

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

**PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW (PPR)
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
In Professional Communications
The Creative School**

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the undergraduate **Professional Communications** program. The report identifies the significant strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The Implementation Plan identifies who will be responsible for leading the implementation of the recommendations; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

SUMMARY OF THE PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW OF THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

The Professional Communications (ProCom) program submitted a self-study report to the Vice-Provost Academic on November 3, 2020. The self-study presented the program description and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the program, and program data including the data collected from student, employer, and alumni surveys along with the standard University Planning data tables. Appended were the course outlines for all core required and elective courses in the program and the CVs for all faculty members in the Department of ProCom and other faculty who have recently taught core courses (required and/or elective).

Two arm's-length external reviewers, Dr. Randy Harris, Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, University of Waterloo, and Dr. Graham Smart, Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies, Carleton University, were appointed by the Dean of the Creative School from a set of proposed reviewers. They reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a virtual site visit via video conferencing (Zoom) on February 25, 26, March 1, 8 and 11, 2021.

The visit included meetings with the Vice-Provost Academic; Dean and Interim Associate Dean (Undergraduate Education & Student Affairs), The Creative School; the ProCom Chair, the Undergraduate Program Director/Associate Chair, The PPR Coordinator, the Curriculum Co-Chair, the Chief Librarian, the Subject Librarian, The Director and Program Coordinator for the Centre for Communicating Knowledge, the Manager of the Catalyst, the Internship Coordinator the Internship and Alumni Liaison, the Creative Technologies Lead and the Creative Technology Advisor & Production Assistant. The Peer Review Team (PRT) also met with several members of the ProCom program, including staff, students, and faculty members. In total, 4 of the 5 days of the visit were devoted to discussions of curriculum, program structure, program management, etc.

In their report, dated April 27, 2021, the PRT provided feedback that describes how the ProCom program meets the IQAP evaluation criteria and is consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities. The PRT felt the self-study was extremely well done and did not provide any additional areas of strength or improvement beyond what was identified in the PPR self-study. Instead, the PRT deliberately prioritized recommendations as much of their report. For the purpose of summarizing here, the PPR self-study identified the following strengths:

Faculty & Staff

- a. Availability and Support for students
 - Faculty who are available outside of class for student consultation
- b. Strong Instructors and Staff
 - Great depth and variety of teaching staff and admin/tech support
 - Professors' knowledge of the field of Comm
 - Teaching
- c. Research, etc.
 - Research
 - Topicality/Currency of Research
 - Highly productive RFA SRC – Re: Instructors
 - Teaching/Research linked to university priorities

Students

- d. Strong Students
 - High achieving students
 - Strong applicant pool
- e. Student Community
 - Teamwork & presentation skills heavily emphasized
 - Participation encouraged in class
 - Collegiality and mentorship between students Program Curriculum
- f. Technology
 - Tech
 - Technology/Creative workshops
 - Engage with changing technologies in communication and incorporate them into teaching/learning
 - Rich technology support for students
 - Dedicated ProCom-specific tech team & resources
- g. Professional Communication
 - “Professional” is in the name of the program already (unlike other programs where a professional connection may not be obvious)
 - Professionally oriented BA Comms (uniqueness)
 - ProCom's key role in providing Comm skills across university
- h. Balance of Theory and Practice
 - Focus on applied practice, especially as it pertains to writing
 - We are both theoretical and applied
 - Blended theory and practice
 - Communication theory
- i. Course Design
 - Sequences and progressively weighted course assessments in almost all courses
 - Relevant subjects
- j. Flexibility of Curriculum
 - Flexibility of curriculum and transferability of knowledge/skills
 - Student self-driven course elective options vs. FCAD other programs
 - Flexibility in the program to choose multiple pathways

The PPR self-study also identified areas for improvement, such as:

Faculty & Staff / Admin

- a. RFA Ratios
 - Need for expanded RFA cohort (i.e. student to RFA ratio)
 - Student/faculty ratio
 - Class size - faculty to student ratio
- b. Class size
 - Class size (year 3 + 4 esp.)
 - Improve/increase faculty/student interactions
 - Growing class sizes equals fewer opportunities for personal attention
 - Large classes
 - Large class sizes
 - Larger class sizes
- c. Staff Support
 - Increased staff support required
 - Staffing (workload)
- d. Funding
 - Funding
 - Funding pressures! On the school and on our students leading to added stress, reduced ability for students to complete courses due to need for work

Program Curriculum

- e. Program Organization
 - Need a 2nd year theory & 2nd year methodology
 - Prof Table Is are also offered to service units – issue of access for BA students
 - Program incoherence
 - Curriculum Organization
- f. Overlap
 - Student-identified issue: overlap amongst courses
 - Course theme overlap
 - Overlapping topics
 - Repetition in courses
- g. Writing
 - Students entering the program with limited basic writing skills (e.g. grammar (ESL))
 - Creating excellent writers
 - Writing skills – extensive training early in the program through small classes
- h. Streams
 - Key issue identified by students: a need for streams or specializations
 - Streams – need for clarity and implementation or revision
- i. Other – Program Curriculum
 - Too much breadth and variety – need more focus
 - Theoretical and applied – students cannot see a balance. Absence of hands-on
 - Curriculum – engagement with critical perspectives of Professional Comm (anti- oppression, inclusion, etc.)
 - Automation + AI + ethics
 - Curriculum – ethics
 - SRC by RFA – not embedded in course design
 - Slow course development process @ Ryerson
 - Table I vs minor/service courses

Industry Skills / Professional Practice

- j. Workplace Connections
 - Optional internships/work placements vs. mandatory co-op
 - Student/alumni identified issue: greater ties to workplace/industry
 - Require more engagement with industry/PAC
- k. Tech
 - Students (industry?) expecting more skills in specific software (e.g. graphics)
 - Significant changes of emerging technologies and skills in a rapidly changing industry
 - Teaching tech skills with class time (not workshops; not expectation that students self-learn) throughout program so skills in coding, Adobe Suite, etc. are excellent by end.
 - Rich tech – not frequently embedded in instructor course design
 - Continual changes in communication technologies
 - Tech teaching abilities
 - Tech skills – enhance mode of delivery in classes Alumni Outreach
- l. Alumni
 - Data/info about alumni
 - Alumni involvement

Other

- m. Other - General
 - Lack of consistency/shared terminology re: assessments
 - Students cannot articulate value of this practice
 - Need more opportunity for creativity
 - Collegial engagement and buy-in

The Chair of Professional Communications submitted a response to the PRT Report on June 16, 2021. The response to both the PRT Report and the Program's Response was submitted to the Vice-Provost Academic by the Dean of the Creative School on September 13, 2021.

The Academic Standards Committee completed its assessment of the Professional Communications Program Review on February 3, 2021. The Committee indicated that a thorough, analytical and self-critical program review was conducted. The School integrated into the implementation plan feedback from students, alumni, employers and peer reviewers, and outlined a comprehensive plan for program enhancements moving forward.

The Academic Standards Committee recommends that the program continue, as well as provide a one-year follow-up report, as follows:

1. The mandated One-Year Follow-up Report be submitted by June 30, 2023 to include:
 - a. Updates on the status of the initiatives outlined in the Implementation Plan;
 - b. A review of courses approved but not offered to determine if they should be removed from the calendar or incorporated into the program;
 - c. Update on the plan to address major vs non-major versions of courses with tied sections taught concurrently, and differential requisite structures.

Presented to Senate for Approval: **March 1, 2022**

Start date of next Periodic Program Review: **2026-27**

SUMMARY OF THE REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS WITH THE PROGRAM'S AND DEAN'S RESPONSES

RECOMMENDATION 1. *Make the (CMN 376) internship mandatory, but include an opt-out provision* (This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendation 3 and key finding 3.) First, this policy adds needed strength to the experiential, skills-based, professionalization dimension of the programme. But secondly, it opens up internships for students that would not otherwise be available. Many companies will only take student interns if the internship is a requirement of their programme, causing ProComm BA students to miss out on those opportunities. The resistance to making CMN 376 a degree requirement, as expressed by a faculty member, is that some students simply don't want it, perhaps because of social-anxiety reasons, while others may not be able to afford unpaid positions. We did not find these concerns widely represented, and indeed the Self Study and our other interviews tell a different story. But for any given student, providing an opt-out on the basis of health concerns or a failure to find a paid position despite demonstrated effort to seek one out, would mitigate both of these concerns. Students who opt out would not receive an Experiential Certification (see recommendation 3.8.1).

