

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**  
**THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**  
**REPORT NUMBER 141 OF THE COMMITTEE ON**  
**ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS**

**May 12, 2009**

To the Academic Board,  
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it met on Tuesday, May 12, 2009 at 4:10 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall, with the following present:

Professor Andrea Sass-Kortsak (Chair)  
Professor Edith Hillan, Vice-Provost,  
Academic  
Professor Jonathan Freedman, Deputy  
Provost  
Professor Gage Averill  
Professor Ragnar Buchweitz  
Professor Elizabeth Cowper  
Professor Luc F. DeNil  
Professor William Gough  
Ms Jenna D. Hossack  
Professor Rhonda Love  
Professor Hy Van Luong  
Professor Ato Quayson

Professor Cheryl Regehr  
Professor Elizabeth M. Smyth  
Ms Lynn Snowden  
Miss Maureen J. Somerville  
Professor Suzanne Stevenson  
Mr. John David Stewart  
  
Professor Susan Pfeiffer, Vice-Provost,  
Graduate Education and Dean, School of  
Graduate Studies  
Ms Karel Swift, University Registrar  
  
Mr. Neil Dobbs, Secretary

Regrets:

Professor Katherine Berg  
Professor Robert Gibbs  
Ms Jacqueline Greenblatt  
Ms Emily Greenleaf  
Ms Anne Guo

Mr. Joseph Koo  
Ms Lesley Ann Lavack  
Professor Douglas McDougall  
Ms Charlene Saldanha

In Attendance:

Professor Sarita Verma, member of the Governing Council; Vice-Dean, Post-Graduate  
Medical Education and Deputy Dean, Faculty of Medicine.  
Professor Maureen Gottesman, Post-Graduate Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine  
Ms Helen Lasthiotakis, Director, Policy and Planning, Office of the Vice-President  
and Provost  
Ms Lesley Lewis, Assistant Dean, University of Toronto at Scarborough  
Professor John Scherk, Vice-Dean, University of Toronto at Scarborough

ITEM 5 CONTAINS A RECOMMENDATION TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD.  
ALL OTHER ITEMS ARE REPORTED FOR INFORMATION.

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**1. Report of the Previous Meeting**

Report 140 (March 31, 2009) was approved.

**2. Business Arising from the Report of the Previous Meeting**

**Item 3, Reviews of Academic Units and Programs, 2007-08 – Annual Report**

The Chair reported that the Agenda Committee of the Academic Board, at its meeting of April 14th, had received the report on the reviews of academic units and programs. The Agenda Committee had accepted the conclusion of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs that all of the issues raised by the reviews were being addressed appropriately by the divisions and that there was no need for action by the Academic Board or the Governing Council. The Agenda Committee had discussed the possibility of a protocol for reviews to ensure the selection of appropriate reviewers, good consultation within the unit, broad distribution of the review reports within the unit, and other matters – many of the same matters considered by the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs. The Vice-President and Provost had assured the Agenda Committee that an assessment of the review process and of review outcomes would be a major priority of the incoming Vice-Provost, Academic Programs – Professor Cheryl Regehr. The Chair noted that the two parts of the Report on Reviews, along with the reports of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs on its deliberations, were on the agenda of this afternoon's meeting of the Executive Committee of the Governing Council. With that Committee's agreement, the reports would proceed to the Governing Council meeting on May 20, 2009.

**3. University of Toronto at Scarborough: Degree and Program Requirements**

Professor Hillan said that all of the University's divisions had established their degree-level expectations in 2007-08. The University of Toronto at Scarborough, following upon this process, had then examined the alignment of its degree and program requirements with its degree-level expectations. That exercise had led to the proposal now before the Committee. First, there would be delineation of the course levels required for the degree (beyond the current delineation included in the program requirements). Students would be required to complete at least six full courses or equivalent at the "C" or "D" level, including at least one full course or equivalent at the "D" level. Second, there would be a breadth requirement to give students exposure to knowledge outside of their main area of study. Students would be required to complete at least one half course from each of the following five categories: (1) arts, literature and language; (2) history, philosophy and cultural studies; (3) social and behavioural sciences; (4) natural sciences;

