

26 July 2017

Dr Andrea Sterzuk, Acting Dean  
Faculty of Education  
University of Regina

Dear Dr Sterzuk,

I am pleased to provide this response to the 29 May 2017 *External Review of the Faculty of Education, University of Regina*. My response begins with an expression of thanks to the external reviewers – Dr Blye Frank, Dean of Education at the University of British Columbia, and Dr Cecilia Reynolds, Deputy Provost and Associate Vice-President at Memorial University – as well as to internal reviewer Dr Troni Grande, at the time of the site visit Head of the Department of English here at Regina. Their time, efforts, and discernment are valued and appreciated. I also wish to express my thanks to former Dean Jennifer Tupper, Faculty Administrator Rochelle Fenwick and the Faculty leadership team, and your faculty and staff for the many hours of work that went into the preparation of a comprehensive self-study document.

It is a pleasure to read the reviewers' positive evaluation of many aspects of the Faculty's work. Among these are the Faculty's emergence in recent years as a "front-runner" in anti-oppressive and Indigenous education, and its related commitment to social and ecological justice; its solid relationships with school boards, the profession, and other key stakeholders including the TEPs; its distinctive program areas including Arts Education and the Bac; its role in promoting valuable specific initiatives such as the day of education for truth and reconciliation, and much more. Thanks to you and your colleagues for remarkable work in these areas. The University is proud of it, and of the students you graduate.

In the paragraphs that follow, I offer brief reactions to several areas of challenge identified by the reviewers.

**Transparency: workload distribution, CVs, involvement in undergraduate teaching, collegial inclusion (5-6); financial clarity (8)**

Noting "a strong indication that ... there is currently some sensitivity to transparency" (5) and that there are "concerns ... about imbalance [in workload assignments] in terms of gender, race, and other forms of equity, and in terms of engagement in undergraduate programs" (6), the reviewers suggest making available a chart showing class sizes and other assigned duties to "help everyone understand challenges facing the Faculty in light of budget downturns expected in the next several years" (5). I believe this is a key recommendation, and one that can readily and quickly be implemented. This, in turn, will help address a further recommendation (7) to review "the processes currently employed to allocate workloads across tenure-track faculty members and the amount of teaching workload currently allocated."

Similarly, the reviewers call for "mechanisms in which the budget, including different sources of revenues and distribution of finances, is better understood by faculty members ... [and] heighten the faculty disposition to collaborate efficiently to solve the financial challenges" (8).

They also suggest that faculty make public their *curricula vitae*, and place course outlines in a central repository that can be consulted by colleagues across the Faculty. Again, the second of these recommendations could readily be implemented, and would potentially benefit many people, including new faculty members and sessional

lecturers assigned to a course for the first time. Some universities go farther and post course outlines to the web. For examples, see Simon Fraser at <https://www.sfu.ca/education/gc/current-students/course-outlines.html>, Western at [https://www.edu.uwo.ca/CSW/my\\_program/BEd/course\\_outlines.html](https://www.edu.uwo.ca/CSW/my_program/BEd/course_outlines.html), and Michigan at [http://www.soe.umich.edu/academics/courses/educ\\_218\\_homelessness\\_in\\_schools\\_and\\_society\\_engaged\\_practice\\_in\\_school\\_se/](http://www.soe.umich.edu/academics/courses/educ_218_homelessness_in_schools_and_society_engaged_practice_in_school_se/).

The cv question is best left to individuals. Some universities post faculty members' cvs on their webpages; others, for example Western and Queen's, leave the decision about posting the cv to the individual, but include a "recent publications" section on each faculty member's webpage. Again, the reviewers' recommendation not to treat cvs as "confidential documents" arises from their concerns about better transparency in Faculty decision-making. I believe collegial discussion within the Faculty is best in deciding how to address this recommendation.

