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Dr. Michael Trevan
Dean Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences
Room 256 Agriculture Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2

RE: MAHE RESPONSE TO UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA'S ACADEMIC STRUCTURE INITIATIVE

Dear Dr. Trevan,

On behalf of the MAHE Members who attended our meeting, July 5, 2013, I want to thank you for the time you gave us and your sincere effort to hear and understand MAHE's concerns and position regarding the President's Academic Structure Initiative. As we discussed we are concerned about this initiative's impacts on the Human Ecology (Home Economics) program of study at the University of Manitoba and the results on students, graduates and our profession's standards under self-governing legislation as well as the professional practice and ability to continue to serve the needs of society. As reflected in our Position Paper sent to you before our meeting our key point is that, regardless of where Human Ecology be moved, that it remain as a distinct, intact and identifiable unit.

I believe the following summarizes areas of common understanding:

- that the Human Ecology (Home Economics) program of study is important to society with its' proactive focus on the family, household unit, and consumers
- that a multi-faceted education in Home Economics/Human Ecology is valuable
- that Human Ecology (Home Economics) education in the schools is essential and must be supported through the university education system and structure
- that Human Ecology graduates are well suited to serve the needs of a diversity of employers in government, business, industry and community organizations
- that the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences would be amenable to accepting Human Ecology as a unit including all current departments and academic staff

- that our discussions included possibilities about how Human Ecology, as a distinct and intact unit, could maintain, enhance and build synergies in the Natural Sciences cluster, the Health Sciences cluster and the greater University community
- that there could be synergies with programming offered by Continuing Education, Red River College and other educational institutions in relation to some of the applied aspects of Human Ecology (Home Economics) education.

Further, I believe the following summarizes the outcomes of our meeting. I believe MAHE members better understand the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences' vision and its participation in the Academic Structure Initiative. I believe we also agree that this Initiative could result in an enhanced Home Economics program of study. To accomplish this, it is necessary that the University pay attention to the importance of society's demand for Human Ecology (Home Economics) educators in the public school system and in occupations serving society in general.

You and other University representatives believe that a Human Ecology (Home Economics) Program of study could be achieved, theoretically with human nutritional sciences and family social sciences academic staff placed within different faculty structures. We, as representatives of the profession, do not believe this structural format could result in a strong, accessible, unified program of study. We do agree that students, and potential students must have 'a home' and a 'champion' within the system.

Thus it is MAHE's position that the President's Academic Structure Initiative result in the academic staff and programs from Human Ecology be considered a distinct and intact program of study unit and be placed as such within the same cluster/faculty. Additionally, the program of study also must retain its identity in the use of its name home economics or human ecology in some structural form. By no means does this mean that we believe that the current Human Ecology educational program should remain static. In fact, we agree that re-conceptualizing Human Ecology (Home Economics) education be given strong support from the University and in collaboration with community stakeholders such as MAHE.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to have a fulsome and productive meeting. MAHE looks forward to further discussions with you on the topic. Feel free to contact me at any time at 204-897-4150.

Yours sincerely,

Debora Durnin-Richards

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c Dr. Gustaaf Sevenhuysen, Dean Faculty of Human Ecology
 Dr. David Mandzuk, Dean Faculty of Education
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