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**3. University of Toronto at Scarborough: Degree and Program Requirements (Cont'd)**

and (5) quantitative reasoning. Similarly, the specifications for program requirements would be modified. Specialist programs would normally consist of between twelve and sixteen full courses or equivalent, including at least four full credits at the “C” or “D” level, including at least one full course or equivalent at the “D” level. A requirement for more than sixteen full courses for completion of a program could be allowed, but only in exceptional circumstances. Major programs would normally require seven to eight full courses or equivalent (or nine in exceptional circumstances) including at least two at the “C” or “D” level. The proposed degree requirements would be similar to those in effect in the Faculty of Arts and Science on the St. George Campus and at the University of Toronto at Mississauga. It was not anticipated that the new requirements would have any resource implications, although Departments might well have to adapt some of their course offerings to meet the new requirements. For example, there might be need for some Departments to offer more “D” level courses. The proposals had been endorsed by the U.T.S.C. Academic Committee and by its Council. To ensure proper notice, the proposed changes would not apply to students registered in degree programs at U.T.S.C. prior to the 2010 Summer Session. Professor Hillan noted a change in the motion concerning the post-nominal abbreviation for the Honours Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science Degree. To achieve consistency across the University, the abbreviations would be Hon. B.A. and Hon. B.Sc.

Professor Buchweitz noted that the proposal had originated with U.T.S.C.’s consideration of degree-level expectations. The requirement to add a minimum number of courses at the “C” and “D” level responded to that review, and it would make the U.T.S.C. requirements similar to those in the Arts and Science programs on the other campuses. There was some concern about this aspect of the proposal, which would probably require the revision of the curriculum to offer more upper level courses, but the need could be addressed through reform of the overall curriculum, which would be appropriate in any case. The addition of the breadth requirement would again bring the U.T.S.C. requirements into greater conformity with those on the other campuses. At U.T.S.C., it was decided to require at least a half course from each of the five breadth categories rather than offering students a choice of three or four of those categories. That requirement had generated substantial discussion, but in the end the proposal had been endorsed.

The following matters arose in discussion.

**(a) Designation of course levels.** A member observed that the degree-level expectations for students in Arts and Science were, sensibly, very similar across the three campuses. Why, therefore, was there a unique system of course level designations (A”, “B”, “C” and “D” level) at U.T.S.C. rather than the 100, 200, 300 and 400-level designations used at the other campuses? Professor Buchweitz replied that originally there were only “A”, “B”, and “C” level courses, and the “C” level designation was considered to be appropriate

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only for advanced courses in a discipline, particularly for independent study and supervised research courses. The system was also the outcome of the availability for many years of the three-year degree. However, with the more recent four level system, the mapping of the use of the designations was not always consistent. For example, in the sciences, the levels were used to map an appropriate sequence of course work, where “D” level courses built upon the prerequisite knowledge established in “C” level courses. It was not, however, generally expected that third year students would complete only “C” level courses and fourth year students only “D” level courses. Professor Buchweitz anticipated that the mapping of the use of the course level designations, and perhaps the system of course level designations, would be examined as part of the curricular review that would follow the proposed change in the degree and program requirements.

**(b) Level of specialization in program requirements.** A member observed that it was proposed that specialist programs could require as many as sixteen of twenty courses for the degree, and that number could indeed be exceeded “in exceptional circumstances.” That appeared to permit a very high proportion of the program to be specified. Another member expressed concern that the proposal might sacrifice breadth for depth. Professor Buchweitz agreed that the level of specialization permitted was high, and Departments would be advised that requiring fourteen or fifteen courses would be reasonable within a twenty-course degree. However, some science disciplines had been adamant that a higher level of concentration was essential for a solid specialist program in the discipline. The use of a requirement for a higher number of courses for a specialist program would clearly represent an outlier situation in particular disciplines. However, the imposition of a limit was a new step and a step forward. In addition, the new breadth requirement for the degree would ensure that some appropriate amount of study outside of the specialist area was required of each student, and the breadth requirement would limit the number of courses that could be prescribed in any specialist program for reason of exceptional circumstances.

