REPORT OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Report #W2014–3; April 2014

In this report the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) brings to Senate its evaluation and recommendation on the following item:

- Periodic Program Review of the Bachelor of Arts in Arts and Contemporary Studies

A. PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW – ARTS AND CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

1. BASIC INFORMATION AND HISTORY
Ryerson University's Arts and Contemporary Studies program (ACS) is an interdisciplinary four-year undergraduate program leading to a Bachelor of Arts in Arts and Contemporary Studies. A student may choose to complete one of eight options, which appear on their transcripts upon graduation. The options are:

Interdisciplinary option:

- Culture Studies
- Diversity and Equity
- Global Studies
- Invention and Inquiry

Discipline-based option:

- English
- French
- History
- Philosophy

The core of the program comprises a range of required interdisciplinary courses that allow students to focus on "Ideas that Shaped the World" from ancient times to the present day. In these courses, students also develop key skills and competencies, including the ability to read precisely and critically, communicate effectively, develop strategies for life-long learning, mediate conflict, work in teams and conduct research and analysis.

The ACS degree prepares graduates to think, work and actively participate in the changing social, political and cultural environments of the 21st century. It combines the intellectual agility and other benefits of a liberal arts education with hands-on, applied skills and competencies. The program

The Faculty of Arts launched ACS in September 2003. It is the largest – by enrollment – program in the Faculty of Arts. ACS was a designed through a collaborative process involving all departments in Arts, through the leadership of the Arts dean. In keeping with Ryerson's special mandate, discussions centred on a vision of creating a program that would strike a balance between theoretical/historical and practical/applied education – a symmetry that remains intrinsic to ACS's nature. In addition, ACS was created to fill an educational gap at Ryerson: a bachelor's level liberal arts degree that reflected the university's expanding definition of "applied education."

At the outset of planning, ACS was envisioned as involving both the humanities and social sciences departments within the Faculty of Arts. As the social science departments launched their own discipline-based programs, their involvement in ACS declined. Thus, at launch and to the present day, the Arts departments centrally involved in ACS curriculum development and teaching are English, History, Languages, Literatures and Cultures (formerly French and Spanish), Philosophy, and Sociology.

Until 2005, ACS included only the four *interdisciplinary* options: Culture and Entertainment (changed to Culture Studies in 2005), Diversity and Equity, Global Studies, and Science and Technology (changed to Inquiry and Invention in 2007). Four new *disciplinary* options were added in the 2005-2006 academic year: English, French, History and Philosophy. As of 2005 options were no longer mandatory and over half of the current ACS student body are now "generalists" (i.e., non-option students).

2. SOCIETAL NEED
An article in *The Globe and Mail* (13 October 2012) explored a growing awareness that "a well-rounded, liberal education" is essential for producing graduates who possess not only specialized

technical knowledge – for example, in business, law or medicine – but who are also adept at communication, team-work and critical thinking. In addition to the individual benefits that arise from interdisciplinary education rooted in the humanities and social sciences, there are significant public economic consequences. The development of interdisciplinary "core curriculum" programs capable of producing such graduates is much further advanced in foreign universities – in particular, in the United States and Asia – than here in Canada. In June 2013, *Le Devoir,* published "Disparition du programme Arts et lettres - La liquidation de l'héritage culturel" urging universities to foster their programs in the Humanities and Liberal Arts (more specifically in Literature) as they provide us with cultural knowledge to make engaged and learned decisions in the future.

The ACS program uniquely enables students to study and analyze the world in which they live through multiple, intersecting disciplinary lenses. Training in the humanities and social sciences provides ACS students with in-depth understanding of social groups, historical events and a broad range of ideas that have shaped Western and global cultures. Looking beyond graduation, students' development of cultural, historical and social awareness, as well as advanced critical-thinking and communication skills, empowers them to make informed judgements about current issues facing contemporary society as well as, on the employment front, to contribute fully and creatively to organizational and business success.

3. STUDENT DEMAND
ACS is a high-demand program at Ryerson. On average, it receives 1800 applications per annum and admits 175 new students (see Table 1 for applicants-to-registrants ratio). Over the last 5 years, the mean entrance-grade average for ACS was higher than the Faculty of Arts and Ryerson average (Table 2).

Table 1. Progress Indicator 1a: Applications to Registrants Ratio

Program	Year							
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Ryerson	11.0	10.1	8.9	10.2	10.4	10.2	10.0	9.2
Arts	10.5	9.9	12.2	19.4	19.3	17.8	19.2	17.0
Arts & Contemporary Studies	13.1	11.2	6.4	10.7	11.0	9.7	11.5	10.7

Table 2. Progress Indicator 1b: Mean Entering Average

Program	Year							
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Ryerson	80.6	79.8	78.8	79.8	80.2	80.6	81.5	81.4
Arts	78.7	79.3	76.2	79.3	79.8	79.8	81.2	81.1
Arts & Contemporary Studies	79.6	79.8	75.2	80.8	81.7	81.7	82.8	82.4

When asked to identify why they chose to enroll in ACS, students give the following top-four reasons:
- To develop their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills
- To become more creative
- To develop their communication, leadership and research skills
- To learn about Canadian and global histories, cultures and societies

4. PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of the program, graduates will be capable of the following:
1. Describe, from a plurality of humanities disciplines and perspectives, the influential ideas that have formed the social, historical and cultural context of the contemporary world.
2. Demonstrate an ability to select, review, evaluate and interpret information relevant to a multidisciplinary context. Specifically, graduates will be able to

a. assess, analyze and think critically about influential ideas in their social, historical and cultural context;
b. formulate incisive, challenging questions;
c. identify emerging social and cultural trends and assess their impact;
d. read critically and conduct textual analysis on sources and texts from a variety of media; and
e. review, present and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative research.

3. Demonstrate excellent written and oral communication skills, including
   a. effective academic writing;
   b. logical and persuasive argumentation; and
   c. the ability to produce scholarly and creative forms, styles and media tailored to different audiences.

4. Demonstrate excellent interpersonal communication skills informed by intercultural and inclusive perspectives (through activities such as group work, presentations and community-engaged projects).

5. Demonstrate active intellectual engagement and independent, original thought through
   a. the ability to synthesize disparate kinds of information and ideas from across disciplines;
   b. problem-solving skills;
   c. collaborative skills;
   d. thorough understanding of the limits of their own knowledge and abilities.

6. Behave consistently with academic integrity and social responsibility, and a respect for intellectual freedom.

7. For students pursuing options, demonstrate depth of integrated interdisciplinary knowledge and the ability to apply it in multiple contexts.

As demonstrated by curriculum mapping, ACS 300 (Ideas that Shape the World III) and ACS 400 (Ideas that Shape the World IV) reinforce all of the program learning outcomes. SSH 301 (Research Design and Qualitative Methods) and ACS 401 (Introduction to Research and Statistics meet the introductory requirements of many of the program learning outcomes because they are specifically designed to provide students with methods, research tools, and the fundamentals of statistics. ACS 302 (Introduction to Culture Studies) introduces students to interdisciplinary studies (learning outcome 1) as well as how to formulate incisive challenging questions and the identification of emerging social trends (learning outcome 2.b and c.) It continues to reinforce concepts such as how to assess, think critically and analytically in terms of influential ideas in their social, historical, and cultural context (learning outcome 2.a) as well as reinforcing their written and oral skills (learning outcome 3.)

ACS 500 (Ideas that Shape the World V) reinforces many of the program learning outcomes. It also provides the opportunity for students to proficiently put into practice their ability to select, review, evaluate, and interpret information, particularly in reading critically and in textual analysis of various media (learning outcome 2.d) and to perform communication skills tailored to different audiences (learning outcome 3.c)

In fourth year the mapping of the capstone course to program learning outcomes clearly highlights the proficient level at which students put into action the knowledge and skills acquired as all seven program learning outcomes have been identified at the proficiency level in terms of students' learning.

5. PROGRAM CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER ACADEMIC PLANS

Ryerson University's *Shaping Our Future: Academic Plan for 2008-2013* underlines the importance of "educational pathways that give [students] breadth as well as depth, and that help to prepare them for the evolution of their own career changes and professional opportunities". ACS's core interdisciplinary curriculum, combined with the various options and minors, ensures that students graduate with a wide array of professional choices and opportunities. The plan also states, "students today need educational opportunities that emphasize strong intellectual foundations and relevant professional skills, along with critical thinking, research skills, and practice at pursuing new ideas, solving problems, and grasping the

interconnectedness of people, ideas, things, and places in a globalized century". Supported by effective and diverse program offerings and demonstrated by the program learning outcomes (as well as their significant cross-referencing to UDLES), ACS holds true to Ryerson's mandate and principles.

