



FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Visual and Critical Studies, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies

Prepared by:	Senate Quality Assurance Committee
Period of Cyclical Review:	September 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019
Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies:	Dr. Ian Clarke
Program Review Team Lead:	Dr. Ryan Whyte
External Reviewers:	Simon Glass, OCAD University Dr. Alice Ming Wai Jim, Concordia University

1. Executive Summary of Cyclical Program Review:

The Visual and Critical Studies program (VCS) was granted through a Post Secondary Quality Assurance Board (PEQAB) application for ministerial consent in June 2012 by the minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The program had a soft launch of transfer students in the 2013-2014 academic year and admitted its first cohort in September 2014. Although most cyclical reviews occur every seven years, the Visual and Critical Studies review happened early to align with the PEQAB application for renewal of the program. As a result, the review was condensed from a two-year process to an eight-month process.

The program review team was formed in August 2018. It was led by the Program Chair and comprised of faculty members who reflect the program's origins, current structure, and future development, and the Program Assistant. Data surrounding applications and admissions, registration, retention, time-to-graduation rates, and student demographics was provided by OCAD University's Institutional Analysis Office. Student perspective for the self-study was provided via an online survey sent out to VCS majors in November 2018 and represented approximately 40% of students registered in the program. Moreover, qualitative feedback from students was collected during a student focus group facilitated by the Faculty and Curriculum Development Centre (FCDC) in January 2019. An alumni survey was also conducted but, due to only a single cohort having graduated from the program at the time,

only a few responses were received. Faculty perspectives were provided by an anonymous faculty survey facilitated by the FCDC in October 2018, which was modeled on a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges (SWOC) analysis. The program review team also participated in a curriculum review process where, over several sessions from October 2018 through December 2018, learning outcomes were developed and a curriculum mapping exercise was completed.

The Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) members were Simon Glass, Associate Professor, OCAD University Faculty of Art, and Dr. Alice Ming Wai Jim, Professor of Contemporary Art, Department of Art History, Concordia University. The external review process occurred in March 2019 and consisted of meetings with the Program Chair, program review team, program faculty, and program students. Additionally, the PEC met with the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies Interim Dean, Associate Dean of Outreach & Strategic Initiatives, and Office Manager, as well as OCAD University's Vice President, Academic & Provost. Discussions with Dorothy H. Hoover Library, Learning Zone, and Writing & Learning Centre staff about research and learning resources happened during a tour of the campus. On this tour, the PEC members also visited a VISA-2002: History of Modern Art lecture, the first-year studios, lecture halls, and campus galleries. Lastly, the *Journal of Visual & Critical Studies* editorial board members presented their work on their annual journal.

The External Review Report found the faculty, staff, and students in the VCS program are highly capable of strong self-reflection. Furthermore, they found that after four years, the program has shown good growth, produced excellent student work, and created an identity for itself as rigorous and innovative. The report noted the program's successes are remarkable given the minimal resources with which they were achieved. Moreover, the External Review Report underscored the importance of two recommendations: the issue of lack of a dedicated student study space and sense of community; and barriers to accessing studio courses.

2. Strengths and Challenges:

The strengths of the VCS program include its embodiment of the principles of the Academic Plan. Most notable of these are its commitment to Indigenization, decolonization, and interdisciplinarity. Furthermore, VCS faculty exhibit high quality of research, creation, and teaching expertise. Student performance is similarly high. The program demonstrates exceptional curricular range and a unique curricular structure that uses the resources and opportunities afforded by an art and design university situated in downtown Toronto.

The creation of a cohesive program identity is a challenge VCS could address by implementing dedicated study and social space. Furthermore, there is little funding for program operation, few scholarships/fellowships/bursaries to support VCS students financially, and an insufficiently resourced library.

