



March 6, 2017

Professor Sioban Nelson  
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs  
Simcoe Hall  
University of Toronto

Dear Sioban,

I am writing to provide a follow-up report to the November 2015 external review of the UTM Academic Portfolio and the Administrative Response of March 16, 2016.

This report will provide an update on the five areas previously identified as requiring immediate attention, followed by a brief discussion on our next steps and long term goals.

## **Vision & Planning**

The need for a UTM Vision Statement that describes UTM's identity was recognized by the campus-wide external review that took place during the 2015-16 academic year. Consequently, creating consensus around a Vision was the first step in a year-long academic and strategic planning initiative at UTM to create both a Vision Statement and Academic Plan that are forward-thinking, comprehensive, and inclusive.

During the Fall of 2016, we engaged in broad consultation and participation with the UTM community (faculty, librarians, staff, students, alumni and others) to listen and ensure that feedback on the draft versions of a UTM Vision were received. On January 19, 2017, we released the UTM Vision statement ([https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/dean/sites/files/dean/public/shared/UTM%20Mission%20Vision\\_finalfinal%20\\_1.pdf](https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/dean/sites/files/dean/public/shared/UTM%20Mission%20Vision_finalfinal%20_1.pdf)).

Using this Vision, the Offices of the Vice-President & Principal and Vice-Principal Academic & Dean are spearheading an academic and strategic planning process to develop goals and objectives, set priorities and create a roadmap to implement the Vision via the Academic Plan over the next planning cycle (i.e. the next five years). A Strategic Planning Task Force has been formed

to help advise on the design of the UTM Academic and Strategic Plan; its membership can be found at <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/dean/initiatives/FinalVision/strategic-planning-task-force-membership>. Academic units, administrative offices, and students have been asked to share with the Task Force a summary of their own Academic Plans and strategic priorities for implementation, focused on links to the key attributes of our identity and the advancement of our Vision. The Task Force will review all submissions and is also holding open drop-in consultation sessions where members of the UTM community are able to further contribute thoughts, opinions, and submissions.

We are committed to using the Vision Statement, each unit's Academic Plan, the opinions and submissions shared during drop-in sessions, and further material to create a UTM Academic Plan that is strategic in nature.

## **Workload Issues**

A working group has been established by our Chief Administrative Officer to review support staffing levels and effectiveness across departments. The group has been meeting regularly throughout the Fall 2016 term with the goal of having a comprehensive report available in April 2017. This report will make recommendations on strategies to develop a transparent process for determining the most appropriate allocation of support staff resources. The report and recommendations will be shared with all UTM Departments, Units, and Offices and will help inform the strategic plan described above.

## **Administrative Restructuring**

Implementation of a new administrative structure within the Office of the Dean began in Summer 2016. The existing roles of Vice-Dean Undergraduate, Vice-Dean Graduate, and Assistant Dean were re-examined and re-organized into more comprehensive and better focused portfolios that will support the growth of UTM as well as our shared identity, vision, and purpose. Three new Vice-Dean roles were created, with mandates as follows:

1. Vice-Dean Faculty – to develop a divisional hiring plan and support strategic complement growth;
2. Vice-Dean Teaching & Learning – to spearhead programmatic growth (with an emphasis on cross-discipline collaboration) and innovation that will carry out the academic mission of the campus; and
3. Vice-Dean Academic Experience – to develop rich and diverse intellectual academic opportunities for students; to support integration of academic opportunities and student services throughout UTM.

In addition to the Vice-Dean positions, two new Associate Dean roles, Associate Dean Undergraduate and Associate Dean Graduate, were created to focus on the undergraduate and graduate mission of UTM, respectively. Both of these Associate Deans will support the Vice-Dean Teaching & Learning.

