



March 22, 2017

Faculty Members of the Faculty of Forestry
33 Willcocks Street
Toronto, ON M5S 3B3

Dear Colleagues,

RE: Collegial process of exploration and consultation about the Faculty of Forestry

I am writing to you in relation to the [Policy and Procedures for Faculty and Librarians on Academic Restructuring](#) (“Policy”)¹, which supports collegial processes for academic planning and consultation on various matters that affect faculty and librarians. In particular, at this time I am writing with respect to paragraph 5 of the Policy which is as follows:

5. Prior to an Academic Restructuring being proposed, faculty members and librarians of potentially affected Academic Units must have had a reasonable opportunity to participate in a collegial, inclusive and deliberative process in which the context and parameters of potential Academic Restructuring could be explored and during which their input was sought. This includes Academic Unit self-study prior to any required external review.

This letter provides an outline of some of the previous discussions regarding potential structural change to the Faculty of Forestry, and an invitation to faculty members and librarians to participate in a collegial, inclusive and deliberative process in accordance with paragraph 5 of the *Policy*. Discussions about the appropriate structure to support the research and programs of the Faculty of Forestry have been ongoing for many years. A summary of the history of some of these discussions over the past 20 years is presented in Appendix A.

The 2016 external reviewers highlighted, as have previous reviewers, the important roles that Forestry faculty, students and graduates have played in producing leading research and shaping policy and practice. As have previous reviewers, the present reviewers noted opportunities for even greater impact. Some of these issues – for example, the role of forestry research and programming in understanding and responding to issues around climate change and sustainability; and the importance of strengthening support for Indigenous issues in the form of curriculum and recruitment of faculty and staff – have been the focus of recent broader discussions at the University.

Perhaps most significantly, the 2016 reviewers observed that “some resolution of the status of the Faculty of Forestry is long overdue.”

¹<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/a18520150226.pdf>

Therefore, I have decided to initiate a consultation process under Section 5 of the Policy to provide further opportunity to the Faculty of Forestry and others to participate in a collegial, inclusive and deliberative process in which the context and parameters of potential academic restructuring of the Faculty of Forestry can be explored and during which your input will be sought.

The consultation process should include consideration of potential structures that will allow academic programs and research related to the discipline of forest sciences at U of T to flourish, and have stability and sustainability, including related programs and research in other units such as those listed in Appendix B.

This consultation process will begin with an initial phase that invites ideas and input from the Faculty of Forestry and other potentially affected Academic Units. In this phase, we will explore the context and parameters of potential academic restructuring. Following this initial phase of the consultation process, consideration will then be given to whether a proposal for academic restructuring should be developed and proposed in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Policy, which provides as follows:

6. If, following the process described in paragraph 5, an Academic Restructuring is proposed, the proposal must be accompanied by a clear academic rationale in relation to the University's overall mission and the relevant Academic Units' academic priorities and objectives, including explicit consideration of alternatives. The proposal shall also consider and include relevant information and implications, including budgetary and financial. Information pertaining to the rationale for a proposed Academic Restructuring shall be made available to all faculty members and librarians of the Academic Units for which Academic Restructuring has been proposed.

We are beginning this initial phase of consultation over the coming weeks through this letter to you, the individual faculty members in the Faculty of Forestry, as well as through communications to faculty members and librarians in other potentially affected academic units by way of a memo to academic administrators in departments, EDU As and Bs, and divisions with academic programs and research in disciplines and areas of study related to forestry.

The consultation process will be multi-phased and deliberative, and will begin in spring 2017. The first phase of consultation will seek input from Faculty of Forestry faculty members and the academic leadership of divisions with programs and research in related fields, including but not limited to the Faculty of Arts & Science and the University of Toronto Mississauga. Issues to be considered in further consultation and collegial discussion include the academic structure of forestry at U of T, and the relationships between the academic programs and research within the Faculty of Forestry and related programs and research activities in other related disciplines and units – such as (but not necessarily limited to) forest conservation, geography, environmental studies, sustainability, Indigenous studies, materials engineering, and natural resources management.

After this first phase of consultation, my office will produce a discussion paper and will then initiate a second phase of consultation, engaging all potentially affected faculty and librarians and other key constituents for their input and participation.