3. Implementation Plan:

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility and Other Stakeholders	Implementation Date/Timeline
Program 1. Continue VCS's commitment to the project of decolonizing and Indigenizing the academy in ongoing curriculum review and in public events and publications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCS Chair and Program Committee establish a speaker series subcommittee (contingent on budget) to this end VCS Chair and Dean of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies (LAS/SIS) discuss funding of speaker series based on resources and support from Development and the Executive Director & Advisor to Provost/Partnerships, Outreach & Research Curriculum workshop in 2020 to review relationship of curriculum to Academic Plan (see Recommendation 9 below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCS Program Chair VCS Program Committee Dean of LAS/SIS Development Executive Director & Advisor to Provost/Partnerships, Outreach & Research 	Fall, 2020 and ongoing. However, the establishment of a speaker series subcommittee depends entirely on the commitment of resources to supporting this, which presently VCS does not have.
Program 2. a.) Coordinate speaker series themes with the <i>Journal of Visual and Critical Studies</i> . b.) Explore the relationship of JVCS's vision and mission to the Program Learning Outcomes.	a. Instead of speaker series, bring in a keynote around which the journal symposium can be focused. VCS Chair and VCS Program Committee meet with JVCS editorial board to converse with students ahead of time about who that keynote could be to integrate it with the speaker series. Contingent on funding. b. VCS Chair and VCS Program Committee review relevant documentation prior to meeting with JVCS Editorial Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCS Program Chair VCS Program Committee JVCS Editorial Board 	Fall 2020 and ongoing
Curriculum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCS Program Chair 	

<p>3. Creation of dedicated advanced seminar courses for VCS majors in the program, in particular, honours seminars, to complement current thesis seminar and explicitly establish VCS as an Honours BA program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Honours designation follows the Ontario provincial standard by which four-year BA undergraduate degrees are designated "Honours" (thus distinguishing them from three-year BA degrees). Thus, the IQAP team does not see the need on this basis to follow the external reviewers' recommendation • Considering program requirements and curricular initiatives from the VPAP Office, thesis has become optional • During this transition phase, program chair will monitor demand and will assess whether creation of new advances seminar courses is practical • If thesis model shifts from seminar model to individual advisor model, could some of the savings be re-deployed toward student awards and speaker series? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of LAS/SIS 	<p>To be assessed through Fall/Winter 2021-2022</p>
<p>Curriculum</p> <p>4. Prioritize resolving access issues to studio courses for VCS students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flow: Curricular Transformation has been addressing this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of LAS/SIS • Dean of Art • Dean of Design 	<p>In progress per Flow implementation, Fall 2020</p>
<p>Curriculum</p> <p>5. Formalize Indigenous content by making the new courses in the Indigenous Visual Culture program (INVC) -- 4XXX Global Views: Indigenous Art" and INVC-1XXX "Introduction to Indigenous Visual Culture" (formerly INVC-2012) required courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process began in 2018/19 with VCS Chair and Program Committee continuing discussion to make IVCV-1XXX and IVCV-4001: Global Views: Indigenous Art into program courses for Fall 2020 • IVCV-1XXX to be one of required first year art history courses starting Fall 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of LAS/SIS • VCS Program Chair • VCS Program Committee 	<p>Began in Fall 2018 and is planned to be implemented in Fall/Winter 2021/22</p>

Curriculum 6. Formally embrace and build up experiential learning as a for-credit option in the curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss experiential learning possibilities within and beyond the University; determine what's available, and what resources are there to expand opportunities From there, discuss the practicalities of formally implementing for-credit experiential learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCS Chair Program Committee Dean of LAS/SIS Director, Centre for Emerging Artists & Designers Manager, Career Development 	VCS Chair to meet with CEAD in Spring 2020 to assess
Curriculum 7. Instrumentalize the final annual event of the thesis presentations (thesis symposium) to check in with students to see where they perceive the gaps are in course offerings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCS Chair to explore with Associate Dean of Outreach and Strategic Initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCS Program Chair Associate Dean, Outreach & Strategic Initiatives 	April 2020
Curriculum 8. Consideration of pathways for VCS BA students who do not wish to pursue graduate studies that could be articulated through a variety of alternative options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the practicalities of a non-Thesis option with reference to the Program Learning Outcomes map generated by the IQAP process Program requirements and curricular initiatives from the VPAP Office, has mandated that thesis has become optional as of 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Chair Program Committee 	Implemented in Winter 2020
Curriculum 9. Conduct curriculum workshop in 2020 to review the self-study and reflect critically on the curriculum when fuller quantities of exit and alumni data are available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum workshop in Fall 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCS Chair VCS Program Committee 	Fall 2020
Curriculum 10. Expand the list of exchange partner universities in the Mobility/Exchange program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Manager, International Student Support & Exchange Programs to determine resources available and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Chair, Dean of LAS/SIS Manager, International Student Support & Exchange Programs 	Fall 2020

