



FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: Academic Board

SPONSOR: Sioban Nelson, Vice Provost, Academic Programs
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PRESENTER: See above
CONTACT INFO:

DATE: March 20, 2018 for April 19, 2018

AGENDA ITEM: 4a

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Follow-up Reports on Reviews:

- a) Dalla Lana School of Public Health and its programs (Dalla Lana School of Public Health)

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under its Terms of Reference, the Academic Board and/or one of its Standing Committees has responsibility for Academic Programs (*Academic Board Terms of Reference, Section 5.1*).

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) is the point of entry into governance for reports, summaries and administrative responses on the results of reviews of academic programs and units commissioned by academic administrators. The role of the Committee is to ensure that the reviews are conducted in accordance with University policy and guidelines, that an appropriate process has been followed, that adequate documentation is provided and consultations undertaken, and that issues identified in the review are addressed by the administration. Under the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process, the AP&P may request a one-year follow-up report when concerns are raised in an external review that require a longer period of response.

This report is forwarded, together with the record of the Committee's discussion, to the Agenda Committee of the Academic Board, which determines whether there are any issues of general academic significance warranting discussion at the Board level. The same documentation is also sent to the Executive Committee and Governing Council for information.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. Committee on Academic Policy and Programs [for information] (April 3, 2018)
2. Agenda Committee of the Academic Board [for information] (April 10, 2018)

3. **Academic Board [for information] (April 19, 2018)**
4. Executive Committee of the Governing Council [for information] (May 8, 2018)
5. Governing Council [for information] (May 17, 2018)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

At its meeting on March 29, 2017, AP&P considered the following review:

The November 2016 review of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health (DLSPH) and its programs, as well as the March 1, 2017 decanal response. AP&P requested a one-year follow-up report regarding the development of an operational/implementation plan based on the strategic plan, including how implementation would take place under the new Dean; steps to reduce the number of “silos” and increase integration within the faculty; the recommendation to appoint a Deputy Dean (or equivalent) position, and; plans for reducing the PhD time to completion.

HIGHLIGHTS:

In July 2017, an interim Dean, and an Acting Director of the IHPME, were appointed. Strategic directions will be identified in an academic plan, once a new Dean has been appointed. In the interim, the DLSPH developed an Operational Plan (2017-2021). Consultations with the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation (IHPME) and the Department of Public Health Sciences took place from October 2017 to January 2018. A final plan was confirmed in January 2018 and was scheduled for review at the DLSPH School Council meeting of March 5, 2018. The Plan has assisted in providing operational guidance for the DLSPH.

The DLSPH led by the interim Dean has moved forward with several deliverables. The Faculty has taken a number of steps to tackle the silos and promote coherence and graduate unit strength. They conducted an administrative review in May 2017 and an IT review in January 2018. Consultations on new professional development and continuing studies initiatives were held. Alumni activities and outreach has been increased and consolidated where appropriate. Governance processes have been prioritized, and regular faculty meetings are held. A Faculty-wide branding initiative is underway to promote communication and collaborations; monthly events, bulletins and other communications are helping to build on this goal. As well, a Faculty-wide complement plan has been developed, and discussions are underway with the Faculty of Medicine regarding shared and overlapping program offerings.

The follow-up report confirmed that after consideration of the external reviewers recommendation to hire a Deputy Dean, the Faculty will not be hiring a Deputy Dean. It is noted that no additional changes to the administration of the Dean’s Office are planned until a permanent Dean is in place.

The Faculty is reducing the time to candidacy. Following this, in 2020 an analysis will be conducted into the factors that lead to a long time-to-degree. Ultimately, the Faculty is aiming to reduce the average time-to-completion for doctoral students entering as 2020 and later.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

For Information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

- Dalla Lana School of Public Health Science, and its programs (Dalla Lana School of Public Health) Follow-up Letter from Interim Dean Adalsteinn Brown Dated February 26, 2018



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Adalsteinn Brown
Interim Dean
Dalla Lana Chair in Public Health Policy

February 26, 2018

Professor Sioban Nelson
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

Dear Professor Nelson,

Re: One-year Follow-up Report to the November 2016 UTQAP External Review of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health

I am writing in response to your request dated May 4, 2017 for a one-year follow-up report to the November 2016 external review of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health and the administrative response of March 1, 2017. As you noted, the review identified both strengths and areas for improvement. At the March 29, 2017 meeting, AP&P requested a follow-up report regarding: the development of an operational/implementation plan based on the strategic plan, including how implementation would take place under the new Dean; steps to reduce the number of "silos" and increase integration within the faculty; the recommendation to appoint a Deputy Dean (or equivalent position), and: plans for reducing PhD time to completion.

