1. Outline of the Visit

Over the course of the day we had the opportunity to meet with the following individuals:

- Alice J. Pitt, Vice-Provost, Academic
- Fahim Quadir, Interim Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
- Adriano Solis, Director, School of Administrative Studies
- Marcela Porporato, Undergraduate Program Director
- Alex Rusetski, Markham Planning Group Coordinator
- Joanne Jones, Assoc. Professor, Audit/MIS/Tax
- Fuminori Toyasaki, Assoc. Professor, Decision Sciences
- David Etkin, GPD, Master of Disaster and Emergency Management
- Sophie Bury, Head, Peter F. Bronfman Business Library & Learning Commons Chair
- Adam Taves, Associate Dean for Collections & Research
- Ananya Mukherjee-Reed, Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LA&PS)
- Sandra Whitworth, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research, LA&PS
- John Justin McMurtry, Associate Dean Programs, LA&PS
- Peter Thompson, Senior Advisor, Institutional space planning
- Irina Arsene, Director, Project Management and Site Construction at York University Development Corporation
- Gary Spraakman, Professor, Accounting
- Pilar Carbonell-Foulquie, Assoc. Professor &Area Coordinator, Marketing
- Manfred Maute, Professor, Marketing
- Kelly Thomson, Asst. Professor, Management
- Jonathan Kerr, Lecturer, Management

The MScMP is to be housed at York’s still-to-be-constructed Markham campus. Thus during our visit at York we were unable to visit the specific facilities, although we were pleased to receive a detailed presentation on the planned facilities and their layout during the course of our visit.

2. General Objectives of the Programs

The MScMP and GDM both fit well with the Markham campus focus on career relevant and experiential learning programs. Both programs fit well with the School of Administrative Studies’ (SAS) current offerings and expertise in non-traditional course formats. Both proposals did an excellent job identifying how the programs are different from current programs offered at other schools, how they would appeal particularly to students currently in York-SAS programs and graduates and professionals in the Markham area.

In the case of the MScMP, its objectives were clearly articulated. We like the MScMP program name: it has the recognized root of MSc, which also denotes the rigour of the program. Using MP distinguishes
what is unique about the program - that graduates are prepared for practice, rather than directing candidates towards a PhD. However, we are sympathetic to concerns that MScMP may attract fewer candidates, rankings, or international partnerships. If investigations (such as marketing surveys or focus groups) validate these concerns, that would be a good reason to revert back to MScManagement.

The MScMP proposal also clearly articulated the choice of various Focus areas in the MScMP, and also why there is no Public Sector Focus in the MScMP. Faculty representatives are confident that all the planned Focus areas will be able to be offered.

We felt that the GDM would be an interesting option for non-business graduates or professionals working in the Markham area who wanted to acquire a basic comprehension of the disciplines in business who either were not ready to pursue an MBA, were not able to devote the money or time to an MBA, or would not be admitted to the programs with their current level of work experience.

We did have some concerns whether the GDM will work effectively as a feeder program to MScMP. In some disciplines (particularly accounting), we have doubts that a candidate with no business background and taking only the GDM would be able to succeed in the accounting focus of the MScMP.

We see a few options the committee could consider:

- Assume that there will not be any candidates who would take the accounting focus. We are not convinced that this is a good idea. While there are perhaps few candidates who would try, it seems unfair to have a route where it is highly doubtful to be successful.
- Indicate that the accounting focus (and perhaps others) are not available if the candidate’s only academic background in accounting was the GDM accounting module.
- Put a requirement into the accounting focus module (and perhaps others) that a minimum number of accounting courses must have been taken (perhaps intermediate accounting 1 and 2 within the last ten years, or equivalent).

3. Need and demand
Both documents did a very thorough job differentiating their program from others in the province and country. They both seem to identify a gap in the market and a need. We particularly anticipate that the GDM could be very attractive to internationally educated professionals (who are numerous in the GTA/Markham area) who want to obtain Canadian education credentials. We believe it will be important to have services and personnel in place to evaluate the applications of IEPs, and meet their specific needs once admitted to the program.

4. Program Content and Curriculum
Both GDM and MScMP program content and curriculum seem very interesting and topical. We were particularly impressed with the core courses in MScMP covering both quantitative and qualitative research, as this will produce well-rounded students versed in both types of research and understanding their respective strengths and weaknesses.

We have some concern that the “management of professionals” stream seemed to have less detail than other focus areas. We appreciate that it is likely to emphasize qualitative, rather than quantitative, research but would like to see clearer indications of how the course content will give students an understanding of the types of research questions to be investigated, how to perform that research, strengths and weaknesses of alternative research approaches, biases and assumptions within different investigative techniques, etc.
We also note that the program might need to limit number of focus areas to be offered in early years of the MScMP, given that the enrolments will be constrained and applicants may not divide themselves evenly among the focus areas.

