FINAL ASSESMENT REPORT AND IMPLEMENATION PLAN

Digital Futures, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan summarizes the results of the cyclical program review self-study and external review processes, and makes recommendations that will focus the future work of the program based on the reports received. It is reviewed by the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and approved by Senate.

Prepared by:	Senate Quality Assurance Committee
Period of Cyclical Review:	July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018
Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences:	Ian Clarke
Program Review Team Lead:	Nick Puckett
External Reviewers:	Mark D. Gross Professor, Computer Science Director ATLAS Institute University of Colorado Boulder Angelika Seeschaaf Veres Associate Professor & Program Chair Industrial Design OCAD University

Executive Summary of Cyclical Program Review

This initial review of the Digital Futures (DF) program noted the overall strength of the program and its faculty while highlighting areas of focus for the next phase of its development. The review committee commended DF for creating and running a unique undergraduate program that integrates technology in an art & design context and actively promotes the priorities of the Academic Plan. At the faculty level the review committee praised the program faculty as a group of internationally renowned researchers who effectively integrate their work and research into the classroom.

Though the program was developed and reviewed under the previous academic plan, the review noted 4 priorities of the current plan that the program is actively advancing.

Priority 6: Enhancing and advancing studio learning.
The review noted the program's commitment to integrating and teaching advanced technologies within the studio environment. They also noted that this experimental approach to studio teaching is uniquely positioned to broaden the scope of teaching at OCADU to include a broader range of disciplines.

Priority 14: Research.
The review noted the very high quality of the DF faculty's research, and the high level of integration of it into the classroom. This was specifically highlighted in relation to the Atelier courses that are based around faculty research.

Priority 8: Language. Digital and business skills and technology enabled learning.
The current course offerings are centred on technology enabled learning as both a tool and an output of the work. We also offer specific courses that teach professional skills in the technology field.

Priority 7: Experiential Learning.
Digital Futures seeks to offer students various types of experiential learning through internships, classroom collaborations, and direct engagement with our industry partners.

The recommendations generated from this review fall into two main categories: curriculum and infrastructure. In terms of curriculum, work has already begun to address how both individual courses and the overall program guide can be changed to give DF students greater autonomy to choose a program of study that fits their individual interests while creating a stronger link to "breadth" courses. In response, a new program guide was created for the 2018-2019 academic year that expanded program elective choices and removed 2.5 credits of required courses. These credits were replaced them with 1.5 credits of Open Electives and 1.0 credits of Breadth electives. Additionally, work has begun to create new courses that address advanced technology topics to give students across the University the ability to explore these issues in greater depth. In Fall 2018, six new and revised courses that address advanced issues in technology were approved by Senate and will be offered for the 2019-2020 academic year. The goal for these courses is to provide an interdisciplinary forum for students across all faculties to develop these advanced skills for a diverse range of practices. In addition to the internal goals of the program, DF strives to be a university-wide leader in developing greater interdisciplinary opportunities for students.

In addition to the curricular changes, the second area of focus for Digital Futures is infrastructural. The review team highlighted that the "main threats" to the continued success of the program are centred on a lack of technological infrastructure and corresponding human resources. Successful program growth has led us to the moment whereby the current forms of technological support that leverage the resources of the research labs cannot cope with the student numbers. Thus, the main focus moving forward is to work in collaboration with the Digital Futures graduate program and our industry partners to create a new space that houses a

new set of technological resources that enable the next phase of growth for the program. In addition to this infrastructure there is a need to provide dedicated technician support to be shared between the DF undergraduate and graduate programs.

Strengths and Challenges

The strengths and challenges of Digital Futures are both related to the program's commitment to the hands-on teaching of advanced technologies in an experimental, interdisciplinary framework. Beyond developing skills, this approach seeks to empower students with diverse perspectives with the ability to bring new ideas to the technology sector. The review noted the capacity of the DF program and its faculty to adapt to continuously evolving tools and technologies by directly integrating the internationally recognized research and practice of the faculty into the classroom. The review also noted the program's unique potential in relationship to the DF graduate program and noted this as a specific area to extend over the coming years.