The development of an operational/implementation plan based on the strategic plan, including how implementation would take place under the new Dean

In July 2017, the School began the process of developing an operational plan (2017-2021). A firm was hired to assist the School in creating a streamlined operational direction for the DLSPH. The DLSPH also saw change in leadership with the appointment of an Interim Dean of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health and an Acting Director of the Institute of Health Policy Management & Evaluation. The operational planning exercise synthesized information from the School's draft strategic plan (academic plan developed in 2016), the UTQAP external review report, the UTQAP administrative response, IHPME's strategic plan (developed in 2013) and other foundational documents. In review of the foundational documents, common paths, directives and goals were apparent, producing an inclusive and cross-cutting operational plan that could respond to a number of the comments and suggestions in the UTQAP review. It is important to note the operational plan is intended to ensure clear operational direction for the DLSPH (changes to School management and processes to enhance effectiveness/efficiency) and not to establish new strategic directions. This plan does not replace the need for an academic plan.

The School's academic leadership and faculty in the DLSPH's two graduate units were engaged in the operational plan preparation process. The consultation phase began in October 2017, with a presentation at the Senior Administrator (October 16, 2017) meeting and subsequently an IHPME (November 15, 2017) and PHS (January 10, 2018) faculty meetings. The plan was finalized in January 2018, approved at both faculty meetings, and will move forward to School Council for final approval at the next meeting (March 5, 2018).

The DLSPH Operational Plan presents four priority areas:

1. World-Class Governance & Administration
2. Investments in People & Relationships
3. Program & Process Excellence

4. Strategic Research Initiatives

Each of the four aims have clear deliverables (with an associated high-level schedule for producing deliverables and any associated risks).

World-Class Governance & Administration

Deliverables under this priority include:

- The revitalization of the Dean's Advisory Board to provide strategic external advice
- A new increased focus on the DLSPH Administration on:
 - Decreasing administrative burden for faculty members
 - More active engagement with alumni and donors
- The creation of working groups and committees on priority topics with clearly defined sunset dates in phases so as to limit the number of active committees/working groups at any time
- Alignment of review activities so that the combination of the plan's progress indicators (e.g. learner and faculty experience and engagement ratings, international collaborations), reporting and external review will ensure that the operational plan is implemented for full effect.

Investments in People & Relationships

Deliverables under this priority include:

- Work with the DLSPH Senior Administrators Committee to identify the most needed supports, followed by the development and implementation of a plan to address them; a focused effort on supporting externally funded Research Chairs and Securing additional Funded (endowed or expendable) Chairs.
- Multiple activities and deliverables to strengthen relationships including:
 - Promoting connections between the units of the DLSPH and the reduction of silos
 - Partnerships with University of Toronto (UoT) Faculties, beginning with new or renewed strategic partnerships with the Faculty of Medicine
 - Standing and stronger mechanisms to integrate the ~600 status and adjunct faculty members who are responsible for ~one quarter of the DLSPH teaching and ~ one half of grant funding
 - Where they do not detract from core School business or the partnerships noted above, national and international partnerships related to Strategic Research Initiatives
- Merit-based \$5000 Dalla Lana Scholarships for graduate students
- Diversity & Equity initiative to focus and commitment for the DLSPH on these topics that will be in addition to all commitments in the UoT Governing Council Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Excellence.
- A program to provide career support and mentoring to post-doctoral fellows

Program & Process Excellence

Deliverables under this priority include:

- A process to identify ways to improve the efficiency of programs including short-term quick wins and longer-term strategic changes. Four changes have been identified, when implemented together, will increase the sustainability and enrollment in DLSPH programs:
 - A coordinated effort to reduce PhD completion time from six (6) years to or more to a timeframe at or below the UoT average for graduate students
 - A plan to provide increased financial support for PhD Students
 - Completion of development of combined degree and certificate programs (e.g. MD-MPH, clinical governance)
 - A concerted effort to bring the percentage of international students at the DLSPH closer to the UoT average for graduate students.
- Cross-cutting investment of funds to increase the Operational Excellence of the DLSPH:
 - Improved "Research Services" function supporting grant writing, grants administration and reporting with a focus on work related to the Strategic Research Initiatives and Research Chair applications with the potential to bring significant external research funding to the School.



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- A process through which seed funding is provided to accelerate the rate of progress on priority initiatives
- Tech-enabled teaching/meeting spaces
- The Dalla Lana Leadership Series Initiative (increase the profile and impact of the School)

Strategic Research Initiatives

Deliverables under this priority include:

Please note the below listed items are existing priority areas. As the operational plan is not an academic (strategic) plan, future/new priority areas are not identified within the operational plan.

- Integrating Public Health and Primary Care
- The Health of Indigenous Communities
- Innovation in Health System Policy
- New and Additional Interdisciplinary Scholarship, which will be determined through a consultative process with faculty members and partners (already includes data science, global health, and immunization research that were initiated under the last Dean)

A master sheet to drive and track process was created and is being maintained by the Dean's Office to track progress on the implementation of the Operational Plan.

