TO: Members of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Richard Nunn, Chair, Governing Council

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DATE: September 14, 2011

AGENDA ITEM: 9(b)

TITLE OF ITEM OF BUSINESS: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs Terms of Reference: Proposed Revisions Arising from the Implementation Committee for the Task Force on Governance

ACTION:

- For Information

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

- Section 2(14) (e) of the *University of Toronto Act* empowers the Governing Council to "appoint committees and delegate thereto power and authority to act for the Governing Council with respect to matters, provided that where power and authority to act for the Governing Council are delegated, a majority of the members of the committee shall be members of the Governing Council." Section 2(14)(na) permits delegation of authority to act for the Governing Council to committees that lack a majority of members from the Governing Council in certain purely academic areas: examinations, student academic awards, admission standards, curriculum and academic requirements.
- The Governing Council has established Boards and Committees and assigned responsibilities among those bodies through their terms of reference. The Governing Council has periodically approved changes in Board and Committee terms of reference to respond to changing circumstances and expectations of governance.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

On October 28, 2010, the Governing Council approved in principle the *Report of the Task Force on Governance* and the 32 recommendations outlined in the *Report*. The Governing Council also established an Implementation Committee led by then Vice-Chair Richard Nunn. The mandate of the Implementation Committee was to oversee and coordinate implementation of the Task Force's recommendations, ensuring appropriate participation among relevant bodies of governance, administrative offices and the Secretariat.

The Task Force recommended that, as a guiding principle, transactional matters be delegated to either the lowest appropriate level within governance, or where appropriate, to the administration with reporting back of decisions to a suitable level of governance. As expected, this principle has been key to the Implementation Committee's work on proposed revisions to Board and Committee Terms of Reference. Recommendations 15, 19 and 20 specifically provide for the re-distribution of and greater delegation of responsibility; for the clarification and reduction of intersection with other Boards' responsibilities; and the re-assignment of selected responsibilities to the Academic Board, Business Board, Executive Committee and the proposed Campus Affairs Committees. Finally, recommendation 30 called for a reduction or elimination of routine or transactional items to enhance efficiency through consent agendas.

The Task Force Report described the use of consent agendas as "delegation with continued oversight" – that is, the consideration of specific classes of more routine approval items to facilitate more careful consideration of major items, a common practice for governing boards.

In May 2011, the Governing Council approved the re-alignment of responsibilities among the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, the Planning and Budget Committee, the Academic Board and the divisional councils with respect to academic program review and approval. These revisions were derived from two parallel processes – (1) that of the University's Quality Assurance Process arising from the Council of Ontario Universities, and (2) the recommendations of the Task Force Report intended to vest academic decision-making and oversight with the institution's expert academic bodies.

Further changes to the Academic Board's Terms of Reference were approved by the Governing Council at its meeting of June 23, 2011. The Connaught Committee was eliminated as a Standing Committee of the Board. To replace its functions, the Vice-President, Research established a committee to oversee the Connaught Fund; information on the new committee and the status of the fund are readily accessible on the Vice-President's website, ensuring the transparency and accountability intended by the original Standing Committee.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The major amendments proposed are as follows. (Numerous additional amendments represent simple housekeeping.)

- **Item 3 - Function**. The central role of the Committee, to ensure the quality of the University's academic programs, is now stressed in the description of the Committee's overall function. It performs this role through the consideration of proposals for new academic programs and the monitoring of reviews of existing programs, as well as through (as stated in the current terms of reference) overseeing various academic policy matters. It is the Committee's work in monitoring the quality of academic programs, through its consideration of reviews of those programs, that enables the delegation of substantial authority to the divisional councils – an important goal of the Task Force on Governance.

- **Item 4.1 - Admissions policies.** It is proposed that the Committee continue to consider and recommend to the Academic Board any University-wide policies concerning admissions. New divisional admission policies, or major amendments to them that would affect the entire division, would be considered for approval at the Committee level. This would reflect the goal of the Task Force on Governance to avoid duplication at various levels by delegating more responsibility to the lowest appropriate level of governance. More minor amendments would be approved by the divisional councils and reported to the Provost's Office.

- **Item 4.2 - Awards Policies.** It is clarified that the Committee considers only University-wide policies on student awards, recommending any new policies or major amendments to the Academic Board and approving minor amendments. Divisional policies that are consistent with University-wide policies are within the authority of the divisional councils, with a report to the Provost's Office.

- **Item 4.3 - Academic regulations.** It is clarified that the Committee considers, and recommends to the Academic Board, University-wide policies governing academic regulations such as policies on student academic appeals and standards of professional behaviour for students in professional faculties. Minor amendments to those policies may be approved by the Committee. With respect to divisional academic regulations, amendments that will have a major affect on the division or that are inconsistent with University policy require the approval of the Committee. Other amendments are within the authority of the divisional council, with a report to the Provost's Office.

- **Item 4.4 – Academic program proposals.** This section contains certain clarifications to bring the terms of reference more clearly into conformity with the University's Quality Assurance Process. Certain definitions of changes to academic programs – including the definitions of new programs and major modifications to programs - were taken from the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process and included in footnotes in the current terms of reference. Because it is anticipated that those definitions might be changed from time to time, the footnoted definitions were removed, and new footnotes instead provide the web reference to the Quality Assurance Process document.

- **Item 4.5 – Examinations and grading practices**. Amendments to this section would delegate to the Committee (from the Academic Board) responsibility to approve amendments to divisional policies on examinations and grading practices, apart from minor amendments that conform to University policy, which amendments would be within the authority of the divisional councils.

- **Item 4.7 - Earned degrees, diplomas and certificates**. The Committee would approve proposals concerning the design of parchments, issuance of replacements, etc., rather than making recommendations to the Academic Board.

- **Item 4.9 – Monitorial responsibilities**. To prevent duplication, the Committee would no longer receive the annual report of the Vice-President, Research. The report should not be made twice, and it is of such importance that it would be would be made directly to the Academic Board. Because almost all members of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs are also members of the Academic Board, they would not lose the opportunity to hear this very important annual report. (One or two members of the Committee might be members of the Governing Council but not the Academic Board, but they would certainly be welcome to attend the relevant meeting of the Academic Board to hear this report.)

- **Item 5 – Procedures**. Two procedural options are being added to the terms of reference of all Boards and Committees. The Chair could include certain more routine items on the agenda of any meeting as "consent" items. Such items would normally be dealt with without presentation or discussion. Rather members would be invited to put any questions to the sponsor by means of a call or an electronic message before the meeting. Any member with concerns could request that the item be dealt with in the usual way. The process would enable the Committee to focus its attention on the more substantial items on the agenda.

  Similarly, certain reports for information could be published electronically, members notified of the publication, and questions again put to the sponsor between meetings. Again, with sufficient notice, any member with a concern could request that the item be placed on the agenda of the next Committee meeting. Again, the process would enable the Committee to focus its attention on the more substantial items on the agenda. In addition, publication of items between meetings would keep members abreast of developments in a timely manner.

BUDGETARY/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

N/A

ACTION:

- For Information only.