

University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

Program(s):	Italian, B.A., Hons: Specialist, Major; Minor Italian Culture and Communication Studies, Minor Second Language Learning (Italian), B.A., Hons: Major Italian Studies, M.A., Ph.D.
Division/Unit:	Department of Italian Studies (Undergraduate and Tri-Campus Graduate Programs)
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	Dr. Christopher Kleinhenz, Professor Emeritus, Department of French and Italian, University of Wisconsin-Madison Dr. Mark Pietralunga, Victor B. Oelschlager Professor and former Chair, Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, Florida State University Dr. Deanna Shemek, Professor of Italian Studies, Department of Literature, University of California, Santa Cruz
Date of review visit:	November 19-20, 2012
Date reported to AP&P:	April 16, 2013

1 Outcome

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that there were no issues to be drawn to the attention of the Agenda Committee but requested a follow up report in one year concerning faculty renewal.

2 Significant Program Strengths

- Innovative teaching
- International reputation of graduate academic staff
- The spirit of collegiality and cooperation within the Department and across campuses
- Undergraduate students' satisfaction with courses
- Well-conceived renewal of the Department's language curriculum
- Unusual strength and engagement of both undergraduate and graduate student associations
- Exceptional research resources

3 Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Going beyond traditional categories and period boundaries in designing undergraduate courses to mobilize critical thinking and trans-historical inquiry
- Systematically identifying learning outcomes in course syllabi and program objectives to strengthen already fine course offerings
- Revising the graduate program curriculum to make it consistent with the interdisciplinary and comparative direction of the profession
- Addressing the ongoing challenge of securing consistently high quality graduate applicants in a competitive funding environment
- Engaging in strategic growth through new faculty hires and building linkages with other programs
- Establishing a strategic plan for the next five to ten years
- Finding ways to facilitate increased dialogue across disciplines and fields, working collaboratively with other units, centres and institutes to mutual benefit

4 Implementation Plan

The Dean undertook in consultation with the Department to support the following changes:

- Immediate Term (6 months)
 - Extending the curriculum beyond traditional boundaries
 - The Department Chair and faculty members are eager to recommend additional new thematic courses for development, especially at the undergraduate level, and they will engage in a reassessment of course offerings
 - Identifying learning outcomes
 - The Department has begun to review course syllabi to ensure that they clearly identify learning outcomes and program objectives
 - Revising graduate program curricula
 - The Department has begun to revise to the graduate program
 - The Department is in the process of further strengthening partnerships across the University to promote more interdisciplinary opportunities for its graduate students
 - Engaging in strategic growth of the complement

- The Department has recently concluded a search for contractually-limited term-appointment and a specialist in three areas
- The Chair is in discussion with cognate units to explore cross-appointment possibilities
- o Strategic planning
 - The Chair will schedule a faculty retreat in 2013 on the strategic direction for the Department
- o Collaborating with other units
 - The Department has already engaged in discussion with cognate units such as Cinema Studies and will continue to assess their curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels
 - Cross-disciplinary topics and methods will be encouraged at all levels, and they would generate easy alliances with faculty of cognate departments for research collaboration, co-supervision of dissertations, and joint conferences
- Medium Term (1-2 years)
 - o Attracting high quality graduate applicants
 - The Faculty has earmarked additional funds for the 2013-2014 recruitment cycle to enhance the Department's ability to attract top-tier domestic students

The Dean's Office will follow up annually with the unit to assess progress.

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as the engagement of the student associations; innovative teaching; high satisfaction of undergraduate students; well-conceived renewal of the language curriculum; and the spirit of collegiality and cooperation within the Department and across campuses. The reviewers recommended that the followings issues be addressed: extending undergraduate courses beyond traditional categories; systematically identifying learning outcomes; revising the graduate program curriculum; increasing the proportion of high quality graduate applicants; engaging in strategic growth of the complement; establishing a strategic plan; and facilitating increased dialogue with other units. The Department will engage in a review of its course offerings at the graduate and undergraduate level and has begun to identify course learning outcomes. The Department plans to continue to strengthen ties and explore cross-appointments with cognate units. A strategic planning retreat is planned for 2013. The Faculty of Arts & Science has earmarked additional funds for the 2013-2014 recruitment cycle to enhance the Department's ability to attract top-tier domestic students. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that there were no issues to be drawn to the attention of the Agenda Committee but requested a follow up report in one year concerning faculty renewal.