Office of the Dean and Vice-Principal (Academic)

MEMORANDUM, DCD #2, 2014-15

To: UTSC Academic Administrators

From: Mark Schmuckler, Vice-Dean Undergraduate

Date: 25 July 2014

Re: Implementation of the Recommendations of the Joint Working Group on Tutorials

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Recently you should have received a message from Siobhan Nelson, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, regarding the upcoming implementation of the recommendations of the Undergraduate Working Group on Tutorials. As the information in this message describes, as of September 1, 2014, first-contract TAs who are being asked to lead tutorials or labs/practicals are required to receive training that focuses on the particular kinds of tutorial teaching in which they will be engaged. The task force has correspondingly classified the forms of tutorials in which TAs engage into four categories: discussion-based teaching, skill development, review sessions, and laboratory teaching or teaching in practicals.

As part of the process of implementing this tutorial framework we need to review the activities occurring in each department for all classes containing tutorials, with the goal of classifying these tutorials into one of these four categories. Accordingly, I am now requesting that you begin the process of reviewing all tutorials within your department, and determining the category under which each class falls. Please note that all tutorials associated with a given class should be given a single classification. Once we have a sense of the types of tutorials that will be required for each department, we can then move forward with determining how this training will be accomplished

In an attempt to help simplify matters, please allow me to make a few suggestions. First, in consultation with my counterparts at other campuses of the University of Toronto, one approach that we are suggesting for each department is that as a first pass they choose up to two categories that would suffice to cover all of the tutorials within their departments. This first pass is intended to capture the typical use of tutorials within their disciplinary context. Second, I would urge you to consult with your associated departments on the UT St. George and UTM campuses, to determine what categories they are employing for comparable courses in their departments; such coordination should significantly aid in this process.

You should also be aware that these classifications can be modified on a year-to-year basis as different instructors provide different emphases for their courses. Accordingly, we are simply attempting to get a first pass categorization in place for September 1, 2014, that can then be revised over time.

Given the relatively short time frame that we have to implement this process, I thought it would be helpful if I were to meet with the individuals within each department (the chair or associate chair, or whomever) responsible for overseeing this categorization process. Accordingly, I am asking Nancy Masocco to arrange meetings with the departmental contact person (or persons), to take place in early to mid-August. For convenience there is no reason that these meetings cannot occur in small groups, maybe on a larger disciplinary basis (e.g., Sciences, Social Sciences, and so on); we will determine this based on people's availability in the coming weeks.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding my request and this information. I greatly appreciate all of your hard work in this effort.