Department's Response: The School will retain CMN 376 as an elective course in spring/summer of Year 2 or 3. We will enhance access to this course by, for example, making it available to students in spring/summer of Year 4 (currently it is only in spring/summer of Years 2 and 3). Additionally, the School will explore the possibility of offering students a second internship through FCD 810 in fall or winter (see response to Recommendation #2). The School agrees that the program's experiential learning elements should be enhanced. However, we note a number of significant challenges in making CMN 376 mandatory:

- Due to the volume of students, we would need additional staff support to administer internships, advise students and liaise with sponsors;
- Also due to volume, we would need an RFA coordinator (by course release), working in tandem with the CUPE coordinator, which would be consistent with the model in our master's program, in which there is a mandatory internship.
- In year 1 or 2, we would need to enhance the way we prepare students for internships (e.g., through Adobe CC training) to ensure all students can transition smoothly into internships, meet sponsor expectations and have a positive learning experiences (the benchmarks in Recommendation #8 may help with this)

As an alternative, the School proposes that we enhance promotion, access and preparation for CMN376 to increase the number of students who take it. To this end, the School would

- poll the students to find out more about barriers to taking CMN 376 and then develop strategies to address them;
- explore the possibility of making CMN 376 available in spring/summer of Year 4 (currently it is only available in Years 2 and 3). This would make it possible to connect internships to our capstone courses (CMN 480 in fall and CMN 490 in winter). Students could, for example, find a sponsor organization to do their capstone research on and then join them as an intern at the end of CMN 490, which may interest employers. Some support (multiple sections, GA, etc.) would be needed to integrate this into CMN 480/490 and the School may need an RFA coordinator (with a course release) beyond the CMN 490 course instructor if this is scaled up so that most or all of our Year 4 students are doing their capstones in partnership with an internship sponsor;
- encourage students planning to apply for the internship to take CMN 304 Career Advancement;
- liaise with CMN 200 instructors about the possibility of building an assessment into this writing skills and portfolio course that would serve as a sample portfolio piece that would be relevant to an internship.

In combination with our proposal for Recommendation #2 below, the strategy outlined above would enable students to do a part-time internship in fall or winter, a full-time internship in spring/summer, or both.

Dean's Response: The School has indicated in their response to the PRT report that they are considering major changes to the internship component in order to help students gain professional

employment. This includes engagement with students and faculty to possibly expand promotion of and access to CMN 376, to explore the possibilities of offering a second internship course through FCD 810 and as a long-term goal, an assessment of the viability of co-op. The Dean's office supports an in-depth appraisal of these options through an examination of exemplars from other programs in The Creative School, to study existing operational structures and utilization of FITS software as well as consultation with Ryerson's co-op administration.

RECOMMENDATION 2. *Add a second (fully optional) internship at end of the programme.* (This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendation 3 and key finding 3.) Adding another internship would provide an additional opportunity for experiential learning and professionalization. Adding it at the end of the programme would provide students with the opportunity to graduate directly into professional employment. Several students suggested a later internship would increase employment opportunities. One student lamented that she could not take up an immediate offer of continued employment after her (third-year) internship because she had to return to classes.

Department's Response: The School will explore the possibility of integrating a second optional internship, possibly through the existing faculty-wide internship course (FCD 810). Among the barriers to CMN 376 may be that it requires students to complete full time internships in spring/summer. The School will explore the possibility of creating a second internship that would be part-time and available to students in fall or winter of Years 3 or 4. In combination with CMN 376, this would mean that students could take an internship course in any semester of years 2, 3 or 4. We anticipate that this additional flexibility would greatly increase the number of ProCom students who take at least one internship course by the time they graduate. To enable students to complete the internship in fall or winter concurrently with other courses, the second internship would need to be part-time (e.g. 65 hours over the course of 12 weeks). The second internship could be added to the program fairly quickly by integrating the already-existing, faculty-wide internship course (FCD 810) as a core elective in the ProCom BA. Students could time the internship so that they are taking this course in the winter semester of Year 4, which would open the possibility of transitioning to employment with the same organization upon graduation. The School will explore other strategies for bridging internships with employment.

Dean's Response: The School has indicated in their response to the PRT report that they are considering major changes to the internship component in order to help students gain professional employment. This includes engagement with students and faculty to possibly expand promotion of and access to CMN 376, to explore the possibilities of offering a second internship course through FCD 810 and as a long-term goal, an assessment of the viability of co-op. The Dean's office supports an in-depth appraisal of these options through an examination of exemplars from other programs in The Creative School, to study existing operational structures and utilization of FITS software as well as consultation with Ryerson's co-op administration.

RECOMMENDATION 3. *Add a co-operative education option.* (This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendation 3 and key finding 3.) Frankly, we find it quite surprising that the programme does not have a co-op option now, given its career-readiness mandate. In fact, this is our strongest recommendation. We list it third only because our two other experiential education recommendations can be implemented more quickly. While Ryerson as a whole has an admirable co-op infrastructure, and while that infrastructure is already partially integrated into the ProCom BA in support of the internship option, mounting a full co-op option will be administratively challenging. We understand that. But the advantages for your students vastly outweigh those challenges. One of us (Harris) can attest directly to the benefits of co-operative education because his department has co-op degree options in all of its programmes, with approximately 60% adoption by students, over 80% for the Rhetoric, Media, and Professional Communication B.A.; he has also served on the university-wide co-op board and has been both Graduate and Undergraduate Director (both MA and BA programmes having co-op options). We are speaking most directly of the Waterloo English experience, then, but the

Waterloo RMPC programme is quite similar to the Ryerson ProCom BA, especially in terms of our respective students' professional aspirations, and we are confident that these benefits generalize to the ProCom BA (and to the MA, for that matter). Ryerson's own co-op website touts very similar advantages, for instance. Co-op students graduate either debt-free or with a comparatively low debt burden compared to non-co-op students, earning upwards of \$13,000 per co-op term (Ryerson's co-op programme frames this as "an average annual salary of \$36,567.24"). Even on its own this fact should not be underestimated, firstly for the financial and mental well-being of the graduates, but also for the flexibility that such well-being gives them in building their careers and lives (especially for their potential for entrepreneurial paths or for graduate work and for personal fulfillment). Not having to settle for low hanging fruit because of immediate financial obligations confers a substantial personal and professional advantage for such students. But just as crucially, co-op graduates emerge from their programmes with two years of in-the-profession career experiences, rather than experience in the retail or service-industry summer jobs most non-co-op students take. That professional experience is the primary factor in the very high placement rate that co-op students have upon graduation, compared to students from non-co-op degree programmes. They also have substantially higher initial salaries, and the positions they take are much more likely to be long-term or permanent, compared to those of non-co-op graduates. (And, to be utterly crass about it for a moment, well-earning, debt-free alumni are in a much better position to contribute financially to the university and the School). Moreover, the experiential benefit of a co-op programme is 'transitive,' in that it increases the professional dynamic in the classroom, including for non-co-op students, because the co-op students bring their professional experience to bear on projects and discussions. Co-op students, naturally, would be excluded from the mandatory internship (recommendation 3.1).

Department's Response: The School will consult with Ryerson co-op administration to explore this possibility in the long-term while prioritizing the enhancement of internships in the short-term. In terms of expanding EL in the degree, the School will prioritize the enhancement of our internships (as discussed above) as our short-term strategy. Additionally, we will explore the development of a co-op option as part of our longer-term strategy for expanding EL. The PRT correctly notes that Ryerson has co-op infrastructure to help support this option in ProCom. However, development of this option would likely take several years. The PRT also acknowledges that adding the co-op component would be administratively challenging. Nevertheless, the School is interested in exploring this option and will consult with other units at Ryerson to learn more about the resources required to develop a co-op option that could be launched in 3 - 4 years. Our priority for the next 1 - 2 years will be adding a second internship and improving access to CMN 376.

Dean's Response: The School has indicated in their response to the PRT report that they are considering major changes to the internship component in order to help students gain professional employment. This includes engagement with students and faculty to possibly expand promotion of and access to CMN 376, to explore the possibilities of offering a second internship course through FCD 810 and as a long-term goal, an assessment of the viability of co-op. The Dean's office supports an in-depth appraisal of these options through an examination of exemplars from other programs in The Creative School, to study existing operational structures and utilization of FITS software as well as consultation with Ryerson's co-op administration.

RECOMMENDATION 4. *Reduce incoming class numbers until the crisis in class size is overcome.* (This recommendation aligns closely with Self Study recommendation / key finding 7.) Incoming class size has increased dramatically since the ProCom BA programme began, with very little justification that we can determine (the Self Study mentions a budget cut that affected the 2019/2020 academic year). The programme, as currently constituted, cannot deliver an adequate education for the degree and provide good student experiences at current enrollment and staffing levels. We recommend returning to 2013 incoming-class levels.

