more flexibility and intellectual exchange for the student body as a whole.

6. Other Observations

Alumni of the RTA Media Production program are, potentially, among the greatest assets of the School. Within the media industry in Canada, and beyond, their careers represent a wealth of professional expertise. The alumni network could serve a greater role as a competitive advantage for the program, in line with the School's Development Plan that calls for "Expanding RTA Outreach" and strategy 26 of the University's "Our Time to Lead".

The RTA website includes an Alumni section featuring the Wall of Fame, a donation link and general information about the RTA Alumni Association (RTAAA). The Self Study lists events and programs in which alumni participated. It does not indicate the number of active alumni involved in RTAAA, nor specific programs initiated by the group, beyond an alumni gala the gala. The SWOT analysis confirms that alumni outreach is an area of opportunity for the School, connected with acquiring “better relationships with the industry.”

A number of RTA staff members currently serve as the executive of the RTAAA. This is an unusual structure for a university alumni group and could be communicating that the RTAAA is a function of the School rather than a volunteer external group. There are two possible issues in this: (1) if the RTAAA is a group functioning externally but in concert with the School why are no external alumni volunteering to run the association? Exploring this further will uncover and define opportunities leading to improved engagement with alumni; (2) as staff members are currently serving in executive roles, there may potentially be opportunity costs to the School if RTAAA duties are impacting paid responsibilities. Future surveys of graduates could probe further into the role of alumni relations for the School. The current Program Advisory Council (PAC) includes RTA alumni and could serve as an additional resource in identifying effective tactics for engaging with a greater number of alumni.

7. Summary and Recommendations

Ryerson’s undergraduate program in Media Production is both a flagship program for the University and a highly respected program in the field. To its credit, the program is not resting on these laurels but is actively revising its curriculum and operations in order to continue to lead. The PRT would like to highlight the key recommendations it is felt would be of most benefit moving forward:

- Establish stronger relationships with, and a more detailed awareness of, comparator programs
- Clarify the relationship between the Media Production program and adjacent programs (especially the undergraduate program in New Media housed in the RTA School)
- Hire additional staff (beyond the projected Industrial Relations Coordinator) to address the considerable load currently placed on the Student Affairs Coordinator
- Augment the course intentions system with stronger communication and an additional first round survey
- Take initiatives to increase the connection of the program to its alumni, and, through them, the wider industry

The members of the Peer Review Team sincerely thank everyone at Ryerson for the invitation to be part of this program review process, and offer our sincere and ongoing support, in whatever form is most beneficial to the people of this exemplary program.

11. PROGRAM RESPONSE TO PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT

1. Introduction and Overview

Coming from a team of reviewers so obviously devoted to ensuring the highest standards of quality in their own work, the overall positivity of the PRT report with regard to the Media Production program is extremely gratifying. We note particularly the PRT's comments that the program is "very strong and widely recognized"; that our faculty, staff, administrators and students are "overwhelmingly proud of, and committed to, the Media Production program"; that our students speak of RTA as a "dream school" and "a safe place to experience and learn"; and their several references to the program's commitment to keeping current with technological and pedagogical developments, as well as to acting on feedback from the media industry and from students.

2. Response to Recommendations

i) Establish stronger relationships with, and a more detailed awareness of, comparator programs.

We agree that there is value to seeking out and evaluating comparable programs that, even if not an exact match with our overall program, match significant portions of what our school teaches. Accordingly, RTA has already been examining curricular developments in media studies on an international level. We are in discussions with Columbia University in New York to develop a similar relationship with their Film and TV school as we have with UCLA's School of Theatre, Film and Television. With the Media Production program's increased focus on new media, transmedia and other non-traditional modes of technologically-based storytelling, we will also be looking to find other comparator programs in Canada and/or the United States. In particular, we are already looking to establish nearby universities such as OCAD and/or McMaster as comparator programs for our New Media program. Where appropriate, we will use our findings from our comparator research with these New Media schools to also draw relevant comparisons to studies within the Media Production program, and to make appropriate changes and updates to the program based on our ongoing findings.

ii) Clarify the relationship between the Media Production program and adjacent programs (especially the undergraduate program in New Media housed in the RTA School).

