

Frequently Asked Questions About the Governing Council

What is the Governing Council?

It is the senior governing body that oversees the academic, business and student affairs of the University.

*The Governing Council was established by the **University of Toronto Act, 1971**. Prior to July 1, 1971, the University had a Senate, that dealt with academic affairs, and a Board of Governors, that dealt with business affairs.*

How do the decisions of the Governing Council affect the University?

Decisions of the Governing Council have an impact on the daily life of members of the university community, and include approval of:

- *academic programs*
- *budgets*
- *capital expansion*
- *employment policies*
- *fundraising*
- *research policies*
- *student life*
- *tuition fees*

How many members are there?

50 members drawn from faculty, staff and students of the University as well as members of the community at large:

*The **President** and **Chancellor** of the University serve by virtue of their positions (ex officio)*

- ***18 appointed members***
 - *16 individuals appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council*
 - *2 senior administrators appointed by the President*
- ***30 elected members***
 - *12 teaching staff*
 - *8 alumni*
 - *8 students: 4 full-time undergraduate, 2 part-time undergraduate, 2 graduate*
 - *2 administrative staff*

How long do members serve on the Governing Council?

The members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council normally serve for three-year terms, as do elected alumni, teaching and administrative staff. Students are elected for one-year terms; the senior administrators appointed by the President also only have one- year terms. Members may serve for a maximum of 9 consecutive years.

How often does the Governing Council meet?

*It meets approximately **6 times** per year – once every 4 to 6 weeks.*

When does the Governing Council meet?

*Meetings are normally scheduled on **Thursday at 4:30 p.m.***

Where does the Governing Council meet?

*Meetings are normally held in the **Council Chamber at Simcoe Hall**, 27 King's College Circle, St. George Campus*

How long are the Governing Council meetings?

*The meetings are usually completed within **2 ½ hours** of the starting time.*

Can anyone attend meetings of the Governing Council?

***Yes.** Meetings are usually held in open session.*

Some portions of the meetings may be held in camera, which means that only members may attend. These sessions are those in which intimate financial or personal matters of any person may be disclosed.

What does a member of the Governing Council do?

Members oversee the management of the University and ensure that the decisions that are made by the Council are in the best long-term interests of the University.

How does a member do this?

An effective member of the Governing Council:

- *is informed about issues and process*
- *asks relevant questions*
- *exercises his/her vote*

What qualifications are required to become a member of the Governing Council?

*The **University of Toronto Act** requires that members of the Governing Council be **Canadian citizens**.*

How can I find out more information about the Governing Council and its work?

*Consult the Governing Council **web-site** (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca>), or contact the Governing Council Office by **phone** at 416-978-6576 or by **email** at governing.council@utoronto.ca.*

Other Ways to Become Involved in Governance at the University

Are there ways other than membership on the Governing Council that allow me to become involved with governance at the University?

Yes. You may apply to be considered for a position as a co-opted or appointed non-Governing Council member of a Board or Committee. Co-opted members are not required to be Canadian citizens.

What is a co-opted member?

They are individuals who are appointed to a Board to fill positions not assigned to members of the Governing Council. In the case of Committees, they are positions not filled by members of the Governing Council and/or the parent Board.

What Boards and Committees have co-opted members?

The Academic Board, Business Board and University Affairs Board each have co-opted members. Co-opted members of the Academic Board may be members of one of its standing committees – the Committee on Academic Policy and Program and the Planning and Budget Committee.

How are co-opted members chosen?

A request for Co-opted members is distributed widely within the University in March. Each Board has a Striking Committee that considers the applications received, and makes recommendations regarding membership on the Board or Committee.