ACS's operations and future plans accord with the Faculty of Arts' academic plan for 2008-2013, which states the following about undergraduate and graduate programming:

> Our past program development with its common platform delivery has set the standard for programs that "…*offer opportunities to students to develop a broad foundation of knowledge and skills" and "… remain innovative and responsive to students…"* providing *"…choice and transferability…"* that exceeds the demands of Ryerson's current plan.[1]

It is important here to point out that, although the Faculty of Arts has established new BA programs in comparable disciplines, ACS application and admission numbers remain high, as does the quality of those applicants and admitted students.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM CURRICULUM AND STRUCTURE

ACS is a four-year, 40-credit undergraduate program offering students a broad, interdisciplinary education in the humanities and social sciences. During the first two years of the program, students take a set of core courses (5) in which they study the "great ideas" that have shaped the world from ancient times to the present. Other core courses (5) during those first two years focus on skills development: critical reading and thinking; effective communication (oral and written); research project design, implementation and evaluation; conflict mediation; and team work. Courses offered during the first year of study (semesters one and two) satisfy all of the seven identified program learning outcomes at the introductory level.

First Year ARTS AND CONTEMPORARY STUDIES			Semester
Required	ACS 100	Ideas that Shape the World	1
Required	ACS 103	Introduction to the Humanities	
Required	SSH 105	Critical Thinking I	
Required		Choose one of ACS 106 *. FRE or SPN	
Table I		Professional Elective	
Required	SSH 205	Academic Writing and Research	2
Required	ACS 200	Ideas that Shape the World II	
Table I or II	Open Elective	(or ACS 201 is required here If you started in ACS before Fall 2008)	
Table I		Professional Elective	
Table II		Professionally-Related Elective	
Second Year ARTS AND CONTEMPORARY STUDIES			
Required	ACS 300	Ideas that Shape the World III	3
Required	SSH 301	Research Design & Qualitative Methods	
Table A		Lower Level Liberal Studies	
Table I		Professional Elective	

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[1] Office of the Provost and Vice President, Academic. *Academic Planning at the Faculty and Academic Division Level: The Preliminary Faculty/ Academic Division Plan*. Toronto: Ryerson University, 2008. Appendix B2, Strategies 1-4.

Table I or II		Open Elective	
Required	ACS 400	Ideas that Shape the World IV	4
Required	ACS 401	Introduction to Research and Statistics	
Table A		Lower Level Liberal Studies	
Table I		Professional Elective	
Table II		Professionally-Related Elective	
Third Year ARTS AND CONTEMPORARY STUDIES			
Required	ACS 500	Ideas that Shape the World V	5
Table A		Lower Level Liberal Studies	
Table I		Professional Elective	
Table II		Professionally-Related Elective	
Table I or II		Open Elective	
Table B		Upper Level Liberal Studies	6
Table I		Professional Elective	
Table II		Professionally-Related Elective	
Table II		Professionally-Related Elective	
Table I or II		Open Elective	
Fourth Year ARTS AND CONTEMPORARY STUDIES			
Table B		Upper Level Liberal Studies	7
Table I		Professional Elective	
Table I		Professional Elective	
Table I		Professional Elective	
Table II		Professionally-Related Elective	
Table B		Upper Level Liberal Studies	8
Table I		Professional Elective	
Table I		Professional Elective	
Table I		Professional Elective	
Table II		Professionally-Related Elective	

The *discipline-based* options allow students to combine their interdisciplinary studies with a focus on one of the following four humanities disciplines:

English: Students focus on how to read critically (i.e., analyze, historicize and politicize) a wide range of literary and cultural texts. They examine how elements such as genre, form, method, historical period, geography and nation inform narrative media, including works of literature, film, television, digital culture and the visual arts. Through an engagement with past and present narratives, students develop a critical understanding of contemporary cultural production.

French: Students develop a deep understanding of the culturally diverse populations of the Francophone world in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. At the same time, they acquire critical insights into

the important role that French and Francophone cultures play both at a national level in Canada and in the broader international context.

History: Students study the past as a way to understand the present, and they also develop a range of skills applicable to many jobs (e.g., those that require an understanding of research techniques, analysis and logic). Students learn to collect data, how to analyze it and how to construct a logical argument from the evidence.

Philosophy: Students gain a broad understanding of the main historical trends and contemporary developments within the discipline of philosophy. This option encourages students to read and think about philosophical issues and problems in an active and critical manner, and it gives them an understanding of, and appreciation for, the contributions made by some of the greatest thinkers of the past and present.

The *interdisciplinary* options allow students to combine their interdisciplinary studies with a special focus on one of the following four themes:

Culture Studies: Students examine the forms of entertainment that have become a measure of who we are and who we dream of becoming. They explore cultural identity through both high culture and popular entertainment.

Diversity and Equity: Students focus on our diverse and politically charged social space. They examine the encounters of language, perspective and value that shape contemporary politics, culture and society.

Global Studies: Students encounter the often volatile mix of cultural passions, environmental concerns and corporate interests that drive contemporary society and culture at a time when global transformations are transcending political boundaries.

Inquiry and Intervention: Students learn about the institutions and ideas that generate – and depend on – scientific discovery and technological innovation. The focus is on the ways science and technology influence our lives, individually and as a society, in the 21st century.

Students pursuing the *generalist* option must complete 23-27 credits from Table I, of which 12 credits are compulsory for the completion of the ACS degree (i.e., ACS 100, ACS 200, ACS 300, ACS 400, ACS 500, ACS 800/900, 103, 106/LLC, 401, SSH 105, SSH 205, SSH 301). Generalist students must also complete 7-11 credits from Table II and 6 Liberal Studies credits. Because this course selection process allows students to complete multiple "teachables" (6 core credits in a discipline), generalist students are well suited to attend teachers college after graduation.

Every ACS student must complete a capstone course in order to graduate. Most students complete their capstone courses in their third or fourth years. These courses enable students to put into practice the theoretical and applied knowledge they have gained over the course of their studies.

7. MODE OF DELIVERY

ACS courses are offered through full-time on-campus learning, as well as through evening classes through The Chang School (held on campus and through distance education). Courses are taught in the classroom or in labs. Some courses with experiential learning components (e.g., ACS 103, ACS 303, ACS 402) along with ACS 800, ACS 900, and ACS 950 take the students out into the community or involve them in various *practicum* initiatives such as forums and conferences. Through a varied use of lectures, tutorials, lab work, experiential learning opportunities and graduate school-like seminars, along with the capstone course forum on corporate social responsibility (full day conference event with debate, guest speakers, workshops, etc.) the ACS graduate is effectively prepared for graduate school, professional engagement and professional programs. Components of their learning, such as community engagement and academic research, also provide the ACS graduate with leadership skills acquired through hands-on learning.

8. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The program's interdisciplinarity ensures that issues and notions of diversity and inclusion are highlighted through the principles informing the program learning outcomes, the teaching methods, the issues discussed in class and in program-related activities. Many ACS courses provide students with the

framework and experiential learning opportunities to apply the issues discussed in class to the community.

The study of Canadian and global histories, cultures and intellectual traditions gives students wide-ranging knowledge on which they can draw in order to become stewards for change in their communities. The Ideas courses primarily introduce the "great thought" movements of the humanities and social sciences, including a critical examination of counter-movements, less popular stances and innovative concepts designed to ensure that students understand the eclectic and fragmented world in which they live.

ACS most directly and forcefully addresses diversity and inclusion through the Diversity and Equity option. This option focuses on diverse and politically-charged social issues, allowing students to encounter diverse languages, perspectives and values that shape contemporary politics, culture and society.

At the capstone-course level, two offerings particularly stand out in terms of diversity and inclusion:
- ACS 800 Corporate Responsibility: This course explores the growing trend among Canadian corporations to play a more active role in addressing community issues.
- ACS 950: Directed Research: One popular manifestation of this course involves students working with PEN Canada to conduct research for various incarcerated, disappeared or exiled writers aimed at helping to liberate them and fight against censorship.

9. CURRICULUM AND STRUCTURE – UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS (UDLES)
Mapping of ACS's curriculum and structure clearly shows that the program conforms to – indeed exceeds – Ryerson's Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UDLEs). Given the program's fundamentally interdisciplinary nature, this is particularly the case with regard to the following goals: 1e, 1f; 2b; 3a) i, ii; 4b) i, ii; 5; and 6a (these UDLEs address breadth and depth of knowledge outside the core "discipline").

At the structural level, ACS unfolds the UDLEs in a sequence that is strongly conducive to students' knowledge acquisition and skills development. Students start their formal training in the humanities and social sciences with courses introducing them to critical analysis, academic reading and writing, the humanities, and ideas that shape the world. During their second and third years, students continue to acquire and reinforce these skills as well as take courses in their option (if they have chosen one). The capstone course, as well as the upper-level Liberal Studies courses suggested as part of the third- and fourth-year curriculum, allow students to continue reinforcing their knowledge and applying theories and methodologies, ultimately being in a position to apply their learning at the mastery level.

