

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
REPORT NUMBER 142 OF THE COMMITTEE ON
ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS

September 15, 2009

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it met on Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at 4:10 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall, with the following present:

Professor Andrea Sass-Kortsak (Chair)
Professor Douglas McDougall
(Vice-Chair)
Professor Cheryl Regehr, Vice-Provost,
Academic Programs
Mr. Konstantin Anosov
Professor Gage Averill
Mr. William Crothers
Professor Charles Deber
Mr. Sybil J. Derrible
Professor Robert Gibbs

Professor Christina E. Kramer
Ms Lesley Ann Lavack
Professor Hy Van Luong
Professor John R. Miron
Ms Judith Poë
Ms Lynn Snowden
Mr. John David Stewart
Miss Sabrina Kun Tang

Mr. Neil Dobbs, Secretary

Regrets:

Professor Katherine Berg
Professor Brian Corman
Professor Alister Cumming
Mr. Ken Davy
Miss Netila Demneri

Professor Miriam Diamond
Professor William Gough
Professor Ito Peng
Mr. Matthew Purser
Professor Suzanne Stevenson

In Attendance:

Professor Elizabeth Smyth, member, the Governing Council, Vice-Dean, Programs,
School of Graduate Studies
Ms Jane Alderdice, Director, Quality Assessment and Governance, School of Graduate
Studies
Professor Cristina Amon, Dean, Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering
Professor Rob Baker, Vice-Dean, Research and Graduate Programs, Faculty of Arts
and Science
Professor Allan Borodin, Co-Chair, Professional Masters Committee, Department of
Computer Science
Professor Marsha Chechik, Vice-Chair, Department of Computer Science
Ms Helen Lasthiotakis, Director, Policy and Planning, Office of the Vice-President
and Provost
Professor Jack Mandel, Director, Dalla Lana School of Public Health
Ms Mae-Yu Tan, Assistant Secretary of the Governing Council

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ITEMS 7, 8 AND 9 CONTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD. ALL OTHER ITEMS ARE REPORTED FOR INFORMATION.

1. Report of the Previous Meeting

Report 141 (May 12, 2009) was approved.

2. Chair's Remarks: Welcome and Orientation

The Chair welcomed members to the Committee's first meeting of the academic year. She introduced herself, the Vice-Chair, the Assessors, and the Secretary. She introduced the Director of Policy and Planning in the Office of the Vice-President and Provost, who played an important role in preparing a great deal of the material that came before the Committee. She then invited members to introduce themselves.

The Chair recalled that members had over the summer received copies of the Committee's terms of reference as well as a list of frequently asked questions about the Committee's work and the answers to those questions. She commented on the areas of the Committee's responsibility, on the duty of individual members and on the operational environment of the Committee. She noted that meetings of the Committee were recorded for the assistance of the Secretary in preparing the Report of the meeting; the recording was used only for that purpose and was discarded thereafter.

One question arose concerning the role of the Committee.

Divisional grading practices. A member referred to a recent memorandum from the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science concerning grading and marks distribution, and he asked whether the matter would fall within the Committee's purview. The Secretary replied that the University had a Grading Practices Policy and that divisions established their own practices within the parameters specified by that Policy. Amendments to those practices could be made without reference to the Committee unless they required an exception from the University-wide policy or unless they were major. The member said that he thought that the changes outlined in the memorandum, which would apply to the Arts and Sciences divisions on all three campuses, would be of interest to the Committee. Professor Regehr said that she would look into the matter and provide information to the member.

3. Calendar of Business, 2009-10

The Committee received for information its calendar of business for 2009-10.

A member observed that there was no business shown on the calendar of business for three of the meeting dates. Did that imply that there would be no meetings on those dates? The Chair replied that the calendar of business showed only items of business that

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3. Calendar of Business, 2009-10 (Cont'd)

came forward on an annual basis or that were known in advance. Other proposals often came forward, including curriculum proposals from the divisional councils. That being said, the Committee had in the previous year cancelled two meetings for the lack of sufficient business, both in the fall term.

4. Business Arising from the Report of the Previous Meeting

Item 5, Faculty of Medicine: Bachelor of Science, Physician Assistant Program

The Chair reported that the Governing Council, at its meeting of June 23, 2009, had approved the recommendation for the establishment of the Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant program.