Department's Response: The program proposes reducing our first-year intake to 115-120 students. The program agrees that cohort size has been a significant challenge for instructors and staff and will continue to be a challenge unless there is a reduction in cohort size, or an increase in our number of staff and faculty members proportional to the increase in cohort size. The PRT recommends returning to 2013 incoming class size, which was 63 students. We are anticipating a first-year cohort of 185 in fall 2021 (though this may decrease to around 165 with attrition). While we agree that cohort size needs to be reduced to ensure we have manageable class sizes and administrative workloads for academic advisors and other staff, the School notes that we have built a strong reputation over the last eight years and that the number of students applying to ProCom has steadily increased since 2013/14. Consequently, if we reduce cohort size to 63 students per year, we would be admitting only a small fraction of applicants. In addition to the budgetary implications of reducing cohort size from 185 to 63 students, the School is concerned that this would likely reduce the accessibility and diversity of our program. For these reasons, the School proposes a reduction of cohort size to 115-120, which is close to the median between the PRT's recommended first-year intake (65) and our anticipated intake for 2021/22 (185). A cohort of 115-120 students would make it more feasible to reduce the size of required courses, some of which currently have the entire cohort in one section. As discussed below, reducing the cohort to 115-120 would make it possible for the School to split most of our large required courses into two sections of around 60 students each.

Dean's Response: The Dean's office *does not* endorse an across-the-board reduction in enrollment to the program but rather encourages further examination of the balance of course delivery modes (mid-size and large lecture combined with tutorials) in each year of the curriculum so that studio size courses that optimize the development of skills demanding increased one on one engagement, such as writing, can be implemented. A recommendation to cohort ProCom students separately from those students who are non-majors taking service courses was also advocated (3.6 in the PRT report and #4 in the ProCom-SS). In their response, the School suggested the development of advanced electives as a way to mitigate this with particular attention to the use of prerequisites, an approach supported by the Dean's office.

RECOMMENDATION 5. Reduce course caps (This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendation / key finding 7.) We agree strongly with the recommendation for reducing class sizes, though we dissent from the belief that it is particularly upper-year students that benefit from smaller class sizes. First-year students also benefit immensely from the closer connections to faculty and feeling of community that low course caps foster, as well as the opportunity for more intensive writing instruction, and a respite from large, alienating, lecture-theatre courses that dominate their first-year experience.

Department's Response: The School recognizes that the number of large lectures in the program is a challenge for both students and instructors. The School will strive to reduce the size of classes, particularly for required courses and for certain elective courses that focus on applied skills such as writing and digital design. This will be achieved through a combination of reducing cohort size (see #4 above) and creating additional sections. While the PRT report recommends reducing class size in general, given budget implications of major reductions in class size across the board, we propose instead to focus on reducing the size of required courses since these reductions will have a positive impact on all students regardless of their elective choices or their year level. Additionally, we propose to reduce class size for elective courses that focus on writing, design and other applied skills. To manage the impact of this change on our budget, the School will make these changes in two phases:

Phase 1: Required courses

Currently, of the 15 required courses in the program, 9 are 100+ students per section. We propose to reduce this number to 4 so that there is only 1 large lecture of 120 students in each year of the degree. All other required courses will have caps of no more than 60 students (again, presuming a cohort of 120 students), with the exception of writing, digital design and oral communication courses which have historically been in the range of 35 - 50 students and will continue to be in that range for pedagogical reasons. The School recognizes that speaking, listening, learning and collaborating in large groups of 100+ is an important skill, particularly for

professional communicators. Single-section required courses also serve an important community-building function for the cohort. Consequently, the School will keep one single-section, large-lecture required course in each year of the program.

Phase 2: Elective courses

Once the reductions in required course class size have been implemented, the School will focus on reducing class size for elective courses in writing, digital skills and other areas which were highlighted by the PRT report and which have learning outcomes that would benefit from small class sizes.

The School's ability to reduce class size is dependent to a large extent on the stabilization or reduction of our cohort size.

Dean's Response: The Dean's office *does not* endorse an across-the-board reduction in enrollment to the program but rather encourages further examination of the balance of course delivery modes (mid-size and large lecture combined with tutorials) in each year of the curriculum so that studio size courses that optimize the development of skills demanding increased one on one engagement, such as writing, can be implemented. A recommendation to cohort ProCom students separately from those students who are non-majors taking service courses was also advocated (3.6 in the PRT report and #4 in the ProCom-SS). In their response, the School suggested the development of advanced electives as a way to mitigate this with particular attention to the use of prerequisites, an approach supported by the Dean's office.

RECOMMENDATION 6. *Separate the bulk of ProCom major courses from those open in large numbers to non-majors. (This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendations 3, 4, and 7, and key finding 7.)*

Keeping in mind that our role is not to review the School of Professional Communication as a whole, still less the faculty or the institution, but only the Professional Communication BA, we can say unequivocally that the legacy-driven entanglement of service courses with ProCom BA courses is highly unfortunate for the BA students and should be significantly reduced. There are opportunities in such mixed courses to bring value to the BA programme—providing leadership and project-management opportunities for ProCom students in group work with other students, for instance—but overall it creates far too much pressure on resources and drives class sizes to unmanageable numbers, and can distort course curricula away from the professionalization and technical expertise needed by ProCom BAs.

Department's Response: The School agrees in part with the PRT regarding the need to address challenges stemming from electives that are open to ProCom BA and external students. However, the PRT recommends separating our own students from external students whereas we propose to retain the existing mix of ProCom and external students in most electives. The School will begin developing new elective courses which are aimed at a more advanced level (this process has already started with CMN 453) and will be restricted to ProCom students and possibly to external students who have the necessary ProCom prerequisites. The School agrees that teaching both ProCom and external students in the same class can be challenging for instructors and students. However, the School's PPR team also heard from a number of faculty members who noted that ProCom students benefit from interacting and collaborating with students from other fields and disciplines in elective courses. Given that most of our required courses are reserved for ProCom students, our electives are key to providing our students with interdisciplinary exposure and engagement. To address the challenges noted by the PRT, the School proposes to create more advanced electives for ProCom students to address areas for improvement identified by the PRT and the Self-Study such as experiential learning, writing skills, digital skills, project management, EDI, and theory. However, the School will also explore avenues for making these courses available to external students who are taking the ProCom minor. The School anticipates that it will be challenging to reconcile this goal of creating more ProCom-only advanced courses with the current open elective implementation (wherein all courses default to open elective unless it is a required course for program students

or restricted via 'required group' notation to the RO). The School will need to think critically about the use of requisites to somewhat restrict access to our courses by external students.

Dean's Response: A recommendation to cohort ProCom students separately from those students who are non-majors taking service courses was also advocated (3.6 in the PRT report and #4 in the ProCom-SS). In their response, the School suggested the development of advanced electives as a way to mitigate this with particular attention to the use of prerequisites, an approach supported by the Dean's office.

RECOMMENDATION 7. Restructure the degree (This recommendation aligns with Self Study key finding 1, but this is one of the few areas where we find the Self Study too optimistic.) The inclusion of a co-op option will require significant programme restructuring on its own, of course, but here we refer specifically to issues of coverage, the timing of content, and especially the sense of degree progression. There is certainly a trajectory in the ProCom BA in terms of knowledge growth and the scaffolding of specific learning outcomes, but this sense of progression is undermined by a number of factors: unproductive redundancies, a lack of benchmarks, a segregation of important themes and perspectives (chiefly equity-diversity-inclusion and theory-building), a consistent lack of emphasis on writing, and apparent 'surprises' particularly associated with the final year. Some recent changes (such as adding ProCom 453 and offerings of co-curricular Adobe design workshops will likely address some of our concerns—indeed, that is what they have been built to do, since these concerns show up in the Self-Study—but it is still too early to tell).

Department's Response: The School agrees with the PRT that the degree needs to be restructured to reduce repetition and enhance progression from introductory to proficiency-level courses. The School will create new courses and revise and/or reposition existing courses based on the findings of the PRT report and the Self-Study. The School will also support meetings of instructors of courses in core thematic areas at the beginning and/or end of each academic year with the goal of reducing repetition and increasing progression in the content and assignments of related courses. The issue of "overlap" or repetition of content between courses was one of the consistent themes our PPR team heard throughout the Self-Study process. The School believes that "overlap" or the integration of the same or similar theories, issues, etc. in multiple courses is not in and of itself a problem; however, we need to ensure that each time students encounter a given theory or issue, they are engaging with it in progressively more advanced ways. To accomplish this, the School will seek to identify pairs of courses that provide introductory and advanced level knowledge and skills and where appropriate, will rename the courses to highlight the fact that the courses are intended to complement one another. The School will also encourage and support planning meetings at the beginning and/or end of each academic year for instructors of courses in core thematic areas highlighted by the PRT and Self-Study (theory, writing, digital design, etc.) to coordinate content between these courses such that repetition is reduced and progression is increased. To address this issue in the area of theory, the School will develop an introductory theory course that will set the foundation for CMN 402. The new introductory theory course will be named "Theorizing Communication I" and CMN 402 will be renamed "Theorizing Communication II" (as suggested by the PRT) to signal to both instructors and students that these courses are intended to progressively develop students' engagement with communication theory. To address this issue in the area of research methods, the School will explore the possibility of moving CMN480 to 3rd year and moving CMN323 to 4th year. This would also enable instructors of CMN480 to focus on applied research methods (currently this course serves as both a research methods course as well as a capstone course) and may also enable CMN323 to become a richer professional practice course. CMN 490, which is in the final semester of the degree, would then be a capstone project course that would build on methods and professional practice introduced in CMN480 and CMN323. The School will also explore and support opportunities for enhancing progression through the identification of pairs or clusters of courses, coordination between related courses, and/or the revision and creation of courses in the areas of writing, digital skills and EDI, as suggested by the PRT. See response to #8 below.

