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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 123 OF THE COMMITTEE ON

ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS

May 31, 2006

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a meeting on Wednesday, May 31, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall, at which the following were present:

Professor J.J. Berry Smith
(In the Chair)
Professor David Farrar, Deputy Provost
and Vice-Provost, Students
Professor Rona Abramovitch
Professor Derek Allen
Professor Gage Averill
Mr. Blake Chapman
Dr. Raisa B. Deber
Professor Luc De Nil
Dr. Inez N. Elliston
Ms Linda B. Gardner
Mr. Christopher Goode
Professor Wayne K. Hindmarsh
Professor Ian R. McDonald
Professor Douglas McDougall
Ms Vera Melnyk
Mr. Matto Mildenberger
Professor Janet Paterson
Professor Andrea Sass-Kortsak
Professor John Scherk
Professor Anthony Sinclair
Miss Maureen Somerville

Non-Voting Assessors:

Professor Susan Pfeiffer, Vice-Provost,
Graduate Education and Dean, School
of Graduate Studies

Secretariat:

Mr. Andrew Drummond, Secretary

Regrets:

Professor Edith Hillan, Vice-Provost,
Academic
Mr. Navine K. Aggarwal
Professor Ronald H. Kluger
Professor Linda McGillis Hall
Mr. Andrew Pinto
Ms Karel Swift, University Registrar

In Attendance:

Professor Sylvia Bashevkin, Principal, University College
Professor Alan Bewell, Vice-Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science
Ms. Marilyn Booth, Director, School of Continuing Studies
Professor Jonathan Freedman, Acting Dean, University of Toronto at Scarborough (UTSC)
Professor Jane Gaskell, Dean, OISE/UT

In Attendance (cont'd)

Professor Susan Howson, Vice-Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science
Professor Tat Smith, Dean, Faculty of Forestry
Professor Tas Venetsanopoulos, Dean, Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering
Professor Catharine Whiteside, Dean, Faculty of Medicine

ALL ITEMS ARE REPORTED FOR INFORMATION.

1. Report of the Previous Meeting

A correction in the attendance of the May 10, 2006 meeting was noted. Report Number 122 (May 10, 2006) was approved, as amended.

2. Business Arising from the Previous Meeting

There was no business arising from the previous meeting.

3. Reviews of Academic Programs and Units – Annual Report

The Chair reminded members that, every year, the administration was called upon to present a report on the reviews undertaken on academic programs and units. These reviews constituted an essential element of academic institutional planning, and helped individual units set their strategic direction. The Committee was the focal point in governance in assessing that the review process and follow-up was appropriate and thorough, and was charged with the duty of being the primary locus of accountability for academic units' external evaluation. A record of discussion would be forwarded to the Agenda Committee of the Academic Board, which would determine if the Board needed to discuss issues of academic importance. From there, the Executive Committee and the Governing Council would receive the report and offer any commentary.

As in the previous year, he noted, each member of the Committee had received copies of the summary documents of all the reviews, as prepared by the Office of the Provost. Furthermore, the Committee had been divided into groups of three or four, each of which was asked to read several reviews in detail, and to report on whether review processes were followed appropriately, whether the administrative response was complete, whether the review matched the summary provided by the Office of the Provost, and whether there was any issues of overriding academic importance that required additional governance attention.

Provostial Reviews

Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering

Professor Tas Venetsanopoulos, Dean, Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering, was present.

A member reported that the review had been performed appropriately, but that the summary had overlooked a recommendation concerning communications to students in the doctoral dissertation process. Another member noted that it was not clear whether previous reviews' recommendations had been adequately followed up, especially regarding the number of women in the faculty complement and the structure of student orientation activities.

Professor Venetsanopoulos addressed the concerns raised by the members. Regarding communications to students, measures addressing the issue had been taken. Regarding the issue of the number of women faculty members, he noted that the problem was systemic across Engineering schools in Canada, but that the Faculty was taking several steps to address it. Among these was the creation of a position of Advisor to the Dean on Women's Issues. The University of Toronto had either the highest

Provostial Reviews (cont'd)

Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering (cont'd)

or second-highest proportion of female faculty in Canadian schools, but more effort was required, and the image of Engineering as a discipline needed to change. Regarding the issue of the student experience, the Faculty was taking steps to ensure that orientation activities were appropriate, both infusing appropriate school pride in students while avoiding inappropriate behaviour. The Dean-designate was aware of the issue and would continue to address it in the future.