5. Report on Approvals Under Summer Executive Authority

The Chair noted that the Committee had on its current agenda a proposal to change the name of the master's degree earned by students in the Public Health Science program. The first meetings of the Academic Board and the Governing Council had been cancelled. Therefore, if the Committee approved the proposal, it would be submitted for approval under summer authority. Such an approval would enable students who would graduate this fall to receive the renamed degree, if they chose to do so. No other matter within the Committee's terms of reference had been approved under summer executive authority.

6. School of Graduate Studies: Annual Report on Approvals by the Graduate Education Council

Professor Regehr recalled that the Committee had, prior to 2006, been called upon to review and approve a significant number of relatively minor proposals from the School of Graduate Studies – a task that required a substantial amount of the Committee's time. Therefore, in 2006, the Governing Council had approved a proposal to delegate to the Graduate Education Council responsibility to approve matters in certain specific areas including changes to admission requirements to graduate programs and the approval of the establishment of direct admission options for existing Ph.D. programs. Approvals given by the Graduate Education Council in those areas would be included in an annual report for information to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs. That report would also include other changes to graduate programs approved by the Graduate Education Council but requiring a report for information to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, as specified in the Committee's terms of reference.

The Committee received the 2008-09 annual report for information.

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6. School of Graduate Studies: Annual Report on Approvals by the Graduate Education Council (Cont'd)

A member enquired whether the Committee or the School of Graduate Studies would be responsible for considering any policy proposal to permit graduate students to spend a year to study or conduct research abroad, using external funding, while not losing a year of their eligibility for graduate-student funding at the University of Toronto. The Chair took notice of the question; an appropriate officer would be asked to look into the question and to provide the information to the member.

7. School of Graduate Studies and Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering: Master of Engineering in Telecommunications – Program Closure

Professor Regehr presented the proposal to close the Master of Engineering Program in Telecommunications program, which proposal was outlined in the memorandum to the Committee dated September 4, 2009. A copy is attached to this Report as Appendix “A”. The self-funded professional Master’s degree program had been initiated in 1997 and had 170 graduates over ten years. As the result of changes in the industrial and economic climate, however, it was no longer attracting students. Invited to comment, Dean Amon said students would have the opportunity to take many of the same courses in the Master of Engineering Program, but there would no longer be a separate, self-funded program leading to a separate degree in telecommunications. In response to a question, Dean Amon said that she did not think that it would be a disadvantage to future students who took courses in the area of telecommunications to earn the Master of Engineering degree rather than a separate degree in telecommunications.

YOUR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS

THAT the proposal from the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering and the School of Graduate Studies to close the Master of Engineering in Telecommunications (M.Eng.Tel.) program, a copy of which is attached hereto as [Appendix “A”](#), be approved, effective immediately.

8. School of Graduate Studies and Faculty of Arts and Science: Master of Science in Applied Computing

Professor Regehr presented the proposal for a new Master of Science degree program in Applied Computing, as outlined in her memorandum dated September 4, 2009. A copy of the proposal is attached to this Report as Appendix “B”. The new professional Master’s degree program offered by the Department of Computer Science in the Faculty of Arts and Science would require two terms of course work and an eight-month industrial internship, and it would be distinct from the Department’s research

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Master's degree program. The need for a professional graduate program had been determined through broad consultation with students and with potential employers in the industry.

Invited to comment, Professor Baker said that the Faculty of Arts and Science supported the proposal strongly. It had been based on excellent market research, and it would serve the needs of its students very well. The required internship would benefit not only students in the program but all students. Students on internships would continue to take at least one course, and they would bring back to the Department their learning from their internship experiences. The Department was very sensibly planning to begin with a small enrolment and to build slowly onto a strong base.

A member noted that the amount of Government basic-income-unit funding for Master's degree programs was capped, and he asked about the financial consequences of initiating the program. (He recognized that the question was one within the purview of the Planning and Budget Committee.) Professor Baker replied that the Department of Computer Science would consider the enrolment in its current Master's program. Overall enrolment for the Department would not increase or might even decline slightly.