Dean's Response: Various recommendations addressed curriculum renewal with reference to content redundancy, the timing of delivery, the integration of benchmark certifications in technology skills such as those

in the Adobe CC, EDI and theory, as well as the enhancement of writing skills and ensuring opportunities for creativity (3.7-3.11 in the PRT report and #1, 2, 5, 6 in the ProCom-SS). The School elaborated how they might operationalize initiatives regarding these recommendations in their response to the PRT report. These included May meetings with faculty clustered around key thematic areas in the curriculum (strategic communication; communication for social justice; design and creative technology; as well as health, science and environmental communication), to holistically map course content, learning objectives, the benchmarking of skills (both in technology and writing) in relation to project briefs within the context of progressive theory integration. Several changes have already been made to incorporate EDI principles throughout the program. This will also become part of a yearly review process during the May meetings. The Dean's office supports the redesign and reorganization of the curriculum and will work with the School to present these changes to Academic Standards for assessment and approval by the Senate. We support keeping the curriculum responsive to industry needs, strengthening EDI content, and adding course intensives to enhance technological skills. Each proposed change will be assessed within the reality of fiscal budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 8. Reduce overlap and redundancy in coursework (This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendation / key finding 1.) A recurrent theme in the Self Study, strongly corroborated in our interviews, is the duplication of course material. The Self Study identifies several courses where this might be addressed (215, 216, 288, 450), but a thorough degree audit and more closely stipulated course coverage is required to do this optimally. One student, for instance, remarked that two of her courses in the same term used the same text book, with a significant overlap in reading assignments. This was extreme, she noted, because they were in the same term but not an otherwise unusual situation. There are efficiencies, not to mention cost-savings for the students, in using the same textbook in two courses (three would be excessive), but there should be mechanisms in place to preclude assignment of the same readings.

8.1. Incorporate benchmark certifications. Certifications, awarded when students have achieved specific benchmarks, give students a sense of accomplishment beyond class completion, provide professional credentials that can help them advance their careers, and provide a sense of degree stages beyond the annual course-completion cycle. We recommend two mandatory benchmarks, one optional, but there is certainly room for others. We make no claim that the names we use are the best ones.

8.1.1. Incorporate a mandatory Adobe CC benchmark for first-year students. (This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendation 1 and key findings 3 and 5. We note, too, that FCAD has a LevelUp programme of some sort—mentioned very briefly in the Self-Study—that might be implicated in some way.) Our discussions with students and alumni confirmed the Self Study's finding that the students feel ill-prepared for many of their projects, especially with the Adobe Creative Cloud tools that they are strongly encouraged to use. The recent implementation of Adobe CC modules in ProCom 210 may answer this need, along with the co-curricular workshops. It is too early to tell, but we trust the department will follow up with students to see if the modules and workshops are sufficient or if other tutorials are required (as most readers surely know, Adobe has a good suite of tutorials; the D2L modules and/or LevelUp training may even capitalize on them). Be that as it may, we recommend that when a sufficient level of training is determined and implemented into the programme, that completion of this training be set as a benchmark certification, one that is included on the transcript and can be added to resumé. It will give the students an early sense of accomplishment, and it will also ensure that they have the skills necessary to succeed in subsequent coursework and to build upon going forward. (The department was wise to include the CC training prior to the internship: possession of these skills will help students acquire a good professional position and will also give them immediate professional strengths for performing well in the positions they do acquire.)

8.1.2. Incorporate a mandatory professional communication Project Development benchmark for graduating students. On successful completion of the 490 capstone, students should receive a certification that goes on their transcript and can be added to their resumé.

8.1.3. Incorporate an optional Experiential Learning benchmark for students. This could be met either by completion of 376 or equivalent hours in relevant part-time professional employment or volunteer work, or a combination of both. It would not be available to co-op students.

Department's Response:

Reducing overlap: The School agrees. See response to #7 above regarding overlap and progression in theory, methods and other core areas. Additionally, the School will conduct an audit through a set of "course cluster" meetings in key areas to identify further areas of overlap and opportunities for enhancing the sense of progression in key skills and knowledge throughout the degree. While the School developed a curriculum map as part of the PPR, we will do an audit that specifically focuses on overlap/progression. Anyone teaching a particular section of a course will be required to participate, so as to capture variations between sections of the same course. As discussed in our response to recommendation #7, the goal of these initiatives is not to eliminate overlap but to plan for and encourage progression, e.g., if two courses address a topic, we need to ensure the second course assumes fundamental knowledge and addresses advanced issues. To this end, the School will organize coordination meetings for clusters of required courses in key areas (historically, the School has scheduled a series of course coordination meetings in May but these tend to focus on coordination between sections of a single course rather than between courses in a thematic area). These meetings will take place in the spring and will be conducted as follows:

1. All instructors of sections of required courses in a given cluster attend a coordination meeting in May. Clusters identified in the PPR include theory (e.g., CMN 210, CMN 402), digital skills (e.g., CMN 222, CMN 448), writing (e.g., CMN 200, CMN 480), EDI (e.g., CMN 211, CMN 315). Based on the PRT recommendations and the School's responses in this document, the Curriculum Committee will finalize the list of courses in each cluster, and may revise/add clusters based on evolving program needs. Each required course will be part of at least one cluster. Instructors will be encouraged to share course syllabi (or at least the list of topics, readings and assignments) with other instructors in the cluster in advance of the meeting.
2. In the meetings, instructors review course learning objectives and then discuss the key theories and skills and the level at which they are taught in each course in the cluster. Instructors work towards identifying possible overlaps and gaps, and discuss strategies for addressing them.
3. With input from the other instructors in each cluster, Course Curriculum Leads complete a Google form for the Curriculum Committee which will include: (1) a list of common theories and skills between two or more courses in the cluster; (2) a description of how these commonalities either build upon one another or overlap/repeat; (3) if there are repetitions (e.g., same theory, same reading, same level at which students engage with it), a discussion of how instructors will address this and revise so that there is progression rather than repetition; (4) a discussion of whether there are any gaps in the content of the cluster as a whole identified by instructors which could be addressed in future iterations of the course or the development of new courses.
4. Curriculum Committee reviews the Google form submissions from the clusters and provides a response that will be shared with all instructors in the cluster (as well as with instructors assigned to the course in the upcoming academic year). In its response, the Committee may also identify further opportunities for addressing overlap and enhancing progression through its own review of detailed course syllabi.

To make this process manageable for staff and instructors, the School will focus on required courses in the first year of implementation but the Committee may decide to expand this process to electives in certain thematic areas in subsequent years.

Benchmarks: The School agrees that benchmarks are necessary to ensure that core skills are acquired at certain points in the program. The PRT recommended the integration of formal certifications. The School proposes instead that instructors of courses in core areas such as design and writing should develop benchmarks and these should be built into required courses as well as optional intensives at the beginning of each year. External certifications have the advantage of being standardized and designed according to industry standards. However, the ProCom BA is built on the core principle of bridging theory with practice whereas certifications tend to focus on applied skills. The School believes our students would be better served by developing our own benchmarks. These may be informed by certifications and industry standards but they would be designed so that they are in line with our learning outcomes and our core values, such as critical thinking and the integration of theory and practice. Additionally, integrating benchmarks into the curriculum will require instructor support and this is more likely to happen if instructors have some input into the content of the benchmark. Benchmarks will be developed collaboratively by instructors in required courses in the two areas identified by the PRT as “mandatory”: Adobe CC and project development/coordination. The Curriculum Committee will also discuss the possibility of developing a benchmark for experiential learning (the PRT viewed this as optional) and for writing (see Recommendation #11). For Adobe CC, in fall 2021, instructors of CMN210 (Year 1), CMN222 (Year 2), CMN448 (Year 2), CMN324 (Year 3) and CMN 480/490 (Year 4) and any other required course which integrate Adobe CC will begin developing benchmarks in each year of the program for core skills in design software. By the end of the fall semester, Course Curriculum Leads will share a draft of the benchmark with the other instructors of required design courses. In early winter 2022, the instructors will meet again to discuss the benchmarks for each year of the program to ensure they progressively build upon and complement one another. The benchmarks will be shared and reviewed by the Curriculum Committee before they are finalized and integrated into our generic course outlines; this last step will ensure that the Adobe benchmarks are clearly communicated to students and instructors. The School will decide whether it is necessary to repeat this process for elective courses but at the very least, the School will require instructors to complete a survey each year to determine which courses are using Adobe CC, which benchmark the elective works toward or builds upon and how, and what resources are needed from the Creative Technology Team. Instructors’ participation in this process will be required since the use of Adobe CC, as a resource provided through FCAD funding and student ancillary fees, should be tied to program learning outcomes and the Adobe benchmarks once they are finalized. Additionally, the School will offer intensives for Year 2, 3 and 4 students in September of each year which will provide students with an opportunity to polish or reinforce Adobe skills which they acquired in the previous year. These intensives will also provide transfer students and exchange students with an opportunity to catch up on Adobe so they are closer to the skill level of their cohort. The School will consider implementing a similar process for project development skills (possibly in CMN210, CMN 323 and CMN 480/490). However, given the emphasis in the Self-Study and the PRT report on enhancing writing skills, the School will prioritize the development of benchmarks for writing (see Recommendation #11) alongside the Adobe CC benchmarks.

