

Background

UTSU held a referendum on October 31 through November 2, 2007 (the “**Referendum**”), in which full-time undergraduate students (the “**Students**”) on the University’s St. George campus were asked to support the establishment of the Levy for a Student Common (see Appendix 1 for the referendum question).

Students voted in favour of the Question.

The Levy was then considered by the University of Toronto University Affairs Board (UAB) on April 29, 2008. The UAB then approved the Levy by passing the following resolution:

“THAT beginning in the fall 2008 session, the Students’ Administrative Council (operating as the University of Toronto Students’ Union; UTSU) fees be increased as follows: [...] (f) for full-time undergraduates on the St. George Campus only, the establishment of a new designated portion of the fee for the Student Commons Project of \$5.00 per session, increasing to \$20.75 per session in the session in which the Student Commons opens.”

The levy has been collected by students since the fall 2008 session.

Since then, UTSU and the University have continued negotiations to establish the Student Commons and the operating parameters related thereto, including considering questions of cost escalation in relation to the Levy.

Proposal to relocate from Site 12 to 230 College

In April 2010, it was communicated to UTSU that the Centre for High Performance Sports (“CHPS”), which was to be constructed adjacent to Site 12 and was a significant factor in choosing Site 12 as the preferred location for the Student Commons, will not be constructed, at this time or at any time in the foreseeable future, due to lack of financing.

In light of the cancellation of the CHPS, UTSU and the University began exploring other sites for the Student Commons. The building at 230 College Street was proposed by the University to UTSU as the new preferred site.

Preliminary cost estimates suggest that the total cost of operating the Student Commons at 230 College Street will be similar to the total cost at Site 12, but that initial construction (which will now consist of renovations) may be less than expected and maintenance may be more than expected.

In April 2010, the UTSU executive met with University officials who provided draft costs for both renovations and operations of 230 College. Further, the University provided for UTSU a draft “fit test” to demonstrate that the building met all of the proposed space requirements and even additional space. UTSU representatives toured 230 College with U of T administrators, the Dean of Architecture, and the building’s current Building Manager.

Later in April 2010, UTSU executives held a consultation meeting on the potential site relocation with stakeholders – including levy group representatives and UTSU recognized clubs representatives. College council representatives were also invited to participate. The response was overwhelmingly positive for UTSU representatives to continue with discussions on the relocation of the Student Commons project to 230 College Street. Individual meetings were scheduled with levy groups, student groups and experts in sustainability to discuss the newly proposed location throughout the spring and summer of 2010.

**University of Toronto Students' Union Ad Hoc Internal Student Commons Planning Committee
Report on Potential Site Relocation to 230 College Street
November 12, 2010**

In August 2010, the UTSU executive sought a legal opinion on the process UTSU ought to undertake to determine the site relocation. The opinion determined that the Board of Directors had the discretion to decide on establishing the Student Commons at a location other than Site 12. Further, the opinion advised that the Board “undertake a duly diligent analysis of the suitability of 230 College as an alternate location of the Student Commons. It should seek input from the various stakeholder groups [such as levy groups and clubs] through public consultations or other means.”

UTSU has continued to work with its legal counsel to determine the financial proposals from the University of Toronto in relation to the site relocation in order to exercise due diligence and uphold the original intentional use of the Levy.

UTSU, represented by President Adam Awad and Executive Director Angela Regnier acting as chief negotiators on the Student Commons project have met with U of T representatives and legal counsel to determine the logistics and financial details of the plans. While the financial details have yet to be finalised, the University has committed to the same financial commitment as the original project.

UTSU and University representatives have discussed a timeline for confirming the relocation through the University processes.¹ While the University was interested in seeing the reallocation in the first cycle of governance for the 2010/2011, it was willing to maintain its offer and wait for UTSU to undertake further consultation and present to the University its decision in December 2010 so that this decision may be considered by Cycle 3 which begins in January 11, 2011.² UTSU representatives agreed to undertake another consultation and seek direction from the UTSU Board of Directors in order to provide information to the University by December 2010. The University's offer to relocate to 230 College Street is not indefinite.

At the October 28, 2010 meeting of the UTSU Board of Directors, Executive Director Angela Regnier presented an Interim Report on the project and the discussions in relation to the proposed site relocation. The report recommended that a committee of the board be struck and that another stakeholder consultation be conducted in November 2010.