Progress

Despite the absence of a permanent Dean, the DLSPH has moved forward with many deliverables to ensure the stability and success of the School including:

- The School's committees have been reviewed and streamlined with some committees closed and no new committees created.
- The Dean's Advisory Committee has been redesigned and the new terms of reference and membership is being reviewed by the VP, DUA.
- The Administrative Review has been completed and recommendations from the School's administrative review will be implemented between January and June 2018 to ensure the administrative strength and stability of the faculty including but not limited to:
 - Hiring of a business manager for Public Health Sciences which will increase the efficiency of the Finance Office and the administrative burden on faculty
 - An IT review to ensure the School is best equipped to meet current demands and also support future learning opportunities and to design consolidation of IT functionality at the School level
 - Clarification of the financial policies to increase transparency
 - Consolidation of communications functionality at the School level
 - A Series of other activities such as presentations at faculty meetings and engagement of faculty to increase transparency around budget and hiring decisions (such as preparation of the complement plan)
- Review of the academic leadership structure is being conducted through a peer faculty (within UofT and against leading schools of public health) organizational structure analysis
- Continued consultation (early 2018) to review existing relations between PHS & IHPME and identification of high-priority connections to foster and improve (planned for mid 2018 to 2021). This work builds on decisions to consolidate some administrative functions (IT and Communications) and the creation of a School-wide complement plan that was approved by leadership from across the School (more on this below)
- The Associate Deans of Academic Affairs and Research have specific goals assigned to deliver on objectives including reducing the time to completion for PhD students and developing processes for priority research initiatives.

- Increased budget and recruitment transparency in line with University of Toronto policies. Work on this has already been started with a different process for budget preparation, review and communication with senior leaders at the faculty and with faculty in general.

Steps to Reduce the Number of “Silos” and Increase Integration within the Faculty

It is worth discussing in more detail efforts underway to create greater coherence within the School while maintaining the strengths of its graduate units. The DLSPH is a unique single department faculty at the University as it houses an EDU-A, IHPME, with a separate graduate department. As a consequence of the DLSPH's unique structure, there are two distinct cultures and foci at the two graduate units that would benefit from creating synergies between the two groups of faculty, academic programs and staff functions.

The following items are already underway to reduce the number of ‘silos’ and increase integration:

- The School has undergone an Administrative Review (May 2017) and is undergoing an IT Review (January 2018). The School is focused on creating administration efficiencies around finance, graduate office support, and academic HR. The IT review will enable the School to support and streamline core processes and set the foundation for future educational aspirations. Both reviews have considered the School as a whole and will consolidate IT functions.
- New professional development and continuing studies initiatives are planned in consultation with faculty in both PHS and IHPME
- The School is levelling up alumni activities for both alumni groups and holding joint meetings to look for synergy
- The academic leadership has initiated efforts to build cohesiveness amongst the different areas of the School. Both faculty complements now have regular faculty meetings to ensure awareness of timely matters of importance that affect the School. A focus on heightening the importance and relevance of School Council (the School's main governance bodies and its committees) by placing all governance matters and school-wide issues of importance on the agenda and effectively communicating meeting notices to the School-body.
- The School is nearly complete on a School wide branding effort that will provide more coherence on communications from the School and increased collaboration in communication activities coming from all areas of the School.
- Approximately monthly School-wide events and increased bulletins and other communication vehicles that celebrate the achievements of the School and enable faculty within both graduate departments as well as students and staff to gather under a unified umbrella.
- Streamlining a School-wide communication strategy.
- Creation of the first School-wide complement plan that had input and approval from all graduate units.
- Initiation of discussions with the Faculty of Medicine about streamlining some of the small enrolment/duplicative degrees that we currently offer in partnership.

Appointment of Deputy-Dean

One of the recommendations from the external review was the appointment of a Deputy Dean. As noted before, since the external report was produced, there has been a leadership change at the decanal level. Until a permanent Dean is appointed, there are no planned changes in the Dean's Office and it is not clear, despite the thoughtfulness of the external review, how a Deputy Dean would increase administrative efficiency at the School. Thus, as noted in our initial administrative response (March 2017), the DLSPH will not add another layer of administration by appointing a Deputy Dean.

Plans for reducing PhD time to completion



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The DLSPH recognizes the importance of time to completion for doctoral students - its affect on the student experience and impact on available funding. Enrolment growth continues to meet target and growth expectations at the DLSPH. The median time to completion is generally good with a long tail end that skews mean numbers. The PhD programs in the DLSPH are uniformly strong with sufficient applications, acceptances, registration rates and employment outcomes for graduates; however, the time to graduate of ~6 or more years is longer than the ~4-5 years for comparable international schools.

Decreasing the PhD completion time has the potential to make the program more financially sustainable for the School and for graduate students pursuing PhDs, while simultaneously increasing the appeal of the PhD program to high quality international graduate students. To ensure that the DLSPH is responsive to this recommendation, the operational plan has identified clear deliverables to reduce PhD time to completion, initially by reducing time to candidacy. By early 2019, the School will complete an analysis of the drivers of long duration PhDs and develop a plan to move toward faster completion such that PhD candidates enrolled in 2020 or later, are positioned to complete their degrees within a timeframe at, or lower than the UofT average.

The DLSPH has been working diligently to address the recommendations from the UTQAP review. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Adalsteinn Brown
Interim Dean
Dalla Lana Chair in Public Health Policy
Dalla Lana School of Public Health