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Dr. Joanne Keselman
VP (Academic) and Provost
208 Administration Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2

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

Dear Dr. Keselman,

On behalf of the MAHE Members who attended our meeting, February 22, 2013, I want to thank you for the time you gave us and your sincere effort to hear and understand the MAHE's concerns and position regarding the university's academic structure initiative. Our appreciation is for Dean Sevenhysen's time and efforts as well.

I would like to take this opportunity to summarize what we feel was accomplished with our conversation and learning from each other.

We understand that re-structuring of faculties will occur at the University of Manitoba for the purposes of right sizing the number of faculties to the proportion of students. The university also needs to attain efficiencies and cost savings. More importantly, it is hoped that changing faculty structures will afford better opportunities for cross-departmental/faculty programs. You made a clear distinction that structure (how the university is structured) is not the same issue as the 'identity' of human ecology. Some of the things we identify as important to the professional practice of home economics such as a multi-faceted educational study are not about structure. They can be achieved through programs of study.

MAHE's focus is on the professional practice of home economics, *The Professional Home Economists Act* and the authority to ensure the educational standard is maintained. The professional practice of home economics/human ecology is valued in the workforce and we identified the labour market demand as well as some emerging gaps such as teachers needed to teach home economics school curriculum. Home Economics/Human Ecology is a multi-faceted approach to the client rather than a single expertise (i.e. professional home economist with nutrition expertise rather than a clinical dietitian) and has the unique focus on family units and households. MAHE's concern relates to the importance of being able to identify the field of study of human ecology, i.e. students have to be able to see it, other Faculties like Agriculture and Education need to be able to reach in and find the student body studying home economics, the university has to promote it, the employer has to be able to hire by it, school divisions have to be able to hire technically qualified teachers.

With such a productive meeting, I would like to summarize what we believe are the outcomes:

- i. It was mutually agreed that the study of home economics/human ecology has a rich and respected history at the University of Manitoba.
- ii. It was agreed that the program of study is important, that it needs to be identifiable.
- iii. That all departments of human ecology must be amalgamated into the same unit and be able to inter-relate with one another as per the professional practice of home economics.
- iv. That there should be core courses that promote the integrated, interdisciplinary way of thinking that is critical to the professional practice of home economics.
- v. The change in structure, might help break down the current 'stovepipes' that have entrenched within each department. The result could lead to improved inter-departmental collaboration and study and research for all students.
- vi. Human Ecology needs to be seen in the University Calendar and must have a Champion responsible for the educational program of study.
- vii. MAHE may want to go through the process of accrediting the program of study required for the professional practice of home economics.
- viii. MAHE will work on ways to promote the professional practice of home economics to potential students, members, employers and consumers.
- ix. Dean Sevenhuysen promised to keep us updated on the universities decisions and actions.
- x. MAHE Members may ask for additional meeting with Dr. Keselman in the future.

I look forward to further conversations with you, Dean Sevenhuysen and others on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Debora Durnin-Richards, PHEc, M.Ed.

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- Dr. David Barnard, President
 - Dr. Gustaaf Sevenhuysen, Dean Faculty of Human Ecology
 - Mr. Ray Karasevich, Secretary to Council on Post-Secondary Education
 - Getty Stewart, PHEc, MAHE Past President
 - Marlene Atleo, PHEc, MAHE Member
 - Lindsey Mazur, PHEc, Member
 - Marilyn Thiessen, PHEc, Member