

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW (PPR)

**Bachelor of Arts
Media Production
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 Media Production Program. This report identifies the strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvements and enhancements, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

This report also includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the final assessment report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy, or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations, who will be responsible for leading those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

SUMMARY OF THE PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW OF MEDIA PRODUCTION

RTA School of Media's Media Production Program is a full-time, four-year Bachelor of Arts program that builds on foundational skills for content creation. Courses consist of hands-on production, screenwriting, media business, media history and theory, audience analysis and the role of media in society. Through a varied curriculum that encompasses audio, visual, written and business topics, students develop best practices and an entrepreneurial spirit in content creation while maintaining an ethical and inclusive approach to their work and lives.

This document comprises The Creative School's Dean's response to the Peer Review Team (PRT) Report and the School's response, in accordance with the directions of the 2022 Periodic Program Review (PPR) Manuals and with Section 8.2 of Senate Policy 126, Periodic Program Review of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs. The site visit by the external PRT for the Periodic Program Review was carried out between March 4 and 5, 2024. The School of Media Production submitted a list of potential Peer Review Team (PRT) candidates to the Office of the Dean, who then selected

Barbara Jones, Professor Emerita, Syracuse University

Dr. Kyle Asquith, Department Head, Associate Professor Communication, Media & Film, University of Windsor

The PRT states that the Media Production program offers many strengths that would make it the envy of post-secondary programs: a lengthy history, impressive alumni roster, and "brand recognition" in Canadian media industries; new energy with new faculty and their accompanying developments (e.g., gaming hub); faculty and staff who have an unwavering commitment to supporting students; passionate and engaged current students; diversity of options spanning the breadth of what media production

means in the twenty-first century; high-impact practices throughout the curriculum; and, in general, being an applied and career-oriented professional Program.

In addition to these strengths, the PRT highlighted several areas for improvement. They noted the importance of better student communication to help alleviate student concerns over course registration, degree planning, and confusion related to internships, career resources and Mentorship. The program's capstone provides an excellent learning opportunity, but requires some reframing to alleviate disappointment, stress, and conflict as a result of unrealistic expectations from students.

The PRT Report offered six critical recommendations, and the School has responded thoughtfully to each to generate their Implementation Plan. The Dean's Office is in full support of the School's responses to the PRT recommendations.

The School of Media Production has submitted its response to the PRT report to the Dean of The Creative School, to which the Dean responded on September 12, 2024.

The Academic Standards Committee completed its assessment of the School of Media Production on February 13, 2025. The Committee indicated that a thorough, analytical and self-critical program review was conducted. The program provided a detailed plan for future growth and support for development.

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

The mandated One-Year Follow-up Report be submitted by June 30, 2026 to include:

- 1. An update on the Implementation Plan**
- 2. A report on how EDI is being implemented into curriculum development plans**
- 3. A progress report on the program's current periodic program review cycle**
- 4. The program's leadership plan for the next 4 years.**

Presented to Senate for Approval: March 25, 2025

Start date of next Periodic Program Review: 2029/30

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

RECOMMENDATION ONE:

In the context of larger and ongoing curriculum work, consider the advantages (e.g., structure and pathways for students) and disadvantages (e.g., fragmentation, registration/scheduling processes) of the scaffolding and concentration structure.

PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:

The faculty discussed this point and everyone recognizes that the concentrations were originally intended as a "marketing" tool for students to demonstrate to potential employers that they had completed a body of study in a particular area. The concentrations were also intended to provide students with information of which courses could fall within an area. They were not meant to become an

academic minor. The faculty agree that the concentrations are longer necessary and could be removed from the RTA's program curriculum.

The PPR self-study already called for the removal of two of the concentrations and this action has been approved by the School Council and is proceeding towards approvals at the FCC, Academic Standards and ultimately Senate levels.

Action:

a) Formal vote at the Media Production faculty level to remove the remaining Concentrations from the curriculum, then the RTA Curriculum Committee level, FCC (along with discussion with the Dean), Standards and Senate.

b) Instead of concentrations simply add for students "If you are interested in..." pages on the Media Production for the pillars of the Media Production program: screenwriting, media business, physical production with subsets for video games, radio/audio, and television/visual and media studies/theory. Build connections and clusters with Image Arts' existing courses to enrich RTA's media studies pillar.