YOUR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS

THAT the establishment of the proposed Master of Science in Applied Computing (M.Sc.A.C.) program within the Faculty of Arts and Science, a copy of which is attached hereto as [Appendix "B"](#), be approved, commencing September 2010.

9. School of Graduate Studies and Faculty of Medicine: Master of Public Health – Degree Name Change

Professor Regehr presented the proposal to change the degree name for the Master's degree program offered by the Dalla Lana School of Public Health from Master of Health Science to Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) The proposal was outlined in [Professor Regehr's memorandum to the Committee dated August 5, 2009](#). The Master of Public Health was increasingly becoming the internationally recognized degree for professionals in the field, and adoption of the degree name would be valuable for graduates of the University of Toronto program. The proposal was made after broad consultation with faculty, students and staff. The Master of Health Science degree would continue to be awarded to graduates of the programs in Health Administration, Speech-Language Pathology and others.

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9. School of Graduate Studies and Faculty of Medicine: Master of Public Health – Degree Name Change (Cont'd)

Invited to comment, Professor Mandel said that several new Master's degree programs in public health had been established in Canada. All of those programs, like virtually all programs in the United States, offered a Master of Public Health degree, and that degree had become the internationally recognized qualification in the field. It was important for the University of Toronto to remain a leader in the field, and there was some evidence that students were choosing to register at other universities in order to work towards the M.P.H. degree. There had been broad consultation with faculty, students and alumni, and there was unanimous support for the proposal.

YOUR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS

THAT the change of name for the degree earned by students in the Public Health Sciences program offered by the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, from Master of Health Science (MHSc) to Master of Public Health (MPH), be approved, effective September 2009.

In the course of discussion, a member observed that Professor Mandel had led the Dalla Lana School of Public Health in a number of great advances, including recruiting a number of highly regarded faculty. The School clearly had a very promising future.

10. Reports of the Administrative Assessors

Professor Regehr reported on the following matters.

(a) Academic Program Continuity Planning

The significant risk of a pandemic of H1N1 influenza had brought to the fore the need for planning for the continuity of academic programs in stressed circumstances. A great deal of planning had been completed over the summer to enable the University to ensure that all of its students would have the opportunity to complete their courses in the event of a pandemic. First, in the middle of August, the University had asked all faculty members to review their courses to consider revisions that could be made and contingency plans that could be put into operation to enable students to complete their courses even if they or their faculty member became ill. The use of technological means and other alternatives could be considered. It would be important to avoid being forced to discontinue courses. Second, members of the faculty had been asked to notify their departmental Chairs or Faculty Deans promptly if they themselves became ill. That would enable Chairs or Deans to take steps to ensure continuity in the event of illness.

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Third, an alternative had been made available to students who became ill during a pandemic and who would be in circumstances where they would normally be required to provide medical certification of their illness. It appeared likely that most people with the symptoms of influenza would be told to remain at home and not to visit their physician. If students could not, as a result, obtain necessary medical verification of their illness, they would likely come to the University, risking further communication of the disease. Therefore, University staff had designed a modification to the Repository of Student Records (ROSI) to enable students to make a declaration of illness that would serve during this term as a substitute for medical verification of influenza-like illness. It would also enable faculty members and divisions to track the extent of the illness among the students in their courses. If the rate of H1N1 influenza were to remain low, this provision could be deactivated. The experience in universities in the United States where there were high rates of H1N1 influenza was that students had come to class to avoid academic penalty, and that had potentially resulted in a worsening of the outbreak.

A member asked what faculty members were expected to do if they received a declaration of illness from a student who missed an examination. Professor Regehr replied that faculty members should follow the usual practices in their Faculty. The only difference would be the acceptance of the declaration in place of the usually required medical certificate. Professor Regehr stressed that the Provost's Office would assess the outcome of the procedure as time passed; the first priority at this time was a mechanism to avoid students who were ill with a communicable disease from coming to the University and transmitting their illness to others.