The recommendations of the Peer Review Team particularly focus on further integrating the New Media and Media Production programs, and facilitating mobility of both students and faculty between these two fields of study. The RTA School of Media has been moving in this direction for the last several semesters, and is in agreement with the Peer Review Team that - while keeping individual fields of study distinct - there is great value for both students and faculty alike when there is consistent and frequent cross-pollination of projects and initiatives across related areas of study. Consequently, the school will continue to actively encourage RTA faculty to design coursework and projects that bring together multiple streams of study (Media Production, New Media, and Sport Media) to further enhance the learning experience of our entire student body.

We are also committed to expanding our cross-disciplinary work with other schools within FCAD, especially in the related fields of Image Arts and Journalism. We have already begun discussions with these faculties to find a framework for collaborative projects that will be of benefit to all participating faculties. As well, the RTA School of Media will continue to foster cross-disciplinary work via the Transmedia Zone, as well as newer initiatives such as The Studio for Media Activism and The Allan Slaight Radio Institute.

iii) Hire additional staff (beyond the projected Industrial Relations Coordinator) to address the considerable load currently placed on the Student Affairs Coordinator.

The Peer Review Team have perceptively and accurately identified the enormously important role played by the Student Affairs Coordinator in disseminating all types of program information to our student body, across all three of our undergraduate programs. We are looking for ways to spread the workload out, while still maintaining the high degree of student satisfaction with the school's Student Affairs office.

Our current plan is, pending budget approval, to hire a Practicum and Outreach Relations Coordinator whose job responsibilities would be split approximately 50/50, so that half the job would consist of industry outreach, fostering partnerships with major industry players, and acting as an information centre for recent graduates looking for industry jobs. The other half of the job would be to act as Senior Student Affairs Coordinator, thereby significantly lightening the load on the current position. The faculty believes that this is a budgetarily responsible way to address the concern of the external Peer Review Team in this area. However, we will also continue to monitor and review the workings of the Student Affairs office on an on-going basis to ensure that the student body is receiving the best counsel and support possible.

iv) Augment the course intentions system with stronger communication and an additional first

round survey.

We currently have several methods by which students can inform the school of their desire to take specific courses published within Ryerson's course calendar, even if these courses are offered on an irregular basis. These methods include:

- course intention forms;
- an "open-door" policy practiced by both our chair and our student affairs coordinator so that students may voice their course intentions directly to both faculty and administrative staff;
- the chair's "fireside chat" initiative which gives students another chance to address their course intentions directly to the chair; and
- the encouragement of students to use social media to establish course intention Facebook groups that will give the faculty and staff a sense of the demand for a particular course.

The RTA faculty is committed to flexibility in terms of offering courses, so that courses that receive a significant groundswell of support in any of these arenas can be run on a more frequent basis than originally planned. That being said, the RTA School of Media is always on the lookout for methodologies that will allow our student body to maximize their experience while at the school. Consequently, going forward, we will be looking at several methods of refining our methods of course planning, as well as being even more transparent in the scheduling of our course offerings. The PRT's recommendation of a first round course intention survey is one of the methodologies currently under discussion at a faculty level.

v) Take initiatives to increase the connection of the program to its alumni, and, through them, the wider industry.

The RTA School of Media is fortunate to have an extremely strong connection with our alumni that we have fostered through the years. Our Program Advisory Council has a significant number of distinguished RTA alumni within its ranks and our Alumni Association has become an increasingly active and important presence within RTA over the past several years. In point of fact, some of the staff and faculty we now have working for the school are graduates who were active in our Alumni Association before we offered them employment – they were in essence 'recruited' by RTA partly as a result of the excellent work they had been doing for our alumni organization. This means that, at the point in time we were visited by the Peer Review Team, our Alumni Association had a higher proportion of RTA faculty and staff than one might traditionally expect from such an organization, which at other schools tend to be somewhat more arm's-length from the workings of the school they represent.