If, following the consultation process, an Academic Restructuring is proposed, the proposal will be accompanied by a clear academic rationale in relation to the University's overall mission and any relevant Academic Units' academic priorities and objectives, including explicit consideration of alternatives. The proposal will also consider and include relevant information and implications, including budgetary and financial. Information pertaining to the rationale for any proposed academic restructuring will be made available to all faculty members and librarians of the Academic Units for which Academic Restructuring has been proposed.

Appendix B contains a chart with an overview of the consultation process for this initial phase; please note that this timeline is approximate.

I look forward to the discussions ahead focussed on identifying the best structure for forestry-related academic programs and research to flourish at the University of Toronto.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CR' with a flourish.

Cheryl Regehr
Vice-President & Provost

CC: Meric Gertler, President
Sioban Nelson, Vice-Provost Academic
Cynthia Messenger, University of Toronto Faculty Association

Appendix A

History

1993	<p>Following discussions in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Governing Council approved the suspension of the undergraduate professional program in Forestry. At the same time it was determined that a strong presence in the field of Forestry would continue through a graduate Faculty of Forestry, which would offer existing graduate programs, and develop a professional master's program with significant enrolment. The Master of Forest Conservation was established in 1996, the same year as the Bachelor of Science in Forestry degree closed.</p>
1999	<p>The Faculty underwent an external review, which found that it had identified a special 'niche' that was unique among Canadian universities and was highly relevant to emerging needs in forest conservation and management. Faculty and students were enthusiastic about the direction of the Faculty, and credited strategic planning, effective leadership from the Dean, and support from the central administration as crucial factors in the successful transition to a graduate Faculty.</p> <p>More specifically, the recently introduced Master of Forest Conservation was noted by the Reviewers as being timely and innovative. However, the lack of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) resources was identified as a concern. The Reviewers supported the Faculty's proposal to collaborate with the Faculty of Arts and Science on an undergraduate program in Forestry Conservation in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science degree offered by the Faculty of Arts and Science. These specialist, major and minor programs were established in 2000-01, along with specialist and minor programs in Forestry Conservation in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Arts (a major was added in 2007). At the time of the review, there were also plans for new master's programs in wood engineering and forest policy and trade analysis.</p>
2004	<p>The Faculty underwent another cyclical external review, which found that it was a well-integrated multi-disciplinary unit that had recruited excellent faculty, established innovative master's courses, and fostered good integration with other units on campus. By this time, the Faculty had introduced five undergraduate programs in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and Science.</p> <p>It had also received OCGS approval for a new Master of International Trade in Forest Products Program, a self-funded program to be offered in collaboration with other divisions. However, ultimately that program did not commence and was discontinued in 2007.</p> <p>Although morale was found to be high, there was uncertainty about the future of the Forestry programs that were found to be in transition from traditional forestry programs to new forms of teaching and research. The breadth of the faculty's research expertise was found to be impressive in terms of quality indicators such as research grants and publications. The reviewers noted a 'sense of distance' from forestry communities in Ontario and Canada and recommended more engagement by the Faculty's Advisory</p>

	<p>Group. The review also recommended that the Faculty of Forestry consider its relationship with U of T's other environmental studies programs, particularly in relation to related undergraduate programs.</p>
2007	<p>The OCGS review of the graduate forestry programs was very positive about the quality of faculty, students and programs. Reviewers commented on the declining applicant pool for all programs, the need to make the MFC program more flexible, and the need to fill the gap in complement around forest policy.</p> <p>In the same year, the Round Table for the Environment was established at U of T, chaired by Provost and Vice-President Research, with a general mandate to provide an opportunity for communication and coordination of activities in this area. The Dean of the Faculty of Forestry participated as a member. The objective was to increase visibility in the community of work in environmental studies and related areas, to provide advice about the structures and strategies to support collaborations among academic programs and research activities, to attract funding, and to create dynamic and important partnerships with other organizations.</p> <p>The two reports of the Round Table's two working groups recommended that a Task Force be struck to assess the feasibility for the creation of an interdivisional unit at the University that would enhance and develop the profile and visibility of academic and research programs on the environment at the University.</p>
2008	<p>A review of the undergraduate forestry programs offered through the Faculty of Arts and Science observed that the programs represented a "unique" collaboration and "a true experiment in the marriage of a liberal arts and science education with a professional education". The review encouraged U of T "to foster this arrangement and challenge the partners to explore how the programs themselves and this program relationship might become even stronger." The review concluded that the programs overall meet their objectives and that "although enrolment is low, it is rising." The review noted that it was "not clear that the formal paths of communication and coordination between the Faculty of Forestry, the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and the Centre for the Environment allow the true potential of these programs to be realized."</p> <p>As part of the strategic growth encouraged by the review, a major and minor in Forest Biomaterials Science were introduced in 2008-09. The review also encouraged consideration of the possibility of accrediting the undergraduate programs.</p> <p>In the same year, a Task Force on Environmental Studies at the U of T was established, chaired by the Vice-President Research, and included the Dean of the Faculty of Forestry as a member. The Task Force found that the only model that would work to bring together the large variety of academic and research activities on the environment at U of T would be an umbrella entity whose main mandate would be related to communication, facilitation of coordination, advancement and internal-external visibility for environment undergraduate programs (rather than reorganization of related academic programs and units, including Forestry).</p>
2009	<p>Another external review of the Faculty of Forestry was conducted as part of the cyclical</p>

