

**Report of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs to the Agenda Committee  
on the  
Reviews of Academic Programs and Units, July 2008 – December 2009**

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) is responsible for undertaking “a comprehensive appraisal of review results and administrative responses” to ensure that “reviews are performed on a regular basis, that they were conducted appropriately, and that the issues identified . . . were dealt with appropriately by the administration.” [Guidelines for Review of Academic Programs and Units.] On March 2, 2010, AP&P considered reviews of 19 programs or units that were commissioned by the Vice-President and Provost or by the University’s academic divisions.

The primary observation from this “review of reviews” is that the University of Toronto’s programs continue to be regarded as outstanding ones - among the best in Canada, in North America, and internationally. I am pleased to report that AP&P was entirely satisfied with the process, documentation and follow-up of 15 of the 19 reviews. In four cases, AP&P is awaiting additional responses and/or updates, as described below.

**1. Faculty of Forestry** (*reviewed November, 2009*)

The external reviewers regard the quality of the Faculty as “unassailable.” They lauded the Faculty’s “vision to continue to be deeply engaged in the ‘greening’ of the economy and as a global player in international conservation and biomaterials science.” They commended its faculty on their “outstanding research productivity,” and they stated that they were impressed by students’ “intellectual capacity and enthusiasm.” But they recognized that the Forestry programs were “unlikely to be financially sustainable.” Enrolments have declined, and the “landscape of contemporary forest resources programs” has been changing around the world. Discussions concerning the organization of the Faculty have been on-going for many years. The reviewers were asked to consider reorganization options and therefore the traditional program reviews were not the focus of their report.

The Provost has appointed a Working Group, consisting of three senior Forestry faculty, to consider reorganization of the Faculty. Options include a move to the Faculty of Arts and Science; the University of Toronto at Scarborough; or the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering. The Working Group is consulting widely to identify the optimal strategy for Faculty reorganization and organizational proposals will no doubt be forthcoming. After that, AP&P expects to receive reports of reviews of the programs being offered to our students.

**2. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education** (*reviewed October 2009*)

The external reviewers, in a highly favourable report, declared the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) to be “a prestigious, unique and highly regarded educational institution” that is “internationally recognized as a centre for excellence . . .” However, they also pointed to the need for the solution of certain organizational issues. There appeared to be some difficulty in integrating the initial teacher education program and the graduate programs, in particular in encouraging OISE’s full-time, tenure-track faculty to assume a greater role in the initial teacher education program. There also appeared to be some organizational problems in the relationships between the Departments and the Dean’s Office.

OISE has acted quickly to deal with those matters, establishing a Teacher Education Council and establishing a system of bi-weekly meetings of the central and departmental leaders. However, it is too early to know the outcome. In addition, the leadership of OISE is about to change, and the arrival of the new Dean will be marked by a new academic planning exercise. AP&P anticipates an update on these items once the new leadership is in place.

**3. University of Toronto at Mississauga - Institute of Communication and Culture**  
(reviewed Fall 2008)

The Institute offers a wide range of programs from Art History to Digital Enterprise Management to Biomedical Communications. There are also a number of programs taught jointly by the University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM) and Sheridan College of Applied Arts and Technology. Since the review took place in 2008, the UTM Dean has had the opportunity to respond to the review, which he has done vigorously.

On March 23, 2010, Academic Board will be considering a proposal arising from this review - to disestablish the Institute of Communication and Culture and to establish two units in its place: an extra-departmental unit A (EDU:A) called the Institute of Communication, Culture and Information Technology and a separate Department of Visual Arts. In addition, it is planning to make other changes, including moving the program in Biomedical Communications to the Department of Biology. Also in response to the review, UTM and Sheridan have established mechanisms to ensure greater coherence in their joint programs, including a program of regular meetings of program coordinators and meetings at least annually of the UTM Deans and the Sheridan Provost.

**4. Department of Humanities at the University of Toronto at Scarborough**

This was a much more recent review, with the reviewers submitting their report in January 2010. They had highly positive things to say about the quality of students and faculty and about the quality of several new academic and administrative ventures. However, organizational issues took much of the attention of the reviewers, leaving little time for reviews of the programs. Both the University of Toronto at Scarborough (UTSC) and its Department of Humanities have grown very rapidly, and the Department has become a very large one. That has set the stage for some very real divisions: among some of the disciplines in the Department and between those taking a traditional, discipline-based approach and others, supporting new interdisciplinary initiatives.

The UTSC Dean has been responding vigorously. UTSC will propose the formation of two new Departments: English and Philosophy. Other faculty will remain in the Department of Humanities. The Dean is exploring with these colleagues a framework for oversight of a number of successful interdisciplinary programs that involve faculty both from the proposed new Departments and the continuing Department of Humanities. UTSC also plans to move forward to deal with a number of other concerns raised by the review. The AP&P regarded the response to this review as a work in progress, and it looked forward to receiving further information, in particular reviews of the programs offered to the students.

Overall, the outcome of this year's reviews was highly positive. It is clear that this University offers outstanding programs – among the best anywhere. This positive outcome applies also to the four units where AP&P is awaiting further reports. In those, it is fair to say that AP&P is satisfied that the Deans are responding to the issues, and AP&P is looking forward to learning the outcome of their efforts.

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