Dean’s Response: Various recommendations addressed curriculum renewal with reference to content redundancy, the timing of delivery, the integration of benchmark certifications in technology skills such as those in the Adobe CC, EDI and theory, as well as the enhancement of writing skills and ensuring opportunities for creativity (3.7-3.11 in the PRT report and #1, 2, 5, 6 in the ProCom-SS). The School elaborated how they might operationalize initiatives regarding these recommendations in their response to the PRT report. These included May meetings with faculty clustered around key thematic areas in the curriculum (strategic communication; communication for social justice; design and creative technology; as well as health, science and environmental communication), to holistically map course content, learning objectives, the benchmarking of skills (both in technology and writing) in relation to project briefs within the context of progressive theory integration. Several changes have already been made to incorporate EDI principles throughout the program. This will also become part of a yearly review process during the May meetings. The Dean’s office supports the redesign and reorganization of the curriculum and will work with the School to present these changes to Academic Standards for assessment and approval by the Senate. We support keeping the curriculum responsive to industry needs,

strengthening EDI content, and adding course intensives to enhance technological skills. Each proposed change will be assessed within the reality of fiscal budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 9. *Increase the focus on theory in earlier parts of the programme.* (This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendation 1.) One of the alumni we met with offered a dissenting opinion on this ("too much theory, not enough practical skills"), but the majority of other students we met with regretted that CMN 402, "Theorizing Communication," comes at the end of the programme, as did the alumni, all of them remarking that taking the course earlier would have helped them navigate the programme better and get more out of later classes—a perception that shows up recurrently in the Self Study. While students and alumni recognized that theory does occur in earlier courses, the kind of exclusive focus of 402 was desired earlier in the programme, and some crucial theory does seem to be missing until very late. One faculty member, for instance, reports encountering students in fourth-year courses who had never heard of semiotics—as fundamental a gap in communication studies as a fourth-year physics student never hearing of the calculus. To be clear, we are not suggesting 402 be moved; rather, that it be retained and augmented with a 'bookend' approach that has theory-specific courses at either end of the degree. Again, a close programme audit would answer this question more fully, but it seems to us that 211 might be the best candidate for either repurposing or trading off for a new course, should complementary numbering with 402 be thought desirable (e.g., CMN 202, Theorizing Communication 1 & CMN 402 Theorizing Communication 2). The content of 211 should certainly be retained and redistributed, which aligns with our recommendation 3.10.

Department's Response: The School agrees and will integrate a new course focusing on theory that will provide a foundation for theory throughout the degree. As discussed in #7 above, the School will develop an introductory theory course to set a foundation for CMN402. Our Curriculum Committee has already received a proposal for a new theory-focused course and will discuss the positioning of this required course in year one or two. The new introductory theory course will be named "Theorizing Communication I" and CMN 402 will be renamed "Theorizing Communication II" (as suggested by the PRT) to signal to both instructors and students that these courses are intended to work together to progressively develop students' engagement with communication theory. The School believes a new course on theory would be a more effective way of ensuring a common foundation in theory and would enable the School to retain CMN211 as a course that focuses specifically on EDI.

Dean's Response: Various recommendations addressed curriculum renewal with reference to content redundancy, the timing of delivery, the integration of benchmark certifications in technology skills such as those in the Adobe CC, EDI and theory, as well as the enhancement of writing skills and ensuring opportunities for creativity (3.7-3.11 in the PRT report and #1, 2, 5, 6 in the ProCom-SS). The School elaborated how they might operationalize initiatives regarding these recommendations in their response to the PRT report. These included May meetings with faculty clustered around key thematic areas in the curriculum (strategic communication; communication for social justice; design and creative technology; as well as health, science and environmental communication), to holistically map course content, learning objectives, the benchmarking of skills (both in technology and writing) in relation to project briefs within the context of progressive theory integration. Several changes have already been made to incorporate EDI principles throughout the program. This will also become part of a yearly review process during the May meetings. The Dean's office supports the redesign and reorganization of the curriculum and will work with the School to present these changes to Academic Standards for assessment and approval by the Senate. We support keeping the curriculum responsive to industry needs, strengthening EDI content, and adding course intensives to enhance technological skills. Each proposed change will be assessed within the reality of fiscal budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 10. *Place greater emphasis on EDI considerations throughout the programme.* (This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendation / key finding 6.) We applaud the creation of 230, 310, and 406 and the adoption of Learning Outcome 10 that they all help to fulfill. But there is a strong felt

need among students and alumni that the issues, methods, and theories these courses address should be present in most, if not all, courses in the programme.

Department's Response: The School agrees. As noted by the PRT, we have already embedded a new learning outcome on EDI in the program. Additionally, many instructors made significant revisions to their courses in 2020/21 to enhance EDI content, including required courses such as CMN 211, CMN 216, CMN 315 and CMN480/490. Additionally, the School is launching CMN 453 Communication and Social Change in fall 2021, the focus of which is advancing EDI and anti-oppression in and through communication. Based on the findings of the Self-Study, the PRT Report as well as the School's recent EDI initiatives, such a student survey conducted in 20/21 by the ProCom Anti-Black Racism Collective, the School will continue to offer courses that focus primarily on EDI but at the same time will develop an "EDI across the curriculum" approach so that EDI is integrated into as many courses as possible. The program has a good start on this but in order to maintain this momentum, EDI will be embedded in our yearly course review process in May (when Course Curriculum Leads meet to discuss possible revisions to course outlines) and at the beginning of each semester (when instructors submit their syllabi). In May, Course Curriculum Leads will provide a brief description of efforts instructors made in the previous year to enhance EDI as well as additional enhancements which are planned for the following year. This will enable the Curriculum Committee to monitor our progress on EDI integration on a yearly basis. The course-based EDI updates will be submitted to the Curriculum Committee for review. The Chair of Curriculum Committee will share a summary of the course EDI updates with School Council so that all Council members have an opportunity provide input, including the School's new BA EDI Rep (in spring 2021, School Council approved a motion of change the ProCom By-laws to add a BA EDI Rep as a voting member on Council and, if approved by Senate, our students will elect a BA EDI Rep in the fall of each year to serve on School Council and on the ProCom Course Union executive team). This document will then serve as a guide for instructors as they prepare detailed course syllabi for the following year. Instructors may also use these documents to develop proposals for GA hours to support EDI-related course development/revision, which ProCom has been able to provide for the last few years and hopes to continue providing in the future, pending budget.

Dean's Response: Various recommendations addressed curriculum renewal with reference to content redundancy, the timing of delivery, the integration of benchmark certifications in technology skills such as those in the Adobe CC, EDI and theory, as well as the enhancement of writing skills and ensuring opportunities for creativity (3.7-3.11 in the PRT report and #1, 2, 5, 6 in the ProCom-SS). The School elaborated how they might operationalize initiatives regarding these recommendations in their response to the PRT report. These included May meetings with faculty clustered around key thematic areas in the curriculum (strategic communication; communication for social justice; design and creative technology; as well as health, science and environmental communication), to holistically map course content, learning objectives, the benchmarking of skills (both in technology and writing) in relation to project briefs within the context of progressive theory integration. Several changes have already been made to incorporate EDI principles throughout the program. This will also become part of a yearly review process during the May meetings. The Dean's office supports the redesign and reorganization of the curriculum and will work with the School to present these changes to Academic Standards for assessment and approval by the Senate. We support keeping the curriculum responsive to industry needs, strengthening EDI content, and adding course intensives to enhance technological skills. Each proposed change will be assessed within the reality of fiscal budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 11. *Place greater emphasis on writing throughout the programme (This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendation / key finding 2.) We were surprised to find this a concern of students, faculty, alumni, and the Advisory Council. But across the board the perception is that ProCom students do not acquire enough proficiency in sentence-to-sentence writing in a variety of styles, genres, and registers. This is a rather startling indictment of a Professional Communication degree. It is significantly exacerbated, if not caused, by the class-size crisis. The Self Study suggests two alternatives—additional courses and more distributed attention ('writing across the curriculum'). We applaud both, noting only that they should not be*

regarded as mutually exclusive as the Self Study appears to imply. We also note that while group assignments allow students to play to their strengths, they also allow students to hide their weaknesses — 'the' writer in a group doing all the text generation, for instance, so that the others do not benefit in that area — and therefore we would advise faculty to (1) include individual writing assignments in their course design, and (2) include group assignments that require all group members take identifiable responsibility for written components, and grade the students accordingly.

