March 10, 2014

Professor Sioban Nelson  
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs  
University of Toronto  
Simcoe Hall  
Toronto, ON  M5S 1A1

Dear Professor Nelson,

Re: Administrative response to the external review report for the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy.

Thank you for providing us with a summary of the external review report and for allowing us to respond to its findings. We appreciate this opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments, opportunities and future direction at the Faculty.

We are delighted that the report was positive and that the reviewers commended us on the quality of our faculty and students and on having a well thought out Academic Plan which they described as a “fine roadmap for excellence”. We take pride in the quality of our people and in their contributions to our accomplishments in teaching and research at the Faculty.

Our Academic Plan, articulated through the Faculty’s Strategy 2016 – Tomorrow · Today document, has been instrumental in shaping our direction and achievements over the past three years and it remains the framework for our continued work over the next two years. It is reassuring to see that some of the areas noted by the reviewers are in fact goals that we ourselves have identified in our Academic Plan; particularly in the areas of communications, organization and management. We look forward to incorporating the review recommendations into our ongoing academic planning at the Faculty.

Below is our administrative response to the recommendations and comments raised by the reviewers as outlined in your letter of January 28, 2014.

1. Academic Plan and Progress toward Academic Priorities

   - The reviewers discussed the importance of developing a sense of cohesion and commonality, engaging all faculty in the execution of the Faculty’s plan, purpose and evaluating progress.

Fully engaged faculty and staff are paramount in our endeavors to create an inclusive culture at the Faculty. We specifically made a commitment in our strategic plan to “build the collaborative relationships needed to move the plan forward”.
Short-term action
Over the next six months, we will re-establish our strategic planning working groups and revive our progress tracking document. Our senior leadership group will initiate mechanisms to engage faculty and staff within their units to be more actively involved in executing the Faculty’s plan and making recommendations on changes in direction. Starting this spring, and running through to early fall, we will schedule small-group mini retreats with faculty and staff that are focused on specific issues (e.g., graduate education; divisional goals; experiential education). All members of the senior leadership group will attend each other’s mini retreats so that they become more informed of the initiatives underway in other areas of the Faculty. Our senior leadership group will be instrumental in promoting the positive tone needed to create a more cohesive and collaborative culture at the Faculty.

Medium-term action
In late fall 2014, we will hold a Faculty-wide retreat to showcase the outcomes of the mini retreats and to re-examine the course for the future. We expect a new Dean will be in place at that time and that this will be an ideal springboard for moving forward at the Faculty. The retreat will serve as a first step in developing a transition from our existing strategic plan into the new planning cycle which coincides with the appointment of a new Dean. Further, we will hold faculty and staff meetings more frequently and continue to engage and encourage people beyond the senior leadership group to present at these gatherings. We will review the effectiveness of our strategic planning monitoring document and make recommendations on how to best evaluate progress and engagement of all faculty and staff.

Long-term action
The Faculty will engage in a new strategic planning cycle that coincides with the appointment of a new Dean. With that, we expect to develop a more robust planning and evaluation mechanism to measure progress on our strategic initiatives and ensure we are able to seize new opportunities as they arise.

- They recommended sustained attention to the structure and function of the Practice Division, including the management of relationships with clinical sites and engagement in Experiential Education.

Short and medium-term actions
The structure and function of the Pharmacy Practice Division is a priority at the Faculty and we will be establishing a series of stakeholder meetings in the next 6-8 months for the purpose of conducting a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. Our intention is to review all the divisions at the Faculty in order to determine their purpose as well as to explore how they may bring greater visibility to their respective constituents. We expect that the SWOT analysis will be instrumental in helping us shape the ideal structure and function not only of the Pharmacy Practice Division but also our other divisions. We expect to have any revisions to our divisional structure in place within the next 18 months.

Managing the relationships with our clinical sites and engagement in Experiential Education remains a critical component to the success of our new curriculum. We have put in place a number of the initiatives identified in our strategic plan, the most notable of which is the establishment of the Hospital University Pharmacy Education Committee (HUPEC) in 2012. The HUPEC serves an advisory board to enhance the experiential component of the curriculum and foster communication and collaboration with our Toronto Academic Health Sciences Network
TAHSN) institutions. We will continue to use the expertise and input of this committee to guide our PharmD program and maximize our relationships with clinical sites.