The RTA School of Media is committed to expanding our Alumni Association, specifically with a goal towards recruiting more non-staff and non-faculty members. To this end, the school plans to partner with the Alumni Association in offering a series of conferences, workshops and services of particular interest to recent graduates; this initiative would be within the purview of the new Industrial Relations Coordinator.

3. Other Points Raised by the PRT Report and Conclusion

The PRT report additionally contained a small number of other recommendations which the RTA School of Media is also examining. In particular, it was recommended that the school should implement an annual graduate employment survey to track the critical success measure of the percentage of graduates who find employment within the media industry. The school agrees that this is a critical performance metric; it is currently captured by surveys conducted province-wide by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, there is often a delay in having these statistics reported back to the school. However, before going to the expense of commissioning our own survey, the RTA School of Media will be investigating avenues to allow for these already-gathered statistics to be received by RTA on a timelier basis.

Overall, the RTA School of Media is very pleased with the external PRT report, which we believe reaffirms our status as one of the world's premier media training schools, while also giving us thoughtful and concrete suggestions about ways to further improve the experience we offer to our students. We look forward to the challenges of the forthcoming years, as RTA remains committed to holding ourselves to the high standard we have already set, while keeping pace with (or even ahead of) the constant technological changes that are the hallmark of modern media.

12. DEAN'S RESPONSE (Dr. Gerd Hauck)

The PRT report provides a thoughtful and fair appraisal of the School's strengths and challenges. I share the perspective offered by the Chair of the School that "the PRT conducted their site visit and other correspondence with a straightforward but collegial attitude that ensured their points were made – and received – clearly, fairly and constructively." The chair's considerate and measured response to the report bears this out.

Strengths

I was very pleased to read that the PRT found much to commend about RTA School of Media and identified numerous strengths across the entire spectrum of the School's activities. In summary, these include:

- The effective and expeditious manner in which the School has adapted to the "shifting landscape" of media production and media studies and continues to do so "from a position of considerable strength" through timely curriculum revisions that respond to this shift;
- The superb quality of students admitted into the program as well as the high retention and graduation rates;
- Students' satisfaction with the intellectual rigour of the program and the successful acquisition of employment-relevant skills;
- Student's high degree of satisfaction with teaching faculty;
- The School's up-to-date technical resources and production facilities;
- Improved scholarly profile of recent hires and greater SRC output since last PPR;
- The palpable pride members of the School take in their program and the excellent *esprit de corps* in the School;
- The numerous and highly beneficial relationships the School has established with media industry partners, both nationally and internationally;
- Gender equity in hiring practices; and
- The speed and enthusiasm with which RTA has adopted the University's opportunities for open electives, ensuring students have access to a flexible curriculum that offers a broad range of intellectual challenges in complementary areas of study.

Challenges and Opportunities

While acknowledging that there is much to celebrate in the RTA School of Media, the PRT also identifies several challenges that would benefit from careful consideration and review. The summary of the PRT report offers five recommendations that should benefit the program. The School's Chair addresses each of these challenges in some detail and offers suggestions on how to mitigate them. Here is a summary of the most pertinent ones and some recommendations on possible remedies or solutions:

The first recommendation offered by the PRT is to "establish stronger relationships with, and more detailed awareness of, comparator programs." In this context the PRT makes specific reference to media production programs at other universities, nationally and internationally, which bear a significant semblance to the ones offered by RTA. I share the view that an awareness of these comparator programs will benefit the ongoing curricular modifications and give RTA's graduates a leg-up in competing for jobs. It appears that the Chair of RTA also supports this recommendation. The emerging relationships with UCLA and Columbia University, as well as the promise to seek closer ties

with OCADU and McMaster University, would suggest that the first steps have been taken to respond to this recommendation.