5. Program structure, learning outcomes and assessment

Overall, the proposals are carefully thought out and provide an adequate level of detail. We found the proposed use of experiential learning (e.g. live cases, internships) is innovative and exciting, and takes advantage of community resources and enthusiasm for these programs.

The Program lengths and modes of delivery seem appropriate, except we had some concern about the planned 2 week module offerings in the GDM. The GDM seeks to be attractive to a wide range of students. This is laudable, and important, but of course raises challenges because the student body is diverse: the 2 week “boot camps” may be appealing for some students, but are VERY intensive and would effectively require that their outside lives be put on hold for the duration of the module. This may be appealing for some students, but impossible for others (particularly, and of most concern, for women who tend to be primary caregivers in their families and thus may have less control over their schedules and availability). Further, the program as it is currently proposed, where one module runs immediately after the other, seems like it would be impossible for anyone. We suggest reconsidering this model to enhance students’ chances for success in the GDM. Eventually, it will be preferable to have different “modes” of course offerings available, such as weekend courses, evening courses, online courses, and a traditional day format that will allow students to select the course mode most appropriate to their circumstances. Given that the first cohort is small and experimental, the committee should pick the option that they feel is most appropriate (whether that be the one the most likely to succeed, or the one most likely to attract candidates, or the one least likely to require adaptation). However, the proposal should indicate whether other modes/schedules are expected to be adopted as the program grows, or if the current structure envisioned is an inherent part of the GDM.

We note that there was some confusion based on our reading of the program documents about the intended size of initial cohort in the MScMP. The current version of the document is unclear on whether it is anticipated there will be 10-20 students admitted to the MScMP IN TOTAL, or 10-20 PER FOCUS AREA (approx. 50 IN TOTAL). This needs to be clarified as it will have a significant impact on the initial program plans and projections, as well as the resources needed for the initial offering of the program.

We had some other suggestions and concerns to be considered by the program committee:

- Learning outcomes should be re-written to ensure they are measurable (e.g. “demonstrate understanding” (which can be measured on a test or project), rather than “understand” (which is not directly visible)).
- Some additional consideration should be given to how the learning outcomes will be demonstrated and assessed at the program levels, rather than just course by course; for example, some pre- and post- program assessments could be introduced to support this or the major research/internship projects could be used to assess learning outcomes.
- We suggest highlighting in promotional materials the available York scholarships for women in STEM/Management fields to encourage their participation.
- Ensure that co-teaching is adequately recognized in faculty members’ workload assignments.

6. Admission requirements
We generally had no concerns, except for the concern previously expressed about GDM graduates entering the MScMP program, perhaps with insufficient background for some of the focus areas. For some focus areas, additional background preparation may be needed beyond that provided in the GDM.

We also suggest that the committee consider specifying how recently the quantitative methods courses need to have been completed if the program desires something other than the default criterion established in Faculty policies.

7. Resources
We consider the greatest challenges for the proposed GDM and MScMP to be in ensuring the programs are adequately resourced. We document below some of the resourcing issues we identified that will need to be given careful consideration to enhance the programs’ prospects for success. For ease of reading we have grouped our observations with respect to resources under several headings below.

Financial
A key financial decision is whether revenues will be regulated or deregulated. This will have a significant impact on the overall resources available for the programs. We note that tuition costs will need to be affordable to attract the best students to the programs without cost being a significant barrier. Given the structure of the MScMP, we also note that special funding may be required to cover costs related to internships.

We noted that there may be opportunities in the future to offer some of the courses proposed in a professional development format, as well as within the MScMP and GDM. This offers the potential for an additional revenue stream, although this might compromise the cohort-based experience of students registered in the MScMP and GDM programs.

Faculty Resources
We note the enthusiasm of the faculty members we met for the proposed programs. An important decision going forward will be which existing faculty members will be appointed to the Markham campus. In addition there is a need to hire new faculty, and to ensure there will be a sufficient number of faculty located at Markham campus to have a footprint there. New hiring will need to be targeted to ensure individuals with the necessary data analysis/technical skills are brought on board. To facilitate this data analysis/technical skills could be included among the hiring criteria for future faculty.

In addition to full time faculty there will be a need for contract faculty involvement in the MScMP and GDM. It will be important that new contract faculty also have the necessary data analysis skills. We suggest that new contract instructors be provided with training or partnering opportunities with full-time faculty so the contract instructors can be mentored through their initial exposure to teaching and administrative duties. If contract instructors will be supervising major research projects or internships, we suggest that appropriate policies, frameworks, and templates be developed to support contract instructors in these duties to ensure positive experiences for faculty and students.

As the MScMP is based upon major research projects or internships with a focus on data analysis, the introduction of the program may lead to new teaching and supervision demands that are quite heavy for faculty. We offer are a number of recommendations in this regard:

- Ensure reasonable course releases are provided to faculty members for the number of projects they supervise.
- Offer appropriate training for current faculty who will be instructing with new data and programs. This might include support (i.e., time, money, travel) to access workshops or training in data analysis programs (e.g. SAP, Stata, ERP)
- Offer appropriate training for faculty who have limited supervisory experience. This training would prepare them for supervising MRPs and/or internship projects.