We will also assemble an advisory committee similar toHUPEC that will represent community practitioners. This advisory group will guide us in enhancing our experiential endeavors in community practice sites.

**Long-term action**
Through our ongoing collaboration with HUPEC and the new community site advisory group, we will transition from a just-in-time model of managing our clinical experiential rotations to one that runs in tandem with the needs of our clinical sites. We will have a mechanism in place that will benchmark the contributions our students make to the institution in which they are placed.

2. Curriculum and Program Delivery – Undergraduate programs

- The reviewers encouraged re-examination of the PharmD admissions requirements, progression and curriculum in the interest of increased rigour and improved PEBC performance.

The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) is the national certification body for the pharmacy profession in Canada and is required for a practice license in Ontario. The PEBC examination focuses specifically on assessing students’ readiness to practice and thus does not evaluate all components of our curriculum. Of the seven Canadian schools rated, the ranking for U of T has been decreasing relative to the other schools in terms of performance on this exam over the last four years. While differences in pass rates amongst the schools is minimal and the overall pass rate for our students remains very high, we would like our students to perform better in these exams.

**Short-term action**
Within the next six months, the Faculty will hold a retreat of the Admission Subcommittee of the Committee for Entry-to-Practice Professional Degree Programs (CEPPDP) to review and evaluate the admissions criteria, program pre-requisites, and the maximum time allowed to graduate. This committee will also conduct an environmental scan of the criteria of other faculties at U of T and of other Canadian pharmacy schools to help inform our process.

**Medium-term action**
At the time of this Administrative Response, we have not had any students graduating from our new PharmD curriculum. We will monitor our PEBC rankings that reflect the results of our first cohort graduating from the new curriculum to determine if there is any change. Our new curriculum is designed to provide enhanced clinical education and skills which should improve performance on the PEBC.

With respect to the admissions process, within the next 1-2 years the CEPPDP Committee will make recommendations to further align admissions, progression, and other relevant policies with the new curriculum.

**Long-term action**
The recommended changes, once approved by Faculty Council will be implemented in the next 3-5 years.
• They recommended attention to the experiential component of the programs.

Short-term action
In addition to the initiatives noted in section number 1 of this document, we are conducting a review of the current E*Value software system that is used for the matching and administration of rotations. A request for proposals is currently in progress to explore other software options that may deliver a more robust selection of user-friendly supports. In the meantime, we will maximize the capability of our current system so as not compromise the learning experience of our students.

In our efforts to build capacity and quality of our preceptor pool, we have developed a Preceptor Training Program; this is a collaboration between our Office of Experiential Education and our Continuous Professional Development Office. Training commenced in Summer 2013 in preparation for the first group of students going on rotation in May 2014. We will continue to provide regular training workshops in the short- and medium-term timeframe and will be providing additional training at a more advanced level.

We will also be working closely with our OEE administrative staff to provide them with professional development opportunities available through the Organizational Development office at U of T. The OEE staff is our frontline of communication with our students and preceptors and we value the benefits of making accessible to them any supports that assist them in this highly focused customer service role.

Section number 6 of this document outlines our initiatives with respect to conducting an organizational review. In this review, we expect to identify a structure that will maximize the efforts of the OEE. We also intend to review where the academic oversight of the OEE will reside.

Medium and long-term actions
We intend to implement strategies that foster a culture of customer service. Procurement of a new software program will make it easier for faculty and staff to manage the smooth and efficient operation of the OEE. We will put in place the training support necessary to take full advantage of the capabilities of the new software. Further, after our administrative and academic leadership review recommendations are implemented (see section 6), we will be able to put in place mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of the Office.

3. Curriculum and Program Delivery – Graduate programs

• The reviewers suggested the development of a strategy to deepen the graduate recruitment pool, and to address the issue of integration of advanced standing students into the graduate program cohort.

Goals in the Faculty strategic plan include the development of a marketing and communications plan, as well as a recruitment plan. Also, a Faculty-wide Recruitment and Admissions Committee was established within our new governance structure and will serve to support recruitment initiatives. We expect these endeavors, which will also include graduate student targeted strategies, will inform the internal and external community of the work being done at the Faculty.
Short-term action
The interim Associate Dean for Graduate Education met with a subgroup of the Faculty-wide Recruitment and Admissions Committee to discuss our current recruitment efforts and admissions data. This committee is working on strategies to enhance recruitment in all programs.