The second recommendation addresses a related concern – the perceived lack of relational synergy between the Media Production program and the New Media program. Given “the myriad ways in which the relationships between commercial, industrial and artistic contents are becoming more fluid,” it would likely benefit the School to follow the PRT’s advice to “to integrate and facilitate mobility between them.” I fully support that piece of advice and would urge the School to look for congruencies, shared resources, enhanced mobility, and opportunities for cross---pollination, while maintaining the distinctive core of the programs. Consequently, I applaud the Chair’s proposal to “actively encourage RTA faculty to design coursework and projects that bring together multiple streams of study (Media Production, New Media, and Sport Media) to further enhance the learning experience of our entire student body.” This makes economic sense, curricular sense, and administrative sense, and it will enhance the sense of unity and harmony amongst the School’s three undergraduate programs.

Third, the PRT addresses a perceived deficit in administrative support. It is true that administrative staff has not grown in harmony with the addition of the New Media program in 2012-13 and the recent launch of the Sport Media program. The PRT considers this “a clear area of weakness,” especially with respect to the range of responsibilities expected of the Student Affairs Coordinator. In response to this situation, both the PRT and the Chair make reference to a developmental plan to create a position for an “Industry Relations Coordinator” (also identified as “Practicum and Outreach Relations Coordinator”) who may be charged with taking on some of the Student Affairs Coordinator’s responsibilities. In spite of the Chair’s assurances that this “budgetarily [sic] responsible way to address the concerns of the external Peer review team,” this area of discrepancy requires further investigation, and I would encourage the administration of RTA to work with colleagues in HR and the Dean’s office to come up with a financially viable and administratively efficacious long-term and sustainable solution.

The forth recommendation speaks to minor flaws in the course intentions system practised in the RTA School of Media. The Chair has indicated the School’s willingness to investigate improved “methods of refining [...] course planning, as well as being even more transparent in the scheduling of [...] course offerings.” I am satisfied that this is an appropriate response to the PRT’s recommendation, and I look forward to learning more about specific steps taken.

Finally, the PRT recommends that RTA “take initiatives to increase the connection of the program to its alumni and, through them, the wider industry. Frankly, I found this recommendation somewhat puzzling since I had always perceived RTA’s alumni relations exemplary in FCAD, if not the University as a whole. RTA is blessed with a plethora of distinguished alumni, and in the course of my tenure as Dean I have been fortunate to meet many of them and have observed their passion for and commitment to the School as well as their pride in having graduated from it. RTA has a disproportionately large number of Distinguished Visiting Professors (many of whom are RTA graduates) and has attracted significant donations from its alumni. The RTA Wall of Fame is only a small, emerging expression of that deep engagement and will surely grow as the School nominates annually more distinguished alumni to be represented there. In fact, given the significant number of RTA alumni hired by the School for a range of its services one might even argue that the School is a little too beholden to its alumni!

Be that as it may, the PRT’s recommendation that “the alumni network could serve a greater role as a competitive advantage for the program” should be taken seriously and explored on the basis of the suggestions offered by the PRT: providing an indication of the number of active alumni involved in RTAAA; listing specific programs initiated by RTAAA, and exploring opportunities for “better relationships with the industry.” This could be complemented by the Chair’s suggestion to offer “a

series of conferences, workshops and services of particular interest to recent [and older?] graduates.”

Conclusion

None of the external Peer Review Team’s recommendations concern aspects of the program which one might consider critical for its survival or vital to its successful continuation. While very thoughtful and highly appreciated, they could even be considered somewhat tangential to the School’s ongoing success and reputation and should be easy to implement without major commitment of funds, personnel, infrastructure or other resources. In some ways this speaks volumes about how successfully the School has operated since the last periodic performance review. The School is clearly in good health, has top- notch facilities, outstanding students, staff and faculty, and produces a crop of graduates who are highly qualified to compete for positions in the media production business. They will join the ranks of passionate, proud and committed alumni and will help ensure that the RTA School of Media will maintain its position as one of the premiere media schools in Canada and North America.