An advisory committee was struck in late Summer 2016 for the combined search of the Vice-Deans and Associate Deans. The search was extremely successful, with appointments for all five positions announced throughout Fall 2016. Our Vice-Deans have already begun their terms and our Associate Deans will both begin on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Managing Growth**

UTM is poised to capitalize on our recent growth and look forward into our next planning cycle in a considered and deliberate manner. Beyond the Academic and Strategic Plan, our goal is to establish a strong support system for our students, faculty, librarians, and staff as we grow together. In this way, our recent administrative restructuring in the Office of the Dean will provide academic units and service offices with additional (and much needed) support in faculty complement planning, academic programming, and in developing new initiatives to foster our research and scholarly culture. Moreover, the recommendations of the CAO's "Staffing Needs Working Group" will help us ensure appropriate support is in place throughout UTM.

New initiatives are currently underway at UTM that embrace our identity and help us to grow in a direction in line with our vision and purpose. For example, the Institute for Management and Innovation (IMI) is developing new courses and programs that promote innovation, sustainability, and community. We are also currently preparing to launch a Co-Op Program (as a pilot project) in September 2018. This Co-Op Program will continue to build strategic relationships with the City of Mississauga, prominent businesses in the Greater Toronto Area, and local community services and outreach organizations. Additionally, a new Centre for Medicinal Chemistry launched in September. This interdisciplinary centre for the research and development of better treatment options for human disease offers UTM boundless opportunities to develop academic programs, research innovation, and both internal and external partnerships. Additional possible academic programming and research growth is focused on areas such as robotics, urban innovation, digital humanities, and community health.

## **Budget Transparency**

We continue to promote clarity and openness in all matters related to budget and financial information with the entire UTM community. In this effort, we offer informative presentations on the planning and budget process to our Campus Affairs Committee and Campus Council. These presentations include discussions on the development of the institution-wide operating budget as well as UTM's own budget and priorities. As we progress with the Strategic and Academic Plan, resource allocation will undoubtedly be a top consideration.

## **Next Steps**

As we look forward into a new planning cycle for UTM, our focus will be to cultivate the attributes shaping our identity (community, creativity, communication, innovation, and sustainability) through the principles which underlie our vision (exceptional educational experience; diversity in scholarship; betterment of society; and equity and diversity in society). We will continue to enhance our graduate student experience by strengthening our graduate student presence at UTM. Through the efforts of our current Vice-Dean Graduate Office, this past Fall 2016 term has seen an increase of 30 graduate students affiliate with UTM. This group of students all come from "non-traditional" units for UTM - Historical Studies, Language Studies, and Faculty of Information/ Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology (ICCIT) - where we previously had no affiliated students. Additionally, the Vice-Dean Graduate Office has been working to increase participation of affiliated and non-affiliated graduate students in campus events, such as our Annual 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition and our Graduate Research Colloquium. Both events have seen participation from newly affiliated students from "non-traditional" disciplines. We are happy to see progress in this area and will continue our efforts.

A search for a new Director of the Institute for Management and Innovation (IMI) is currently underway. As noted by our external review committee, "IMI is on an extremely positive and strong upward trajectory", providing the new Director with a solid foundation of established, successful programs to build upon and a team of enthusiastic teachers and administrators to help him/ her solidify IMI as the UofT home for graduate professional management education, with an emphasis on experiential learning. We look forward to the innovative new initiatives IMI will explore under the direction of its new leader.

UTM also recently welcomed a Traditional Aboriginal Elder to our community. This is an expanded and permanent role for UTM and realizes the principle of equity and diversity as a core value in our increasingly connected global society as indicated in our Vision Statement. Currently, the Traditional Elder is

exploring locations for an outdoor ceremonial space as well as a long-term plan of establishing an Indigenous Centre at UTM. He is also very active in undergraduate education, having already guest-lectured in a number of our courses. The UTM community is very encouraged by the progress he has made in the short time he has been in this role.

This last year has seen many changes at UTM and we continue to undergo significant growth and development. It is an exciting time for our campus and, with the help of our enthusiastic and committed faculty, students, librarians, and staff, we are looking forward to working together to realize our shared identity and vision.

Sincerely,



Amrita Danieri  
Vice-Principal Academic & Dean  
University of Toronto Mississauga