The interim Associate Dean for Graduate Education, along with the Assistant Dean Strategic Initiatives and the Manager of Marketing, will develop a short-term strategy to identify departmental offerings and promote our programs to potential graduate students.

In our efforts to promote graduate studies to our current students, we are identifying a portfolio of graduate courses that we intend to make available as electives to our PharmD students. We will also continue to run our summer research program as a means of attracting students to pursue graduate studies at the Faculty.

Medium-term action
We will establish a working group and commence development of a recruitment plan for the graduate department. It will include identification of three top target groups and our approach for recruiting students domestically and internationally. We will also engage an external advisor to assist us in the development of an identity package that will be used in our promotional endeavors.

We will also be implementing the first joint degree program (PharmD-MBA) in the planned Discovery Stream component of our PharmD curriculum which will provide interested students with opportunities for advanced standing in the MBA program. In the medium-term we will be exploring options for additional joint degree options.

Long-term action
We will develop an annual publication designed to promote current graduate students and alumni. It will become our key communications vehicle to showcase the graduate department and will also serve as a marketing vehicle for our philanthropic efforts through our Office of Advancement.

We expect to introduce additional joint degree program options for our PharmD students within the next five years. This may include advanced standing in the advanced clinical training programs we are planning (see section 4).

- They recommended enhancing the sense of community for graduate students.

Short-term action
After having received the external review report, the interim Dean and interim Associate Dean for Graduate Education organized a town hall meeting (February 14, 2014) to speak with graduate students and graduate faculty regarding the findings outlined in the report. In this meeting, students brought forward several ideas to enhance the sense of community within the department. It is our intent to continue having regular town hall meetings with our graduate students and faculty. We will also be holding a Graduate Department faculty retreat in fall 2014 which will focus on strategies to create a sense of community. This retreat will take place in advance of the Faculty-wide retreat.
Medium-term action
We will integrate the findings and results from the fall 2014 graduate retreat and develop an implementation plan. At the February 14th town hall, the students suggested the development of additional graduate courses, workshops and/or short certificate-based programs focused on topics such as business development and entrepreneurship that would potentially enhance their opportunity to secure employment in areas outside of academia. We expect to have specific topics identified for the first wave of new offerings within the next 18 months. The students also suggested creating at least one mandatory course that all graduate students (within all divisions of the department) are required to take. We anticipate being able to integrate this suggestion by September 2015.

Long-term action
We will incorporate new graduate courses, workshops and/or certificate short programs based on the outcome of our medium-term action planning.

- They suggested the Faculty monitor time to completion and develop strategies to improve the competitiveness and success of students.

The mean time to completion for students in the master’s program is 2 years and 5.7 years for students in the doctoral program. The minimum time to completion for doctoral students is 3.7 years and the maximum time for a few doctoral students is 9 years.

Short-term action
The interim Associate Dean for Graduate Education has begun to identify and contact all students that are in years 6-9 of their doctoral studies so that we may better understand the issues that prevent them from progressing more quickly through the program. We are looking into the software that is being developed by the School of Graduate Studies and how it may assist in tracking students and their progress in their graduate programs. Once available, we intend to integrate this software into our program.

Medium and long-term actions
During the town hall meeting the graduate students were receptive to the idea of a series of workshops and seminars on topics such as business development, entrepreneurship, and drug development to enhance their competitiveness beyond the completion of their degrees. We will further discuss these ideas and outline a plan to move forward during the next town hall meeting and graduate retreat. These workshops will then be formalized and integrated into a menu of specialty topics that we intend will serve a multi-purpose; for example as an element of our recruitment strategy.

4. Program development

- The reviewers recommended the Faculty work with hospital partners to develop advanced clinical training programs.

A number of opportunities exist for developing advanced clinical training programs. One, which is already in development, is a program that will bridge the gap between the phased out Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy (BScPhm) degree and the new entry-to-practice Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree. An expanded scope of practice in the profession of Pharmacy along with the PharmD degree as an entry-to-practice degree in the Province has created significant demand for a bridging program. Another emerging opportunity to advance clinical
training is the creation of a Clinical Master’s program. Finally, significant prospects exist for the expansion of our residency and fellowship programs as well as the opportunity for pharmacy specialty certification similar to the U.S. model.