DEAN'S RESPONSE:

The program self-study and PRT report both emphasize the need to focus on multifaceted curricular renewal. The Dean's office supports the School's initiatives to evaluate their concentration structure, assess course materials, modes of delivery and learning outcomes with emphasis on first year courses as well as those in the senior years (RTA 503 – Project Development and RTA 701 – Thesis production Project) in order to submit a major curriculum modification in the spring 2025.

The Dean's office also endorses improvements in communication plans, especially in the areas of course selection, promotion of School events and updating the RTA website to reach potential applicants to the program.

RECOMMENDATION TWO:

Rebuild thesis/practicum courses to improve structure, support, and consistency for students, refocusing them as capstone learning experiences.

PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:

The PPR reviewers heard a lot of negative comments from recent graduates about Practicum. However, major improvements have already been implemented since Winter 2023 in Project Development to improve this process. A Practicum Fair was created in the Fall of 2023 for project groups to recruit production support from first, second and third year students (Creative Practice Hours). Instructors for both Project development and Practicum believe that groups heading into Fall 2024 Practicum are already in a stronger position to succeed.

Action: More revision to RTA 701 and the RTA 503/RTA701 cycle will continue as led by the Program Director.

DEAN'S RESPONSE:

The Dean's office supports the School's initiatives to evaluate their concentration structure, assess course materials, modes of delivery and learning outcomes with emphasis on first year courses as well as those in the senior years (RTA 503 – Project Development and RTA 701 – Thesis production Project) in order to submit a major curriculum modification in the spring 2025.

RECOMMENDATION THREE:

Advocate with higher levels of administration for a predictable annual budget line for software, equipment purchases, and equipment repair.

PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:

There is an open dialogue between the Technical Committee, Staff Lead and OTI. We are confident that the Media Production Program is being supported in an equitable manner.

Action: On going - Program Director is on the Technical Committee and will work with the Operations Lead (Lesley Salvadori) to ensure a realistic budget can be expected and maintained annually.

DEAN'S RESPONSE:

There is no doubt that predictable budgets are essential to enhance and modernize studio spaces integral to the media production program. The Dean's office is currently implementing curriculum, infrastructure, and budgets holistically as a result of the 360 Review of all programs within The Creative School. Funding for the 2024/25 academic year includes a commitment to upgrade existing student creation spaces as well as development of a new virtual studio production space to support learning and teaching for students.

Additionally, the Dean has approved the recent hiring of a faculty member cross-appointed to both RTA Media and Image Arts and the search for an external Chair in the program is well underway.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR:

Focus strategically on Indigenization, and developing leadership in Indigenous media production, as a distinct and standalone feature of advancing EDI.

PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:

Agreed.

Action: It has been suggested that an "expert" be brought in to help develop a course of action. Budgetary resources for this effort have been set aside by the current Chair subject to Dean's office approval and support of course. It is key that if an outside expert is brought in they should be someone experienced in both indigenous teaching and curricular development AND with actual professional experience in the commercial media industry or public broadcasting on the lines of a Dr. Michael Doxtater. It would be counterproductive to bring in someone without that depth of understanding.

DEAN'S RESPONSE:

The Dean endorses continued work by the School to enhance EDIA in the curriculum, develop leadership in Indigenous media production and integrate SRC into the classroom.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE:

Measurably improve alumni engagement.

PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:

Alumni surveys indicated that alumni would like to be more involved in the program and engaged with students. While the current curriculum provides many opportunities for alumni as guest speakers, they

are looking for other social ways to participate. The faculty supports this initiative but also recognizes that while the current Interim Chair (James Nadler) is on sabbatical there is no immediate faculty lead to champion this cause.

Action: Work more closely with TMU Alumni offices to assemble targeted email lists. Liaise with the Alumni office to provide social opportunities (e.g. Coffee Talks, Career sessions with students and networking events for recent graduates and more senior alumni. Reinstitute the RTA Upfront, the annual event which connected graduating students with RTA alumni and other members of the industry. Reach out to a few recent graduates to encourage them to form an RTA alumni group with a social media presence and have two of those alumni leaders on the PAC.

DEAN'S RESPONSE:

The Dean's office is encouraged that the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) has been re-established and that alumni involvement will be enhanced. The diversity of members on the PAC, as well as alumni representing traditional and emerging sectors in the media production industry (i.e., radio and television as well as podcasting and video games) will elevate the program's identity and culture. The lunch and learn series provides an excellent venue to promote faculty SRC as well as share insights from the PAC and alumni to highlight industry trends, and evolving developments in AI that may challenge media production as it currently exists.