School of Continuing Studies

The Chair welcomed Ms. Marilyn Booth, Director, School of Continuing Studies, to the meeting. A member requested answers to five questions: the role and position of the School on offering applied and professional Master's degrees; the status of the School in becoming a 'clearing house' for not-for-credit programming at the University; whether those who completed certificate programs became alumni; whether for-credit courses would ever be allowed; and whether the culture of 'self-support' was affordable for the School and the University. Ms. Booth, noting that her tenure as Director was only four months old, responded that the School had started to explore various options for future growth, especially the possibility of offering applied Master's degrees. She had hosted two meetings on the topic of acting as a 'clearing house', noting that she felt it would be important for all divisions to consider themselves in cooperation for the benefit of the University as a whole in doing so. She had begun the process of initiating an alumni office, noting that one possibility would be to offer each 'graduate' one free course in the School as a means of fostering relationships. She had begun talks with the Vice-President and Provost on the topic of for-credit offerings. Lastly, she noted that the self-support model required careful action, stating that benchmarking would be needed. In particular, the Universities of British Columbia and Victoria had very different models. It was, however, too early to determine what steps should be taken in that regard.

Transitional Year Program (TYP)

A member noted that the review was done well and that the response was appropriate. He raised one concern: the status of the faculty in the Program. Professor Farrar informed the Committee that the search committee for a new Director was working its way through the process, and that a principal issue facing TYP was tenure-stream appointments.

Faculty of Forestry
Innis College
Faculty of Medicine

No concerns were raised about the reviews of these divisions.

University College

A member noted that a principal issue of the review concerned plans to engage 'commuter' students in the life of the College. Professor Bashevkin responded that a proposal was before the Student Experience Fund to convert space to develop a Community Student Centre. In addition, a proposal for 'Commuter Dons' was under consideration. She agreed that the question was a sensitive and important one, and that, as the new Principal, she was seized of the issue.

Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering

Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering

A member reported that all recommendations arising from the review had either been implemented since or that a plan was in place to address them.

Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering (cont'd)

Division of Engineering Science

A member pointed out that the administrative response for the review seemed vague, but was satisfied because the Division was in a transition period, with a new Director, a new Dean and a new funding model. He reported no concern.

Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering

Members raised no concerns about this review. Indeed, a member noted that it was an excellent review of an excellent unit, and was pleased with the proactivity of the response by the Chair.

Faculty of Medicine

Department of Paediatrics
Department of Psychiatry

Members raised no concerns about these reviews. A member complimented Dean Catharine Whiteside for an excellent review process.

Faculty of Arts and Science

Asian Institute

A member reported to the Committee that the review was a positive one, of a recently established unit. She found the emphasis on language education in the Institute an interesting choice, and was probably an appropriate one. She wondered whether the emphasis on Academic Initiatives Fund (AIF) applications as the source for funding for a collaborative M.A. did not sufficiently account for other opportunities for funding.

Professor Farrar noted that the University taught 47 languages, and had added two more. Language instruction was an essential element of a University. He noted that the AIF application process was considered to be the best way for units to develop and fund new initiatives, and that the emphasis on AIF was appropriate.

Professor Bewell noted that the AIF application had been successful, and that, in terms of focusing the mandate of the Institute, Asia-Pacific issues would increase in importance to the Institute. Professor Howson noted that she had been surprised at the extent of the report's discussions of language teaching, but stated that the review made a good case for teaching more languages. In particular, several languages deserved broader attention, most notably Hindi.

Department of Astronomy

A member stated that the review followed appropriate process and that the unit was well-regarded. There were, however, some concerns. In particular, a member noted that the review concluded that undergraduate advising in the Department was lacking, and no response was evident. In addition, a concern about teaching loads of faculty members was included. Professor Howson responded that the issue of undergraduate advising had been addressed by the provision of a staff person to that area, and that the issue of teaching loads was in some ways part of the tensions about running an excellent Department. She was glad that the reviewers drew attention to the issue. Professor Farrar noted there were creative ways of addressing issues of teaching loads of faculty members.

A member noted that the administrative response from the Faculty of Arts and Science did not address issues raised about the relationship of the Department with the Scarborough and Mississauga campuses. Professor Howson responded that the Faculty of Arts and Science was not in a position to make comments on the actions of other campuses' plans. Professor Bewell noted that the Faculty as a whole, as well as the Department, were working to ensure better communications among the three campuses,

Faculty of Arts and Science (cont'd)

Department of Astronomy (cont'd)

and were making good progress. Any graduate program stretching across three campuses would have similar issues by their nature, and required constant monitoring and good communication. Professor Farrar noted that the administration was keen to address tri-campus issues wherever they arose, but that the issues were complicated and required care.

Cinema Studies Program

A member reported that a recommendation concerning the advising in graduate programs was not represented in the summary. He further noted that there was disagreement between the administration and the Program about what would be required to grant Master's-level degrees: the Program felt it required more faculty members, while the administrative response suggested a move to 'Institute' status. Professor Bewell noted that there was a general consensus on the forward direction of the Program, but that the disagreements that existed were largely about timing. The Program was, in the mean time, moving forward in the spirit of the recommendations. He reassured members that concerned parties were largely in agreement. Professor Howson stated that the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies (OCGS) rules on faculty complement were clear, and that a planning process was required to address issues of faculty retirement. Professor Paterson agreed, noting that the Program had very strong enrolment, and that three positions had been or were being filled to accommodate growth as part of the transition of the Program. A curricular review would follow.