**Short-term action**
We will complete the “major modifications” documentation and approval process for the transitioning of our Post-Baccalaureate PharmD program to a bridging program for those who wish to advance their BScPhm degree to a PharmD degree. We intend for this program to commence taking students in January 2015.

**Medium-term action**
In fall 2014, we will commence working with our partners to identify opportunities for advanced clinical training programs and the form that they may take (for example Clinical Master’s, residencies, fellowships, continuing education, etc.). We will take the lead by hosting a meeting of key national stakeholders. Input and buy-in from organizations such as the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists (CSHP), the Canadian Hospital Pharmacy Residency Board (CHPRB), the Canadian College of Clinical Pharmacy (CCCP) and others will be invaluable in pursuing this initiative.

In January 2015, we will enroll our first cohort into the PharmD bridging program. We will also commence working on a draft proposal and work through the approval process for the creation of an advanced clinical training program (currently expected to be a Clinical Master’s) based on the input of the stakeholder meeting.

**Long-term action**
We will monitor and assess the demand of our PharmD bridging program. As the pool of BScPhm graduates wishing to upgrade diminishes, we will plan for the phase out the bridging program. Upon acceptance of our advanced clinical training program proposal, we expect to be in a position to roll out this new program in 2017 or 2018. Also, we expect to have a number of initiatives underway as a result of our consultations with our hospital partners.

5. **Research**

- **Reviewers recommended that faculty resources and energy be focused on consolidating strengths, ensuring a critical mass of faculty in core areas, and aligning graduate teaching with these research strengths.**

We recognize that to obtain substantial and continued financial support for research and to establish strong research capabilities to address the major challenges in the health sciences will require that we create critical masses of faculty in key areas. This is the driving force for the establishment of several research centres at the Faculty over the next five years that include: i) the Centre for Pharmacy Management, Research and Innovation (CPMRI), ii) the Centre for Pharmaceutical Oncology (CPO), iii) the Centre for Collaborative Drug Research (CCDR), iv) the Centre for Evaluation of Technological Innovation (CETI), and v) the Centre for Integrative Medicine (CIM). Through these research centres, we expect to form clusters of faculty who will have different expertise and resources but share a common interest in solving a broad challenge in the health sciences. These centres will create opportunities for cross-training of undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral fellows between the various disciplines represented in the centres. We further envision the creation of new graduate courses by faculty within the centres that would support a program of focused graduate studies aligned with the
mission of the centres. The Faculty is committed to establishing these centres and has commenced major fundraising in the Boundless Campaign. In addition, the Faculty is building capacity in the clinical research area by recruiting clinician-scientists in collaboration with the TAHSN hospitals.

**Short-term action**
The CCDR and CETI have already been established. Planning and fundraising for the CPMRI and the CPO are underway and will continue in 2014. Interviews are taking place to recruit directors for the CPMRI and the CIM. Fundraising is taking place to create an endowed Chair to lead the CPO. A CFI/ORF application is being submitted to acquire infrastructure for the CPO.

**Medium-term action**
By 2015, we expect to have established the CPO and the CPMRI. An endowed Chair will be recruited to lead the CPO. Faculty members will be invited to join these two centres. We expect to have obtained CFI/ORF funding for infrastructure for the CPO.

**Long-term action**
By 2016, graduate courses will be developed that are aligned with the centres. Fundraising will continue within the Boundless Campaign to meet the targets for the centres and other initiatives.

- They advised that the Associate Dean Research be given delegated authority to make decisions concerning research space and responsibility for the allocation of seeding grants.

The Faculty is currently conducting a space audit to confirm the allocation of space within the building. Once the space audit is completed, the Associate Dean, Research will be delegated the authority to establish a process to allocate research space going forward in accordance with faculty needs and in consultation with the Dean. This process may include the establishment of a "space committee" to review requests for research space. Annual audits of space utilization at the Faculty will be conducted to assure continued efficient space utilization.