The ACS generalist capstone courses (ACS 800, ACS 900, ACS 950) allow students to test their competencies at the level of mastery in interdisciplinary studies, either in an applied fashion (ACS 800), in an academically rigorous seminar (ACS 900) or in a directed reading course (ACS 950).

10. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
The home departments make all discipline-based option curricular changes in consultation with the ACS program director (e.g., the Department of History recommends changes to the History Option). For the interdisciplinary options, curricular changes are raised and deliberated during Program Council meetings. In September 2012, a new Curriculum Committee for ACS was struck to address pressing issues around curricular decisions for both the discipline-based and interdisciplinary options. Recent recommendations from the Curriculum Committee are:
- For discipline-based options, ensure that students understand what courses are being offered under what group in order to assess and master their own learning pathway.
- For interdisciplinary options, ensure that the courses in each option suit the desired outcomes, and that the course offerings on the Table I are conducive to an interdisciplinary learning experience

while enabling a student to focus on a particular discipline-based option or an interdisciplinary option.

- Create an ACS option. This will ensure rigour and structure for students who wish to remain generalists. By pursing and completing the new ACS option, generalists will thereby be graduated with a truly interdisciplinary degree that follows a progressive hierarchy from introduction through proficiency.
- Keep the program current and competitive in light of other similar competitor programs by developing new interdisciplinary options and/or managing the current ones.
- Create more experiential learning opportunities.

11. ENROLMENT IN PROGRAM COURSES
Over the last three years (indeed, since its inception), ACS enrolment data have remained essentially consistent (give or take 30-45 students). This consistency has been deliberate on the part of program directors in order to maintain ACS's high levels of instructional quality and student experience.

- Up to 85% of the students after their first year of study have clear academic standing
- At the outset of the program, ACS 100-ACS 900 courses were "program courses," and enrolment data for them until 2009-2010 reflect the numbers of students (165-200) admitted to ACS each year. When ACS 100 and ACS 200 entered the Faculty of Arts' common platform in 2011, their enrolment rose to 265-300 students.

12. RELATIONSHIP TO CURRENT DISCIPLINE AND PROFESSION
A comparison of the ACS curriculum and structure to similar offerings at other universities demonstrates that the program is at the leading edge of interdisciplinary humanities- and social sciences-based undergraduate education. The program's intense interdisciplinary nature is the factor that most clearly demonstrates ACS is keeping current with disciplinary evolution. As well, by strongly supporting students' engagement with historical and emergent social and cultural issues, ACS is meeting students' need for transferable knowledge and skills that will be useful after degree completion – whether they enter the workforce or pursue graduate-level study. Similar offerings at other universities include:

- Brock University's General Studies BA in Humanities - the program permits students to explore the cultural, intellectual, and artistic ideas of the world from ancient times to the present.
- Wilfred Laurier's Contemporary Studies - the program is designed to introduce students to a range of ongoing and emerging global issues such as poverty, the global financial crisis, climate change, colonization of Indigenous community, and gender and racial inequality.
- The Humanities program at York University - the program introduces students to the major questions of life as they study issues of social, moral and aesthetic value drawing from literature, History, Philosophy, Religion, Fine Arts and popular culture courses.
- The Bachelor of Humanities at Carlton University - the program is promoted as Canada's premier liberal arts degree in the study of the world's great books.
- The major in Anthropology at Guelph University - a new program designed to specialize in social and cultural anthropology. The program will allow students to come to understand different cultures within contemporary global structures and to appreciate the dynamics of social and cultural change.
- The Anthropology Department at Trent University - strives to provide students with a high quality education through which they can explore human life and its transformations from a perspective that is global, historical, and cross-cultural. Students have the opportunity to study linguistic, archaeological, biological, and cultural anthropology, as well as other disciplines which have shaped anthropology, or in which anthropological perspectives are valued.

13. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
ACS students are made aware of the role of practising professionals in society and their ethical responsibilities through reports, presentations, group work, guest lectures, and other pedagogical strategies. In addition, students are exposed to the topics of professional and academic integrity and social responsibility beginning in their mandatory first-year courses. During their capstone courses, students are evaluated on the accumulation of competencies and professional qualities through similar forums, class discussion, seminars and more detailed research projects and group assignments.

14. TEACHING METHODS & INNOVATIVE OR CREATIVE CONTENT OR DELIVERY

In their first three years, ACS students are introduced to their studies through lectures, film and video, discussion and debates and breakout groups. ACS-coded courses are team-taught, which gives students access to professors from different disciplines. In second and third year, independent research and critical reflections are introduced, as are lab work (requiring teams) and in-class demonstrations. ACS Intro to Interdisciplinary Option courses also include volunteering and case studies, as well as other aspects of service learning, such as volunteering and community building. In students' final year of study, courses are delivered in seminar format. While these include traditional pedagogical approaches, they also include case studies, field experience and small-group work.

ACS prides itself on offering the graduating class the opportunity to truly put to work the skills they acquired throughout the program. ACS 800 is open to all students registered either in one of the Interdisciplinary Options or who have opted to remain a "Generalist" Student. This course provides students with the opportunity to tackle one of contemporary society's pressing issues from a multitude of perspectives. By doing so, students challenge the role of community partners and various organization and political leaders in their understanding and handling of said issue and its challenges.

Very recently, new sections of ACS 800 have been offered as *Special Pilot Courses* such as the "Inside-Out" course where ACS students learn and discuss with incarcerated students, an internship *Youthful Cities* and a "Mentorship" course where students focus, through the culminating course style of ACS 800, on a specific question with a faculty mentor, instead of a group. This helps students expand their individual research skills and apply them to the wider community (Digital Literacy and Public Libraries, for example.)

Students with a CGPA of 3.33 (or higher) may select ACS 900 instead of ACS 800 (although these are not mutually exclusive). ACS 900 is a pre-graduate seminar style course where students interested in applying to graduate school can write a research paper that demonstrates their acquired interdisciplinary skills and usually will respond to the particular interdisciplinary question they have been studying in their Option.

Each discipline-based option has its own specific Capstone course. Much like the ACS 900, these courses are designed in seminar-like fashion and focus on class discussion, innovative exercises and dialogue between peers. It is important to remember that ACS was the only program offering a BA that could lead to Graduate programs in these fields and capstone courses provided the right preparation and discipline-based specific learning outcomes to make our candidates strong. It is equally important to remember that for the last 10 years, ACS has had graduating classes of nearly 135 students. Capstone courses, with the exception of the introductory course to the Option, would be one of the few courses limited to the ACS student body and assures the specified outcomes of the interdisciplinary curricula.

15. PARTNERSHIPS OR COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS

ACS currently has a number of partnerships and collaborative agreements that allow students to earn credits either on campus or in an international exchange program. The program also offers other volunteering and community-involvement opportunities allowing students to earn credits towards their Undergraduate degree.
- **Study in Florence:** This is a six-week intensive learning experience in Florence, Italy.
- **Human Rights Watch:** The ACS 402 credit includes experiential learning with the Human Rights Watch.
- **Inside Out Prison Exchange Program:** The ACS 800 capstone course enables ACS students and incarcerated individuals to share their experiences through course content specifically designed around issues of discipline and punishment.
- **International Exchange Programs:** Each year, a number of ACS students travel to the universities of New South Wales, Tilburg and Singapore for a full term.

- **PEN Canada and PEN International:** Through ACS 950, students are given the opportunity to conduct research on specific files pertaining to exiled, incarcerated or missing writers and journalists. Their research, analysis, critical-thinking and communication skills are further fine-tuned by preparing reports that could be used in the eventual liberation of those writers and journalists.
- **YIMBY (Yes in My Back Yard):** ACS 103 students discover the importance of community-building, partnership and contribution through this initiative that promotes the role of the neighbourhood as a force for positive change.
- **Youthful Cities:** This internship allows students to work up to 15 hours a week on skill-developing project that involves measuring how Toronto measures up to the world's 25 "hottest" cities.

16. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Along with the many opportunities for experiential learning developed through the partnerships listed above, ACS offers several courses that enable students to put their critical and analytical skills into practice. In ACS 800, for example, students are tasked with finding a relevant issue, bringing together (sometimes acrimonious) groups to discuss the various factors related to corporate social responsibility (e.g., homelessness, the tar sands, the Occupy movement). They organize and host a one-day forum that features presentations on key topics and that provides a space for community partners and other stakeholders to discuss the event's central topic.

17. STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Students are assessed in a myriad of ways in order to ensure accurate evaluation of their various skills and knowledge. First-year students are evaluated primarily through traditional forms (e.g., mid-terms, participation in class discussions, short essays.) Essays continue to form part of the assessment matrix throughout all years of the program, with increasing requirements related to research, word count, references and style. In second year, independent research is introduced as well as critical reflection papers and major essays. In second and third year, lab reports, and small-group exercises and in-class assignments are introduced. Field experiences and case studies are introduced in third and fourth year; therefore, these ACS students are evaluated on their presentation skills and by other key assignments such as research projects, annotated bibliographies and problem assignments.