	<p>process of academic quality assurance. The external reviewers assessed the quality of the Faculty as “unassailable.”</p> <p>The terms of reference for that review explicitly included consideration of potential reorganization of the Faculty in light of the new U of T budget model and the work of reviewing environmental studies more broadly at U of T.</p> <p>The reviewers noted productive and collaborative research relationships among faculty members from Forestry with those in other units, particularly UTSC, FAS, and the Pulp and Paper Centre in the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering. However, the review noted the lack of such collaboration in student supervision and teaching.</p> <p>The review recommended restructuring the Faculty of Forestry into a department within the Faculty of Arts & Science associated with the Centre for the Environment as well as the expansion of masters programs in urban forestry and forest conservation in collaboration with UTSC and FASE.</p>
<p>2009-10</p>	<p>A Provostial working group was formed with the mandate to have preliminary discussions towards a proposal for an umbrella entity or school for environmental studies at U of T as per the Task Force’s advice, with special consideration of the status of the Faculty of Forestry and potential reorganization.</p> <p>The working group acknowledged that enrolments within the Faculty had declined, and the landscape of contemporary forest resources programs had been changing around the world. The University was highly committed to the excellent research and teaching programs offered by the Faculty of Forestry, and the goal was to find a place where the programs offered by the current Faculty could grow in the context of environmental studies; to give more students access to the programs and courses offered by the faculty members; and to give faculty members more students to teach and supervise.</p> <p>The working group, chaired by the then-Dean-designate Professor Sandy Smith, consulted with faculty and students within the Faculty and with other University divisions, including the Faculty of Arts and Science, the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering, and the University of Toronto at Scarborough, as well as with alumni and with members of the external community with an interest in the Faculty’s work, and held a retreat. It received a great deal of input.</p> <p>The options considered included a move to the Faculty of Arts and Science, the University of Toronto at Scarborough (UTSC), which was in the process of establishing a new PhD in Environmental Science, or the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering. The objective was to seek out the best way to marry the University’s interests and programs in environmental studies with the 103-year-old Faculty of Forestry. The Group sought to arrive at the model that both (a) would be the best outcome for the Faculty, and (b) would best help to strengthen environmental studies at the University. As of September 2010, there was no consensus around an outcome for Forestry at U of T.</p>
<p>2010</p>	<p>The review of the Centre for Environment remarked on U of T’s “immense” faculty resources in the area of environment and observed that U of T’s “dispersed</p>

