



TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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AGENDA ITEM: **8(b) 2**

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

**Follow-up Report on the Review of the Undergraduate Program in Forensic Science at the University of Toronto Mississauga**

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The Committee is the point of entry into governance for reports, summaries and administrative responses on the results of academic reviews of programs and units commissioned by academic administrators. The role of the Committee is to ensure that the reviews are conducted according to University policy and guidelines, an appropriate process is being used, adequate documentation is provided, consultations are undertaken, and issues identified in the review are addressed by the administration. Under the new University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process, the Committee 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 Planning 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 sent to the Executive Committee of Governing Council for information.

**PREVIOUS ACTION**

The Forensic Science program at the University of Toronto Mississauga was reviewed on December 2-3, 2009. In his report the external reviewer described his findings as troubling and suggested that the program be restructured or closed. In response, the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs asked for a one year follow-up report to provide the opportunity for the University of Toronto Mississauga to provide information on a number of identified issues: structure and administration of the unit, curriculum, faculty resources, and space and facilities.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

The follow-up report from the University of Toronto Mississauga focuses on the following areas identified in the initial review report:

- *Structure and the administration of the unit*

The reviewer expressed concern that location of the program within the Department of Anthropology meant it did not receive the attention it deserves. In her response, the Dean and Vice-Principal (Academic) has indicated that the program will not be moved but that the new director, an Anthropologist, is enthusiastic and has a good working relationship with the Department.

- *Curriculum and academic programs*

The reviewer suggested that the curriculum lacks depth and consistency. The Dean and Vice-Principal (Academic) has explained in some detail the rigorous assessment and reworking of the program's content and structure that has occurred.

- *Faculty resources*

The reviewer expressed concern that the reliance on cross-appointed faculty and sessional instructors did not support a strong or coherent program. In response, the Dean and Vice Principal (Academic) has described the new director's success in securing teaching commitments from participating departments that will improve instructional quality and provide greater stability.

- *Space and Facilities*

The reviewer expressed concern about the deficiency of basic instrumentation and the Dean and Vice Principal (Academic) reports that the program has moved into newly constructed and outfitted space which offers top quality science labs.

**FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:** n/a

**RECOMMENDATION:** For Information.