18. STUDENT SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

On average 80% of ACS students have a clear academic standing upon completing their first year of study (significantly higher than the Faculty of Arts and Ryerson averages). By fourth year 96% of ACS students have a clear academic standing (again, significantly higher than the University's norm). Grade averages upon graduation demonstrates that over 56% of ACS students receive a grade of B or higher.

19. LIBRARY RESOURCES

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of ACS, the program has access to the materials acquired through the partner departments. Most importantly, the library currently holds 331,546 titles directly related to the research fields comprised in the ACS program with one quarter of this content published later than 2000.

20. ADMISSIONS

Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) with a minimum overall average of 70% in six Grade 12 U/M courses (including Grade 12 U English), or equivalent, establishes eligibility for admission; subject to competition, individual programs may establish higher academic averages. All programs also stipulate specific subject prerequisites. Grades required for admission are determined on the basis of competition each year.

In the program's first year (2003-2004), ACS admitted 193 students and, in its second year, admitted 205. Since then, the numbers have been lower. As a result of the introduction of four new social science programs (Criminal Justice, Sociology, Politics and Governance and Psychology) in 2005-2006, the already-reduced pool of applicants dipped to a ratio of 1:6.4, and the students accepted into ACS represented only a small percentage of students entering with 80% or higher (i.e., only 15.8% compared

to the usual range of 45%-80%); as a result, that year only 140 students were admitted into the program. Combined with students' requests for change, these data led to a significant curricular revision.

21. STUDENT QUALIFICATIONS
Analysis of the University Planning Office (UPO) Data Tables show that ACS's admission requirements are sufficient to ensure that incoming students are well able to succeed in their first year of studies during which students develop their critical and analytical skills. The introduction of more courses to Table II in 2005-2006 and the introduction of the generalist option in 2007-2008 led to a more successful completion of first year. For example, in 2005-2006, only 58.2% of first-year students had clear standing; by 2008-2009, that figure had risen to 85.5%. Currently, ACS is averaging close to 80%.

22. ENROLMENT, RETENTION AND GRADUATION DATA
UPO data show that, on average, ACS's acceptance-to-application ratio is 1:12. Over the past 8 years, the mean entry average has been 82.4%, which is slightly higher than Ryerson's overall average.
In 2012-2013 the November student headcount was 160. Ryerson data shows that ACS seems to be generally within the averages (or slightly above in its earlier years) for enrolment and progress indicators. When ACS was putting together its data for the PPR, information for 2010-11 and 2011-12 was scarcely available and therefore is not included in this analysis.

A few indicators important to note:
In 2009, 98% ACS students, at the time of survey the largest program of the faculty, would recommend their program and 92.8% were satisfied with the quality of the instruction received. Table 3 illustrates retention rates after one year in ACS and Table 4 indicates graduation rates.

In 2008, on average, 85% of first year ACS students had a clear academic standing which increased to 100% by fourth year. By 2011, these numbers dropped to 77% clear in first year and 96% in fourth. Analysis shows that less students have graduated in fourth year and attempted, at times, a fifth or sixth year to complete their BA. This is reflected in the Table 5 where an average of 50% of students graduate in 6 years. ACS students require, at times, an additional year(s) of study for a number of reasons, the first being that ACS students work off campus and select to reduce their course load to balance work and university life. Only recently have ACS students started supplementing the Fall and Winter course load with additional Spring and Summer courses. Also, students usually select their Option (if they choose one) during second year. However, students may change their option and may do so at any time leading up to graduation. Students working on Option curriculum as of third year, or changing Options in third or fourth year will face certain curricular restrictions (new requirements to complete because of the Option selection) that may result in longer study times.

Student and alumni satisfaction is high as ACS provides students with a great deal of flexibility in the curriculum. Students can find courses and Options that suit their particular needs. The "non-confinement" and flexibility of the Professional and Professionally Related Electives mean that students feel they ease into their university course. This is also due to the fact that students feel their academic workload is manageable (84.9% of students and alumni surveyed agreed) and that it was a well-organized (75% agree) and that students felt as though their professors and their feedback was of high quality (80% agree.) Most importantly, 100% of students and alumni surveyed said they highly recommended the program. These numbers support the retention and enrollment numbers.

Table 3 Progress Indicator 5d: Retention after one year of same program

Program	Year						
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Ryerson	84.9	84.6	81.0	81.3	82.1	80.0	81.0
Faculty of Arts	78.5	73.3	74.8	74.8	74.9	74.0	74.9
Arts & Contemporary Studies	79.4	82.2	78.0	66.7	69.7	72.3	73.6

Table 4   % Graduation Rate

Program	Year				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Ryerson	72.7	74.2	76.3	77.4	73.8
Faculty of Arts	57.7	72.3	62.4	63.5	59.7
Arts and Contemporary Studies	-	-	-	65.0	55.0

Table 5   Percentage of newly-admitted secondary school students
who graduated within six years

Program	Year		
	Fall 2003	**Fall 2004**	**Fall 2005**
Ryerson	77.3	73.7	66.3
Faculty of Arts	59.5	62	50.1
Arts and Contemporary Studies	62.8	56.6	47.1

23. SURVEYS
a. Program Review Student Satisfaction Survey:
- Nearly 90% of the current student body surveyed agreed that most of their professors and instructors were current and knowledgeable in their fields, that they were available outside of class time to help students and that generally speaking, the teaching in the ACS program is of high quality.
- over 90% of the surveyed students agreed that ACS is an academically challenging program
- over 80% said that they are given useful feedback on their academic performance
- over 65% said that the program was good preparation for a career
- students noted that ACS helped them to develop their creativity and leadership and to improve their problem-solving, research, critical-thinking and communication (oral and written) skills.
- students indicated that the various assessment methods used by professors and instructors were effective ways of measuring their understanding of the material

Overall, ACS students had overwhelmingly positive comments to make about the program, adding that they would strongly recommend it to other prospective students. They commented primarily on the program's flexibility and the wide range of faculty expertise.

b. Graduate Survey:
- 92.8% of students indicated that they would highly recommend the program – a score that is significantly higher than the Ryerson average
- 35% felt "very satisfied" and 58% were "satisfied" with where their education had led them thus far

Surveys of ACS students have demonstrated that their research, analysis and critical skills acquired through the program are a valuable and sought-after asset in the work place. Although some students have found it difficult to determine how exactly the program has led them to their career choice, most emphasize the importance of a broad liberal arts degree, combined with the essential skills in research and applied methodologies (such as qualitative research methods and statistics) make the graduates adaptable to different work areas and research disciplines post-graduation. Being able to access minors in fields such as human resources, professional communications, business, accounting and law is an additional asset to ACS alumni's success in the workplace.

ACS has an active Alumni association. Graduates of the ACS program participate in many employment opportunities for future ACS graduates. They are routinely invited to participate in the ACS 800 Social Corporate Responsibility Forum day, either as guests or as speakers, or to attend as "Young Professional" to the ACS Mix & Mingle Soirée that introduces ACS students to the working world through conversations with young professional working in ACS related fields.

As program graduates choose diverging and original career paths it is difficult to track their work opportunities and successes in a concrete fashion. However, ACS does know that its successful OGS and SSHRC applicants attribute their achievements to the academic strengths of the program and the support they received from of Faculty and Staff. The ACS program's future and current teachers state that ACS was instrumental to the development of qualities they consider to be unique and indispensable in finding a job in teaching in Toronto. Those qualities are directly linked to the broad and flexible curriculum offered by ACS allowing students to complete and acquire many teachable areas.

ACS graduates also do very well in the editing and publishing world. Some graduates hold senior editing, managing, and publishing positions soon after graduation. ACS alumni are presidents, journalists, curators, entrepreneurs, professors, teachers, researchers, marketers, and more.

Many ACS students have also chosen to attend graduate school. These students report that the academic rigour and requirements for high achievement in the ACS program makes for a smooth transition to graduate-level training. Many of the discipline-specific capstone courses (e.g. ENG 900, PHL 900, HST 900, FRE 900) operate very much like graduate seminars and students typically produce high-calibre work.

