TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Cheryl Regehr, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

CONTACT INFO: 416.978.2122, vpacademicprograms@utoronto.ca

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AGENDA ITEM: 2

ITEM OF BUSINESS:
Report on the Reviews of Graduate Collaborative Programs: 2011-12

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:
"The Committee…has general responsibility…for monitoring, the quality of education and the research activities of the University. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Committee works to ensure the excellent quality of academic programs by…monitoring reviews of existing programs….The Committee receives annual reports or such more frequent regular reports as it may determine, on matters within its purview, including reports on the …[r]eviews of academic units and programs."[1]

The report on the reviews of graduate collaborative programs is forwarded, together with the record of the Committee's discussion, to the Agenda Committee of the Academic Board, which determines whether there are any issues of general academic import warranting discussion at the Board level. The same documentation is sent to the Executive Committee of the Governing Council for information.

PREVIOUS ACTION
Governing Council approved the *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units* in 2010. The *Policy* outlines University-wide principles for the approval of proposed new academic programs and review of existing programs and units.[2] Its goal is to align the University's quality assurance processes with the Province's Quality Assurance Framework through establishing the authority of the University of Toronto's Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP).

The scope of the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) includes collaborative programs. In line with the COU's Quality Assurance Framework, the University of Toronto understands a collaborative program to be "an intra-university graduate program that provides an additional multidisciplinary experience for students enrolled in and completing the degree requirements for one of a number of approved programs. Students meet the admission requirements of and register in the participating (or 'home') program but complete, in addition to the degree requirements of that program, the additional requirements specified by the collaborative program. The degree conferred is that

of the home program, and the completion of the collaborative program is indicated by a transcript notation indicating the additional specialization that has been attained." [3] The learning outcomes of a collaborative program are in addition to those supported by the home program.

In implementing the UTQAP it was agreed that the Vice-Provost Graduate Education and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies would commission collaborative program reviews and prepare an annual report on their outcomes and implementation plans. Because of the unique nature of collaborative programs, their review process focuses on the quality of the "additional multidisciplinary experience" that collaborative programs provide, over and above the experience associated with the home program. Reviews emphasize elements that are critical to determining ongoing quality of collaborative programs at the University of Toronto, including:
1. Clarity and appropriateness of requirements
2. Evidence of successful attainment of learning outcomes
3. Evidence of ongoing need and demand
4. Continuing support of participating programs and supporting units (e.g. renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA))

This is the first report on the reviews of graduate collaborative programs to come forward to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs under the UTQAP.

HIGHLIGHTS:
Six external reviews of collaborative programs were commissioned by the Vice-Provost Graduate Education and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies in 2011-12. The submission to AP&P consists of a table that summarizes the review outcomes, administrative responses and implementation plans for each review.

The overall assessment of the "additional multidisciplinary experience" provided by each of the collaborative programs was positive. The reviews indicate that collaborative programs provide students with access to an array of enriching experiences including unique seminars, internships and social events, and that there is ongoing and in many cases increasing demand for these collaborative programs. The renewal of the MOA, which is part of this review process, provides an important opportunity to clarify participation in and support for the collaborative programs.

Some reviews raised concerns about the clarity of program requirements and terminology. The reviews made important recommendations on how these matters could be improved. The administrative responses of the collaborative program directors and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies addressed these issues and others.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS: n/a

RECOMMENDATION: For Information.

[1] Committee on Academic Policy and Programs Terms of Reference, sections 3 and 4.9. http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Boards+and+Committees/Committee+on+Academic+Policy+and+Programs/apptor.pdf
[2] http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/AcaProgs_Units_pdf.htm
[3] COU Quality Assurance Framework, page 4. http://www.cou.on.ca/related-sites/the-ontario-universities-council-on-quality-assura/pdfs-(1)/quality-assurance-framework---guide-may-2012