Department's Response: The School agrees and will (i) develop benchmarks for writing for each year of the program; (ii) create a new upper-year required course focusing on professional editing skills; and (iii) cap CMN200 and the new editing intensive course at 40 students, pending support for this in the School's budget.

The School's approach to each of these areas are as follows:

- (i) The School believes that benchmarks for writing and editing are needed to ensure the development of core skills in this area throughout the program. As discussed in relation to Adobe benchmarks, the School believes that benchmarks developed by our instructors and Curriculum Committee will be more effective than benchmarks developed by external organizations (e.g., grammar tests, certifications for copy editors, etc.). A description of our proposed process for developing benchmarks in writing and other areas is included in the School's response to Recommendation #8 above.
- (ii) The School will also develop a mandatory upper year editing/writing course (possibly based on the Amy Einsohn method). This course would prepare students for copyediting, stylistic editing, proofreading, and other on-the-ground skills expected in any communications position.
- (iii) The School proposes capping CMN200 and other writing-intensive courses at 40 students. Effective writing pedagogy requires smaller classes since these courses involve close, line-by-line assessment by the instructors, iterative writing assignments in which students revise and resubmit work based on instructor feedback, and integrate many assignments throughout the semester to ensure regular practice rather than a few heavily-weighted assignments.

Additionally, the School will explore the following strategies to improve writing skills:

- develop a 2-hour grammar brush-up workshop that can run multiple times throughout the academic year. There is a model from the University of Victoria which could be adapted to ProCom for this purpose. Once built, the workshop could run periodically for any interested students;
- adapt a "Writing across the Curriculum" approach to ProCom, discovering opportunities in many classes for individual writing assignments so students have practice across genres (the School could conduct an audit, as discussed above regarding Adobe skills and EDI to track the writing/editing skills and genres of written outputs that are required in our courses);
- pending budget, the School proposes the creation of a ProCom writing centre, staffed by MPC students who would be paid. ProCom students encountering severe writing challenges would have access to four hours per month of one-on-one assistance. This assistance would be outside of the Ryerson Writing Centre, which does not always have the resources to advise students on the specific kinds of writing assignments they produce in our courses. The MPC students employed in part-time positions as writing coaches would be mentored by a faculty member and themselves would improve their writing skills;

Regarding group work, the School will ask its Curriculum Committee to include the advice of the PRT in our syllabus template, indicating to instructors that wherever possible, group assignments should require group members to take identifiable responsibility for written components.

Dean's Response: Various recommendations addressed curriculum renewal with reference to content redundancy, the timing of delivery, the integration of benchmark certifications in technology skills such as those in the Adobe CC, EDI and theory, as well as the enhancement of writing skills and ensuring opportunities for creativity (3.7-3.11 in the PRT report and #1, 2, 5, 6 in the ProCom-SS). The School elaborated how they might operationalize initiatives regarding these recommendations in their response to the PRT report. These included May meetings with faculty clustered around key thematic areas in the curriculum (strategic communication;

communication for social justice; design and creative technology; as well as health, science and environmental communication), to holistically map course content, learning objectives, the benchmarking of skills (both in technology and writing) in relation to project briefs within the context of progressive theory integration. Several changes have already been made to incorporate EDI principles throughout the program. This will also become part of a yearly review process during the May meetings. The Dean's office supports the redesign and reorganization of the curriculum and will work with the School to present these changes to Academic Standards for assessment and approval by the Senate. We support keeping the curriculum responsive to industry needs, strengthening EDI content, and adding course intensives to enhance technological skills. Each proposed change will be assessed within the reality of fiscal budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 12. *Continue the onboarding, cohort-bonding, community-building efforts.* One of the strengths of programme is a pervasive ProCom spirit that begins to emerge in the first term. Current first-year students do not seem to have the same level of community spirit as students in other years, which suggests this issue is a partial casualty of the remote environment, but is perhaps also connected to the cohort's size. In any event, the situation does indicate that more effort should be put into finding ways to encourage this spirit through remote resources (Coordinated remote socials? Required programme-wide selfie posts? Movie nights?), not just to deal with the current pandemic, but also to address the new expectations and conventions the pandemic is creating among students, and to be ready for other social crises in the future. One issue with the current onboarding efforts was voiced in our meetings with students and alumni, however, an issue completely distinct from the current cohort's size and the pandemic circumstances; namely, a negligible awareness by students of the capstone research project (480 and 490). We have no doubt that this element of the programme is introduced, possibly even featured, in the programme orientation. Nonetheless every senior student we talked to, as well as one alumnus, said the capstone project came somewhat as a surprise in their fourth year, something that they wish they had known more about earlier and had been more fully prepared to carry out; and every junior student reported not having heard about the project. This project should be the telos of the programme for every student, a learning experience that they build towards and think about yearly. (Our recommendation 3.8.1.2 would contribute to foregrounding this project for students.) The role of current Advisory Council is still rather ill-defined, but integrating them into onboarding, and regular community-building efforts is one way where they could make important contact with the students. Perhaps each of them could host an event, at a rate of about one per term, around their particular expertise and role in the profession.

Department's Response: The School will continue its community-building efforts. Thanks in large part to the commitment of the School's staff members, our Orientations, year-end shows, international collaborations, student-focused EDI initiatives, internship networking sessions, awards celebrations, and other events and activities have fostered a strong sense of community among the students. We will continue these efforts. The School will also explore ways of increasing the involvement of faculty members and our Program Advisory Council in community-building events for students and will continue to work with the Dean's office and the ProCom Course Union to help with the planning and delivery of community-building initiatives.

Dean's Response: As stated previously, this is the inaugural periodic program review for the BA, Professional Communication. The PRT report endorsed continued onboarding, cohort-bonding through alumni engagement and community building as well as sustained support to faculty research to enhance reputation, curricular vibrancy and to encourage students to pursue graduate study (see 3.12-3.15). The problems identified in the self-study and the suggestions from the PRT offer several strategies to transition the School from start up to maturation. This process of implementing solutions to the problems identified and proposing curricular changes suggests implicit reflection on the identity of the Professional Communications program to further enhance the communication clusters identified, especially within the context of FCAD's recent brand identity transition to "The Creative School".

RECOMMENDATION 13. *Continue to support faculty research.* ProComm has an enviably accomplished research faculty, which can only be achieved through institutional support, such as RA funding and grant-writing support. The Self Study makes it clear that FCAD and ProCom regard faculty research as elemental to the success of a BA programme. We agree. Not only does it improve faculty engagement when they can teach what they research, it also ensures that course content is current, that models higher academic research for students seeking careers in such fields as scientific editing or policy advocacy, and that can even result in direct experiential learning outcomes (e.g. Professor Clapperton's work); not to mention, increased job satisfaction for faculty, always a good thing.

Department's Response: The School will continue to support faculty research. ProCom has, since 2018, allocated funding to RFA for course design/redesign and to support SRC efforts, each by way of formal calls and subsequent adjudication. We anticipate continuing to do so as we move forward. 2021/22 was a record year for faculty collaborations on research projects and grant applications; the School will continue to involve our faculty SRC Representative and the Catalyst in supporting and showcasing faculty SRC.

Dean's Response: As stated previously, this is the inaugural periodic program review for the BA, Professional Communication. The PRT report endorsed continued onboarding, cohort-bonding through alumni engagement and community building as well as sustained support to faculty research to enhance reputation, curricular vibrancy and to encourage students to pursue graduate study (see 3.12-3.15). The problems identified in the self-study and the suggestions from the PRT offer several strategies to transition the School from start up to maturation. This process of implementing solutions to the problems identified and proposing curricular changes suggests implicit reflection on the identity of the Professional Communications program to further enhance the communication clusters identified, especially within the context of FCAD's recent brand identity transition to "The Creative School".