RECOMMENDATION SIX:

Elevate program rigour through consistent use of D2L, improved library resource integration, and the implementation of a monitoring mechanism for grade inflation.

PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:

Agreed

Action: Form a faculty working group that would review course syllabi to ensure that the above is being implemented.

DEAN'S RESPONSE:

The Dean's office endorses the formation of a faculty working group, under the direction of the program director, to review course syllabi to ensure effective use of D2L, library resources, as well as newly implemented requirements on textbook pricing and to assess final grades to monitor grade inflation.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: SCHOOL OF MEDIA PRODUCTION

Priority Recommendation #1: Review existing Media Production curriculum and scaffolding in order to have a better flow of learning objectives and outcomes. (Self study Recommendation 1; PRT Recommendation 1; PRT Recommendation 2)

Rationale: *With emerging technologies and workflows within industry, some courses need revision and replacement.*

Implementation Actions: Many of the courses have already been revised and further conversations with faculty are on going.

Timeline: Immediately

By the end of the 2025/26 school year, the Core Curriculum will have been evaluated and revised as needed. Faculty have recommended to make minor changes to First Year Mandatory courses, MOVE RTA 210 Media History to the Core Elective Table and REPLACE with a new course Media Literacy and Information (F2026) In Second year, RTA 316 Concepts of Narrative and RTA 310 Media Aesthetics and Culture will be replaced with the Creative School Year 1 and Year 2 courses as mandatory courses.

Responsibility for:

a) leading initiative: Chair and Program Director (Karen Sebesta)

b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:

Priority Recommendation #2: Review the first year core curriculum and delivery mode to ensure foundational production skills are protected. (Self study recommendation 2)

Rationale: *The first year Media Production experience continues to be foundational to the rest of the program learning outcomes. With the constantly changing media landscape, it is important to review the course materials, modes of delivery and learning outcomes to ensure connection to present and future production needs.*

Implementation Actions: The faculty is on track to approve a revised first year curriculum that would be presented to the Curriculum Committee in the Fall of 2024.

Timeline: Immediately

By the end of the 2025/26 school year, the First Year Curriculum will have minor changes to several of the mandatory courses to create more synergies between course assignments and will MOVE RTA 210 Media History to a Core Elective table and REPLACE with a new course RTA XXX Media Literacy and Information that is being developed for F2026

Responsibility for:

a) leading initiative: Chair and Program Director (Karen Sebesta)

b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:

Priority Recommendation #3: Develop a plan for equipment upgrades and integration of new technologies to ensure the current curriculum can be maintained. (Self study recommendation 3; PRT Recommendation 3)

Rationale: *Since this is a professional practice based program, it is important to maintain and expand equipment needs to support experiential learning within the program.*

Implementation Actions: The Technical Committee (Staff and Faculty) has been functioning for the past 2 years and continues to work with OTI on improvements to existing production spaces. Already in place for F2024, there will be upgrades to existing student content creation spaces, Met-TV studio and facilities and the integration of a new virtual studio production space - Studio A. In addition, the audio production spaces now have a new immersive space and there will be more upgrades to audio facilities in the next year.

The program has seen creation of a New Immersive Audio Studio and Creation Space, Arthur Smith Virtual Production Studio (formally Studio A) and 5 Content Creator Suites featuring OBS streaming technologies.

Timeline: Immediately

Responsibility for:

a) leading initiative: Lesley Salvadori, Program Director (Karen Sebesta) b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:

Priority Recommendation #4: Media Production Faculty hiring and succession planning (Self study recommendation 4)

Rationale: *In order to maintain the strength of the Media Production program, more full time, tenured faculty are required to support the administration (service) and curriculum leadership of the program.*

Implementation Actions: The RTA Departmental Hiring Committee (DHC) is currently in the process of making its recommendation to the Dean on the hire of a cross-appointed tenure track assistant professor for Media Production and IMA in Virtual Production. The Virtual Production assistant professor would provide their service to RTA.

The Image Arts Departmental Hiring committee is also making its recommendation to the Dean for a cross appointed tenure track assistant professor who will teach in Media Production and IMA with a focus on single camera storytelling.

Even so, we agree with the external reviewers that more hires are needed in RTA's production, business and screenwriting streams, preferably with solid industry experience, diverse lived experiences and a strong desire to teach undergraduates. Media Production will continue to lobby the Creative School and the University to provide proper resources, i.e. full time faculty positions.