13. SUPPLEMENTAL DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN (prepared by Media Production program)

At the request of the Academic Standards Committee, we are including this Supplemental Developmental Plan which outlines several new projects currently in progress with a student focus. RTA is committed to increasing the level of experiential learning both within courses, and to provide exceptional extra-curricular experiential learning opportunities for our students. The following are some of the initiatives that we are currently running, or are planning to launch in the near future:

- We plan to increase our Transmedia Zone initiatives from 12-20 over the next five years. From apps to installations, from two-screen to video-games, from web to mobile, or categories that defy description, the Transmedia Zone provides co-working space, equipment, and mentorship on every aspect of students’ projects.
- We are also planning a “music industry hub” to be based within RTA, which will bring students together with industry leaders to foster innovation and growth in modern music-related businesses.
- We have just opened the Allan Slaight Radio Institute, which provides state-of-the-art radio and audio production facilities to our students.
- We have just upgraded all of our cameras for our Advanced Single Camera Production students.
- We have created the Maker Space where all students in RTA programs can collaborate to prototype, create and design their work.
- Hack Nights are a weekly open studio opportunity to work on projects, share ideas and network with peers and professors.
- We are increasing the opportunities with RTA Productions, which was created as an opportunity for students to get paid production work that is facilitated by RTA staff. RTA Productions is a professional production unit hired by the University for its wide-ranging media needs.
- RTA Sports is an opportunity for students interested in sports production to get involved in a wide variety of production roles. RTA Sports is responsible for the live television, webcasting and radio productions of Ryerson Rams varsity athletics, as well as a number of sporting events that take place at the Mattamy Athletic Centre and other areas on and around campus.
- RTA Public Service, provides students with the opportunity to volunteer their time and skills to help an individual or group that wouldn’t otherwise be able to access high-end production facilities. The aim of the group is to offer students from all years and streams of RTA an avenue to produce high-quality work alongside local community initiatives and charities.
- We are working with the Dean’s office to expand our international presence and provide international opportunities for students.
- We are adjusting the format of RTA’s annual “Upfront” showcase to provide better opportunities to bring students and the industry together. This event selects the school’s best projects and invites industry professionals and alumni to get to know our students, and find a project that fit with their organization.
- We are exploring opportunities to showcase RUtv (Ryerson's premiere student-run television station) on

both cable and other digital outlets.

- With the opening of the Allan Slaight Radio Institute, SpiritLive has a new and updated home. It is a 24-hour a day, 7 days a week internet broadcaster, featuring original content produced by students of the RTA School of Media from our studios in Ryerson's Rogers Communication Centre.
- Our Broadcaster in Residence is holding open office hours, and next month will be inviting Media Production students to work with him as audio producers and to create voicetracks for upcoming shows.
- The RTA School of Media is partnering with the Ontario Science Centre to present a student installation in the Summer of 2016.
- The RTA School of Media is partnering with TIFF once again this year. RTA students will work on the Title Wall with TIFF and internationally acclaimed (and Canadian!) artists TANGIBLE INTERACTION. Their creations have been featured all over the world with many of the biggest stars in the music and entertainment biz (Cirque du Soleil, Arcade Fire, Blue Man Group, the Olympics, many more). RTA successfully partnered with TIFF last year, so we hope to maintain an ongoing relationship with them.
- Global Campus Network is expanding to provide more opportunities for students to collaborate.
- In the new curriculum, we are implementing a requirement that students complete a minimum of 60 volunteer hours of creative community practice prior to graduation.
- As we build our research centres and zones, we are also increasing the opportunities for student involvement in faculty SRC activity.
- We will provide exhibition opportunities for students (both online and through festivals)
- As planned in the PPR, RTA has now hired a Student Academic Co-ordinator, specifically to help first and second year students with their course planning.
- We are exploring opportunities with FCAD to work with the Chang School to develop offerings for our students.