RECOMMENDATION 14. *Continue to prepare students for graduate studies.* While direct career entry is a primary goal of most ProCom BA students, a significant number will continue on to graduate work, either in ProCom or at other programmes or institutions. We note that our recommendations about class size (3.4 and 3.5), theory integration (3.9), disentanglement of the degree from service teaching (3.6), and faculty research (3.13) all enhance this goal. We note, too, that preparation for graduate work is a kind of experiential learning that is often overlooked when that term is used—experiential learning in higher academic research that undergirds careers in many fields.

Department's Response: The School will continue to prepare students for graduate studies. The program currently prepares students for graduate studies in upper-year required courses on communication theory (CMN 402), contemporary issues in professional communication (CMN 323) and research methods (CMN 480/490) and through electives that are available only to upper-year students (e.g., CMN 321, CMN 408, CMN 453).

Additionally, some of our upper-year electives are cross-listed with our master's program (CMN 321, CMN 408) and provide BA students with opportunities to interact and collaborate with our master's students. As discussed above in response to Recommendation #6, the School plans to prioritize the development of advanced electives that are specifically designed for upper-year ProCom BA students. These courses will provide our students with additional opportunities to strengthen their grasp of theory and methods and to develop research papers and other outputs which students can use as writing samples for applications to graduate programs. The School will also explore the development of an information session to be offered in the fall semester, possibly in collaboration with the ProCom Alumni Association, featuring ProCom alumni who pursued graduate studies.

Dean's Response: As stated previously, this is the inaugural periodic program review for the BA, Professional Communication. The PRT report endorsed continued onboarding, cohort-bonding through alumni engagement and community building as well as sustained support to faculty research to enhance reputation, curricular vibrancy and to encourage students to pursue graduate study (see 3.12-3.15). The problems identified in the self-study and the suggestions from the PRT offer several strategies to transition the School from start up to maturation. This process of implementing solutions to the problems identified and proposing curricular changes

suggests implicit reflection on the identity of the Professional Communications program to further enhance the communication clusters identified, especially within the context of FCAD's recent brand identity transition to "The Creative School".

RECOMMENDATION 15. Increase financial support for students who wish to participate in the experiential learning opportunities afforded by international exchanges and the internship course—especially in the EDI space. Extend the principles of EDI to the International Exchanges programme and to the Internship course by providing financial support to students who would like to participate in one or both options but are unable to do so because of financial constraints.

Department's Response: The School will continue to seek opportunities to provide financial support for our students. The School has developed paid opportunities for students in ProCom's Anti-Black Racism Collective, the Centre for Communicating Knowledge, paid internships in ProCom (Alumni Assistant and Communications Assistant) Course Development GA positions for ProCom instructors to support the implementation of PPR recommendations, emergency bursaries for ProCom students in financial need, bursaries for technology for students facing financial hardship, and RA positions to support SRC by ProCom RFA members. Additionally, we integrated new bursaries for students from marginalized communities into our budget proposal for 2021/22 and will continue to seek opportunities to provide funding to our students, particularly those from marginalized communities. The School will continue these efforts to provide financial support to our students and will work to promote funding opportunities provided by the Dean's office for international exchanges. Additionally, as discussed in response to Recommendation #3, the School will explore a co-op option as part of its longer-term strategy for experiential learning, which would also increase paid work opportunities for students.

Dean's Response: As stated previously, this is the inaugural periodic program review for the BA, Professional Communication. The PRT report endorsed continued onboarding, cohort-bonding through alumni engagement and community building as well as sustained support to faculty research to enhance reputation, curricular vibrancy and to encourage students to pursue graduate study (see 3.12-3.15). The problems identified in the self-study and the suggestions from the PRT offer several strategies to transition the School from start up to maturation. This process of implementing solutions to the problems identified and proposing curricular changes suggests implicit reflection on the identity of the Professional Communications program to further enhance the communication clusters identified, especially within the context of FCAD's recent brand identity transition to "The Creative School".

PRT's Further Suggestions:

Suggestion 1. While a programme as recent as the Ryerson ProCom BA does not yet have many graduates, our alumni meeting suggested that alumni engagement is an area that might be improved.

Suggestion 2. The information scientists working in the library are capable of more thorough engagement in ProCom courses, and eager to do so. They are also uniquely placed to help with tools and research methods in many of the important areas connected with digital media communications, such as bot-detection, data-harvesting, and optimization algorithms. We encourage the curriculum development committee to consult with the library about such involvement.

Suggestion 3. There were complaints about a lack of Canadian content in the courses. We encourage the use of case studies, examples, issues-management scenarios, and so forth drawn from the Canadian context. This is another area in which the Advisory Council might be especially valuable.

Suggestion 4. Course projects strike us as an untapped resource for both student development and cohort building, which can additionally help foster alumni engagement. The capstone projects especially, but also other intensive course projects, might be brought into first and second year courses to illustrate communication

decisions, rhetorical pressures, design features, project management, and so on. We encourage the use of these projects in earlier years of the programme, including (where possible) the involvement of their creators, whether they are still students or have become alumni. This suggestion also can enrich the ProCom graduate students, if they come from ProCom BA ranks and can talk about projects they developed then.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Priority Recommendation #1: Enhance experiential learning in the ProCom BA.

Rationale:
 Currently, only a minority of ProCom students take the ProCom internship course, which is positioned in the spring/summer term of the second or third year of the degree.

 As discussed in the PPR self-study (recommendation 3), students who completed the internship often speak highly of the experience. According to the PRT (recommendations 3.1 - 3.3), enhancing experiential learning should be one the School’s top priorities in the coming years. In its response to the PRT and the School’s response, the Dean’s office indicated that it supports our exploration and assessment of the options listed below for increasing the number of students who enroll in the ProCom internship and participate in other experiential learning opportunities.

Implementation Actions:
 To enhance access to the existing ProCom internship, the program will

- poll the students to find out more about barriers to taking CMN 376 and develop strategies for address them;
- explore the possibility of making CMN 376 available in spring/summer of Year 4 (currently it is only available in Years 2 and 3);
- explore the possibility of linking internships to our capstone courses (CMN 480 in fall and CMN 490 in winter);
- improve the student preparation for CMN 376 by encouraging students planning to apply for the internship to take CMN 304 Career Advancement Communication and by liaising with instructors of CMN 200 The Craft of Professional Writing about the possibility of building an assessment into this writing skills and portfolio course that would serve as a sample portfolio piece that would be relevant to an internship.

To create additional experiential learning opportunities beyond CMN 376, the program will

- explore the option of integrating a second optional internship, possibly through the existing faculty-wide internship course (FCD 810);
- consult with Ryerson co-op administration to explore the possibility of adding a co-operative education option to our program.

Timeline

2021/22

- consult with students, alumni, the Dean’s office and the PAC to find ways increasing the number of experiential opportunities available to our students while also enhancing our existing internship course.

2022/23

- implement new strategies, based on its consultations in the previous year, to enhance the existing internship. The School will also create additional experiential learning opportunities by creating a new course, providing access to other internship courses in The Creative School

and/or by supporting student participation in faculty SRC. As well, the School will look at expanding the purview of the internship and (potentially) redefine it as an “experiential learning” component of the degree which may include research assistantship, or positions with academic supervisors or large, granted Creative School projects.

Responsibility for

- a) leading initiative:** ProCom Chair, Program Director, Internship Coordinator and Internship Liaison
- b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** ProCom Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, ProCom School Council and Faculty Dean

Priority Recommendation #2: Renew the ProCom BA curriculum

Rationale:

Repositioning courses and creating new courses will be necessary to address issues of coverage, redundancies and timing of course content, and the sense of degree progression (particularly with regard to EDI, software skills, theory and writing) and also to integrate the experiential learning option. This recommendation aligns with Self Study recommendation #1 (“Organizing a curriculum that builds each year upon the previous year, with an eye to eliminating curricular overlap.”) and recommendations 3.1 - 3.11 in the PRT report.

Implementation Actions:

The program will

- create new courses to enhance program offerings and revise, rename, or reposition existing courses to improve the sense of progression and development of skills;
- survey courses annually in the spring to identify areas of focus, identify duplicated topics and overlap between courses, and ensure progression from introductory level knowledge and skills to proficiency level throughout the degree;
- review courses that can be paired and label those courses as introductory and advanced treatments of subject matter;
- revise courses or develop new courses to improve program offerings in the areas of writing, digital skills, and EDI.
- develop select, targeted concentrations in: science, health, technical communication; social and political communication; strategic and corporate communication; and design and creative communication.
- create a required introductory theory course (Theorizing Communication I) in Year 1 and rename the existing fourth year theory course (CMN 402) “Theorizing Communication II”;
- in addition to the creation of Theorizing Communication I as a Year 1 required course, Curriculum Committee will review and discuss the possibility of moving several courses on our elective list into the core curriculum to more solidly structure the degree and ensure progression in key areas of professional communication. The proposed changes are as follows:
 - Year 2: change CMN 414 Interpersonal Communication and CMN 306 Risk and Crisis Communication from elective to required
 - Year 3: change CMN 316 Questioning Data and CMN 443 Intercultural Communication from elective to required
 - Year 4: add CMN 405 Oral Advocacy as a required course (currently this course is listed as an elective but has not been developed or offered)
- Curriculum Committee will also discuss the possibility of refocusing CMN490 on the development of capstone projects (currently it is both a research methods course and a capstone course), as recommended by the PRT;

- create a critical path for applied skills with required workshops so that students acquire technical skills in production, design, sound and video;
- develop benchmarks in Adobe CC (mandatory) and writing skills. Once these benchmarks have been established, the School will explore the possibility of creating benchmarks for project management and experiential learning.