	<p>how to address potential gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations with Advancement around financial support for students studying abroad • Develop a list of partners and potential partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancement 	
<p>Faculty Complement</p> <p>11. Inclusion of Indigenous faculty member as part of core VCS faculty complement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suzanne Morrisette was added to Faculty of LAS/SIS as cross-appointed faculty and sits on VCS program committee • Clarification/formalization of “core faculty” appointment process to be discussed • Contingent on funding and fundraising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of LAS/SIS • VP Academic & Provost • VCS Program Chair 	Fall 2019 and ongoing
<p>Faculty Complement</p> <p>12. In alignment with Priority #2 of the Academic Plan, which includes the advancement of equity and diversity, further diversify the core faculty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given that VCS already has a relatively low sessional complement, it is unlikely that this program would be prioritised for new tenure-stream appointments in the short term • In future, increases in demand and faculty renewal will create more opportunities for diversity in new hires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Chair • Dean of LAS/SIS 	Ongoing
<p>Faculty Complement</p> <p>13. Exploration of collaborations with OCAD U's Digital Futures program as digital art history.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of an initial iteration of a VISA/DF cross-listed Digital Art History Seminar began during May 2019 LAS/SIS Retreat and VCS Retreat • If successful it will be the basis to develop a minor and specialization in Digital Art History • To be re-revisited after Flow implementation and contingent on funding and enrollment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Program Chair • Digital Futures Program Chair • VCS Program Committee • Digital Futures Program Committee • LAS Faculty 	On hold
Resource: Space			

14. Creation of a dedicated, combined bookable and free space for VCS students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a dedicated VCS space is highly unlikely • Audit of currently available study and workspaces for students is recommended instead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Program Chair • Dean of LAS/SIS • Vice-President, Administration & Finance • Vice-President, Academic & Provost • Executive Director & Advisor to Provost/Partnerships, Outreach & Research 	Fall/Winter 2022-2023, or after Flow has been fully implemented
Resource: Space 15. Discuss with the Office of the Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies, the possibility of securing more space and funding for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See item 14 above 		
Resource: Funding 16. Create stable funding for the <i>Journal of Visual and Critical Studies</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding currently exists on an ad-hoc basis • Formal budget account has been created for the JVCS as of Winter 2020 • Further steps to formalize this will be taken through 2020-2021 budget cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Chair • Dean of LAS/SIS • Manager, LAS/SIS Office 	In progress and due to be completed by end of the 2020-2021 fiscal year
Resource: Funding 17. Allocation of more funds for program-dedicated student bursaries and scholarships, travel and research grants, and TA and RA-ships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently VCS is having to deploy funds from its discretionary budget to meet the demands of existing awards, so this conversation has been ongoing with Advancement • Executive Director & Advisor to Provost/Partnerships, Outreach & Research has been consulted with as well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Chair • Dean of LASSIS • Advancement • Vice-President, Academic and Provost, • Executive Director & Advisor to Provost/Partnerships, Outreach & Research 	Ongoing
Additional recommendations to be implemented, not included in the external review report (if applicable):			

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility and Other Stakeholders	Implementation Date/Timeline
18. Create first-year art history courses for VCS majors (replacing VISC-1001, VISC-1002: Global Visual Material Culture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Chair and VCS Program Committee have already begun discussion of this (VCS Retreat, May 16, 2019), with discussion to continue in the Fall so that this can enter the curricular process in 2019/20 and be implemented in 2020/21 • Considering university-wide curriculum changes, the possibility for creating dedicated VCS tutorial sections is being explored instead of new courses • Implementation of VCS specific tutorials is subject to determination of faculty course load allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Chair • Dean of LAS/SIS • Office of the Registrar 	Tentative for Fall 2020
19. A dedicated VCS team-taught course interdisciplinary course in History/Humanities/English offered at the second year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions of this began during the VCS Retreat, May 16, 2019, with discussion to continue in the Fall • Further discussion has been placed on hold due to Flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Chair • VCS Program Committee 	To be revisited post-Flow implementation (Fall/Winter 2023-2024)
20. Explore a specialization in Indigenous Art History, contingent on the hiring of art history Indigenous specialist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions began during VCS Retreat, May 16, 2019), but has been put on hold pending Flow implementation • Introducing an Indigenous and Canadian Art History Minor specific minor for all students will also be explored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of LAS/SIS • Chair of VCS • Chair of Indigenous Visual Culture 	To be revisited post-Flow implementation (Fall/Winter 2023-2024)
21. The VCS Program Committee clarify curricular priorities with respect to course rotations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions to be made on an ongoing basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Chair • Associate Dean, Academic Affairs 	Ongoing
22. Exploration of course-sharing partnership with a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Letter of Agreement is being explored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar • Dean of LAS/SIS 	

