FOR FINAL APPROVAL

TO: Arts & Science Council

SPONSOR: Dwayne Benjamin, Vice-Dean, Graduate Education

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DATE: February 6, 2019 for February 13, 2019

AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM OF BUSINESS: Closure of the Collaborative Program (Specialization) in Astrophysics (MSc), Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:
The Arts & Science Council has delegated authority to approve major modifications that are defined in the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP), including the closure of a graduate collaborative specialization.

GOVERNANCE PATH:
1. Graduate Curriculum Committee – February 1, 2019 (for approval)
2. Arts & Science Council – February 13, 2019 (for final approval)
3. Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs (for information), in turn reported to the Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (for information) – May 8, 2019

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will also report this major modification to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance in the summer of 2019.

HIGHLIGHTS:
The collaborative specialization in Astrophysics (MSc) was established in 1998. It was offered through the Department of Physics and the Department of Astronomy & Astrophysics, with the Canadian Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics (CITA) as a supporting unit. The specialization was intended to amplify the connections between the participating units and their respective disciplines. Enrolments in the collaborative specialization ranged from 0-5 students in the years it was active (1998-2014). In 2002-03, a change to the admission policy of the Department of Astronomy & Astrophysics had a marked impact on the collaborative specialization’s enrolments, going forward. The department established a direct-entry option and moved towards admitting students into that option, rather than the MSc. Since the collaborative specialization was Master’s level only, the option for Astronomy & Astrophysics students to bypass the MSc reduced the pool of students who might apply. As well,
graduate students in both departments had other opportunities to collaborate with the other department, and with CITA, through registration in each department’s courses, for example, and through supervision by a CITA faculty member. Students, then, have the continued ability to pursue research with overlap in physics and astronomy. These opportunities for collaboration, combined with the shift to direct-entry enrolment in the Department of Astronomy & Astrophysics, contributed to the decline of the collaborative specialization and led to the closure of admissions in 2014-15.

The final student enrolled in the specialization completed its requirements in 2013. The participating units have agreed that the specialization should be formally closed through governance.

**MOTION:**

*Be It Resolved*

THAT the proposed closure of the Collaborative Specialization in Astrophysics, to which admissions have already been closed as described in the attached proposal dated January 31, 2019, be approved, with full effect on September 1, 2019.