Timeline

2021/22

- outline the new streams/clusters in our curriculum and map existing courses in the four years of the program onto these categories;
- develop a call for proposals for new courses which address the priorities identified in our PPR Final Recommendations and Implementation Plan, such as EDI, digital skills, writing, experiential learning, upper-year electives, courses that align with new clusters, and courses based on faculty SRC;
- organize a review of course topics and knowledge/proficiency levels with an emphasis on identifying and reducing overlap between courses in the same cluster or thematic area and increasing the sense of progression from year 1 to 4 in each cluster and across the program as a whole. This review will take place annually from Spring 2022 onwards. The results of the first review will be seen in course delivery beginning Fall 2022;
- support faculty members and the Curriculum Committee as they develop benchmark/certifications for digital skills and writing and integrate them into courses;
- engage faculty who teach courses that will be repositioned (CMN 306, CMN 316, CMN 414, CMN 405 and CMN 443) in discussion about the recommended changes to the position, title and/or description and integrate feedback into course revision proposals, which will be reviewed by our Curriculum Committee by Spring 2022.

2022/23

- share revised curriculum map, including any new stream/clusters and benchmarks that do not require curriculum modifications, with faculty and students in onboarding materials and events in Fall 2022;
- submit to the Academic Standards Committee
 - curriculum modification proposals to reposition courses and change titles and descriptions of CMN 306, CMN 316, CMN 414, CMN 402, CMN 405 and CMN 443;
 - curriculum modification proposal for Theorizing Communication I and any other new course in priority areas;
 - any additional curriculum modifications arising from the annual review process and the integration of clusters/streams, benchmarks;
- launch the benchmarks for writing and digital skills in selected courses (benchmarks for the entire program will be delivered in Fall 2023)

2023/24

- share revised curriculum map, including the finalized streams/clusters and benchmarks, with faculty and students in onboarding materials and events in Fall 2023;
- begin rollout of new curriculum for the first-year cohort;
- launch the benchmarks for writing and digital skills across the entire program.

Responsibility for

- a) **leading initiative:** ProCom Chair, Program Director, Academic Coordinator, Curriculum Committee, Prof. Jane Griffith (writing benchmarks)
- b) **approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** ProCom Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, ProCom School Council, Procom Chair, ProCom Program Director, and Faculty Dean

Priority Recommendation #3: Enhance student experience.**Rationale:**

ProCom students enjoy a strong sense of community and cohorts are generally closely bonded, but existing community-building efforts should continue and new activities developed to strengthen the student community. Strong community bonds create better networks of support for students during and after their degree. Shared community experiences and knowledge help prepare students to encounter the challenges of the program in upper years (such as the demands of the capstone project in CMN480 and CMN490). By adding more required courses, as well as creating concentrated specializations create more cohesion among the students as well as creating a stronger base for future alumni support.

Implementation Actions:

The program will work to

- create more opportunities for seminar and studio style classes (in spite of increasing enrolments) to optimize pedagogy, skills development, and engagement and to help prepare students for graduate studies;
- reduce the number of classes that include ProCom majors and non-major students. ProCom will add more required courses exclusively for ProCom students, and develop advanced electives restricted to ProCom students while continuing to deliver foundational elective courses to non-ProCom cohorts;
- increase research-informed course designs and help faculty leverage research strengths and networks to create opportunities for students;
- develop new events and activities that increase the involvement of the ProCom Course Union (PCCU), faculty members, and the Program Advisory Council (PAC);
- strengthen student-faculty relationships and collaborations though, for example, a redefinition or expansion of the internship to include experiential learning through research assistantships

Timeline

2021/22

- in consultation with the Dean's office, identify opportunities in the program for increasing seminar and studio courses while continuing to deliver required and elective courses to non-ProCom students;
- in consultation with the Dean's office, develop strategies for reducing the number of classes that include ProCom majors and non-ProCom students;
- support preliminary work on research-informed course designs/redesigns through, for example, a call for proposals for new courses which integrate faculty SRC;
- identify opportunities in existing events/activities for increasing the participation of faculty members, the ProCom Course Union (PCCU), the ProCom Alumni Association (PCAA) and the Program Advisory Council (PAC).

- plan and pilot new initiatives to strengthen student-faculty relationships and collaboration in key areas such as course development, SRC, co-curricular events, school governance and EDI initiatives;

2022/23

- submit curriculum modification proposals to the Academic Standards Committee for the following changes:
 - add seminar and studio courses to the program;
 - reduce the number of courses or sections of courses that include ProCom majors and non-projects students (e.g., by changing the prerequisites or the positioning of electives on the Open Elective and Liberal Studies tables);
 - add new courses or revise existing ones to infuse faculty SRC into our curriculum.
- plan and deliver new events/activities which prioritize student interaction and collaboration with faculty members, alumni and/or industry representatives.
- assess initiatives that were piloted in the previous year for strengthening student-faculty relationships and collaboration and, if successful, ensure these activities are embedded in the School's annual events calendar, onboarding processes, governance procedures, etc.

2023/24

- begin rollout of new seminar and studio courses, courses based on faculty-research, as well as electives which were previously open to ProCom and non-ProCom students and will now be restricted to ProCom students;

Responsibility for

a) leading initiative: ProCom Chair, Program Director

b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: ProCom Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, ProCom School Council, Faculty Dean, ProCom staff.

Priority Recommendation #4: Renew program identity and support its maturation

Rationale:

The Self-Study, the PRT report and the response of the Dean's office agree that many of the issues around curriculum and student experience noted above stem from the fact that the ProCom BA is a relatively new program which was developed alongside the School's ongoing service commitments. In the next few years, the School will prioritize the transition of the ProCom BA from a "startup" to a mature program. To this end, the PRT report, the School's response and the Dean's response highlighted the need for continued onboarding, cohort-bonding, alumni engagement and community-building and support for faculty research to enhance reputation, curricular relevance and vibrancy, and the preparation of our students for graduate studies (3.12 - 3.15 in the PRT report; recommendations 12 - 14 in the program's response to the PRT). The formation of communication clusters and other curriculum renewal initiatives discussed above will also contribute to the maturation of the program.

Implementation Actions:

To enhance community-building, the School will

- continue to provide orientation events and resources, year-end showcases of student work, international collaborations, student-focused EDI initiatives, internship networking sessions, awards celebrations, and other events and activities that have fostered a strong sense of community among the students;
- explore strategies of increasing the involvement of faculty members, our Program Advisory Council, alumni and industry supporters in community-building, professional development and mentorship activities for students.

To prepare students for graduate studies, the School will

- continue to allocate funding (pending budget approval) to faculty for course design/redesign and support SRC efforts by way of formal calls and subsequent adjudication, and continue to involve our faculty SRC Representative and the Catalyst in supporting and showcasing faculty SRC;
- explore strategies for integrating faculty SRC into the development of new courses and clusters of courses in our curriculum.

To support faculty research and its integration into our curriculum, the School will

- continue to prepare students for graduate studies in upper-year required courses on communication theory, contemporary issues in professional communication and research methods as well as electives which are available only to upper-year ProCom students and/or which are cross-listed with our master's program;
- create advanced electives courses designed for upper-year ProCom BA students to deepen their understanding of theory, methods and contemporary issues and to prepare them for graduate studies;
- explore curricular integration of experiential learning opportunities in which students participate in faculty SRC and knowledge translation (KT) activities.

Timeline

2021/22

- continue existing initiatives around community-building, preparation for graduate studies and support for faculty SRC and plan events and initiatives that bring together students, alumni, members of the Program Advisory Council and other industry supporters;
- support preliminary discussion and planning of new upper-year electives, courses that are based on faculty SRC, and experiential learning opportunities that involve students in faculty SRC and KT;

2022/23

- Review and approve new course proposals that address the areas above (preparation for graduate studies and involvement of students in faculty SRC and KT).

Responsibility for

a) leading initiative: ProCom Chair, Program Director

b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: ProCom Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, ProCom School Council, Faculty Dean, Undergraduate Internship Coordinator, ProCom Alumni and Internship Liaison.