**Staffing Resources**

To support the administrative aspects of the MScMP and GDM we note the need for an appropriate course release and stipend for the graduate program director. The graduate program director will need to be supported by graduate program assistant(s). Further, given the community-based nature of the programs, appropriate additional staff will be needed to act in outreach and liaison roles with businesses in the community. There will also need to be resources provided for an effective career placement center to serve the MScMP and GDM, as well as other SAS programs to be offered at the Markham campus. In addition, appropriate staffing resources related to these programs in Management will be needed in the Markham library.

**Physical/Digital Resources**

We note that the Markham campus building seems to be well located, and is close to public transit and other commercially available facilities that will be attractive to students. We also note that flexible event space is identified in the building. This will be important for fostering community engagement. The planned building and library facilities seem very attractive. We note that it will be important to have student study spaces, areas for collaboration, and spaces where MScMP students can work and leave materials (e.g. lockers, locked drawers, study carrels or the equivalent).

The planned library resources seem excellent, with plans in place for a mix of print and digital resources, and facilities for inter campus transfers of resources materials. We encourage faculty involved with the MScMP and GDM to carefully specify in advance the data and software requirements for the programs to ensure these resources are either available in the planned Markham computer labs or through inexpensive licensing agreements by students so they are not expensive additional requirements for students. We also note that it may be beneficial if the library or SAS facilities have Bloomberg terminals available at the Markham location and suggest that the MScMP might need the CRSP/Compustat merged database to facilitate faculty and student research.

**Fundraising**

The proposed programs will need the support of university and/or faculty advancement staff to fundraise and support the programs’ community engagement efforts. As part of this support, comprehensive donor recognition programs (including named scholarships) should be implemented to recognize both monetary and non-monetary contributions by donors and other supporters. Such contributions could include providing personnel to teach, internship placements, providing access to data, offering computer programs for data analysis, etc. Formally recognizing these contributions will support the programs’ community engagement efforts.

**Stakeholder Relations**

We recognize the value in already having corporate partners committed to, and engaged in, the programs. We note that the level of support from these stakeholders is already high as attested to in the letters accompanying the program documents. We concur with observations made during our visit that it makes sense to approve these proposed programs as early as possible so that these important
stakeholder relationships can be further fostered and developed during construction and are ready to go when the programs commence at the Markham campus.

**International Students**

Demand by international students is expected to be high. The faculty we spoke with expressed a desire that there be no cap on the number of international students able to register in the programs. We agree that access to the proposed programs by international students represents an important opportunity for them to establish themselves with current and relevant Canadian educational credentials. At the same time, however, international students may require additional services to support their successful completion of the program(s). With this in mind, we recommend consideration be given to the need to offer dedicated resources and supports for international students and Internationally Educated Professional if they end up being a significant portion of the student body. The resources and supports needed might include language aids, specialized career placement activities, and training such as offering workshops in cultural “soft skills”.

**8. Quality of Student Experience**

In general, we anticipate the student experience will be a positive one. The proposed courses are interesting and relevant. We anticipate the common core courses will lead to a strong sense of being part of a cohort among students. The major research paper/internship will provide meaningful research opportunities for students that should result in a strong positive experience in the program.

As noted previously we have some concern that the intensive two week courses will be challenging for students. We note that this proposed format is not one that is used in current SAS programs. The intensive two week courses may also be challenging for faculty assigned to teach them, which may impact student experience.

Several of the proposed course outlines anticipate assigning standard textbooks. Students may consider the cost of textbooks as excessive when used in short or intensive courses. Faculty members may wish to consider alternative resources, including custom published versions of textbooks, for these courses. This would ensure that students are paying for only materials that are covered in the courses, and may enhance the student experience.

**9. Other Issues**

No additional issues were noted.

**10. Summary Observations**

We note there is strong, enthusiastic cross-area support for the GDM and MScMP among all the faculty with whom we spoke. The faculty spoke of their long-standing desire to have a distinctive Master’s program in SAS to increase opportunities for faculty members to supervise Master’s level research projects. The proposed MScMP will satisfy this desire.

The proposed MScMP name reflects clearly the unique focus of the program on evidence-informed Management Practice and we support this name. We observe that it is desirable for the MScMP and GDM to be approved well in advance of their planned opening to ensure adequate time for capacity and relationship building to enhance the programs’ chances of success. Additional factors that will need to be in place to support the programs’ success include adequate efforts to brand the new Markham campus and the new programs to be offered there. We observe that the success of the proposed
programs will depend largely on appropriate resolutions of the resourcing issues we have identified in our review.

We appreciate the hospitality extended to us during the course of our appraisal visit and are optimistic regarding the future of the proposed programs.