

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**  
**THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**  
**REPORT NUMBER 169 OF THE COMMITTEE ON**  
**ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS**  
**September 16, 2014**

To the Academic Board,  
University of Toronto

Your Committee reports that it met on Tuesday, September 16, 2014 at 4:10 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall, with the following present:

**Present:**

Professor Elizabeth M. Smyth (Chair)  
Professor Maydianne C.B. Andrade (Vice-Chair)  
Professor Sioban Nelson, Vice-Provost,  
Academic Programs and Interim Vice-Provost, Faculty and Academic Life  
Professor Locke Rowe, Vice-Provost,  
Graduate Research and Education,  
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies  
Ms Halla Ahmed  
Ms Shakira Brathwaite  
Professor Markus Bussman  
Mr. Ken Chan  
Professor Zhong-Ping Feng  
Ms Stephanie Gaglione  
Professor Robert B. Gibbs  
Professor Tara Goldstein

Professor Paul Kingston  
Ms Lorraine McLachlan  
Ms Pádraigín Murphy  
Professor Emmanuel Nikiema  
Dr. Graeme W. Norval  
Professor Elizabeth Peter  
Professor Sonia Sedivy  
Professor Markus Stock  
Professor Nhung Tuyet Tran  
Professor Vincent Tropepe  
Ms Adriel Weaver  
Ms Alena Zelinka  
  
Mr. Richard Levin, Executive Director,  
Enrolment Services and  
University Registrar  
  
Secretariat:  
Mr. Patrick F. McNeill

**Regrets:**

Professor Peter Lewis, Interim Vice-President, Research and Innovation  
Professor Russell Pysklywec, Chair,  
Department of Earth Sciences, FAS

Professor Sandy Welsh, Vice-Dean  
Graduate Education and Program  
Reviews, Department of Sociology,  
FAS

**In Attendance:**

Professor Don Boyes, Department of Geography, FAS

Ms Jennifer Francisco, Coordinator, Academic Change, Office of the Vice-Provost,  
Academic Programs

Dr. Jane E. Harrison, Director, Academic Programs and Policy, Office of the  
Vice-President and Provost

Ms Laurie Harrison, Director, Online Learning Strategies

Mr. Will Heikoop, Online Learning Strategies

Professor Melody Neuman, Department of Cell Systems Biology, FAS

Professor Micah Stickel, Chair, First Year Senior Lecturer, Electrical and  
Computer Engineering, FASE

Ms Mae-Yu Tan, Acting Coordinator, Academic Planning and Reviews, Office of the  
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

ALL ITEMS ARE REPORTED TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD FOR INFORMATION

**1. Welcome and Orientation**

The Chair welcomed members and guests to the first meeting of the Committee for the 2014-2015 governance year.

Following the introduction of the Assessors and Committee members, the Chair and Vice-Chair, together, provided an overview of the Committee's functions and roles within University governance and reminded members that the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs has general responsibility for monitoring the quality of education and research activities of the University.

The Secretary provided a brief overview of the use of cover sheets for business items.

Professor Sioban Nelson, Senior Assessor to the Committee, added that her office relies on the Committee to ensure there is full discussion on various items of business. Such engagement is central to effective quality assurance at the University.

**2. Calendar of Business: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs**

The Chair provided a brief overview of the Calendar of Business and noted that it would be updated on-line every Friday.

**3. Academic Presentation: U of T Engagement in Ontario Online**

Professor Sioban Nelson, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs and Interim Vice-Provost, Faculty and Academic Life gave an overview of the University initiatives and progress in Online Ontario. The Committee previously received a report about Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

Professor Nelson introduced Ms Laurie Harrison, Director of Online Learning. Ms Harrison gave a powerpoint presentation describing the University's online learning strategies.

The overview and presentation addressed a number of issues including the Province's commitment to online learning; funding support for course development and related projects; the creation of a provincial Centre of Excellence; and, the University's aim to advance innovation in online learning through development of new models, methods and instructional strategies.

Three faculty members who were involved with the development of online courses shared their experiences with the Committee. Professor Don Boyes, Department of Geography, FAS, spoke about three courses that had been offered on the subject of Geographic Information and Mapping and the various initiatives that had been introduced (e.g., "*Online Office Hours*"; pre-recorded podcasts; live lecture webinars; virtual software access; and software demonstrations).