The Faculty is conducting a review of the overall budget including indirect costs to determine the availability of funds to support "seeding grants". In addition, one of the initiatives in the Faculty’s Boundless Campaign is the establishment of a Dean’s Fund to seed innovative research projects to allow them to be competitive for more substantial external grant funding. A process will be established to receive applications for these grants once or twice per year and to prioritize projects given the limited funds available. In addition, the two research Centres that are planned and for which funds are being raised in the Boundless Campaign [the CPO and CPMRI] include seeding funding for pilot research projects.

**Short-term action**
A review of the overall budget at the Faculty to determine the feasibility of seeding funding will be completed in 2014. The audit of space utilization will be completed in late fall 2014.

**Medium-term action**
By 2015, we plan to establish a seeding funding budget for research. A process to assign research space will be established by the Associate Dean, Research in consultation with the Dean.
Long-term action
Additional funds for seeding grants will be raised as part of the Boundless Campaign to establish a Dean’s Fund as well as the research centres (CPO and CPMRI).

6. Resources and Planning

- The reviewers recommended that attention be given to developing effective organizational and management structures. Specifically they recommended an administrative review of staffing and the academic leadership team’s structure and roles, clarifying the role of the Divisions, and a space audit.

One of the goals in our strategic plan is to “develop an organizational structure that aligns with our strategic plan and enables us to achieve our goals”. The plan states that we will be conducting an organizational review and a space audit.

Short-term action
Both audits are currently underway and we expect an audit on the organizational review within the next three months and the space audit within the next six months. We will also be starting work on an academic leadership review in late fall 2014.

Medium-term action
Our organizational structure is the underpinning of our ability to meet strategic goals at the Faculty. We expect to implement the recommendations of the organizational and space audit reviews over the next 18 months. We will also review the outcome of the leadership review which we expect will be complete by late spring 2015.

Long-term action
We expect to implement the recommendations of the leadership review. We will also commence working on succession planning at the Faculty. This will include annual audits and forecasting for both administrative and academic units.

- They recommended the Faculty focus on the development of IT infrastructure in support of technology supported learning – both in the building and at clinical sites.

Aligning information technology to support the operational, marketing, research, teaching and learning needs at the Faculty was identified as a major goal in our strategic plan and is in sync with the recommendations of the reviewers. We have made significant strides with implementing learning technologies into our part-time PharmD program and in our CPD programs however we have been slow to incorporate new technology into our other program areas.

Short-term action
We will consult colleagues at similar sized faculties at U of T regarding their infrastructure and staffing. This will assist us in framing our administrative leadership needs. We anticipate hiring an individual to lead our IT initiatives in the next year.

Medium-term action
We will conduct an audit of our current IT systems and services and identify if they are appropriately supported and managed. We will develop a multi-year IT plan.an IT multi-year plan.
**Long-term action**
We will implement our multi-year IT plan and monitor opportunities for continuous improvements that contribute to an enhanced teaching and learning environment.

- *They recommended a review of the complement plan with respect to tenure stream recruitment priorities, as well as part-time faculty for the Practice Division.*

As our external reviewers identified, our faculty members are one of the Faculty’s greatest strengths. The multiple changes in academic programs (ongoing and planned) as well as our ongoing plans to identify and support areas of research strength provide an opportunity to review and reflect on our current complement plan, particularly in the Pharmacy Practice Division.

**Short-term action**
The ongoing financial review and planning will include a focus on academic planning. By identifying upcoming retirements, unfilled salary lines and needs of new and proposed academic programs we will develop a comprehensive plan to supplement our current academic complement with strategic hires in key areas. Decisions about tenure stream and lecturer hires in the Pharmacy Practice Division will be informed by a retreat planned within the next six months. We expect to begin recruiting for several high priority positions before the end of 2014.

The appointment of six clinician scientist and two clinician educators over the last three years has been very favourably received by the reviewers and by the pharmacy profession. We plan to evaluate how this initiative may inform next steps in enhancing our faculty complement.

**Medium and long-term actions**
The academic complement plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the ongoing needs of the Faculty and to take into account new retirements. Additional academic hires will be made, based on our needs. Our planning will also be influenced by the outcome of the SWOT analysis to determine the structure and function of our divisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to the external review report. We look forward to all our faculty and staff being involved in shaping our future direction at the Faculty.

Sincerely,

Heather Boon
Professor and Interim Dean

cc.
Jane E. Harrison, Director, Academic Programs and Policy
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