UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 56 OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

September 17, 2009

To the University Affairs Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it met on Thursday, September 17, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. in the Falconer Room, Room 107C, Simcoe Hall, with the following members present:

Mr. Stephen Smith (In the Chair)
Ms Diana Alli
Professor Ronald H. Kluger
Mr. Olivier Sorin

Regrets: Mr. Gary P. Mooney

Secretariat:
Ms Mae-Yu Tan

In Attendance:
Mr. P.C. Choo, member, Governing Council
Ms Joeita Gupta, member, Governing Council
Ms Murphy Browne, past member, Governing Council

In this report all items are reported to the University Affairs Board for information.

1.Welcome and Orientation

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and invited them to introduce themselves. He stated that the Elections Committee was a standing Committee of the University Affairs Board and was composed of five members from various estates. Three voting members were required for a quorum, and members were asked to notify the Secretariat in advance if they would be unable to attend a meeting, to ensure that quorum would be met.

The Chair explained that the role of the Committee was to develop the *Guidelines* for Governing Council elections. The Committee also served as Election Overseers and heard appeals related to the election process. The decision of the Overseers was final and was not subject to any further review or appeal.

The Chair explained that the main purpose of the meeting was to review and discuss the Report of the Governing Council Elections Process 2009 and the comments on the elections process that had been received.

2.   Report of the Previous Meetings

Report Number 55 (February 12, 2009) was approved.

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3.   Business Arising from the Report of the Previous Meeting

There was no business arising from the Report of the previous meeting.

4.   Report of the Governing Council Elections Process 2009

Ms Mae-Yu Tan, the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO), presented the Report of the Governing Council Elections Process 2009 to the Committee. A copy of the Report is attached hereto as Appendix "A".

The following were among the matters that arose in questions and discussion.

a)   Advertisement of the Elections Process

It was noted that a number of steps were taken by the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and the DRO's to advertise Governing Council and Academic Board elections. Suggestions for additional steps which could serve to increase awareness of the process were offered and are listed below.

- Provide information on the elections process to administrative staff managers so that they might disseminate it to their staff.
- Consult with administrative staff managers, particularly those in the Facilities and Services Departments, on effective methods of increasing participation in elections among their staff.
- Ask the divisional Registrars to distribute information about the elections to students using their existing listserves.
- Use the BlackBoard application as a communication tool for promoting the elections.

b)   Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities

Invited by the Chair to address the Committee, a member of the Governing Council who was in attendance spoke of her experience in participating in the elections process. As a student with a disability, she had required accommodation in order to participate fully in the nomination and elections process. In her view, she had had to devote quite a bit of time to discussions with staff in the Office of the Governing Council regarding possible accommodations. The member urged the Committee to facilitate the participation of other students with disabilities in the elections process. It was her belief that the University should provide reimbursement for accommodation costs associated with the elections process, that such terms should be contained in the *Guidelines*, and that such costs should be in excess of those permitted for other election expenses.

c)   Part-Time Undergraduate Students

In response to a concern raised by a member of the Governing Council, the Committee agreed that it would be helpful to reduce the number of nominators required for an individual seeking to serve as a part-time undergraduate student member of Governing Council. The Committee hoped that such a reduction might encourage an increased number of candidates. For a number of years, students had been required to obtain the signatures of twenty nominators on their nomination form[1], and some part-time students had reported difficulty identifying peers who were eligible to

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[1] Part-time undergraduate students were required to obtain the signatures of 15 nominators between 1973 and 1986. This number was increased to 20 in 1987 and has remained in effect since that time.

nominate them[2]. The Chair suggested that the proposed reduction to five nominators be reflected in the draft *Guidelines* that would be considered by the Committee at its next meeting.

d)   Campaigning

Members discussed a report of an administrative staff member who had apparently experienced difficulty obtaining access to peers for campaigning purposes in one division of the University[3]. Noting that it was likely that some managers were unfamiliar with the election process, a member suggested that the CRO provide focused communication to managers in advance of the 2010 elections. As well, it was suggested that the CRO might provide verification letters that election candidates could use when campaigning. The CRO's contact information could be included in the letters, so that people with questions about the campaign or election process could contact the CRO directly.

e)   Online Elections

The DRO noted that, following the Committee's discussion at its meeting in February, 2009, the CRO had arranged for the implementation of additional online election security measures prior to the start of the election period. Specifically, eligible teaching and administrative staff voters were required to supply both their date of birth (month and day only) and their personnel number on the elections website in order to proceed to cast an electronic ballot. Only a very small number of staff had contacted the CRO and DROs for assistance in using the online voting system during the election period.

A member commented that administrative staff who did not have email addresses listed in the Human Resources Information System (H.R.I.S.) had had paper ballots sent to their campus address. Some caretaking staff had informed her that they had not received their ballots, which should have been delivered to them by their supervisors. The DRO informed the Committee that she had contacted the Facilities and Services Department regarding this matter and had been assured that their mail delivery system was effective. Perhaps suggestions to increase communication with managers would help not only to minimize such incidents in the future but would also serve to increase staff engagement in the elections process.

A Governing Council member who was in attendance was invited by the Chair to make his comments. The member stated that he had been informed that some individuals had had difficulty remembering their personnel number, which was needed in order to vote online. As well, some administrative staff, who were on long-term disability leave, had been unable to vote. The Chair suggested that, in the future, such individuals should be encouraged to contact the CRO immediately so that she/he could assist them.

f)   Voting Results

Members agreed that the CRO should provide the total number of votes received by each candidate when publicly communicating the election results for all constituencies. (The 2009 vote count for the administrative staff candidates had been omitted from the election results

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[2] Section 6.c.iii of the *Election Guidelines 2009* (p. 39) states that "Nominators of a student candidate must be members of the student constituency of the candidate."

[3] Section 6.b.iv of the *Election Guidelines 2009* (p. 30) states that "All candidates must be allowed reasonable access to members of their constituency during the campaign period. Such access shall not be unreasonably withheld."

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announcement to the University community.)

5.   Community Input on the 2009 Elections Process

The Chair stated that the collection of written comments on the elections process, which had been received as of May 25, 2009, had been included in members' agenda packages. He noted that this year a call for submissions had been sent in the spring, immediately following the elections, and an online response form had been used to gather feedback from members of the University community.

The Chair highlighted some of the comments, noting that a number of respondents had expressed an interest in participating in elections, but they had been concerned about the amount of time that they would have to invest. He noted that dissatisfaction with the requirement that members of the Governing Council be Canadian citizens had been expressed for a number of years. However, in order for that requirement to be amended, the *University of Toronto Act* would have to be re-opened. It was unlikely that such a significant step would be taken until there were a number of aspects of the *Act* to be re-examined.

Members considered the desirability of shortening the campaign period from five to four weeks, as some respondents had indicated that they believed it was currently too lengthy. The DRO pointed out that, while the timing of the election period was not ideal as many students were busy preparing for academic deadlines in March, it would be difficult to compress the election schedule much more, given the procedures that had to be followed.

6.   Date of Next Meeting

The Chair noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, October 15, 2009, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in Room 229, Simcoe Hall.

7.   Other Business

There were no items of Other Business.

<div align="center">The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.</div>

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Secretary   Chair
September 30, 2009

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