Professor Stevenson noted that a similar debate had taken place with respect to permissible specialist requirements in the Faculty of Arts and Science on the St. George Campus. In that Faculty, the limit had been specified as fourteen courses or sixteen in multidisciplinary programs. In the discussion on the St. George Campus too, some of the science disciplines had put forward a case for a higher requirement. Therefore, the usual limit of sixteen courses at U.T.S.C. represented a step forward in permitting breadth in some programs. Another member stressed that the breadth requirement represented an important assurance against excessive specialization.

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**3. University of Toronto at Scarborough: Degree and Program Requirements (Cont'd)**

On the recommendation of the University of Toronto at Scarborough,

YOUR COMMITTEE APPROVED

THAT the proposed changes to degree program requirements for the Honours Bachelor of Arts (Hon. B.A.), Honours Bachelor of Science (Hon. B.Sc.) and Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.) degrees and for Specialist and Major programs, as described in the submission from the University of Toronto Scarborough, be approved, effective as of the Summer 2010.

**4. School of Graduate Studies: Graduate Academic Appeals Board Regulations – Amendment**

Professor Hillan said that the School of Graduate Studies proposed a minor change to its regulations concerning academic appeals that would formalize an existing practice. At the present time, the regulations entitled students to seek advice or mediation from the Vice-Dean of the School at any time up until the filing of a formal appeal. The time permitted for such an appeal would, pursuant to the proposed regulation, be extended until the time of the hearing of the appeal by the School's Academic Appeals Board. The change was appropriate because students had an eight-week deadline to file an appeal with the Appeals Board, but there might well be some significant further time before the hearing took place. In addition, the regulations would give students access to an alternative mediator if they perceived that the Vice-Dean had any conflict of interest in the matter. The proposed revision had been endorsed by the Graduate Education Council.

Two members expressed their support for the proposal. One member, who had served on the committee that had reviewed divisional appeals practices, commented that it was very good to see that divisions were making improvements to their regulations.

On the recommendation of the School of Graduate Studies,

YOUR COMMITTEE APPROVED

The proposal from the School of Graduate Studies to amend the section of the General Regulations in the S.G.S. Calendar on "Academic Appeals: Informal Mediation."

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Professor Hillan said that the Faculty of Medicine proposed the establishment of a Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant degree program as a full-time, professional, second-entry undergraduate degree program based in the Department of Family and Community Medicine. The University of Toronto degree program would be offered with the participation of the Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences (with which the University had a long-standing partnership) and with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. The proposal for the program had arisen from the 2006 report on Health Human Resources Strategy, produced under the auspices of the Government of Ontario. A collaborative steering committee had then been established to work further on the matter. That steering committee had been led by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and by the Ontario Medical Association, and it included broad representation of health care employers, educators, and health-care professional bodies. Physician Assistants were mid-level health-care professionals who would provide a broad range of medical and surgical services under the supervision of licensed physicians. The profession was a relatively new innovation in Canada. There were currently two programs training Physician Assistants in Canada: a Master's-level program at the University of Manitoba and a Bachelor of Health Sciences program at McMaster University. The program would be available to professionals with prior experience in a health-care field, especially those with a commitment to contributing to health care in under-served and rural communities.

Professor Hillan said that the proposed program would be a full-time distance and distributed-learning program requiring the completion of six consecutive semesters of training over twenty-four months. The first class would consist of 22 students, with an anticipated increase to 42 students per cohort in the second year. The proposal followed extensive consultation across the University, including consultation with the Council of Health Science Deans. Consultation had been particularly important with the Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, which offered a program training Nurse-Practitioners, and the University of Toronto at Scarborough, which offered a program training Paramedics. In the course of that discussion, a question had arisen concerning the difference between Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants. Nurse Practitioners were independently licensed practitioners operating within a very well defined, regulated scope of practice. Physician Assistants, on the other hand, operated under the supervision of a physician, and the scope of their practice depended on the area of practice of that physician. Nurse Practitioners trained at the University of Toronto completed a graduate degree program or a post-graduate diploma program, whereas Physician Assistants would complete a second-entry undergraduate degree program. The admission requirements for the two programs, in terms of academic background and clinical experience, were very different. The proposed program and the Memorandum of Understanding among the three institutions to offer the proposed program had been considered and endorsed by the Faculty of Medicine Council, and the Memorandum of Understanding had been endorsed by the Governing

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**5. Faculty of Medicine: Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant Program (Cont'd)**

Council's Planning and Budget Committee at its recent meeting. It was anticipated that there would be no resource implications arising from the proposal; it would be self-sustaining from government grants and tuition fees.