(b) Program Quality Assurance

Professor Regehr reported that her new position of Vice-Provost, Academic Programs had been established by the Vice-President and Provost to ensure a high level of focus on assurance of the excellence of the University's academic programs. That duty had previously been carried out by Professor Hillan, who had also been responsible for a wide range of other matters including faculty personnel matters. Changes being made in the Province of Ontario such as changes to graduate program appraisal and review were, however, requiring that full-time attention be devoted by an officer of the Provost's Office to the provision of quality assurance. Professor Regehr's duties as Vice-Provost, Academic Programs would focus on a number of tasks including: (a) examination of proposals for new programs to ensure that they would meet the appropriate standard of excellence and that they would enhance the University's overall program offerings and not duplicate existing offerings; (b) evaluation of existing programs; (3) oversight of some

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aspects of programs being offered jointly by more than one division; and (4) program continuity planning (e.g. planning in the event of an influenza epidemic, as discussed above).

Professor Regehr reported that the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (O.C.G.S.) would no longer review and accredit graduate programs. The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (the “Quality Council” – a subgroup of the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents or OCAV) was at work to determine an alternative review process for all Ontario universities. It had prepared several drafts, but its work was not yet final. It appeared clear, however, that the new process for graduate programs would be similar to that for undergraduate programs, and each university would be responsible to commission reviews of its own programs. The Quality Council would audit each University’s review policy and process, and the university’s compliance with them. That would represent a very substantial change for graduate programs, but it would be akin to the Undergraduate Program Review Audit (UPRAC) process. It would provide the University with a valuable opportunity in that it would have agency over its own quality-control process. In particular, the University would be able to select its own benchmarks for evaluation of its programs. The new arrangement would require change to the University’s policy, which would be brought to the Committee for consideration and recommendation to the Academic Board.

Professor Regehr stressed that it would be important for the University to act quickly. A final Quality Assurance Framework had not been received by the Ontario universities. However, the Provost’s Office was currently working with the divisions on the matter. Each division was being asked to consider an appropriate schedule of reviews, with each unit and/or program being reviewed within a period of five to seven years. The proposed schedule of reviews would be submitted to the Provost’s Office.

A very important outcome would be the divisions’ ability to bundle their reviews. Divisions could arrange their administrative reviews and their reviews of graduate and undergraduate programs to take place at the same time. That would require the completion of only one self-study rather than several. In appropriate cases, professional accreditation reviews could also be completed as a part of the bundle.

Professor Regehr reiterated that the University did not have all of the information it would require to revise its system of quality assurance. The University of Toronto was, however, in a very good position to deal with the matter.

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Several matters arose in questions and discussion.

(i) Committee role in the new review process. A member observed that the Committee currently received and considered the reports on administrative and undergraduate-program reviews but not graduate program reviews, which were conducted by the O.C.G.S. What was the likely role for the Committee in the anticipated new process? Professor Regehr replied that, while the matter had not yet been determined, she anticipated that all or almost all reviews would be considered by the Committee. That was particularly the case because it was anticipated undergraduate and graduate program reviews would often be bundled.

(ii) Conduct of reviews under the new arrangements: preparation and evaluation of data. A member expressed the strong hope that the new arrangements for reviews would include provisions for the preparation and collection of data and curricula vitae in a streamlined and efficient manner. The member's experience with O.C.G.S. reviews had been problematical in terms of the data required and the format of that data. Professor Regehr agreed. The University did have a Provostial guideline on self-studies for reviews, and that guideline would be reviewed to ensure that it was sufficiently comprehensive. Each academic unit would be required to complete a comprehensive self-study that selected and reported on relevant benchmarks for valuation. The external reviewers would be provided with the self-study, and they would be advised that their review should emphasize the units' academic programs. Their review report should provide meaningful information on the strengths and deficiencies of the programs to enable the University to take any necessary action to ensure that the programs were at the highest level of excellence. The University would, therefore, provide structures for reviews, but it would leave a great deal of flexibility within those structures to enable the academic units to select appropriate benchmarks. The member applauded the initiative.

A member expressed concern about the apparent absence of systematic, annual data collection. While it appeared that the necessary data was collected for reviews, it would be much more helpful if the data were collected each year and made available to the academic units so that they could track their performance. Professor Regehr agreed with the member's view. The data was currently available in different parts of the University, but the leaders of units often did not know how to obtain the data. The Provost's Office was considering means to provide the data including comparative data for benchmarking purposes. Clearly, it would be best to provide the data grouped in a manner that would be most useful to the academic units. A member stressed the importance of that initiative in a situation in which there was regular leadership change in academic units.