Media Production faculty biographies posted on the TMU website need to be reviewed. Where a RTA Media Production professor has been seconded within TMU or is on leave that their profiles should accurately reflect those facts to promote greater understanding of the extent that RTA Media Production's dedicated faculty is available for teaching and service.

F2024 saw the hiring of a tenure-track faculty member with skills in film-making (MP/IMA) and a recommendation for a tenure-track Virtual Production hire (MP/IMA), In addition, several new sessional instructors (CUPE) were hired who bring industry knowledge in screen-writing and production. Second tenure track full-time faculty for VP production has been hired and will begin in July 2025.

Timeline: Ongoing and over the next four years.

Responsibility for:

a) leading initiative: Chair and Chair of the DHC.

b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: Chair and Chair of the DHC to monitor. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the Dean and the University to approve any hiring recommendations and find the resources for new faculty hires.

Priority Recommendation #5: Continue to advance EDIA within the curriculum and faculty. (Self study recommendation 5; PRT Recommendation 4)

Rationale: *There is still room to review current syllabi and courses overall within the program.*

Implementation Actions: This has been discussed among Media Production's faculty and it has been suggested that Media Production work with CELT or an expert/consulting to help review the courses and curriculum to provide guidance and effective implementation. In addition, the department will include University commitments (OVPCI) of visible presence for equity, diversity and inclusion and Indigenous values and experiences, plus media production specific issues (i.e. accessibility) as integral components of teaching and research.

Course management has improved with the retirement of some courses, revision of others and clearer documentation for students to see curriculum pathways through the four main pillars of media production - audio, video, writing and business.

Timeline: Fall 2024 to Winter 2025 and then on an ongoing basis.

Responsibility for:

a) leading initiative: Chair and Program Director.

b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: Chair and Program Director.

Priority Recommendation #6: Develop an overall communication plan for students. (Self study recommendation 6)

Rationale: *There is still confusion amongst some students on course management and selection in addition to learning outcomes for some courses (i.e. Practicum)*

Implementation Actions: More conversations and ideation with the MP Events/Communication and Student Advisors and student representatives to School Council about timely and effective communication to students. Continued review of the RTA website. With input from student advisors, the Program Director will develop a "one page" document (cheat sheet) that outlines the program's pathways for course selection that students could keep throughout their academic career. MP Events/Communication to draft prototype for review and implementation.

RTA Handbook and website were updated, more streamlined email process and communication

between Program Director and students. Still need to work on a system for course information and scaffolding to help students plan pathways.

Course management has improved with the retirement of some courses, revision of others and clearer documentation for students to see curriculum pathways through the four main pillars of media production - audio, video, writing and business.

Timeline: Summer 2024: MP Events/Communication to draft the “cheat sheet” for approval of Chair and implementation in time for August enrollment. Annual reviews of the RTA website each September and June.

Responsibility for:

a) leading initiative: Chair, Program Director, Events/Communication Officer, Manager, Operations & Administration (Shawn Haswell), Student Advisors (Angela Cheng and Donna Morrison)

b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: Chair and Manager, Operations & Administration. Note: Dean’s office and Admissions recruitment needs to be encouraged to discuss with RTA the communication strategies for students, potential applicants and the community well in advance which is not currently the case.

Priority Recommendation #7: Reestablish the Program Advisory Committee and revitalize the relationship to industry

Rationale: *There has not been an active PAC in 4 years.*

Implementation Actions: The new PAD has already been curated and a meeting is scheduled for May 21st, 2024 This new group consists of a diverse group of people from the media industry, race, culture and level of leadership.

First meeting was a success. Second meeting planned for W2025.

Timeline: Immediately

Responsibility for:

a) leading initiative: Chair and Program Director (Karen Sebesta)

b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:

Priority Recommendation #8: Encourage the faculty to bring their SRC into the classroom

Rationale: Continued conversations amongst faculty to ensure that they are exposing students to their SRC and also presenting the pursuit of critical study as a pathway through their education.

Implementation Actions: Continued Lunch + Learns and discussions on curricular development.
Departmental Chair Search continues through Winter 2025.
Faculty continue to share and discuss SRC information at monthly faculty meetings.

Timeline: Ongoing starting January 2025. Chair has not been hired as of Jan 2025.

Responsibility for:

a) leading initiative: Chair (it is expected that a new Chair will be hired by January 2025) and a tenure-track faculty member TBD.

b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: Chair and each member of the Media Production faculty.