



August 8, 2011

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

Dear Cheryl:

Re: Forensic Science Review

I am writing in response to the request by the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs in regards to the external review of the undergraduate Forensic Science program conducted in December 2009. The Committee had requested a one-year follow-up report to focus on a number of specific issues:

Structure and Administration of the Unit

The positioning of the program 'within' Anthropology has not been changed but the program is now led by an enthusiastic director who is herself an anthropologist and has a good working relationship with departmental colleagues and the Chair. The current director has engaged in vigorous outreach among the participating departments to stimulate their commitment to the program and is working closely with the chair of anthropology to address issues that raised concerns in the review.

Curriculum and Academic Programs

The new director has undertaken a rigorous assessment and reworking of the program's content and structure. She revamped the Forensic science survey course (FSC 239Y), obtained commitments from faculty in other departments to ongoing teaching in the program, and has updated and streamlined the requirements for all four streams of the program. In the past, the heavy emphasis on math, physics, chemistry and biology for students in all four streams had come at the expense of Psychology and Anthropology stream students' ability to meet the requirements for the specialist program in their cognate field (and hence to be admitted to graduate programs that would allow them to pursue careers as forensic psychologists or forensic anthropologists). Program requirements in these streams have been revised to ensure that these students may also meet the requirements for the specialist program in their field, and to reflect the appropriate level of math, physics, chemistry and biology courses to allow them to do advanced work in forensic anthropology or psychology. The changes introduced to the Chemistry and Biology streams will allow us to pursue accreditation for them.

Following the review, we had closed admission to the program for September 2010. In February 2011, we made the decision to re-open admission to the program and are promoting the program to high school students during recruitment season.

On a side note, I would like to add that the students enrolled in the program are very enthusiastic about Forensic Science. Though a small program, they have one of the most robust and dedicated student academic societies within UTM. In addition, we have investigated and can confirm that the quality of admitted students and their rates of employment or admission to graduate programs upon completion of the program remain very high.

Faculty Resources

We recently hired a term-limited appointee who will bring valuable expertise to the program and who will help prepare it for the accreditation process. As noted earlier, the new director met with each of the participating departments and secured some valuable teaching commitments that will help to stabilize and improve the instructional quality of the program, including the instructor of first year Psychology and a former recipient of UTM's Teaching Award. Until we see how enrolment progresses and the accreditation process unfolds, there are no current plans to hire continuing faculty.

Space and Facilities

In the North Building (its former home), Forensic Science had to create lab space in a building that was built to house humanities subjects. The program was in fact using office- and seminar-sized and outfitted rooms for their labs. In early July, the program moved into the newly constructed Terence Donnelly Health Sciences Complex where the program has top-quality science labs. These are first-rate web lab spaces with benches, fume hoods, and modern equipment and space.

Sincerely,



Amy Mullin
Vice-Principal, Academic and Dean