

9 September 2011

Professor Cheryl Regehr  
Vice-Provost Academic Programs  
Simcoe Hall, Room 225  
University of Toronto

**Re: Review of Centre for Environment, one-year follow up report**

Dear Cheryl,

Thank you for your letter of 17 June 2011, requesting a one-year follow-up report to the February 2010 external review of the Faculty of Arts and Science Centre for Environment. Your letter requests information on the structure and administration of the Centre. In general, I can report that progress has been made in fostering and formalizing discussions within the Faculty with respect to how best to offer high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs and support for internationally significant research related to the environment and resources.

As you know, recent reviews of the Faculty of Arts & Science, the Faculty of Forestry, and the Centre for Environment, coupled with recent academic planning within several Arts & Science units, led to much discussion of the most appropriate academic structure for teaching and research programs related to the environment and natural resources over much of the 2010-11 academic year. These informal discussions helped identify a number of important issues related to the most effective way to offer high quality undergraduate and graduate programs in these areas of critical importance.

Given the number of groups involved in the informal discussions it became difficult to ensure that all units strongly affiliated with programs in the environment and resources had been fully consulted and informed of ongoing discussions. In order to focus the discussion and consider how best to offer high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs related to the environment and resources, in May 2011, I struck a broadly-based working group to review our activities in these areas and to make recommendations for the Faculty of Arts & Science. [The membership of the committee, terms of reference, and related memos and reports are available at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/committees-reports/envres>]. The committee is representative of the units involved in main programs and research in the area of environment and resources and included faculty and students. The Faculty of Forestry was invited to participate due to their existing FAS undergraduate programs related to the environment and conservation.

The specific charge of the Working Group is:

1. To summarize and review the existing Arts & Science undergraduate and graduate programs in the general area of environment and resources.
2. To identify strengths and weaknesses of the current Faculty unit structures, considering the academic plans of the units and cognate disciplines.
3. To make recommendations (either organizational or otherwise) that would strengthen environment and natural resources programs overall, identifying specific outcomes and measures of progress toward academic goals and ensure that the resources we place into

initiatives on the environment and resources achieve the greatest scholarly and educational impact.

The Working Group met during the summer to review the various environment and resource programs offered by the Faculty as well as the aspirations of the units offering the programs. The Working Group decided to concentrate first on undergraduate programs with consideration of graduate programs to follow. Three themes emerged in the group's discussion that related to undergraduate programs in Environmental Sciences, Environmental Studies, and Earth Systems Science. Before proceeding any further in discussion, the Working Group decided that subcommittees should be established to review these three themes and consider associated undergraduate programs and pedagogy.

The composition of the subcommittees included representation from the Working Group and additional members were also invited to participate, especially undergraduate and graduate students related to each theme. Guests from the broader FAS community in programs related to environment and resources were invited to meet with the subcommittees. Each subcommittee reviewed and discussed the Faculty's strengths in environment, resources and related programs inviting guests to speak or write to the committee from additional disciplinary areas. Each subcommittee developed a program outline in order to conceptualize what could be considered as an ideal program that the Faculty could offer in the areas of Environmental Science, Environmental Studies and Earth Systems Science. Based on the input from further consultation in A&S, if there is general agreement to proceed with such programs or modifications to existing programs, a detailed program description would need to be developed by the participating teaching staff and units.

The progress of the Working Group has been shared with the broader Arts & Science community along with an invitation for input and discussion. (The update report is available at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/committees-reports/envres>). Although there will likely be suggestions for additional programs and program modifications that emerge over the course of consultations and discussions, the Working Group considered that it is important to begin the process by presenting programs that had emerged in their initial discussions. A first phase of consultation will occur over the course of September in order to solicit input on the program proposal outlines, rationales and possible alternatives, as well as comments on how to best administer and support the programs and possible implications for existing programs and units.

The co-chairs of the Working Group are meeting with faculty, undergraduate and graduate students and staff in units that offer programs in the environment and resources in order to listen directly to their comments and suggestions. The Working Group will meet in October to review the input received through this consultation phase and consider the next steps in preparing their report for the Faculty and seeking additional input on the program proposal outlines through further broad-based consultation.

Yours sincerely,



Meric Gertler  
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science