

## **Internal Academic Review Committee**

### **Report on the Review of the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology**

The internal academic review of the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology highlights the many strengths of this unit. In particular, the Department is noted for its commitment to teaching and the quality of its curriculum design, which are highly rated at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Further, the research profile of the Department is very strong, sustained by the success enjoyed by faculty members who attract funding from a large number of different sources. The research work of several faculty members is nationally and internationally recognized and acclaimed. Moreover, it was noted that the faculty are productive and supportive as well as active in the supervision of graduate students. The staff also receives praise as a cohesive and efficient group. Overall a collegial environment exists in the Department providing a milieu that is conducive to both learning and research.

#### Major Recommendations:

1. UNDERGRADUATE LABORATORIES: The Department contributes the majority of its undergraduate resources to the Life Sciences program, largely through courses, which have a laboratory component. However, increasing enrolments combined with budgetary pressures threaten to have a detrimental effect on the quality and quantity of these laboratory experiences. This problem is common to all of the Basic Health Sciences Departments and the IARC has recommended an integrated approach to resolving this issue. (see “Common Themes” submission)

2. FACULTY RENEWAL STRATEGY: The Department will be facing a number of faculty retirements in the near future. This will potentially affect the current standards in research and teaching as well as the service activities in which faculty members are engaged which enhance the overall reputation of the Department. The problem of the need for faculty renewal is shared by all of the Departments in this group and the IARC is recommending that this unit work with the other Departments and the Faculty of Health Sciences to formulate an integrated strategy to effectively deal with impending faculty retirements. (see “Common Themes” submission)

Other Recommendations that the Department may wish to consider

1. ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES: The success in research endeavours enjoyed by several faculty members in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology has allowed them to transfer the results of their research discoveries to the marketplace in the form of spin-off companies. However, it is important to ensure that these activities are conducted in an environment that protects the teaching and research programs in the Department.

*The IARC recommends that the Department develop clear guidelines, following the policies set out in the Collective Agreement, for faculty members associated with start-up companies in order to avoid conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment.*

Outcomes of the Review:

*The following response was submitted by the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences and presented at the Basic Science Council:*

The continuing evolution of scientific discovery has outgrown many of the traditional disciplines that have comprised the Basic Medical Sciences. Where we once had disciplines based on anatomic, functional or biochemical levels of knowledge, advances in science have moved knowledge and research to a more fundamental commonality.

Furthermore, research increasingly embraces the breadth of inquiry from the gene to the health of populations, involving those from a variety of “traditional” disciplines, no longer so relevant. In fact, many of our research programs cross Faculties and have become thematic, addressing health issues deliberately, such as Cancer, Heart and Stroke, etc.

Reflecting this reality, our educational programs have become collaborative and generic at the undergraduate level, and thematically follow our research programs at the graduate level.

It is within this context that budgetary constraints causing harsh consequences provide an opportunity for optimizing our various functions and responsibilities. The following initiatives have been taken or are being considered:

- 1 The Canada Research Chair allocation process is strategic, non departmental, and vested in the Research Advisory Committee of the FHS. CRCs are the major source of new faculty at present.
- 2 Basic Science Council will discuss further the creation of a Basic Science staffing committee.
- 3 Basic Science Council, Research programs and Departments will be encouraged to develop policies to recruit graduate students from a wider national and international pool.
- 4 Basic Science Council will be asked to create a subcommittee to review all the undergraduate laboratory curricula with the view of further integration and cost-effectiveness.
- 5 Basic Science Council will be asked to consider ways and means of integrating the annual budget preparation, with the goal of avoiding any duplications and improving administrative and academic efficiencies.
- 6 The FHS is dedicated to furthering our existing Research Strategy, which is thematic and programmatic, has been recently reviewed and ratified, and which is firmly embedded in the strategic plan of the Faculty.

Follow-up on these recommendations and issues will take place in the annual budget and staffing strategy meetings between the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Vice-Principal (Academic).