Department of Computer Science

A member pointed out that, while space consolidation was a primary concern of the review, it was addressed very little in the response document. In addition, the response did not address the question of ties to other units. Professor Howson stated in response that the relationships with other units were indeed occurring, but did not require specific decanal intervention. Regarding the question of space allocation for the Department, Professor Howson reminded members that space allocation was a challenge for practically all units within the University, and could not be solved simply without creating other problems. Professor Bewell agreed, noting that the review appeared to suggest a different prioritization of existing space, which by its nature would disadvantage other units. Professor Howson informed the Committee that the buildings housing the Department were not all allocated to the Faculty of Arts and Science, which occasionally created difficulty; however, such a situation also placed faculty members in occasionally beneficial locations.

Department of Economics

A member stated that the review was thorough and well-done. Another member informed the Committee that one of the points of discussion in the review concerned the teaching loads of members. Professor Bewell informed the Committee that the teaching loads in the Department of Economics – two courses per term – was comparable with other units'. The member then asked why there seemed to be a tendency (according to the review) for faculty members not to apply for external grants. Professor Bewell informed the Committee that the Faculty of Arts and Science indeed encouraged seeking grants, and conveyed the message through the administrative response that it expected action on that point.

Finno-Ugric Studies

A member stated that the review process was sound, but informed the Committee that the review highlighted that the program was in a precarious position. He then informed the Committee that the Dean was attempting to allocate additional resources to the program to ensure its continued strong existence.

Faculty of Arts and Science (cont'd)

Department of Geography

A member noted that one theme raised by the review concerned the operation, at the University of Toronto at Scarborough (UTSC), of a division within two different academic sections. The administrative response had not addressed the question, Professor Howson informed members, because the Faculty of Arts and Science had no authority over the operations of UTSC. A member noted that the review commented on the fragmentation of the Department by space allocation. Professor Howson informed members that, with the pending capital project in Economics, the space issue for Geography could be resolved.

Department of Geology
Department of Physics

Members discussed these two reviews in concert.

A member stated that the review of the Department of Geology was very critical, and included a recommendation to reorganize the Department. Professor Howson informed the Committee that the Dean of Arts and Science had clearly heard the message, and would be assembling a Committee in the fall of 2006 to examine the issue closely.

Another member informed the Committee that some recommendations from the 1999 review of the Department were not carried out.

Regarding the Department of Physics, a member informed the Committee that the Department appeared to be losing ground to other Canadian institutions, and that the faculty members seemed to feel that there was a lack of transparency in Departmental administration. Furthermore, some questioned whether the Geophysics component of the Department should be in the Department of Physics or in the Department of Geology.

Professor Howson reminded the Committee that the reviewers of the Department of Physics had noted the strength of the Geophysics component within the Department of Physics, and that faculty members were attracted to the program because it had been situated in Physics. The Dean was in agreement that it should remain.

Humanities Centre

A member informed the Committee that, as a new Centre, the review was the first, and a new director was awaiting appointment. Apart from a recommendation that the Centre 'remain on the radar', members raised no issues

Centre for International Relations

A member informed the Committee that the review expressed concerns about the small number of core faculty members, most of whom had split appointments in other units. The administrative response echoed the concern. Professor Bewell stated that complement issues in interdisciplinary units were always difficult to resolve, and that the question was under continual review.

Department of Mathematics
Department of Zoology

Members raised no issues concerning the reviews of these Departments.

OISE/UT

Institute of Child Study

A member asked if the Memorandum of Agreement (referred to in the review) needed by 2006 had been signed. Professor Gaskell confirmed that it had. No other issues arose during the discussion of this review.

School of Graduate Studies

Mathematical Finance Program

A member questioned why the review referred to 'delicate relationships' with other academic units. Professor Pfeiffer informed the Committee that the Program was a cost-recovery one. Its business model, however, was under review and pending restructuring following that review.

Centre for Urban and Community Studies

A member informed the Committee that the issue of financial support for the Centre had been raised in the review. Professor Pfeiffer stated that a new structure for the Centre was being implemented to allow support to be more substantial.

Institute for Environmental Studies
Centre for Russian and East European Studies

Professor Pfeiffer noted that each of these units had been repurposed according to recommendations in the reviews.

University of Toronto at Scarborough (UTSC)

Department of Humanities

A member informed the Committee that the review raised the issue of 'split' Departments as a concern to be addressed.

4. Date of Next Meeting

Members were reminded that the next regular meeting was scheduled for fall, 2006.

5. Other Business

All members applauded the outgoing Chair, Professor J.J. Berry Smith, for having led the Committee well for four years. Professor Smith thanked members, reminding them that it was a privilege to serve on a Committee that allowed one to observe so much of what kind of academic work was happening across the University.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Secretary Chair

October 23, 2006