

April 6, 2011

Master of Science in Sustainability Management (MScSM), UTM
Administrative Response to Appraisal Report

Professor Peter Brown, Professor and the former Director of the McGill School of the Environment, and Professor Janaki Alavalapati, Professor and Head of the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, Virginia Polytechnic and State University, conducted an external review of the proposed new professional graduate program (the Master of Science in Sustainability Management) at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) on March 3rd, 2011.

The report was very positive. The summary notes that the strengths of the proposed program include strong administrative, faculty, and clientele support for the program, positive students' perceptions about the structure and scope of the program, and the program's positioning to take advantage of the substantial physical, human (intellectual), and technological resources available at all 3 campuses of University of Toronto. The reviewers indicate that the credentials of the participating faculty are outstanding and therefore the quality of the program is expected to be high. The reviewers make several very helpful recommendations about course content and faculty hiring which we respond to below.

The reviewers were both convinced that the program, as proposed, is a Master of Science program but, due to philosophical differences, were split regarding the original name of the program, i.e., 'Sustainable Management.' One of the reviewers, in particular, expressed concerns regarding the currency and the meaning of the words 'sustainable' or 'sustainability.' The other reviewer thought the name appropriate. The debate between the reviewers has caused us to reflect upon the proposed title and, after an extensive discussion, the faculty most involved in creating the proposed program have agreed to call the program the MSc in Sustainability Management. As noted by UTM's Principal, Professor Deep Saini, a former Dean of the Faculty of Environment at Waterloo: "What we are developing is a program that combines environmental sustainability and business management. I am not necessarily convinced that 'sustainable' as such is passé, although it has fallen out of favor in certain circles."

The reviewers make several suggestions regarding the proposed curriculum. One is that the required science courses (XXX1030 and XXX1050) should be designed to cover the essentials of Earth and ecosystem science without relying on case studies. As indicated in the course descriptions, the intention is for these courses to be lab-based and very rigorous in nature. In addition, they suggest that the course (XXX1020) Decision Making for Sustainable Management include biophysical decision-making frameworks such as material life cycle analysis, greenhouse gases inventories, and techniques developed from industrial ecology. The emphasis should be on non-monetary measures and include impact on nonhuman species and life support systems. We agree with their comments and have modified the course description to reflect these priorities. Finally, the reviewers would like to see a

course in environmental ethics and social justice offered to the students. It is our belief that the program as a whole is imbued with concern with environmental ethics. We do agree, however, that it makes sense for students to be able to take a course on this specific topic as an elective. We have added a course that focuses on ethics and its connection to the environment as an UTM-based elective to the proposed program (XXX2020).

We are pleased to note that the admission requirements, program structure, program content and mode of delivery were all found appropriate. The program's combination of production and performance with analytical and communication skills was deemed well balanced. In general, the resources were deemed appropriate in support of the program and staffing projections were deemed well supported. Proposed means of assessment were deemed appropriate.

The reviewers believe that at least one of the new faculty members (of the three new faculty to be hired in support of the proposed program) should be a tenured faculty member at the Associate or Full Professor level. We agree it would be ideal to make one of the first hires at the associate professor level and will explore the feasibility of doing this during the 2011-12 academic year. In addition, the reviewers suggest that one of the new faculty should be in the area of ecological economics. We see this as an appropriate suggestion and have modified the proposal to explicitly include this suggestion. Finally, the reviewers suggest that a formal agreement should be reached between the PGPC, the Department of Geography and the Department of Management. We have prepared such an agreement and will ensure that it is agreed to by the Vice Dean Graduate and the Chairs of the two departments in the near future.

The reviewers indicate that they did not have enough information to comment on the level of financial assistance provided to graduate students in the planned MScSM program. UTM has proposed several different models of financial aid. We hope to be more generous with financial aid as enrolments increase, and we are also pursuing fundraising in support of this objective, but given that the budget for the program will be in deficit for at least one year, the financial aid available at the outset will be necessarily be modest.

We are pleased that the reviewers indicate that the program is creative and will develop a new generation of professionals with a greater understanding of sustainability management (as opposed to business management).. We agree with them that the program is an excellent opportunity to harness the strengths available across all three campuses of the University of Toronto.



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