	<p>administrative and academic structure appears to have kept the university from making changes that can reshape the domains of existing units into a more integrated structure for study of the environment.” Integration was desired by faculty and students. The review recommended four possible structures to strengthen work and programming in this area, but the administrative response explained that action was on hold pending the outcome of the work of the Forestry Working Group.</p>
2011	<p>The Working Group on the Environment, Resources and Related Programs was established in the Faculty of Arts & Science, which invited the Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and senior faculty members of Forestry to participate due to existing FAS undergraduate programs on the environment and forest conservation.</p> <p>In early 2012, the Working Group recommended the disestablishment of the Centre of the Environment and the establishment of a new School of the Environment as an EDU:B, as well as more collaboration across disciplines and units in related fields. Discussion took place about the reorganization of Forestry along with the establishment of the new School but did not result in restructuring.</p>
2011-12	<p>Following wide-ranging consultations that had included the Faculty of Arts and Science, the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering and the Faculty of Forestry, the School of the Environment was established as an EDU:B within the Faculty of Arts & Science as of July 1, 2012. The new unit was intended to provide greater cohesion and visibility to the programs in environment, creating the ability to move forward with multi-disciplinary programs at the graduate and undergraduate level, and interdisciplinary research.</p>
2012	<p>The Provost and new Dean of Forestry discussed specific proposals to reorganize the Faculty of Forestry as a unit within FAS or FASE, as well as an infusion of resources from the University Fund to support faculty hiring and academic programming in forest conservation. Discussions took place about the reorganization of Forestry, including an all-faculty and staff meeting to discuss budgetary challenges, academic programs, and potential amalgamation with other academic units. But these discussions did not result in restructuring.</p>
2014	<p>Meetings were held between the Dean and faculty members in Forestry and Dean and faculty members at UTSC to discuss specific proposals to reorganize the Faculty of Forestry as a unit within the University of Toronto Scarborough. The Provost committed resources from the University Fund to support a move to UTSC. But these discussions again did not result in restructuring.</p>
2009-2016	<p>Individual faculty members moved their appointments out of the Faculty of Forestry into departments in other divisions or retired, with 7 faculty members remaining in the Faculty.</p>
2016	<p>An external review of the Faculty of Forestry was conducted as part of the cyclical process under the U of T Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) framework. Reviewers praised the overall quality of the professional master’s programs and the productivity in the research graduate programs, noting that U of T forestry programs are unique in</p>

	<p>Ontario in producing graduates who move into research or managerial/policy roles. Reviewers also noted the positivity and sense of community in the undergraduate students, and their appreciation of being able to combine a forestry major with other majors or minors. Reviewers observed that students had difficulty finding undergraduate forestry programs amongst the range of offerings in the Faculty of Arts and Science, recommended considering an accredited undergraduate program, and made suggestions to improve access to courses and support for field courses and internships.</p> <p>In addition to comments about the programs and research, the reviewers remarked on the resilience of faculty and students given the indeterminacy around the unit over many years and observed that, “some resolution of the status of the Faculty of Forestry is long overdue.” The reviewers made several observations around possible structures, noting that “maintaining the University of Toronto’s distinguished record of thought leadership in forestry does not require a large faculty, although it may require a structure such as Faculty status to realize their potential and fulfill their mission.”</p> <p>Regardless of how structural issues are resolved, reviewers noted that “some investment in additional faculty positions may be needed,... in areas such as the social dimensions of forestry and aboriginal issues.” Investments in these areas would support program growth and teaching in related undergraduate programs. Reviewers observed that “consolidation of the Faculty of Forestry with School of Environment would resolve current problems with the campus activity based budgeting model, but likely at the expense of a significant loss in institutional capacity to engage in effective interdisciplinary, problem-driven research on forestry issues over time.”</p> <p>They emphasized the importance of improving visibility and branding including the possibility of including “conservation” in the name of the Faculty. They also remarked that it was “important for the University to maintain a small center of excellence in forestry (particularly in the areas of urban forestry, biomaterials, and the social dimensions of forestry, including aboriginal interests).”</p>
<p>2017</p>	<p>The Provost and Vice-Provost Academic met with the Dean and faculty members of the Faculty of Forestry to discuss potential academic restructuring, including preliminary proposals being considered in other divisions.</p>

Appendix B

Timeline for Consultations

March 22 2017	Memo about initial phase of consultation sent to individual faculty members of Faculty of Forestry.
March 23 2017	Memo about initial phase of consultation to academic leaders of the following academic units: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faculty of Arts & Science and its units, including<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ School of the Environment○ Department of Geography & Planning○ School of Public Policy and Governance○ Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology○ Department of Cell and Systems Biology○ Department of Chemistry○ Department of Earth Sciences○ Department of Physics○ Department of Anthropology○ Munk School for Global Affairs• University of Toronto Mississauga and its units, including<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Department of Geography○ Department of Biology○ Institute for Management and Innovation• University of Toronto Scarborough and its units, including<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences○ Department of Biological Sciences• Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering and its units
March 24 2017	Memo about initial phase of consultation posted on Provost's website, with distribution through the Provost's Weekly Digest.
April/May 2017	Discussions with relevant student societies and course unions.
April/May 2017	Focus groups and/or departmental/divisional meetings with faculty and staff of divisions and units above, as appropriate.
April/May 2017	Inviting submissions from any members of the University community including alumni, and external organizations through a consultation website.
June 2017	Feedback from consultations incorporated into draft discussion paper or proposal for further consultation phase, as appropriate.