



TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Cheryl Regehr, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

CONTACT INFO: vpademicprograms@utoronto.ca

DATE: Meeting of March 1, 2011

AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Report on the Reviews of Academic Units and Programs July to December 2010

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 conducted as per University policy and guidelines, an appropriate process is being used, adequate documentation is provided, consultations are undertaken, and 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 Governing Council for information.

PREVIOUS ACTION

Governing Council approved the *Policy for Assessment and Review of Academic Programs* in 2010². The *Policy* outlines University-wide principles for the approval of proposed new academic programs and of existing academic programs and units. 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).

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. Academic reviews are critical to ensuring the quality of our programs through vigorous and consistent

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

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

processes that assess the quality of new and existing programs and units against our international peer institutions.

Five external reviews of units and/or programs were received by the Office of the Vice-President and Provost from July 2010 to January 2011: three commissioned by the Provost and two commissioned by Deans. As part of our efforts to improve the accountability of the process, this year we include signed administrative responses 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 January 2011. 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 excellence of our faculty; the strength of our educational programs; and our competitiveness internationally. At the same time the reviewers made helpful suggestions concerning specific areas for potential improvement.

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.