### **Need for reviews of graduate and secondary programs (7)**

Recent Academic Unit Reviews of the Departments of Physics and Biology (available on the AUR webpages) commend those units for making strategic decisions about focusing on *some* areas of their disciplines rather than trying to cover all, or even most areas. Indeed, the Physics reviewers point to that Department's decision to focus essentially on two areas – subatomic physics and medical imaging – as one of the reasons their research has been so successful in recent years. Another recent review, that of the Department of Geography and Environmental Science, recommends a reduction of at least 40% in the number of undergraduate programs currently being offered.

Without identifying which ones, the Education reviewers call for the "use of metrics" to decide which graduate programs should be sustained, and which should be wound down. They also call for a secondary program review "with a particular focus for developing learning and teaching opportunities across the now siloed subject areas" (7). I support these recommendations.

### **Improved research productivity (8-9)**

This is a complex set of issues. In recent years the University of Regina has not fared well in SSHRC funding as compared to other Canadian comprehensives. External funding of research is, of course, only one of a series of indicators that include a variety of outputs, impact measures, contributions to the development of policy and progressive social change, and others. The reviewers make a number of suggestions, noting that improving research productivity (and, I would add, impact) is a "critical [task] for the new Dean" (8). The reviewers point to a number of mentoring and support strategies designed to assist early-career scholars, including writing retreats, peer editing of grant proposals, and the support needed by new PhDs in moving, where appropriate, from sole-researcher status to members of research teams that today often span multiple institutions.

### **Developing and marketing areas of distinctive programming (9)**

The reviewers compliment the Faculty on distinctive programming in areas such as Arts Education (which they term "unique in Canada" (4)) and the Bac. They suggest a "concerted effort" to increase the numbers of students in these distinctive programs. The recent formation of La Cité provides added impetus to make French-language programming a true "draw" for the University of Regina in an increasingly competitive environment for students, both domestic and international.

The reviewers suggest that both Arts Education and the Bac think through a new progression from undergraduate study to a graduate certificate or degree, adding that further certificate offerings in English as an Additional Language, Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and an Educational Assistants' certificate should be



considered as a means "to generate important revenue streams to support other needed activities within the Faculty" (10).

### **Faculty structures (7)**

Much has changed within the Faculty and across our campus during the last six to eight years. Structures and portfolios appropriate a decade ago need re-examination, re-orientation, renewal, or in some cases shutting down. I support the reviewers' calls for a review of several Faculty structures, including the portfolios of the leadership team, SUNTEP, and CIET.

With regard to internationalization and international development, for example, the continuance of CIET should be examined in the context of today's reality and campus structures, with a campus student population that is 14% international, increased outbound mobility of both students and faculty, increased numbers of visiting scholars, and a UR International operation that is the envy of many of our sister institutions. Note that the CIET webpage at <http://ciet.ca/> makes no mention of UR International, carries no visual association with the University (wordmark, clickable link to the Faculty main page or the University main page), and refers to a January 2011 event as something that has yet to occur.

### **Financial planning, revenue generation, and hiring freeze (8-10)**

Though I support reviewers' recommendations around greater clarity and transparency about budget, revenue generation and a "close look at both its faculty and staff complement ... [so as to] realize better ways of operating with [Education's] current complement," I do not believe a hiring freeze is appropriate. Several recruitments need to be completed if the Faculty is to meet its obligations to students.

At the same time, the reviewers make this recommendation in the knowledge that we experienced a substantial cut to our operating budget in March 2017, and expect similar cuts in the 2018 and 2019 provincial budgets. What we all need to do is to ensure that any position that becomes vacant through a retirement or resignation needs to be evaluated very carefully in light of likely further cuts to our operating grant.

I hope you find these reactions to the reviewers' recommendations helpful, and am happy to discuss them with you and your colleagues at any time that is convenient.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas Chase  
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Copies: Dr V Timmons, President and Vice-Chancellor; Professor of Education  
Dr D Malloy, Vice-President (Research)  
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