

October 10, 2008

To: Vic Pakalnis, Paul Pross, and Filippo Sabetti (chair)

CAPPA Accreditation Review Committee for the Master of Arts, Public Policy and Administration Program, Ryerson University

It is a pleasure to respond to the Canadian Association of Programs in Public Administration (CAPPA) Accreditation Review Committee's Report which has unanimously recommended that Ryerson University's Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration degree be granted accreditation for a full term of seven years. It is most satisfying that our MA in Public Policy and Administration degree established in 2005 has received such a positive reception from CAPPA's accreditation review process. This closely follows earlier this year our successful Periodic Appraisal by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS) where our program achieved the OCGS's highest standing upon the completion of its review of our program.

CAPPA's Accreditation Review offers an extensive positive overview of our key program features as well as recommendations for future enhancement of our program of study. This review will be extremely valuable as we continue to build on the strong foundations of our existing program. While it is not possible to address all of the ideas raised in CAPPA's review, we would like to take this opportunity to comment on a number of developments which are immediately relevant.

One of the challenges which Canadian graduate programs confront today is resource scarcity. The range of courses that programs would like to offer is always limited by allowable course allocations. One way in which the breadth of course offerings can be expanded is through cross listing of relevant graduate courses across programs. This is a strategy for expanding course choice which we have already begun to pursue. Students from our program have gained access to relevant courses in Ryerson graduate programs in International Economics and Finance, Immigration and Settlement Studies, Communication and Culture and Early Childhood Studies. We are also examining the possibilities of expanding student choice to courses in other graduate programs including, for example, Environmental Applied Science & Management, Business Administration, Urban Development and Social Work. In addition, Graduate Directors from various programs are pursuing with the Dean of Graduate Studies

the possibility of expanding course offerings by developing explicitly shared courses. For example, a course dedicated to quantitative research methods may be an ideal candidate for such an offering as student demand for such a course has a limited audience in any one particular program.

Beginning in the Fall 2009 term, Ryerson University will begin to offer a new interdisciplinary PhD program in Policy Studies. This opens opportunities as this program will require some new courses which will be shared with existing MA programs. The Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration is strategically placed to benefit from this development. We believe that many of the areas identified in CAPPAs report on program curriculum enhancement can be addressed through avenues offered by these developments at the Masters and PhD level.

Two points raised in CAPPAs review concerned the need for a course on ethical governance and for a course focused on the Third Sector. These were areas which we also have identified as needing enhancement. To that end, we added to our curriculum a new course: PA8215: *Values, Ethics and Governance*. We have as well re-oriented an existing course PA 8209: *Public Sector: Changing Boundaries* to focus explicitly on the Third Sector and the policy and administration interactions it has with the state and society.

CAPPAs report suggests that our course class size is 33 students. This is not in fact the case. While our program is in very high demand and we have expanded our yearly student intake since 2005, we recognized the need to ensure appropriate class sizes. Consequently, class size has actually been capped at 25 students and most classes run well below this maximum limit. In order to respect appropriate class size limits, the program in 2006/2007 began to offer two sections of each of our four required courses each year.

Ryerson as a university situated in downtown Toronto on the most expensive real estate in Canada faces many space challenges. The university is, however, expanding and has acquired substantive new land recently. Among buildings targeted for construction is a new learning centre. As new buildings come on stream, the space crunch should ease allowing for space reallocation where graduate student space co-located with faculty and program administration offices will become a more achievable goal. It should be noted that this year on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Ryerson's Library, a new state-of-the-art work and study space was opened dedicated to graduate students. This new space is in close proximity to our graduate faculty and indications are that our student body is already making good use of it. In the interim period, our graduate students have access to dedicated work and study space which is only two blocks from the program offices and this space is continually being upgraded.

The Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration program remains committed to its mission to provide a high quality, professionally-relevant

educational program that recognizes the unique character of the public service and its role in democratic governance to both full and part-time students. CAPPA's Accreditation Review offers a most useful assessment of our achievements and its thoughtful suggestions for future enhancements are most welcome and will help guide our development. We enthusiastically embrace CAPPA's accreditation of our program for the full seven year term.

Janet Lum and John Shields

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Janet Lum' and the signature on the right is 'John Shields'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

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