Research conducted with students, prospective employers and colleagues at Ryerson and other universities identified several elements that will be critical for preserving ACS's appeal to high-quality students and that could form the basis of potential recruitment strategies:
- Maintaining the program's emphasis on a heuristic methodology for learning
- Modifying current options and/or introducing new ones that accord with emerging scholarly and social issues and trends, and that enable ACS to remain on the leading edge of interdisciplinary education
- Increasing the use of teaching and learning approaches (e.g., collaborative instruction, digital-empowered instruction) that take professors and students beyond the conventions of the normative classroom experience
- Intensifying the program's experiential learning opportunities, including making it available to all 4th-year ACS students
- Continuing to add new international partners (through Ryerson International)
- Supporting students' ambitions to study abroad (usually in their 3rd year)

24. RESOURCES
a. Faculty: ACS has no faculty members of its own. All faculty members are "borrowed" from Faculty of Arts departments. Although some faculty members (from English, History, Philosophy and Politics and Public Administration) have taught in ACS for several (often consecutive) years, university policies mandate that they must give priority to their home departments. In the Faculty of Arts' 2012 hiring plans, greater emphasis was placed on including ACS's needs in the planning and decision-making processes. Since the program's launch, many of the Faculty of Arts' new-faculty positions were granted to humanities departments, with the intention that these individuals would contribute to teaching in ACS. In practice, however, this link has proved weak. Co-teaching (by two individuals from different departments) of certain ACS courses (e.g., ACS 200, ACS 300, ACS 400) was introduced in 2004. Since then, the number of co-taught courses has fluctuated according, primarily, to faculty members' availability and interest in participating. Co-teaching is one of the many ways to provide ACS students with multidisciplinary approaches when interdisciplinary instruction is unavailable.
b. Support Staff: Since the program was launched, ACS has had one support-staff member: a program administrator. ACS directors have made many requests for additional staff; however, until recently, these requests have always been denied (in March 2013, it was announced that a 0.3 FTE staff member would be added to support the program administrator).
c. Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants: ACS does not directly employ academic assistants. However, students completing discipline-based options have served as research assistants (RAs) and taken part in the Undergraduate Research Opportunity (URO) program for the last 6 years.
d. Curriculum Counseling/Advising: Throughout the academic year, the ACS program administrator and program director work closely with the ACS curriculum advisor to provide curricular counseling/advising to students regarding course selection, course directives, substitutions and option pathways. Additionally, students have access to the members of the Student Experience Centre Team (SECTeam).

25. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS
a. Strengths and Weaknesses
i) Ideas Courses
- ACS's "Ideas" series (ACS 100-ACS 500) provides students with a strong foundation in contemporary critical theory and is one of the most attractive interdisciplinary learning opportunities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).
- It is equally important to highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the teaching involved in ACS 100-series courses. Because these courses are co-taught by a team (two instructors from varying disciplines co-teach one course), students are exposed to a multitude of perspectives and approaches.
- There are only 12 ACS-coded courses and ACS 302, ACS 402, ACS 403 and ACS 800/900 are not compulsory. In any given year the ACS 300-ACS 500 mandatory courses are the only exclusively-ACS academic meeting grounds for ACS students.
- Many ACS students have also felt that the emphasis on the ACS-coded series, although offering excellent learning experiences, were sometimes charged with too much content for the term.
- Although an intrinsic and important part of the program, the emphasis on preparing students for graduate studies should cede some room to more experiential and practical learning opportunities.

ii) SSH 301 and ACS 401
- SSH 301 and ACS 401 are high-quality, challenging courses; it is unusual to find qualitative research and statistics courses as integral and compulsory components of humanities programs.
- In light of the fear of mathematics that some ACS students experience with regard to ACS 401, in Winter 2012 ACS launched three peer-support tutoring positions, carried out by three third- or fourth- year students.

iii) Engaged, Active and Committed Faculty
- ACS's engaged, active and committed faculty members comprise a good example of how one of the program's strengths is also one of its weaknesses. ACS instructors are willing to take on the challenge of teaching within the program while still maintaining the required teaching, service and research obligations of their home departments.
- Both Ryerson Faculty Association (RFA) members and Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) sessional instructors – remain departmental hires.
- When instructors teach in ACS they are not necessarily credited with having provided additional service to the program, as their service requirements remain the purview of their home departments.
- Because hires come from the collaborating teaching departments, new instructors of ACS- coded courses are not familiar with the program, its suite of courses, its mandate and other aspects of its interdisciplinarity.
- For the most part, ACS has profited from the generosity and collaborative nature of its instructors in developing additional activities (e.g., evening lectures, directed-reading courses, workshops) for students. However, because the membership of the program's governing structure (e.g., curriculum committees, Program Council) and faculty members' teaching assignments are so fluid, students who are nearing graduation or who have recently completed the program often find it difficult to connect with faculty members when seeking direction and advice.
- ACS's director and administrator have developed and implemented new curricular pathways and one-on-one meetings to ensure ACS graduates-to-be have the necessary pieces in place for graduation; however, they do not have sufficient time to conduct the variety of support tasks the program's nearly 1000 students' request.
- Because ACS has no centralized faculty members, the program office is at the centre of most student–faculty interactions.

iv) Student Engagement
- ACS student engagement is in line with levels found across the Faculty of Arts. However, because ACS students have contact points with many departments, they typically engage outside the program as much as they do inside it. For this reason, ACS students have spearheaded many projects that ultimately include the entire Faculty of Arts. These include Arteries, a student-initiated and student-led conference, *The Continuist*, a student-initiated and student-run journal of

visual arts and literature, the International Issues Discussion Series, Alternative Spring Break, and the Philosophy Club.

- Now, Arteries and *The Continuist*, although continuing to be operated by ACS students with strong support by the program, reach out to students across Ryerson as well as at other universities. ACS students' engagement is often recognized and honoured with Ryerson's most prestigious awards, including the Gold Medal and the Dennis Mock Award.
- With the recent launch of several new discipline-based humanities bachelor's programs, strong ACS students are often recruited for Ontario University Fair and other Discover Ryerson programs by the departments in which those students have chosen to pursue their discipline-based options. This has had a negative impact on ACS because it compels students to choose how to represent the university – either in terms of our program or according to their option departments (rarely both simultaneously).

v) Program Flexibility

- ACS offers a wide range of courses through its Table I (Professional Elective) and Table II (Professionally Related Elective) courses. The 2012-2013 academic calendar lists 217 courses listed on Table I (a 600% increase in course offerings since 2007) and 152 on Table II (an increase of 210% since 2007).
- Originally, the influx of new courses to Table II was intended to offer more professionally-related choices to students, which, in turn, meant more access to minors. However, the abundance of choice made available to ACS students in Table II sparked some problems: for students interested in a wide variety of minors, the addition of courses has been a great asset; however, for students selecting courses based on term-by-term interest, the wide variety of choice can lead to confusion and, at times, prove daunting.
- For students remaining in the generalist option, Table I has seen a steady increase in terms of its offerings. Yet, this long list of courses is often misleading, as all the courses are not necessarily available consistently from term to term and, in certain cases, some have not been offered even once in the past 7 years. For generalist students, the overabundance of Table I courses may also lead to a lack of scholarly progression, as students may take introductory-level courses for nearly the entire length of their degrees.
- Because many of the Table I and Table II courses are also offered on the Liberal Studies table, many of those courses do not have an inherent pre-requisite, which means that students may take courses in sequences that are neither fully logical nor supportive of intellectual development.

vi) Lack of Coherent Curriculum Planning

- Over time, the practice of adding courses to the ACS table fell out of the Curriculum Committee's and the Program Council's regular planning activities; instead, it began to happen mere days before calendar changes were due. The lack of time for reflection and deliberation meant that too many courses (often somewhat repetitive) were added to the tables and that appropriate curriculum progression was at times undercut. The results can be seen in today's calendar and, more importantly, in the experiences felt by the students (e.g., confusion due to overabundant choice, overuse of the curriculum advising group for course directives and transfers).

b. Opportunities

i) Courses that Utilize Ryerson's Physical Location

- Ryerson is located in the heart of Canada's largest and most multicultural city. ACS courses (including courses on diversity, economics and politics) already draw on this rich environment, and ACS believes that this momentum should be continued.
- ACS could develop an "ACS in the City" course that would engage students in their community and provide them with an opportunity to complete their required experiential learning.

ii) Secure Faculty Members for ACS

- In 2012-2013, ACS was consulted and informed about decisions regarding three Faculty of Arts new-faculty hiring processes. More such involvement would be an excellent opportunity to help ensure that ACS' curricular concerns are met. ACS also has the opportunity to enter into discussions with the Faculty of Arts in order to start securing faculty members specifically for the program. For the 2013-2014 teaching-assignment decision-making process, ACS was given space to discuss the program's teaching needs during the Dean's Council meeting.