One challenge to this approach is that it is very resource intensive, and the continued growth of the program has brought upon a tipping point of feasibility. The external review team noted this issue as the greatest threat to the program's continued success. Thus, over the next review period a major focus will be to find external partnerships that can fund the technological infrastructure that the program requires. A dedicated technician is required for this program but the synergy between DF undergrad and DF graduate programs allows for significant shared resources and a shared technician.

The second challenge is the ability to continue to build the overall identity of the program within the rapidly changing landscape of technological development and discipline porosity. To achieve this, we seek to expand our efforts in highlighting the range of student work that is happening from the first year of the program through thesis.

Implementation Plan:

Recommendation	**Proposed Follow-up**	**Responsibility and Other Stakeholders**	**Implementation Date/Timeline**
Curriculum development 1. Change the program guide to allow for greater autonomy for students within the program.	This process began in the Fall of 2017 when the DF Program committee submitted a revised Program Guide. This guide was approved by Senate in Fall 2017 and was amended in Fall 2018	Program Chair and faculty	Fall 2017

Curriculum development 2. Develop courses that address advanced topics dealing with technology.	Consult with faculty and other Program chairs to create courses at the 3000 and 4000 level that address advanced topics in multiple programs	Program Chair and faculty	Fall 2020 (begun Fall 2018)
Quality of educational experience 3. Create a new program map that shows how the core skills of the program can be advanced through the program via different course offerings.	In parallel to creating advanced technology course we will also create a new type of guide for the program each year that shows how different core skills can be developed/advanced by different courses.	Program Chair and faculty	Version 1 – Fall 2020 and then updated annually
Quality of educational experience 4. Establish clear policy on student access to Maker/Shop facilities at 100 McCaul and 205 Richmond	There is currently no clear policy for DF students in relation to shop access. One must be developed.	Program Chair Director of Facilities and Studio Services	Fall 2019
Quality of educational experience 5. Provide Students with Studio working space at the South Campus.	Provide communal working space for both the Atelier and Thesis Students.	Program Chair VP, Finance Director, Campus Planning and Projects	Fall 2020 (Begun Fall 2018)
Quality of educational experience 6. Create new classroom typology that addresses hands-on technology development and collaboration.	Embed new technologies into select classroom spaces.	Program Chair DF GPD Director of Facilities and Studio Services Director of Campus	Phase 1 – Fall 2019 Phase 2 – Fall 2020

		Planning and Projects	
Quality of educational experience 7. Create a new facility at 205 Richmond for advanced fabrication and technology development.	Working in collaboration with the DF graduate program we will establish a new hands-on digital fabrication and technology development facility. This facility will be externally funded and will also comprise multiple staff / technicians.	DF Program Chair DF GPD VP Academic & Provost VP Finance Dean FOLASIS Dean Graduate Studies Director of Facilities and Studio Services Director of Campus Planning and Projects Director of Sponsorship & Corporate Partnerships	Fall 2020
Quality of educational experience 8. Hire a dedicated technician for the DF undergraduate program to be shared with the DF graduate program.	To manage the technology intensive DF program, we will create equipment loans and hire a dedicated DF technician. This position will be shared with the DF graduate program and act as a resource for the new hands-on digital fabrication and technology development facility on the south campus.	DF Program Chair DF GPD VP Academic & Provost VP Finance Dean FOLASIS Dean Graduate Studies Director of Facilities and Studio Services	Fall 2020

Prioritization of Recommendations

As noted, many of these initiatives are already underway and in some cases have been completed. The main focus for implementation is infrastructure. This includes both the enhancement of select classroom space at 205 Richmond, and the creation of a new advanced fabrication space.

Conclusion

The Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) was provided with the documents pertaining to the Digital Futures undergraduate program cyclical review, including the self-study brief; the responses of the Dean, Graduate Studies and the Vice-President, Academic and Provost, the External Reviewer Report, and the Program Review and Dean's Internal Response. In their review of this final report, the committee provided minor suggestions to strengthen the document and with those considerations recognized, recommended the report to the Senate for approval. The report received approval from the Senate on February 25, 2019.