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(iii) Conduct of reviews under the new arrangements: external reviewers. A member noted that for O.C.G.S. reviews, the Council included external reviewers in the process. Would that continue under the new arrangements? Professor Regehr replied that external reviewers would most certainly be involved. While the number had not yet been determined, the Quality Council discussions had envisioned two or three external reviewers. In accordance with the University's current practice, the reviewers would be selected by the University officer commissioning the review - the Dean of a multi-departmental Faculty or the Provost for a Faculty that did not have a departmental structure. It would be important that the external reviewers be well equipped to assess the programs and to report on potential issues. As with the external reviews the University currently commissioned, it would have to ensure that external reviewers were selected from peer institutions and that they were highly qualified.

(iv) Conduct of reviews under the new arrangements: Tri-campus arrangements. A member observed that in Arts and Science, graduate departments were usually tri-campus departments but undergraduate departments were established on a single campus. Would reviews be conducted for the tri-campus departments or for the departments on each campus? Professor Regehr replied that the question was under consideration by the Tri-Campus Deans. The University would look to the three Arts and Science divisions to determine whether it would be appropriate in each case to complete a review of the combined departments or of each campus department individually. The Provost's Office recognized that one size would not fit all, and it did not propose to impose a model.

(v) Conduct of reviews under the new arrangements: Graduate Departments not affiliated with other units. A member noted that some graduate programs such as collaborative programs were not affiliated with particular undergraduate units. Therefore, a means of undertaking reviews of those units concurrently with undergraduate reviews and administrative would not be apparent. Professor Regehr replied that the Deans would make a determination of the timing of those reviews and whether it would be appropriate to hold them concurrently with other reviews. One of the Provost's Office's responsibilities would be to maintain a database to ensure that reviews were in fact completed.

(vi) Conduct of reviews under the new arrangements: timing of reviews. Professor Regehr anticipated that reviews would be conducted on five to seven year cycles. The maximum interval between reviews in the current University guidelines was ten years. There might be some need for leeway initially to establish the new cycles, especially for academic units that had very recently been the subject of an O.C.G.S. review. Professor Regehr agreed with a member's observation that it would be highly desirable to reduce

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duplication of effort and, wherever possible, to have administrative reviews and reviews of graduate and undergraduate programs conducted concurrently. In Faculties where there was a requirement for an accreditation review, it would also make sense for that review to be conducted concurrently, if possible. At the present time, the need for three or four reviews every cycle could result in an academic unit's conducting a self-study every year or two – a fact that could reduce the quality of the self-study. Conducting the required reviews concurrently would help to promote the best possible outcome, one that was coherent and dealt with the interface of the undergraduate and graduate programs and the administrative support for them.

Professor Regehr stressed that her responses represented the current thinking of the Provost's Office. That thinking was subject to change, particularly when the final paper from the Quality Council was released. In addition, the Quality Council might or might not approve the University's plan. The Chair observed that the Committee would consider the matter further.

11. Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee (UPRAC): Audit Report

Professor Regehr said that in the current process for undergraduate program reviews, the University was responsible to commission the reviews, and the process was audited by the University Program Review Audit Committee (UPRAC). The [report of the UPRAC audit](#), now before the Committee, was of the second such audit of the University of Toronto undergraduate programs. The University had responded to the recommendations contained in the first audit report, received by the University four years previously. The report of the new audit contained recommendations and suggestions, and it was unclear whether the University should respond to UPRAC or whether its response should be included in the University's new review policy and process to be submitted to the Quality Council. In either case, it would be necessary for the University to consider several things. First, the auditors had noted that there had in some cases been too much focus on the review of the administration of a unit – often in connection with the end of the leader's term – and too little focus on the review of the quality of the unit's undergraduate program. Second, the auditors had noted that in some cases the reviews did not conform entirely to the University's policy and guidelines. The Provost's Office had responded in part by the establishment of the position of Vic-Provost, Academic Programs, and Professor Regehr would work to ensure that the reviews would conform to the University's policy and guidelines.

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12. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair reminded members that the next regular meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, October 27, 2009.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Secretary

Chair

October 14, 2009

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