



TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Report on the Reviews of Academic Units and Programs July 2008 to December 2009

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee is the point of entry into governance for reports summaries and administrative responses on the results of academic reviews of programs and units commissioned by academic administrators.¹ The role of the Committee is to ensure that the reviews are done as per University policy and guidelines, 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 2005². 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.

55175

¹ The full review reports are available in the Office of the Governing Council.

² <http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/policy/review.htm>

HIGHLIGHTS:

External reviews of academic programs and units are important mechanisms of accountability for the University and a vital part of the academic planning process. The academic reviews are critical to ensuring the quality of our programs through vigorous and consistent processes. The 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.

Nineteen external reviews of units and/or programs were received by the Office of the Vice-President and Provost from July 2008 to December 2009: Five commissioned by the Provost and fourteen commissioned by Deans. As part of our efforts to improve the accountability of the process, this year we include the signed administrative responses to the reviews, from the Deans and Provost for divisional reviews, and from the Deans for departmental reviews. In addition, rather than presenting reports to the Committee on a slip-year basis, this compendium includes reports received to the end of December 2009. As such, administrative responses for these reports highlight action plans and consultations to be taken following report recommendations.

The overall assessments of the academic programs reviewed were positive. Common themes continue to be the strength of our faculty excellence and the emphasis on enhancement of the student experience.

The reviews of the Faculty of Forestry, the Faculty of Medicine Banting and Best Department of Medical Research, and the University of Mississauga Institute for Communication and Culture, and the University of Toronto Scarborough Department of Humanities all concern themselves with matters related to the structures of these units. The administrators for these units have included plans for consultation and co-ordination in addressing the recommendations of the reports.

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.

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.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS: n/a

RECOMMENDATION:

For Information.