

## College of Electors Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the College of Electors?

The College of Electors (College) is a body of the Governing Council of the University of Toronto composed of volunteer alumni representing the constituent alumni associations of the University of Toronto Alumni Association (UTAA). The College was established by the Governing Council in 1971, following its approval of a proposal from the UTAA.

### What is the purpose of the College of Electors?

The College is responsible for electing the Chancellor and the eight alumni members (alumni governors) of the Governing Council.

### What is the Governing Council?

The Governing Council is the senior governing body that oversees the academic, business and student affairs of the University. It was established by the University of Toronto Act, 1971, and is composed of 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, and 2 graduate
  - 2 administrative staff

### **What is the role of the alumni members of the Governing Council?**

Members of the Governing Council serve as trustees of the University. They consider and approve specific proposals, they provide oversight of the management of the University, and they offer advice on proposed initiatives at various stages of development. In advancing and sustaining the University's purpose, governors address such aspects as strategy; image and reputation; recruiting, hiring, and supporting the Chief Executive Officer; finance; human resources; capital expenditures and infrastructure; risk management; governance effectiveness; academic quality; and student experience.

### **What is the role of the Chancellor?**

The Chancellor serves as chairman of Convocation and confers all degrees of the University. The Chancellor is also the titular head of the University, and, with the President and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Council, represents the University to the external community. In this role, the Chancellor is an advocate for the vision of the University and plays an essential ambassadorial role in advancing the University's interests within the local, provincial, national, and international arenas. The Chancellor's term is three years in length. If re-elected by the College of Electors, s/he may serve a second three-year term.

### **Who serves on the College of Electors?**

The College comprises 48 alumni representing 27 constituent alumni associations.<sup>1</sup> The UTAA Vice-President, University Governance, serves as the Chair of the College.

### **How are members of the College of Electors chosen from their individual alumni associations?**

Each constituent alumni association is responsible for electing members to the College based on the following population representation:

<i>Number of Alumni</i>	<i>Number of Electors</i>
Up to 15,000	1
Between 15,001 and 30,000	2
Between 30,001 and 45,000	3
Beyond 45,000	4

Election of members of the College should be carried out at a regular meeting of the constituent alumni association. Alumni representatives should be experienced in and

---

<sup>1</sup> A constituent alumni association is defined as a group of alumni of a college, faculty, school or other academic division of the University that has authority to recommend the awarding of a degree or post-secondary diploma or certificate (College of Electors Constitution Section IV.1, page 2).

knowledgeable about University affairs, the role of governance generally, and university governance in particular. It is the responsibility of each constituent alumni association to provide the names of the College member(s) annually to the Secretary of the College by July 1st.

**What is the length of term served by a member of the College of Electors?**

Normally, a member of the College is invited to serve an initial one-year term, beginning July 1st, with the possibility of an extension to a maximum of four consecutive years.

**How often does the College of Electors meet?**

The College typically meets five times a year between September and June.

**What are the expectations of members of the College of Electors?**

Many of the broad expectations and attributes required of members of Governing Council<sup>2</sup> are applicable to members of the College. These include understanding the University's vision, strategies, and objectives, its business and affairs, and the role of governance. Members are expected to prepare thoroughly for each meeting, participate respectfully and constructively in discussions, and protect confidential information.

**What type of duties are members of the College of Electors required to carry out?**

Members are asked to develop a strong understanding of the work of the Governing Council and its Boards and Committees, to assist in developing and implementing the College's recruitment strategies, to review the applications received for alumni governors, to participate in the selection of candidates who will be interviewed, to participate in the development of questions used for the interview of candidates, and to elect the alumni governors and the Chancellor. Of particular importance is the role that each member serves as liaison to his/her constituent alumni association. Members update their alumni associations throughout the year on the work of the College. The work of identifying and recruiting potential candidates within their constituencies is a collaborative and consultative effort that includes the divisional head (Principal or Dean), divisional alumni staff, and the divisional alumni association. Together, they strive to recruit individuals who possess the attributes and particular skill sets the Governing Council is looking for in a given year.

---

<sup>2</sup> The *Expectations and Attributes of Governors and Key Principles of Ethical Conduct* may be viewed at <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Task+Force+on+Governance/2010-2011+Documentation/Expect.pdf>

### **Are there other ways in which members may contribute to the College of Electors?**

Members may volunteer to serve on the standing committees of the College. These include the Nominating Committee for the Executive Committee (the body that recommends to the College the membership of the Executive Committee), the Executive Committee (the body that sets the agenda for meetings of the College and serves as the Chancellor Search Committee), and the Nominating Committee for Alumni Governors (the body that identifies and assesses potential candidates for alumni governors, in consultation with the College). Elections for positions on the College's standing committees are normally held annually at the final meeting of the College for the year.

### **What governs the operation of the College of Electors?**

The *Constitution* of the College of Electors<sup>3</sup> sets out the composition and responsibilities of the College, general rules and regulations, and procedures for the election of the alumni members of the Governing Council and for the election of the Chancellor.

### **Who supports the work of the College of Electors?**

There is a Secretary of the College, appointed by the Secretary of the Governing Council, who keeps a record of the proceedings of the College and Executive Committee meetings. The current Secretary of the College is Patrick F. McNeill (email: [patrick.mcneill@utoronto.ca](mailto:patrick.mcneill@utoronto.ca); phone: 416-978-8428).

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.governingcouncil.lamp4.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/COE-Constitution.pdf>