



TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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DATE: March 18, 2009

AGENDA ITEM: 4

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

**Reviews of Academic Units and Programs 2007-08 – Annual Report Part II: Divisional Reviews**

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The Committee is the point of entry into governance for reports on the results of academic reviews of programs and units commissioned by academic administrators. The role of the Committee is to ensure that the reviews are done, that an appropriate process is being used, that adequate documentation is provided and consultations are undertaken, and that issues identified in the review are addressed by the administration.

The compendium of review summaries is forwarded, together with the record of the Committee's discussion, to the Agenda Planning 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 Assessment and Review of Academic Programs* in 2005<sup>1</sup>. The *Policy* governs the overall framework for the internal assessment of proposed new programs and units and the review of existing programs and units at the University of Toronto and defines the overarching principles, scope, procedures and accountability within this framework. The *Policy* specifies two administrative guidelines that outline the procedures for the actual assessment and review of programs and units.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

External reviews of academic programs and units are important mechanisms of accountability for the University and an integral part of the academic planning process. The academic reviews are critical to ensuring the quality of our programs through vigorous and consistent processes. External review reports may also inform the search for a new academic administrator.

Twenty-five reviews of units and/or programs were commissioned by University divisions in the 2007-08 academic year. The overall assessments of these units and their academic programs were positive. Common themes continue to be the strength of our faculty

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/policy/review.htm>

excellence and the emphasis on enhancement of the student experience. Degree level expectations were approved by academic divisions in the spring of 2008. The 2007-08 reviews are the last reviews commissioned under review guidelines that did not incorporate of degree level expectations in the terms of reference.

The Faculty of Arts and Science commissioned two reviews of interdivisional programs, the Forestry Conservation program (with the Faculty of Forestry) and the Music program (with the Faculty of Music). Although both the Faculty of Forestry and the Faculty of Music were reviewed externally in 2004, the undergraduates programs were reviewed separately in 2007-08 because they had not been fully considered in the provostial reviews.

The Faculty of Medicine reviews highlight that the Faculty's undergraduate medical curriculum has undergone many innovative developments and provides a standard of excellence in medical education. Several reviews highlight the need for academic planning within a unit. Several reviews noted the changing health funding within the Province of Ontario, referring to the Phase 3 of Alternate Funding Plan (AFP) funds in support of education and research as well as relationships with health care providers within the newly established Local Health Integrated Networks.

The reviews conducted by the University of Toronto Mississauga are the first external reviews of the departments since their establishment in 2003. The review reports reflect the rapid undergraduate expansion that the campus has seen since the establishment of the departments.

University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) separately reviewed the five interdisciplinary programs it offers jointly with Centennial College, established in 2003-04. Students receive a BA/BSc from UofT and a diploma or certificate from Centennial. As part of the process to establish the programs, a *Memorandum of Understanding between Centennial and the University of Toronto* was signed by both institutions. In accordance with the MOU, UTSC and Centennial commissioned a review of the MOU during 2007-2008, concurrent with the external reviews of the programs. During the deliberations of the Review Committee, as well as in the self-studies prepared for the review and the external review reports themselves, it became clear that certain common administrative issues needed to be addressed for the joint programs. As outlined in detail in the administrative responses, UTSC and Centennial have worked to revise the MOU, clarifying the program's senior academic administrative leadership, setting up a Joint Programs Steering Committee and a Joint Programs Coordinator, and coordinating a new marketing and recruitment campaign to raise program awareness.

Several of the departmental review reports of the Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto Mississauga and University of Toronto Scarborough comment upon the complex nature of the tri-campus relationships. The University has engaged in the *Towards 2030* comprehensive planning strategy which is, amongst many other things, the next step in the evolution of the tri-campus structure. The *Towards 2030 Framework*<sup>2</sup>, approved by Governing Council in 2008, highlights the University's de-facto tri-campus system. The document affirms the University's commitment to "sustain inter-campus collaboration while enabling strategic tri-campus differentiation of academic programs. Campus-specific

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=5517>

autonomy will be supported insofar as it does not compromise efficiency or academic quality.” For this complex endeavor to be successful, the continued goodwill, collaboration, and cooperation between the arts and science divisions on all three campuses is essential. The issues raised in the review reports have been discussed within the Tri-campus Deans Committee, whose biweekly meetings serve as an important forum for communication, consultation, and coordination across the three arts and science divisions.

Additional reviews of programs are conducted by organizations external to the University. Reviews of academic programs by external bodies form part of collegial self-regulatory systems to ensure that mutually agreed-upon threshold standards of quality are maintained in new and existing programs. A summary listing of these reviews is presented in the Appendix.

These reports compliment the University’s Performance Indicators and other institution-wide quantitative measures of our performance towards key goals and compares that performance to its peers. The full review reports are available in the Office of the Governing Council should members wish to consult them.

**FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:** n/a

**RECOMMENDATION:**

For Information.