

Terms of Reference

Provost's Task Force on Evaluation, Accountability and Measurement

Motivation:

In 2003 McMaster University established a long-term strategic plan, *Refining Directions*, that has guided subsequent actions. One of the key statements in *Refining Direction* is as follows: "Setting priorities among competing goals will be an essential part of the implementation process". Further, the plan notes that

A commitment to accountability is a key recommendation of the Refining Directions exercise. Measurement and evaluation are necessary for effective planning and enable us to determine how we are doing with respect to our goals. It is also essential for transparency and accountability to members of McMaster's internal and external communities. Each department and unit along with the University as a whole will be accountable.

The goal of this task force is to address the issues of measurement, evaluation and accountability institutionally, in an open and inclusive manner.

Charter:

The Provost's Task Force on Evaluation, Accountability and Measurement will develop a process to assess departments and units along with the University, as a whole, in the context of *Refining Directions*. The intent is to provide an information base that will play an important role in prioritizing institutional initiatives and aligning resources in ways that reflect *Refining Directions'* goals. The task force will report to the University Planning Committee and the Provost and will conduct its work in an inclusive manner, soliciting the views of all constituencies. Departments and units to be considered by the task force will include all departments and units of the university, academic and otherwise.

The task force activities will include:

- consulting with members of the McMaster community as to what to measure and how to evaluate departments and units along with the University as a whole in the context of the goals expressed in *Refining Directions*.
- assessing current methods of measurement and evaluation of individual departments and units along with the University as a whole.
- reviewing the types of data on individual departments and units along with the University as a whole that are currently available and determining whether there are informational gaps that are important in the context of *Refining Directions* and are feasible to fill. Data include quantitative measures and qualitative considerations such as reports on important future directions for university research and educational activities.

- developing, as necessary, new instruments and methods for gathering information about individual departments and units as well as the University as a whole that will help to determine their effectiveness in meeting University goals as expressed in *Refining Directions*.
- maintaining a liaison with the Budget Model Task Force as that group may share some of the same informational needs, and that the budget model must be such that it supports institutional priorities and processes.
- recommending how information should be used in any prioritization process.

The task force will report to the University Planning Committee and the Provost in June, 2008. It may decide to continue its work after that date, potentially developing a preliminary assessment of current departments and units and the University as a whole using the recommended process.

Membership:

Chair: Mike Veall, Professor and Chair, Economics,

Co-chair: Karen Menard, Associate Vice-President, Institutional Research and Analysis

Susan Birnie, Administrator, Education Services

David Capson, Professor & Acting Dean, School of Graduate Studies

Andrea Farquhar, Director, Public and Government Relations, University Advancement

Mita Giacomini, Assoc. Professor, Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics

Milena Head, Assoc. Dean/Assoc. Professor, DeGroote School of Business

David Hitchcock, Professor, Philosophy

Basel Jarrad, undergraduate student and Chair of SRA University Affairs

Aine Leadbetter, graduate student

Jennifer McKinnell, Education Coordinator, Health Sciences Library

Bob McNutt, Chair, Alternative Budget Model Task Force

Jackie Osterman, Academic Advisor, Faculty of Humanities

Lilian Scime, Assistant Vice-President, Administration