Professor Verma noted that the proposal arrived at the Committee following a fifteen-month planning process. That process had been initiated in part by a request from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that the University undertake leadership in providing a part of the response to the need for additional health-care personnel in parts of Ontario. Almost 1-million people across the Province did not have adequate access to medical care. The training of Physician Assistants would expand the number of people physicians are able to serve. The partnership with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine and with the Michener Institute – with which the University had a long-standing relationship – would be a very good means of providing training for Physician Assistants.

Among the matters that arose in questions and discussion were the following.

**(a) Role of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.** A member asked about the role of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in providing training. She was concerned that its teaching hospitals might lack a sufficient number of specialists in such areas as complex trauma care to enable it to provide adequate training in those areas. Professor Verma replied that the major role of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine would be to provide and oversee sites for clinical placements. Because of the rapid growth of the undergraduate medical program and the residency programs at the University of Toronto, most of its teaching hospitals had become quite saturated as training sites. The teaching hospitals and community-based institutions affiliated with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine had good training opportunities and good funding for preceptors. In addition, when students received training in Northern Ontario sites, they would be more likely to establish their practices in the area, where their services would be much in need. That would represent a very good opportunity for training for Physician Assistants in such areas as family practice, chronic care, and community-based medicine in general. It was recognized that training to assist Physicians in certain other specialized areas would likely include work in tertiary-care centres in or near Toronto. In that way, the cooperation of the three institutions would serve to meet the needs of the program.

**(b) Possibility of graduate training in the area.** A member noted that the program would be considered to be a professional program but a terminal one. Graduates who wished to pursue further education in order to become qualified in the areas of administration and training for Physician Assistants would likely have to seek admission to a Master's Degree program in the United States. Was there any possibility of graduate training in the area at the University of Toronto? Professor Verma replied that such a program was not now foreseen. While there was a Master's degree program at the

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University of Manitoba, it was intended to train Physician Assistants who would proceed to practice. The Faculty of Medicine was aiming to provide training for individuals who would assist in the provision of health-care services in underserved areas, and it was not at this time considering the provision of a secondary level of training. However, the member's point was a very good one, and it was clearly worth considering the possible need for further training opportunities for Physician Assistants who might wish to proceed to administrative or educational roles.

**(c) Professional experience required for admission.** A member asked about the likely characteristics of candidates to be admitted to the program and in particular about the requirement that they have some professional experience. Professor Verma replied that candidates would be required to have at least twelve months of full-time experience in a clinical role in the health-care area where they had direct patient contact. She noted that the individuals admitted to the McMaster program fell into three categories. About one third had selected the Physician Assistant program as training for a career of choice. A second third had pursued the program as an alternative to a program in another medical profession. Such a choice was not an unusual one in the health care area where admission to programs was highly competitive. A final third were graduates of medical programs in other countries who, because of the nature of their previous training, were not able to obtain residency training to practice Medicine in Canada.

**(d) Name of the degree.** In response to a member's question, Professor Hillan said that the degree name Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant was comparable to the Bachelor of Science Nursing and Bachelor of Science Pharmacy degrees awarded by the University.

**(e) Possible expansion of the program.** A member expressed his support of the proposal. He was pleased that Physician Assistants would be trained and available to provide medical services. He thought it had taken too long to move to initiate the profession in an effort to reduce a gap in health care in Canada with its dispersed population. He hoped that program would soon expand. Professor Verma said that the Ministry of Health had certainly expressed an interest in an expansion of the area, and she was cautiously optimistic that the program would expand beyond the 42 students per year currently planned. However, in the current economic circumstances, the University was very pleased that full funding would be provided for its plans at the current planned enrolment.