14. ASC EVALUATION

The Academic Standards Committee (ASC) assessment of the Periodic Program Review indicated that the review provided a reflective and comprehensive evaluation of the program. The ASC noted that the program attracts and retains strong students who rate the program quite highly. ASC also noted the program's commitment to ensuring the program stays current with the technological and pedagogical advances in the field and that it is responsive to feedback from students and industry. The recent curriculum revisions provide Media Production students with greater flexibility and choice in pursuing their career interests.

The Academic Standards Committee recommends that the program provide a follow-up report on the status of the initiatives outlined in the Developmental Plan and the Supplemental Developmental Plan. The follow-up should also include: (1) a plan that will ensure all students have proficiency in all program learning outcomes; and (2) the CVs of all faculty members in the School and all other faculty who have taught required courses to program students at the time the Periodic Program Review was submitted to ASC (i.e., the 2014-2015 academic year).

Follow-up Report

In keeping with usual practice, the follow-up report which addresses the recommendation stated in the ASC Evaluation Section is to be submitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Design, the Provost and Vice President Academic, and the Vice Provost Academic by the end of June, 2017.

15. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

i. Approval of the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report:

The recommendations have been approved by the Dean and by Senate. Ryerson University's IQAP Policy 126 states: "Senate is charged with final academic approval of the Program Review."

ii. Responsibility for providing any resources made necessary by those recommendations:

Ryerson University's IQAP Policy 126 states: "The Chair/Director and Dean are responsible for requesting any additional resources identified in the report through the annual academic planning process. The relevant Dean(s) is responsible for providing identified resources, and Provost is responsible for final approval of requests for extraordinary funding. Requests should normally be addressed, with a decision to either fund or not fund, within 2 budget years of the Senate approval. The follow-up report to Senate will include an indication of the resources that have been provided."

iii. Responsibility for acting on those recommendations:

Ryerson University's IQAP Policy 126 states: "If the report includes a recommendation for approval of the program review, it will include a date for a required follow-up report to be submitted to the Dean and Provost on the progress of the developmental plan and any recommendations or conditions attached to the approval."

iv. Timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations:

Ryerson University's IQAP Policy 126 states: "The initial follow-up report is normally due by June 30 of the academic year following Senate's resolution. The Provost may require additional follow-up reports."

16. REPORTING

i. The distribution of the Final Assessment Report (excluding all confidential information) and the associated Implementation Plan to the program, Senate and the Quality Council:

The Office of the Vice Provost Academic is responsible for distribution of the Final Assessment Report to all relevant parties.

ii. The institutional Executive Summary and the associated Implementation Plan be posted on the institution's website and copies provided to both the Quality Council and the institution's governing body:

The Office of the Vice Provost Academic is responsible for posting the information on the Curriculum Quality Assurance website at www.ryerson.ca/curriculumquality. The information is provided to the Board of Governors on an annual basis.

iii. The timely monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations, and the appropriate distribution, including web postings, of the scheduled monitoring reports:

The Office of the Vice Provost Academic is responsible for following up with the programs and their respective Deans to ensure the recommendations are implemented. The follow-up report is submitted to the relevant Dean(s), the Provost and the Vice Provost Academic for review. It is submitted to Senate "for information".

iv. The extent of public access to the information made available to the public for the self-study:

Ryerson University's Senate Policies are available to the public through the Senate website at www.ryerson.ca/senate. This includes Policy 110 Institutional Quality Assurance Process and Policy 126 Periodic Program Review of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs. The Final Assessment Report (excluding all confidential information) and the associated Implementation Plan is available on the Curriculum Quality Assurance website at www.ryerson.ca/curriculumquality. A summary of the Report of the Review Committee is contained within the Final Assessment Report. A summary of the responses provided by the Dean and the program to the Report of the Review Committee is contained within the Final Assessment Report.

17. SCHEDULE

Date of next Periodic Program Review is 2023 – 2024