Professor Melody Neuman, Department of Cell Systems Biology, FAS, explained that innovations were modelled on successful inverted courses and the use of Blackboard Collaborate break-out rooms. She said that a pilot project "*Team Up!*" was a learning tool that provided instant feedback and part-marks and that it went a long way in providing cognitive, social and teaching presence in online courses.

Professor Micah Stickel, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, FASE, advised the Committee that FASE had been an early adopter of educational technology. He said that online content delivery enabled the material to be contextualized through "off-site", out of class, lecturettes (e.g. "*Math in Motion*" developed by Professor Shai Cohen). In his view, faculty saw the value of creating high-quality content that could be used in other settings and courses (RLOs).

Several members asked questions on the challenges associated with the development and delivery of online courses, as well as their assessment; the normal oversight and governance of on-line courses and entirely on-line programs; whether such initiatives occurred at the graduate level; and whether such initiatives occurred in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

The faculty presenters noted that among the challenges outlined were:

- time needed to develop and implement courses;
- creating high quality material (design stage determines success);
- need for strong supervision in the early weeks of online discussion forums (needs to be "well-seeded");
- requirement for students to have strong time management skills and the ability to work independently;
- creating a "community" on-line;
- impact on pedagogy (experimenting with alternative pedagogical approaches; providing additional ways for students in face-to-face classes to learn);
- extra time needed to explain learning model to students;
- using technology to overcome many large class logistical issues.

In terms of assessment, the faculty presenters made the following points:

- assessment tools continued to be developed (modelling assignments, reports and exams);
- student enrolment and retention in line with normal patterns;

- positive institutional course evaluations had been received.

With regard to governance, Professor Nelson advised that the development and approval of new courses occurs at the divisional level and that a proposal to offer an existing program or field entirely “on-line” was a major modification and would require approval as such.

On the matter of the Ontario Online initiatives, Professor Nelson added that currently, no provincial funding for graduate level courses exists, but was expected. She further noted that 10% of OISE courses (graduate) were now offered online and that Social Sciences and Humanities were also well-represented (examples included courses in the Departments of History, the Study of Religion, Psychology, Political Science and others).

#### **4. Report of the Previous Meeting: Report 168 – May 13, 2014**

Report number 168, of the meeting of May 13, 2014 was approved.

#### **5. Business Arising from the Report of the Previous Meeting**

There was no business arising from Report Number 168.

#### **6. Date of Next meeting – Tuesday, October 28, 2014 at 4:10 p.m.**

The Chair advised that the Vice-Chair would be chairing the next meeting of the Committee. She invited the Vice-Chair to briefly outline the review process and expectations of the Committee members to participate on Reading Groups.

The Vice-Chair reminded members that the Committee had general responsibility for monitoring the quality of education and research activities within the University. Part of this responsibility was to undertake a comprehensive overview of reviews of academic programs and units, and monitor the results of the reviews and administrative responses. All reviews would be brought forward to the Committee for information.

#### **7. Reports of the Administrative Assessors**

##### *University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP)*

Professor Nelson explained that under the new Provincial approach to Quality Assurance (QA), the University had developed an institutional QA process [IQAP] for reviewing academic programs and the units that offer them called “UTQAP”. The process had been fully operational for the last three years.

She explained that the new QA process at the U of T was distinguished by: the responsibility of the University for QA; the equivalency of graduate and undergraduate; the delegation of significant authority and responsibility to the Faculties/Divisions (reinforced by the University's budget model); an emphasis on formative rather than threshold reviews and continuous improvement; and transparency.

Professor Nelson concluded that, at the heart of UTQAP, it was critical to understand that quality was ensured through peer review including a collegial process of discussion amongst colleagues; with cognate programs/units; external appraisal; review by colleagues

Report Number 169 of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs September 16, 2014 within the Faculty; review by colleagues across the University in AP&P; and review by colleagues across Ontario in the Quality Council. As part of the University's commitment to transparency, the University posts the Final Assessment Report (FARS) of the review of units and programs for public viewing and access.

Mr. Levin advised that he would be providing two reports to the Committee at the Cycle 4 meeting for information: a report on all new, amended and withdrawn awards annually; and, the Report on Student Financial Support.

Professor Rowe stated that SGS would continue to be engaged in developing online learning initiatives and opportunities at the graduate level. He also reported that SGS, in its new streamlined role, was not as involved with UTQAP, which allowed them to focus on graduate student experience and outcomes.

## **8. Other Business**

There were no items of Other Business.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

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Acting Secretary

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Chair

September 17, 2014