comprehensive university (e.g. Ryerson) to provide VCS students more breadth options, including languages, and access to an external research library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements beyond university libraries (i.e. AGO) will also be considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice President, Academic & Provost • VCS Program Chair 	Tentative for Fall/Winter 2021-2022
23. Explore synergies with the grad programs in Contemporary Art, Design, and New Media Art Histories and Criticism and Curatorial Practice, such as adding more 5000-level courses for undergrads and grads and targeting specific 4000-level courses for grad students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions are happening around courses which will be re-designated from 6000 level and 4000 level to 5000 level • Streamlining registration process by implementing formal policy for senior undergraduate students to register in graduate courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Program Chair • Graduate Program Director of CADN • Dean of Graduate Studies • Dean of LAS/SIS 	Explore through Fall/Winter 2020-2021
24. Develop a protocol for undergraduate and graduate programs to work together to develop joint courses and facilitate access to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See item 23; new courses unlikely at this time 		
25. Improvements to student registration system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend that the current registration system is audited post-Flow implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of LAS/SIS • Registrar 	Ongoing
26. Improve support and consultation from Marketing and Communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual meetings to review recruitment strategies; highlighting key aspects of the program and to refresh promotional materials each year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Program Chair • Dean of LAS/SIS • Manager, Marketing • Manager, Recruitment 	Ongoing
27. Expansion of the library's physical plant and acquisitions budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of physical resources is highly unlikely; however, the program chair is exploring with University Librarian expansion of the University's E-Library and Faculty access to other collections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Librarian • VCS Program Chair • VCS Program Committee 	Exploratory conversation in progress

28. Develop a VCS Library Acquisitions Advisory Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See previous item (27) 		
29. Improvements to VCS fundraising support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See item 16 and 17 above 		
30. Support for research and research dissemination, including increased professional development and conference funding for faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of professional development increase through negotiations • Consider re-instating the VPA's discretionary competitive conference and research support budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCAD Faculty Association • Dean of LAS/SIS • Vice-President, Academic & Provost • Executive Director & Advisor to Provost/Partnerships, Outreach & Research • Vice-President, Research & Innovation 	Implemented as becomes available
31. Faculty support for pedagogical development, including dedicated funding and workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCAD U is prioritizing this • VCS Chair is encouraging VCS faculty engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice-President, Academic and Provost • Faculty & Curriculum Development Centre • VCS Program Chair 	Ongoing
32. Ongoing access to cultural competency and anti-racism training for Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCAD U is prioritizing this • VCS Chair is encouraging VCS faculty engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Program Chair • Vice-President, Academic and Provost • Faculty & Curriculum Development Centre • Office of Equity, Diversity and Sustainability Initiatives 	Ongoing

4. Recommendations:

The starting point most likely will be the reverse: not to prioritize what can be done, but to identify all items that are unlikely to be practicable in the foreseeable future. This includes any recommendations for the creation of additional courses, any recommendations for new hires, and any recommendations that require either capital budget, increased operating budget or (as in the case of upgrading the library) both. To be clear, these recommendations all are very well considered, and we welcome the opportunity to implement them, but it seems unlikely in the current context. As well, there are some recommendations that are similarly robust, but

are better placed in the hands of other units, such as the office of the VPAP (such as pedagogical development and cultural competency/anti-racism training).

Following from this, prioritization will occur in consultation with the VCS Program Committee and the LAS/SIS decanal structure. That said, as noted at the start, the External Review Report underscored the importance of two recommendations—the issue of lack of a dedicated student study space and sense of community; and barriers to accessing studio courses—and we concur that these are top-line items. While we don't see new space being provided in the foreseeable future, we do think other low-cost or no-cost solutions to the issue of community might be available (tutorial sections in VISC-1001 and VISC-1002 dedicated to the VCS cohort; creation of a VCS students' association), and that facilitating access to studio courses will happen through curricular revisions currently in progress.

5. Conclusion:

The Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) was provided the documents pertaining to the Visual and Critical Studies cyclical program review, including the self-study brief; the responses of the Dean and Vice-President, Academic and Provost; the External Review Report; and the Internal Response. In their review of the final report, the SQAC focused discussion on resource and space requirements and the need for a sense of cohort amongst other student needs. The committee recommended the report to Senate for approval. The report received approval from Senate on April 27, 2020.