



TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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DATE: October 12, 2012 for October 29, 2012

AGENDA ITEM: 4(a)

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Follow-up Report on the Review of the Department of Biology at the University of Toronto Mississauga and its programs

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 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 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 Department of Biology at the University of Toronto Mississauga was reviewed on November 9-10, 2010. The report of the external reviewers identified a number of strengths including high quality faculty dedicated to undergraduate teaching and strong co-curricular and professional development programming. However, the report also suggested a number of areas for immediate attention. 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 regarding curriculum and teaching laboratories.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The follow-up report from the University of Toronto Mississauga focuses on the following

areas identified in the initial report:

Curriculum

The reviewers expressed concern about the lack of a departmental strategic academic plan, and the attainment of learning objectives and degree-level expectations. The Department has since developed a strategic academic plan, and in the process undertook an extensive curricular review. They have created a database of curriculum content and identified teaching methods that support program and degree learning objectives.

Teaching Laboratories

The reviewers expressed concern about the adequacy of the Department's teaching laboratories and limited student access to laboratory courses. New resources have since supported the renovation and modernization of laboratory facilities at UTM. This has facilitated making lab experiences available to more students.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:n/a

RECOMMENDATION: For Information.