



# University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

**Executive Committee  
January 27, 2005  
Item #11**

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Edith Hillan  
CONTACT INFO: edith.hillan@utoronto.ca

DATE: December 1, 2004 for December 8, 2004

AGENDA ITEM: 3

## **ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee (UPRAC) - Report of the Auditors on the 2001 U of T Undergraduate Program Review

## **JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The Committee has monitorial responsibility for annual reports on reviews of academic programs and units.

## **PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

As a result of the 1993 Report of the Task Force on University Accountability (Broadhurst Report), the Ontario government had indicated that it wanted to initiate a process whereby there would be direct external review of undergraduate programs. In Memorandum 93-VI, the Ontario Council of University Affairs proposed a province-wide review process to be carried out by an independent Academic Quality Audit Committee.

The Ontario Academic Vice-Presidents noted that the proposed initiative was (a) far too intrusive into universities' internal affairs and (b) likely to increase costs and bureaucracy substantially. Over the next three years, there were discussions among the Vice-Presidents Academic, the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and the government about how to construct a system-wide review process that synthesized (a) the government's goal of accountability with b) the universities' insistence on maintaining autonomy.

In December 1996, COU accepted an initiative proposed by the Vice-Presidents Academic group. A sub-committee of the group, now formalized as the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV), would oversee a regular 'audit' of the procedures used by universities in reviewing their undergraduate programs. This process is applied both to existing programs, as well as to the introduction of new programs. The process was designed to satisfy the needs for accountability identified in the Broadhurst Report and by the Ontario Council on University Affairs in its Advisory Memorandum OCUA 93-VI Academic Audit Review, while preserving the principles of university self-regulation and autonomy.

In 2001, the University Program Reviews Audit Committee (UPRAC) audited the University of Toronto' review system by selecting a sample of completed U of T reviews and the University's own *Guidelines for Review of Academic Programs*.

The Audit Committee presented its Report to the University in January 2004 (see attached). The Report made a number of recommendations and suggestions as to how processes at the University of Toronto might be improved. The UPRAC report was on the agenda for the Committee's meeting in June 2004, but it was agreed that it should be deferred to a later meeting.

The *UPRAC Audit Guidelines* apply two tests: the conformity of institutional policy, procedures, and practices (i.e., the review process as a whole) to the UPR process, and the conformity of institutional procedures and practices to institutional policy. The reviewers concluded that the review process at U of T is "essentially very sound" with a number of features that "are laudatory and worthy of emulation". The reviewers also noted that U of T's *Guidelines for Review of Academic Programs* were tied to the planning process and our challenge would be to develop an overarching review policy.

In framing their report and presenting their findings, the Auditors have found it helpful to distinguish between recommendations and suggestions. Instances where the Auditors considered the policies and procedures not to be in conformity with the UPR Process are cast as recommendations. Suggestions are offered in cases where, although the institution's measures are in conformity with the Process, those measures could, in the opinion of the Auditors, be improved.

The UPRAC recommendations and suggestions were in general constructive and particularly helpful as they came at a time when the University was entering the new academic planning cycle, *Stepping UP*, and had begun the process of consolidating and updating the *Guidelines for Review of Academic Programs*. As we were beginning, however, to incorporate the recommendations and suggestions of reviewers into the *Guidelines for Review of Academic Programs*, OCAV approved its own revised *UPRAC Review and Audit Guidelines* on February 4, 2004. These revisions were based on the general findings of the first cycle of reviews across the entire system.

We have received the revised *UPRAC Review and Audit Guidelines* and have worked to consult with the U of T divisions and Principals and Deans to revise the University's review guidelines and develop an overarching review policy for both new and existing programs and units. The Policy is being presented to Governing Council for approval (see Agenda Item #4) along with procedural Guidelines for the internal assessment of proposed new programs and units and the review of existing programs and units at the University.

**FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:**

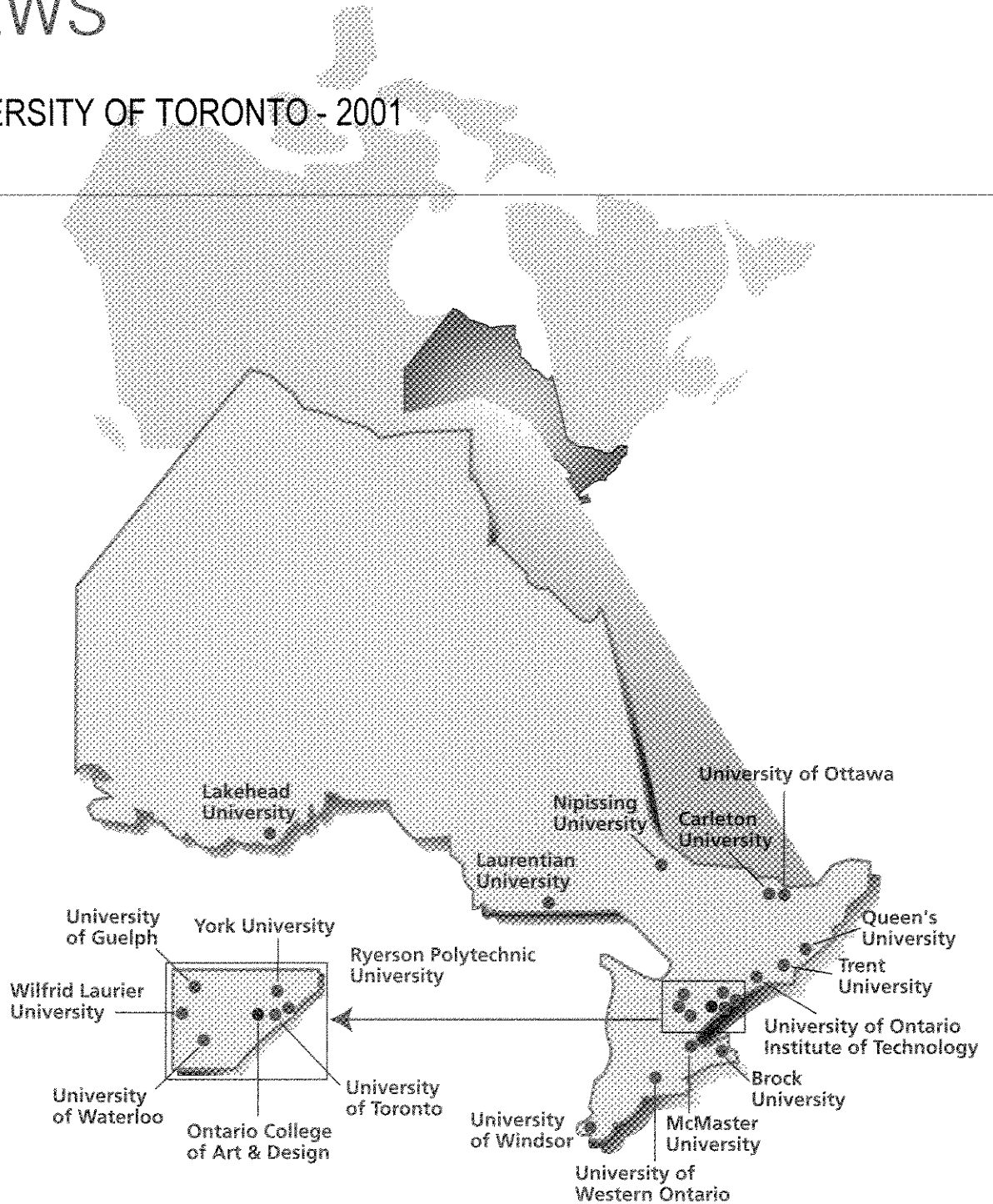
There are no new/additional financial resources required to receive the UPRAC audit report and implement the recommendations.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

For Information.

# REPORT OF THE AUDITORS ON UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEWS

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO - 2001



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