Memo

To:  Rebecca Pillai Riddell, Chair, APPRC
     Leslie Sanders, Chair, ASCP
     FGS Council

From:  Jen Gilbert, Faculty of Education Graduate Program Director

Date:  March 6, 2015

Subject: Response to Report of External Appraisal Report for the Proposed
          Master of Leadership and Community Engagement

We were pleased to receive the positive report from the external reviewers, Drs.
Michelle Stack and Jon Young, for the proposed Master of Leadership and
Community Engagement. With the exception of some minor revisions, Drs. Stack
and Young conclude: “this is a strong proposal for an important graduate program
that has a strong academic basis, that reflects the established and ongoing
strengths and core values of the Faculty of Education, and for which there would
be a local and potentially national and international demand.” This endorsement
comes from two renowned researchers of educational leadership and policy; their
enthusiasm for the program is a sign of the proposal’s strength.

In their report they outline a couple of areas in the proposal that could be
improved or clarified. In this memo, I address each of their concerns and indicate
how the proposal has been revised.

1. The most significant issue concerns learning outcomes in the core courses.
   They write: “the Learning Outcomes presented in the proposal lacked
   some clarity and precision” and that improving the course proposals
   specifically would “help potential students get a far clearer understanding
   of the benefits of the program” (p. 6)

   We addressed this issue by revisiting the learning outcomes table on pp.
   16-17 and in each of the course proposals. The specific changes in
   language are too significant to include in detail here but essentially in each
   of the course proposals we pulled out the language of learning outcomes
   from the Expanded Course Descriptions and organized those goals in a
sub-section called “Learning Outcomes.” In each of the course proposals, authors had already identified a series of outcomes that were academically and practically significant but were not highlighted in the current structure. The revised structure allows potential students to see more clearly what they will learn in each course. We then copied those more robust descriptions of learning outcomes into the table on pp. 16-17.

2. Reviewers note that the proposal does not include any specific work requirements for admission despite the focus on situating the program in student’s work life. In the Dean’s memo, he argues that the openness around this requirement allows us to reach out to a wide swath of potential students and he is not inclined to change our admissions requirements.

3. The reviewers worry about the potential workload burden placed on the coordinator of the program and suggest that additional resources may be required, including, perhaps, charging an administrative fee to students. The Dean responds that all costs for the program will be rolled into the tuition and that staffing this program will inform his planning of the faculty complement.

The Master of Leadership and Community Engagement represents an important programmatic innovation in the Faculty of Education. It has widespread faculty support; according to the reviewers there is a clearly defined and diverse market for the degree; and its approval would help expand the Faculty of Education’s reach outside of studies of compulsory and post-secondary education. With the minor revisions, the proposal is ready for FGS Council.