- In the future, ACS would like to work towards planning faculty members' service contributions to the program. This would certainly improve the program's administration and provide students with more faculty support and guidance.

iii) Interdisciplinary Options Revision
- Over the last several years, it has become increasingly clear that certain interdisciplinary options require revision in order to satisfy student demand, to leverage faculty strengths and to bolster faculty engagement. At present, very few students select the Diversity and Equity or Invention and Inquiry options (in 2012-2013, the latter does not have any students enrolled), despite the fact that those options expose students to a wide range of engaging issues delivered through interesting courses.

c. Threats
i) New Discipline-based BA Programs
- During the last three academic years (2010-2013), the Faculty of Arts has launched three new BA programs: English, History and Philosophy. The addition of each of these had an immediate negative impact on ACS student applications and enrolment, as well as on faculty members' participation in the program. As each BA appeared, there was a corollary decrease in ACS student numbers and it became more difficult to recruit and retain faculty members.
- In order to register and retain students (capped at 200 from 2009-2011), ACS had to accept individuals whose mean average upon completing high school dipped under the program's usual 80% requirement. In an effort to maintain the program's quality and that of incoming students, ACS – in concert with the Faculty of Arts dean and associate dean – lowered the first-year target numbers to 140. As it turns out, in September 2012 ACS managed to accept an excellent group of 165 new students.
- Because of the arrival of new BAs in neighbouring and encroaching disciplines, ACS has given itself the mandate of clearly identifying the benefits of interdisciplinary study with a special focus on a discipline (e.g., English, Philosophy, History). This mandate has brought new energy and insights to the program.
- Until the launch of the English BA, ACS was the only BA in the Humanities offered to Ryerson students. Naturally, with the onset of other BAs in the Humanities (Philosophy and History as well), the internal competition for completing discipline based curricula has in fact depleted the pool of applicants to the program. Importantly, ACS was originally designed to be an Interdisciplinary BA in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The proposed plan would see this be the main objective of the BA in the near future. There are a number of reasons motivating some of the proposed plans for ACS. The first, although not guaranteed, is the talk of Double Majors (or Combined Majors) at Ryerson University. If the discipline based Options were soon to be delivered in the format of a Major (one credit more than the current Option format) then ACS would no longer offer the Discipline Options, but rather, would allow its students to take combined ACS-English (for e.g.) majors. With more curriculum maneuverability, ACS would focus on providing a strong Humanities core through the ACS courses and offer distinct Humanities-Social Science interdisciplinary options.

ii) Faculty Not Assigned ACS Service Duties
- ACS gains from faculty members' multiplicity of backgrounds, experiences, expertise and knowledge; however, it suffers from this diversity as well. That is chiefly because faculty members are not assigned specific ACS-service hours, nor can they be expected to take on tasks and responsibilities that go above and beyond what their home departments have already requested of them.
- ACS students are the first to feel the impact of the absence of ACS-dedicated faculty most especially when trying to locate a faculty member with whom to conduct independent research or with whom they could potentially apply to work as an RA.

iii) External Competition
- A number of universities in the GTA and other parts of Ontario offer high-quality programs that have much in common with ACS. However, ACS believes that healthy competition is as much a benefit as it is a threat to the program. The fact that interdisciplinary and humanities studies are

being offered by several institutions helps to ensure that prospective students (and their parents) come to regard these disciplines as worthy and in-demand. At the same time, Ryerson' reputation for experiential learning, service opportunities and international partners help to distinguish ACS from similar programs offered elsewhere.

26. DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN

I. Overview

Within the context of the program's mission, goals and objectives, the overarching aim of this plan is to provide ACS students with a truly interdisciplinary degree that includes multiple experiential-learning and practicum opportunities characterized by rigorous academic engagement and application. In order to address the challenges that have resulted from the new Humanities BA offered in the Faculty of Arts, ACS will 1) propose new options and 2) strengthen its current options. ACS will continue to focus on providing a strong Humanities core through the ACS courses and offer distinct Humanities-Social Science interdisciplinary options.

New Options:	Major Revision/Renaming Options:
- Anthropological Perspectives - Religious Studies	- Global Relations (to replace Global Studies)

The new interdisciplinary options will be very popular and respond to both societal demand and student demand and will not create internal competition to the university as they will be truly innovative. These options will also start integrating new courses from outside the Faculty of Arts (for example, Anthropological Perspectives) which will provide a unique opportunity for students acquiring an interdisciplinary degree.

ACS is also interested in developing a more structured Global Relations Option (to replace the existing Global Studies Option). There are too many cross-overs and redundancies between the Culture Studies Option and the Global Studies Option. Reformulating the Global Relations option by providing students with curriculum directions (by using groups to collate similar courses thematically, thus insisting that students get both breadth and depth of study in a sequential and evolutionary manner) will allow students to comprehend the nature of this interdisciplinary based option. Currently, students have expressed confusion about the name and the purpose of such an option. It has, however, remained rather popular as a surrogate for "International Relations" studies (as the option does provide students with courses in History, Politics, Economics and Geography similar to this area of study.) Students also state that they understand the concept of "Global Relations" and note that there is a better directional sense with this title.

As part of the curriculum restructuring, field placement, experiential learning, and engaged learning are considered a new essential facet of our curriculum that will be considered in the development and support of options. The new advisory council composed of members of the community will contribute to the formation of new curriculum, engaged learning and internships. For example, new "in-museum" courses to bolster the new Anthropological Perspectives Option, a proposal for a Summer Intensive Field Placement in Turkey through the Koç University summer institute of Archeology, and new versions of the ACS 800 that provide students with internship and mentorship opportunities along with the creation of new grants to support its students.

In its PPR, ACS has determined that space is most important in concretizing the characteristics of the program. ACS has made an official request (supported by the Dean) to have offices for its seconded faculty, staff, and administration as well as meeting space for its students as is believed that the feelings of disparity and "non-belonging" emanate from the reality that, as a program, there is no space to call home, and no faculty to call "parent." Space would also provide a new collegial meeting point where engaged faculty members (either through secondment, teaching, or research in interdisciplinary areas), students, and staff could consider the new issues faced by ACS, its students, and its community.

A faculty contingency would create a larger community feeling for ACS as students would have a Faculty compliment to consult outside of the Program Director as well as potential employers for RA ships in areas of study (not having to compete with Discipline based BAs would be of great benefit to the ACS student). Faculty would be available to represent and serve the program on the myriad of the committees, groups, planning forums, etc. Faculty secondments would also create an ease of assigning teaching (or rather, foresight) as well as a new collegial group with which to consult, distribute work, and bolster the program (see events such as OUF, Discover Ryerson, Orientation, etc.) not to mention the amount of letters of support and graduate application information our students require.

II. Curriculum Restructuring (to take place within 12 months)

a. Generalist Option

Re-categorize the extensive Table I course offerings in terms of "groups" to allow students flexible access to all humanities and social sciences disciplines and to encourage cumulative acquisition of disciplinary knowledge.

b. Discipline-Based Options

Re-evaluate the discipline-based option curriculum offerings to clarify subject groupings in order to help students better recognize the originality of studying a discipline-based subject within an interdisciplinary program and to ensure that ACS students' curricular pathways are completely transparent. Also, departmental curriculum committees have been tasked with ensuring that curricular redundancies and gaps have been resolved. They are also developing plans to ensure that ACS students have equal access to their program-based courses.

c. Interdisciplinary Options

Review interdisciplinary options to ensure coherence and availability of courses within each option. Currently, Invention and Inquiry has only two students enrolled, while Diversity and Equity has only eight. Lack of interest and lack of active faculty members devoted to these interdisciplinary options have made it difficult to attract and keep students engaged and involved. Also, ambiguity surrounding option names and goals have rendered them less appealing.

d. New Minors

Continue to ensure that all ACS students have access to the appropriate minors. ACS will continue to closely monitor Table II offerings in order to avoid overlaps with Table I and the Liberal Studies courses (Tables A and B).

e. Capstone Courses and Experiential Diversity

Continue developing capstone courses with relevant Ryerson faculty members and community partners; continue to expand such relationships; and make experiential courses more widely available to ACS students.

II. Program Innovations (to take place by 2014-2015)

a. New Grants

Encourage innovation among ACS students. For example, two new student grants have been created, which have been implemented for the first time during the 2012-2013 academic year:

ACS Conference Participation Grants (4 per year) given to students who have engaged in research and who have been invited to present their findings at national or international conferences.

ACS International Experience Grants (4 per year) given to students who are actively initiating or participating in international opportunities that provide participants with a global outlook, enhanced intercultural and language skills and increased self-reliance.