**(f) Public Health role.** A member expressed concern that the curriculum for the program appeared to provide no training specifically in the area of public health. That omission was curious given that the University had considerable strength in the area in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health and given its stress on global issues as manifested in such initiatives as its new Master of Global Affairs program. Professor Verma replied that the

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**5. Faculty of Medicine: Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant Program (Cont'd)**

public health component would be well developed within the individual courses. The role of the Physician Assistants would depend on the area of work of the supervising Physician. The Physician Assistants were not members of a regulated group entitled to work in areas of choice. However, with their training in medical microbiology, it appeared likely that the Physician Assistants would be able to assist in such areas as surveillance of patients to prevent the spread of communicable disease and in the provision of immunization. As an assistant, the role of the individual would be limited by the role of the Physician; and that role would be different from that of a public health nurse. Another member, referring to the course descriptions in Appendix “B”, noted that there would be training in Health Promotion and Education. With the program being offered through the Department of Family and Community Medicine, it was very likely that there would be substantial training in public health and health-advocacy matters.

**(g) Flexibility for, and status of, Physician Assistants.** A member asked whether a Physician Assistant, working under the supervision of a particular Physician, would have any flexibility to shift to another area of practice if the Supervisor should move or retire. Professor Verma replied that because the area was a new one, there was not a definite answer. However, because the Physician had to supervise the work of the Assistant, and normally accept legal liability for it, it was quite possible that the Physician Assistant would come to work only in a particular area of practice. In response to a question about the status of the physician assistants, Professor Verma said that it was anticipated and hoped that supervising physicians would adopt a team approach.

**(h) Tuition fees and resources.** In response to members’ questions, Professor Verma and Professor Gottesman said that the tuition fees for the program would initially be about \$9,400 per year. The Ministry, given the high priority accorded to the program, would provide not only appropriate formula funding but also start-up funding to establish the program.

On the recommendation of the Faculty of Medicine,

**YOUR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS**

THAT the proposed Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant (B.Sc.P.A.) program in the Department of Family and Community Medicine of the Faculty of Medicine, as described in Appendix “A” hereto, be approved, with enrolment commencing January, 2010.

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**6. Student Awards: Annual Report on those Established, Amended and Withdrawn, July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008**

The Committee received for information the Annual Report on Student Awards Established, Amended and Withdrawn, July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008.

A member noted that 126 new awards had been established in 2007-08 compared to 169 new awards the previous year. He asked about the progress of new awards for 2008-09. Ms Swift replied that a very generous anonymous gift had been received that would be of great importance to the admission scholarship program.

**7. Interim Date of Next Meeting –**

The Chair said that the first regular meeting of the Committee of the 2009-10 academic year was currently scheduled for Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at 4:10 p.m. A complete schedule would be distributed to members over the summer.

**8. Other Business**

**Chair's Concluding Remarks**

The Chair observed that this was the Committee's final regular meeting of the year. She thanked all members for their service to the Committee over the past year: for their careful review of agenda material and for their thoughtful questions and comments. The Committee had done its work efficiently and effectively. The Chair expressed her special thanks to Vice-Chair, Professor Douglas MacDougall for his advice and support, and especially for stepping in when the Chair had been unable to attend. Professor Edith Hillan had served with distinction as the Committee's senior assessor since 2004. She would be moving into a new role as Vice-Provost, Faculty and Academic Life. It was not yet known whether she would continue to work with the Committee next year. It was certain that if she were not to do so, her lucid presentations of items of business and her overall excellent leadership would be missed. Professor Susan Pfeiffer and Professor Jonathan Freedman were both completing their terms as Vice-Provost and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, and as Deputy Provost, respectively, and also their service as assessors on the Committee. Again, their wisdom and guidance had been of great value, as had their good humour at agenda planning meetings. The Chair also thanked those assessors who would continue to serve the Committee for their work in bringing business it: University Registrar Ms Karel Swift; Vice-President, Research Professor Paul Young; and Assistant Vice-President, Research Dr. Tim McTiernan. The Chair noted that Ms Helen Lasthiotakis, the Director of Policy and Planning in the Provost's Office, sat off to the side at the Committee's meetings and she rarely spoke at them. Her on-going role was, however, an essential one. She played a central role in preparing matters for the

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**8. Other Business (Cont'd)**

**Chair's Concluding Remarks (Cont'd)**

Committee, drafted the cover sheets for many of the items that came forward, and prepared the summaries of all of the reviews of academic units and programs. Finally, the Chair thanked the Secretary for his support of the work of the Committee over the year.

Members thanked Professor Sass-Kortsak for her extraordinary leadership of the Committee over the past year.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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Secretary

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Chair

May 25, 2009