



October 1st, 2018

Professor Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-President and Provost
University of Toronto

RE: Follow-up Report: External Review of Undergraduate Programs in UTM's Department of Chemical and Physical Sciences

Dear Susan,

In a letter dated May 1, 2018, Sioban Nelson requested a one-year follow-up report to the February 2017 review of the undergraduate programs in the Department of Chemical and Physical Sciences (CPS). The letter conveyed a request from the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) to follow up on progress made concerning the sustainability of astronomy within the department.

The reviewer's report stated:

Specialist in Astronomical Sciences & Major in Astronomy relies heavily on subject specific courses offered by the Faculty of Arts and Science on the St. George campus; not as rigorous as similar programs in other universities (pg. 8)

The Department discussed this issue at the 2017 Departmental Retreat and at a faculty meeting on May 30, 2018. The consensus that emerged acknowledged the limited resources available but committed to retaining astronomy as a component of the Department. This commitment is based on:

- 1) **Student interest:** The astronomy program currently has 22 Major and 28 Specialist students, and service courses in astronomy attract strong interest (e.g., AST101 enrolled 230 students in Fall 2018). Eliminating astronomy programs and courses would have a significant impact on our department.
- 2) **Strong relationships between Physics, Earth Sciences, and Astronomy:** Astronomy and physics are partnered at nearly every university: astronomy faculty can teach physics courses, and physics courses benefit astronomy students. The astronomy curriculum can be supported because of synergy with physics offerings, and astronomy faculty can be hired that will strengthen the existing physics and earth sciences groups within the Department.

Going forward, the Department will look for opportunities to incorporate two faculty in astronomy into the complement plan to supplement the existing research-stream position in astronomy. The first position would be a tenure-stream solar (astro) physicist who could collaborate with the (paleo) climate line of research in the Department (Moore, Halfar, etc.). This area of research would also complement astronomy themes on the downtown and Scarborough campuses. The second position would be a teaching-stream astrophysicist to enhance the number of astronomy courses offered at UTM.

Together, these three faculty, plus support from existing courses in mathematics and physics, should be sufficient to ensure that the vast majority of courses required for an astronomy program could be offered at UTM. The seven half-courses taught by the new faculty hires would be cross-listed with physics and could thus benefit students in those programs as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Angela Lange".

Angela Lange
Acting Vice-Principal Academic and Dean