

December 1, 2022

Council Committee on Academic Mission
University of Regina

Re: Creative Technologies (CTCH) Program Review - 18 Month Follow Up Report

Dear CCAM,

The external review of the undergraduate Interdisciplinary programs in the Faculty of MAP sheds light on a number of issues that needed to be addressed more broadly within the Faculty, as well as in the specific programs. The review was an important process in that it offered stakeholders a much needed outlet to voice concerns, as well as to seek and offer possible solutions on some of the issues outlined by the reviewers.

Since January 2022, with the support of our newly appointed Interim Dean Dr. David Dick, the undergraduate Interdisciplinary programs and the Faculty as a whole have made substantial progress in addressing a number of the concerns outlined in the review. I am happy to report that we are moving forward with a renewed sense of hope and energy.

Since the Last Response:

Over the past 8 months we have made a dramatic shift in how we are responding to the external review. Much of the confusion that was felt and reported on by the reviewers was in part because the Creative Technologies program was positioned as similar to the other undergraduate interdisciplinary programs in MAP, which is not the reality. Creative Technologies is an undergraduate program that functions in a similar way to the programs in the other four departments in MAP, and thus, it has been determined the best course of action moving forward is to separate out the Creative Technologies program from the other undergraduate Interdisciplinary programs that were part of the external review. This will facilitate greater transparency and accuracy as we respond to and implement the recommendations made by the external reviewers for the different areas that fall under Interdisciplinary undergraduate programs.

The Creative Technologies program has felt the effects of rapid growth, while at the same time attempting to manage a serious lack of support and resources as identified by reviewers in the report. However, in collaboration with Interim Dean Dick Creative Technologies is developing strategies to access supports, including administrative and technical supports. In Creative Technologies we still need to address the need for more faculty as we continue to run the program drawing on a large number of sessional appointments.

Below I have outlined each of the recommendations and how we are addressing each one in Creative Technologies.

Recommendation 1.

Improve Workplace Culture and address communication in the Faculty

Comments: Improvements in workplace culture are being addressed at multiple levels within the Faculty. In Fall 2021 the provost hired Folk Consulting to initiate discussions on how to improve our workplace culture in MAP. Our first Faculty-wide workshop focusing on workplace culture was held in Spring 2022. Since then the Dean's office has been working on a process for feedback that allows for anonymity so as to address fears and anxieties around possible retaliation for critical input.

The most significant change in workplace culture can I believe, be attributed to the appointment of a new Interim Dean, Dr. David Dick (January 2022), whose leadership style focuses on fostering collegiality, building trust through listening, and making himself accessible to faculty, staff, and students. Dean Dick is a strong communicator who believes in transparency, especially with regard to budgets and resources. He works collaboratively in order to find and offer possible solutions, and he provides meaningful support in an equitable way across the areas in MAP. The Dean also delegates tasks that are better navigated or supported by others. These are all actions that have been highly successful in improving workplace culture within MAP over a short period of time.

Concerns around the lack of communication as expressed in the report have also been specifically addressed for Creative Technologies through the following strategies:

- the creation of the Creative Technologies Program Coordinator, a position that is dedicated to the leadership of and advocacy for the CTCH program and area;
- the creation of a dedicated seat for the CTCH PC at the Dean's Executive;
- the scheduling of monthly meetings for the Dean and the CTCH PC, offering direct lines of communication between CTCH and the Dean;
- listening to the expertise of CTCH faculty as we navigate changes to the program;
- the transparency of budgetary matters concerning CTCH and needing resources;
- the centralizing of administrative support for the CTCH program.

Recommendation 2

Actively involve all stakeholders in developing a new vision for the IDP undergrad Interdisciplinary programs

Comments: The CTCH program is the most interdisciplinary of all programs in the Faculty of MAP. The CTCH program is a partnership between MAP, the Faculty of Engineering, and the Department of Computer Science. The program was developed to work across and between disciplinary boundaries and we have successfully moved beyond the idea that interdisciplinarity is merely a bringing together of two or more disciplines.

Over the past 6 months, the CTCH committee, which includes representatives from our partners, has discussed and put into action multiple changes to the program, especially to the core, which highlight the interdisciplinarity of CTCH and how it can serve the students as they work through their programs and in their search for employment upon completion of their studies.

Recommendation 3

Governance: Address Structural Issues that have Disenfranchised Stakeholders

Comments: In Spring 2022 after discussions with all stakeholders, Dean Dick created a new CTCH Coordinator position as a way to address some of the structural and governance issues remarked upon in the review. I was appointed to this position, and since my appointment the terms of reference and governance structure for CTCH have been changed. The CTCH PC now reports directly to the Dean on behalf of the CTCH Committee. This is also an action that speaks to recommendation 1, as CTCH now feels that they have a voice at the Dean's table and are included in decision making that impacts the area and the wider Faculty.

Recommendation 4

Support: Undertake Critical Work in Restructuring Technical Resources and Support Staff; removing redundancies and creating efficiencies by removing duplication, so as to better support all units

Comments: The Dean and Faculty Administrator are working to centralize technical resources for the entire Faculty. This is key for CTCH as we move forward, as the program, which is heavily reliant on specialized equipment, gear, and space, continues to grow at a quick rate. I have also started to work more closely with our partners in Engineering and Computer Science so we can engage in sharing and reciprocity around resources, rather than duplicating resources.

Recommendation 5

Curriculum: Tighten and focus the interdisciplinary courses

Comments: In the past 6 months, the CTCH Committee has worked to revise the CTCH program, as well as update course titles and descriptions, in order to streamline and focus the program. We have considered and changed aspects of the core of the program; we have also added core courses from our partners, and made more transparent the ways to navigate the program. These changes are in process with the aim of being in place for Fall 2023.

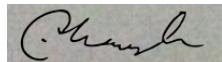
Recommendation 6

Interdisciplinarity: Develop a framework of Interdisciplinarity at the Unit level, the Faculty level, and the University level

Comments: As mentioned above, Creative Technologies already has an established framework of interdisciplinarity that works well within the program, and takes into account our students' different disciplinary backgrounds as we focus on the richness of conversations between MAP, Computer Science, and Engineering students that occur in Creative Technologies classes. I think it is key for CTCH to help lead some of these larger discussions within the Faculty, not to determine a singular definition or understanding of interdisciplinarity, but to demonstrate how the CTCH model of interdisciplinarity works in serving students and the area. CTCH is one model of interdisciplinarity that may assist in the creation of a larger Faculty-wide framework.

As I mentioned above, my colleagues and I are feeling hopeful and supported in Creative Technologies as we continue to work through the recommendations and move forward with program changes. I look forward to meeting with CCAM next week to further discuss the progress we have made and future work we have to still do in Creative Technologies.

Sincerely,



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