Develop a Faculty Grant that would reward interdisciplinary research and teaching. The grant would compensate projects that would include research for ACS students.

b. New Advisory Council Members

Seek three additional Advisory Council members by September 2013 for a total of six active and engaged members.

c. New Interdisciplinary Options

Develop new option choices that reflect the times in which we live. The Program Council has begun preliminary talks and has identified, through student surveys and student participation, that the following options would be in demand among students and, therefore, attract strong enrolment:

- Anthropology (potential launch in 2014-2015)

- International Relations Studies (potential launch in 2014-2015)
- French Cultural Studies (i.e., a revamped version of the current French Option) (potential launch in 2015-2016)
- Sustainable Responsibilities (or Environmental Responsibility) (potential launch in 2015-2016)
- Social Change (potential launch in 2016-2017)

d. **2nd- and 3rd-Year Experiential Development**
- Expand experiential learning and ensure that such opportunities are made available in 2nd and 3rd years. ACS currently offers experiential learning opportunities to 1st-year students through ACS 403 and again in 4th year.
- Reintroduce (and potentially redevelop) ACS 201: Resolution and Conflict Studies, which would involve community partners, case studies and outreach (the course would be mandatory for generalist students).
- Create more bridges and partnerships with other universities that would make it easier for ACS students to study at those institutions. One possibility is to establish a permanent partnership with Koç University (a private university in Istanbul, Turkey), whereby ACS students could complete a minor in archaeology through one 12-week intensive session.

27. PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT
The site visit took place on October 23, 2013. Reviewers were Dr. Hugh Hodges (Department of English, Trent University), Dr. Daniel Samson (Department of History, Brock University), and Dr. Philip Coppack (Department of Geography, Ryerson University).

General Overview: The ACS Program's unique origin − the program was developed prior to most of the disciplinary programs which now have a stake in it − is both its greatest strength and the source of its most creative attributes. Whereas at other institutions interdisciplinary study is often treated as an afterthought or an embellishment, at Ryerson it is literally foundational and receives extremely broad support for its objectives from both the administration and from the departments.

The program is structured so that a series of interdisciplinary core courses (designed to create a sense of community and continuity within the program) are supplemented by courses drawn from a range of disciplines. The result is that ACS students receive unusually rich training in the acquisition of new intellectual skills. Students identify the core courses as a valuable component of the ACS program and are generally satisfied with them. All the students interviewed declared themselves satisfied with the opportunities for experiential learning that ACS provides and agreed that such experiences can be extremely helpful as they choose a direction through their undergraduate education.

There are very few steps that need to be taken internally at present to improve the program. The two academic areas that do need attention (consideration of new interdisciplinary options and a review of the generalist option) were already being worked on at the time of this report. A review of the disciplinary options will also be needed if Ryerson introduces double majors. In addition, for the next review, ACS might invest work toward solidifying the statistics on longer-term student results (employment successes, OGS/SSHRC success rates). The reviewers acknowledge that ACS has inadequate administrative support. Anecdotally, there is a strong sense that ACS is able to place students in graduate programs and employment after ACS. A more concrete sense of where ACS students end up would greatly assist future reviews.

The more serious challenges faced by ACS can only be resolved by external action. ACS desperately needs administrative resources and a team of faculty members whose university service is dedicated to the program. A plan to resolve at least part of this problem has been proposed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and seems to have broad support within the Faculty. Finally, both faculty members and students make reference to the problem of creating community within ACS; while there are some things the program can do internally to foster a sense of community, the most effective contribution would be a dedicated ACS student space.

Curriculum: In a very real sense, the ACS Program's curriculum is the current state of the area of study. Nowhere else in Canada has an interdisciplinary program developed before most of the disciplines that ostensibly constitute its axes. This has given ACS a unique opportunity to freely define both its area of study and its approach to that area. As a result ACS is one of the most innovative interdisciplinary programs in Canada.

The learning outcomes of the program are focused on critical thinking, numeracy and independent engagement. The program's delivery modes are appropriate to their stated objectives: lecture based content delivery, lab based skills training, seminar based critical thinking and a professional orientation provided through guest speakers and other experiential learning avenues.

The reviewers and student surveys indicate digital literacy as a shortcoming. Course outlines indicate a strong place for research methods, both quantitative and qualitative, and there is certainly some sense of computer-based skills development in this realm. However, student surveys indicate that "computer proficiency", "responding to technological innovations", and "experiences with computer-based technology" are amongst the lowest scores. This review does not have the tools or evidence to better assess the importance, or even the accuracy of these views. It does, however, highlight a perceived weakness of the program, one where critical reading, writing, and numeracy are enhanced, but not technologically enabled.

Teaching and Assessment: The final year experiential-learning opportunity offers an excellent capstone moment for the ACS student. Some of the described opportunities (working with PEN, for example) are undoubtedly powerful learning opportunities, where students can draw most fully on the breadth and depth of their training. They are not, however, required, and the precise degree of participation is not clear. This leads the PRT to two potential modifications that might strengthen the program. First, making some form of experiential capstone course a required course would both strengthen the program and develop a better sense of a shared/common experience in the program. Expanding the capstone program would no doubt require additional opportunities. Thus ACS might also investigate the possibility of adding an explicitly co-op-based opportunity to the fourth- year curriculum.
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Resources: Academic services available to ACS students seem both appropriate and effective; particular mention should be made of the excellent work being done by the Student Experience Centre, which facilitates many of the experiential learning opportunities available to ACS students. However, ACS strains at the limits of what can be done with its existing human and physical resources. Given the size of the program, its large FTEs, and the complexity of administering such a large interdisciplinary program, this cannot continue for long without serious negative consequences for the ACS program.

ACS students need a common room/study space/lounge dedicated to ACS. Both faculty and students identify student engagement and collegiality as a problem in ACS; students have few opportunities to foster a sense of community outside of the classroom. It would also give the ACS Student Association a home, which would make it more visible to ACS students.

Quality Indicators: The NSEE survey results reflect the same findings as the progress indicators – a high degree of satisfaction vis a vis overall quality of the program and experience, improvements in choice and variety of courses within 'majors', and the need for space.

Interviews with eight full time faculty members indicated a strong identification with the ACS program, attention to its aims and objectives, and a real interest in and enthusiasm for teaching in it. The full time Arts' faculty who participate in the program all maintain research agendas on par with disciplinary norms. The PRT considers these data to reflect an acceptable level of qualification and scholarship in a program of this nature, were it a stand-alone program with its own department.

Applications to registrations ratios are lower in comparison to Arts as a whole, but at par with Ryerson. This reflects an ACS program that has continued to perform in the face of three new humanities

programs coming on line over the same period. If they were to be compared with other Ontario universities, ACS ratios are much higher.

The program maintains a better than Arts or Ryerson average for students with a CLEAR academic standing at 77%, reflecting the quality of the student body. Its retention rates hover just below the Arts average, which in turn are below the Ryerson average. This in part is due to the relative ease of transferability between Arts' programs made possible by the Faculty's common curriculum platform, but principally it appears it is due to the new humanities programs that have been developed over the past four years. These would provide alternative academic career paths for those ACS students in the program's discipline based options. Overall the PRT does not see the retention data as a significant negative indicator of program quality since the program has maintained its excellent CLEAR academic standing status and its ability to attract high quality students.

ACS has some weakness, having graduation within six years rates below those of Arts and Ryerson. However, the caveat here is on the data itself, having a most recent date of 2005. On perusal of Ryerson's latest prowess indicators, graduation rates for the period 2005-2010 reflect an improvement to 65% - about 2% higher than Arts. Survey data provided on whether graduates would recommend the program reflect a rate of 93%, about par with Arts and higher than Ryerson, and satisfaction with the program rate of about 92%, again higher than Arts or Ryerson. GPA at graduation rates indicates that about 72% of students have a B or better- higher than Arts and about par with Ryerson.

Responses to the student survey reflected a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of the program and the faculty teaching it. Two questions pertaining to career prospects and organization of content received poorer than average responses and helping to improve abilities in specific areas, leadership, working in teams, computers and technology, international context and careers rated from somewhat to not at all. Some of these areas were expected - the program is not designed nor its learning outcomes expressed in terms of teaching computer literacy to any high degree, nor are its students schooled in entrepreneurial activities. But the PRT sees leadership, teamwork and international context as being part of the program's aims and these should be strengthened or emphasized more.

Students indicated that evaluation methods and academic advising were effective to very effective. Overall, out of 50 survey respondents, 43 stated they would recommend the program. The program appears also to be an ambassador for Ryerson as about the same proportions answered a similar question about whether they would recommend Ryerson. The survey of alumni reflected an almost identical set of findings as the student survey and there is little point in repeating them here. Suffice to say that the quality of the program is again represented.

Summary and Recommendations: ACS is a program of good quality, which attracts excellent students and graduates even better ones. It has very strong support within the Faculty of Arts, where its interdisciplinary approach to undergraduate education continues to inform and vitalize the faculty's other programs, and under the stewardship of its current Director and the Dean of Arts it is undergoing revisions that will ensure that quality for the future. In some ways, however, ACS has been a victim of its own success. It introduced an innovative and immediately successful approach to undergraduate Arts education that laid the ground for several new and also very successful disciplinary programs in the humanities and social sciences. These programs have, perhaps inevitably, diverted faculty and administrative resources from ACS; meanwhile ACS continues to attract its own full complement of first-rate students every year. This situation has not yet seriously affected the quality of the program, but only because the goodwill of faculty members and the extraordinary efforts of the program director have held things together on a catch-as-catch-can basis. This situation is unsustainable.

The PRT draws attention to three challenges to the continuing viability of the program:
- Demands on the program director
- Demands on faculty members' time
- Reliance on informal arrangements and agreements that leave ACS vulnerable

The PRT also identifies three somewhat less urgently pressing issues (that are to a very large extent consequences of the challenges listed above) which do, however, need to be addressed:
- Curricular concerns around the generalist and disciplinary options
- A need to monitor existing options to ensure ongoing quality
- Student engagement

It should be noted that the ACS program's thorough and thoughtful self-assessment report not only identifies all of these problems but also proposes viable solutions to them. This committee's recommendations strongly support those proposals.

Recommendations

i. Improved administrative support

An administrative unit as large and complex as ACS requires both a Principal (performing the functions of a departmental Chair) and Program Director. It also requires a two - person administrative staff.

ii. Enhancing the administrative structure

Creating a "College", or "School" of Arts and Contemporary Culture as a distinct academic unit within the Faculty of Arts would better allow the Dean to craft the particular guidelines that would allow both its central place and its administrative needs to be best regulated.

iii. Secondment of faculty members

It is crucial that ACS have a core of faculty members whose University service supports it. To this end, this committee strongly endorses the Dean of Arts' proposal that a number of faculty members be seconded from the Arts departments to ACS. At any given time, ACS should be home to six or so faculty members, each of them seconded for a period of three years. It should be noted that this proposal appears to have very wide support across the Faculty of Arts. Secondment, combined with a stronger administrative structure, would also strengthen the Program Council which now seems inconsistently administered. A clear plan of moving people in and out of the Program Council would ensure a solid blend of stability, continuity and fresh thinking.

iv. Curriculum Revision

i) Generalist option: The generalist option needs to be reviewed to ensure that instruction is progressively sequenced and that the program's exit outcomes match the rigour that is characteristic of the specialist options.

ii) Disciplinary options: The presence of disciplinary options within the interdisciplinary ACS program seems counterintuitive. Interviews with students revealed that students completing one of these options, often referred to as 'Majors', may be under the mistaken impression that they are getting the disciplinary background demanded by discipline-focused graduate programs. There is some indication that this may pose problems for students wishing to pursue discipline-based graduate training. The disciplinary options were developed prior to the development of degrees by Arts' humanities departments and were originally there to serve the role of humanities disciplines. With the recent development of humanities degrees, the disciplinary options provide just that- an optional avenue towards a humanities focused discipline embedded in the ACS program. Students' desire to combine interdisciplinary and disciplinary studies is both understandable and legitimate; the disciplinary options with ACS, however, are not the happiest answer to this desire. If the University introduces joint Majors, the elimination of the disciplinary options in ACS will no doubt follow.

iii) New interdisciplinary options: This external review coincides with an internal review of ACS's interdisciplinary options. Since the program's inception, new areas of expertise have emerged as new faculty members have joined the University. Some of the existing options seem to have drifted somewhat towards the humanities, away from the social sciences; it is to be hoped that the new options will bring some balance back towards the social sciences in ACS.

v. Student Engagement

Student engagement on a predominantly commuter campus is a perennial problem and there is no panacea. Faculty secondment should provide some assistance here simply by having greater regularity of

contact between student and faculty. The PRT also recommends that some student space be dedicated to ACS.

28. PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE TO THE PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT

The report, sent by Dr. Philip Coppack on behalf of the Peer Review Team (PRT) composed also of Drs. Hugh Hodges and Danny Samson, was very positive. The site visit went by smoothly, albeit very busy, and all required interviews were completed. As the PRT report provides recommendations and comments very close to the remarks underlined in the self-study report, the responses are few.

The PRT report does, however, highlight three areas that require additional information and explanation. Therefore, the following response will focus on those three points:
1) Capstone courses;
2) Curriculum Restructuring;
3) Program Structural Requirements.

Capstone Courses: The PRT suggested that ACS provide mandatory capstone courses and that the selection of courses offered be extended to all students. ACS provides mandatory capstone courses to all students. ACS offers discipline specific capstone courses (ENG 900, FRE 900, HIS 903, PHL 900) and numerous iterations of the ACS 800 and ACS 900 available to the generalist and interdisciplinary students registered in ACS. On average, eight different capstone courses are offered every year. These courses offer unique experiences in multi and interdisciplinary approaches. They are cumulative and challenging. Students can also access internships and other off-campus opportunities through the ACS 800. Finally, the ACS 950 is the program's Directed Reading course and is not compulsory. It can, however, be used (when offerings are not copacetic to a student's completion schedule) to replace one of the 800/900 series course and satisfy the capstone course credit requirement.

Curriculum Restructuring: The PRT provides a description of the types of curricular restructuring required in order for the program to continue to deliver effective and compelling Options (the Generalist Option being considered here as a "New Option" for the ACS Student.) The recommendations of the PRT is that ACS not start working on these recommendations until the administrative restructuring is complete. ACS has already started working on these curricular changes and will be submitting significant calendar changes in October 2014 reflecting these. Furthermore, ACS has already enlisted and engaged the help of numerous faculty members and the designing of New Interdisciplinary Options is also already well under way.

Program Structural Requirements: The PRT requirements and recommendations for funding, faculty, and administrative support are in line with some of the requests presented in the Self-Study Report and as expressed during the site visit. The PRT report proposes that the new College (or Institute, or Center, depending on the acceptable use of name in keeping with Ryerson appellations) would require additional staff, faculty secondments, and new administrative roles.

Considering the level of service provided to the program in the event of faculty secondments, ACS wishes to have the following type of administrative support:
• a Principal (if ACS becomes a college, the Principal would carry the same administrative duties as the current role of the Program Director)
• a Curriculum Coordinator, Grade 13
• a Program Coordinator, Grade 12
• an Administrative Assistant, Grade 9

As ACS hopes to implement its new structure soon, it may be advisable that the program consider starting with four secondments. Most importantly, ACS would require a specific space to harbor this type of faculty secondment and staffing structure. As the hope is to create and generate a sense of community between students, faculty, and staff, the space to host such an endeavor is required. For this reason, ACS would like to specify that office and meeting space be also considered as an important part of this request.

29. DEAN'S RESPONSE

The Dean confirmed that Dr. Walsh Matthews conferred with him before completing the director's response. He indicates that he is aware of the both the recommendations and requirements determined by the PRT as well as the modifications underlined in the Program Director's response.

In his response letter, the Dean confirmed that the Faculty of Arts supports the direction of the PPR recommendations, which are geared to strengthening the program while updating it to be competitive for today's 21st century university. ACS is an excellent program and the Dean expressed an intention to build on its excellence with what has been learned from the extensive (and helpful) PPR process.

30. ASC EVALUATION

The ASC assessment of the Periodic Program Review of the Bachelor of Arts in Arts and Contemporary Studies indicated that overall the review was well-done and provided an informative evaluation of the program. The development plan addresses key concerns and proposes reasonable approaches to dealing with issues and priorities raised by the self-study and the PRT report.

The Academic Standards Committee recommends that the program provide a follow-up report on the status of the initiatives outlined in the Developmental Plan. Also, as the program develops and revises its Options the Academic Standards Committee recommends that it include curriculum mapping in order to demonstrate how the learning outcomes and learning objectives from each course contribute to the overall level of expected student attainment identified in the Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UDLES) and the program's overall goals.

Follow-up Report

In keeping with usual practice, the follow-up report which addresses the recommendation stated in the ASC Evaluation Section is to be submitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and the Provost and Vice President Academic by the end of June, 2015.

Recommendation

Having satisfied itself of the merit of this proposal, ASC recommends:

- *That Senate approve the Periodic Program Review of the Bachelor of Arts in Arts and Contemporary Studies*

Respectfully Submitted,

 Chris Evans, Chair for the Committee

ASC Members:
Charmaine Hack, Registrar
John Turtle, Secretary of Senate
Chris Evans, Vice-Chair and Vice Provost Academic
Denise O'Neil Green, Assistant Vice President/Vice Provost, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Andrew Hunter, Faculty of Arts, Philosophy
Neil Tomlinson, Faculty of Arts, Politics
Ian Baitz, Faculty of Communication and Design, Graphic Communications Management
Jean Bruce, Faculty of Communication & Design, Image Arts
Mary Sharpe, Faculty of Community Services, Midwifery

Nick Bellissimo, Faculty of Community Services, Nutrition
Medhat Shehata, Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science, Civil Engineering
Colin Ripley, Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science, Architecture
Vadim Bostan, Faculty of Science, Chemistry & Biology
Kelly McKay, Ted Rogers School of Management, Hospitality & Tourism
Naomi Eichenlaub, Library
Des Glynn, Chang School of Continuing Education