The Ad Hoc Internal Student Commons Planning Committee's duties are:

- To coordinate a stakeholder consultation meeting in November 2010,
- To consult experts in sustainability and accessibility,
- To undertake research and planning on the Student Commons as needed, and
- To advise the Executive Committee on matters related to the Student Commons.

The composition of the Internal Student Commons Planning Committee is:

UTSU President, Adam Awad
UTSU Vice-President Campus Life Corey Scott
UTSU Vice-President Equity Danielle Sandhu
UTSU Sustainability Commissioner Chanda Pal
Division I Board of Directors Member Carol Rodrigues
Division II Board of Directors Member Megan Lund
Student of Architecture (vacant)
Student of Engineering (vacant)

¹ See University of Toronto Policy on Capital Planning and Capital Projects
<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun282001.pdf>

² See the Governing Council meeting schedule at www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca

UTSU Executive Director Angela Regnier

Call-outs for the vacant positions have been circulated. The committee will review applications in early December for the vacancies.

Stakeholders Consultation Meeting November 11, 2010

On Thursday, November 11 the Internal Student Commons Planning Committee hosted a consultation for Levy Groups, Clubs, Board of Directors members. Approximately 40 representatives were in attendance. The meeting included an overview of the process presented by Executive Director Angela Regnier, an overview of the characteristics of Site 12 and 230 College Street presented by President Adam Awad, and a discussion facilitated by Board of Directors Representatives and Committee members Megan Lund and Carol Rodrigues.

The discussion centred around two main issues: that the 230 College Street location was rationally the more favourable option over Site 12; and, the process for consultation and decision-making.

On the matter of the location, the following items were raised:

- 230 College street was preferred potentially less expensive, faster, and had more space
- Site 12 does not really seem to be an option because it is indefinite
- The need for student space is dire and it would be unfortunate to delay the building of a student commons indefinitely
- 230 College Street is such a good offer that it would be foolish to pass down
- Students at Woodsworth were expecting the Student Commons to be on the North end when they voted in the referendum.
- 230 College Street sounds like a great student space and clubs and levy groups really need use of good space.
- Sussex is still club space on the North Side.
- The faster we can get student space the better.
- In a "straw pole" of attendees in the room, preference indicated for 230 College Street was unanimous.

On the process for consultation and decision-making:

- Some attendees desired more time for consultation, such as a plebiscite or more consultation meetings.
- Some attendees were satisfied with the amount of consultation and felt that the decision was not that complex to require more consultation
- Student Commons Planning Committee members agreed to post the powerpoint presentation on the website and be available for presentations in respective constituencies prior to the November 17 Board of Directors meeting.
- Some attendees said that it would be a problem to miss the upcoming University governing council cycle and risk losing the 230 College Street option by delaying the decision.
- Some attendees said that the Board of Directors needed to make a responsible decision and that delaying the decision would hinder the needs of students to have more student space.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Internal Student Commons Planning Committee has deliberated on proposal to relocate the Student Commons project from Site 12 to 230 College Street and has determined the following:

Site relocation

- Based on the indefinite option for Site 12 construction and the seemingly unanimous agreement on the suitability and financial viability of 230 College Street, 230 College Street is the preferred location option at this time.
- UTSU representatives should continue to negotiate on the financial arrangements with the University and report back to the committee on any

Timing of decision

- The Board of Directors ought to decide on the relocation now, rather than delaying to undertake more consultation because the decision is not complex or controversial.
- The Committee can continue to undertake consultations on further developments related to the Student Commons project.
- Delaying the decision could lose the opportunity for 230 College Street and further hinder access to student space on campus.

Recommendation 1:

That the UTSU accept the University's proposal to relocate the Student Commons to 230 College Street pending acceptable financial arrangements are met.

Recommendation 2:

That Executive Committee representatives President Adam Awad and Executive Director Angela Regnier continue to lead negotiations on behalf of UTSU on financial and operational detailing for the site relocation.

Recommendation 3:

That the Ad Hoc Internal Student Commons Planning Committee continue to undertake public consultations as project planning continues.

**University of Toronto Students' Union Ad Hoc Internal Student Commons Planning Committee
Report on Potential Site Relocation to 230 College Street
November 12, 2010**

Appendix 1 - Student Commons Referendum Question

BACKGROUND

The St. George campus of the University of Toronto is one of the only Canadian university campuses without a large student-centred community facility. Students at the Mississauga (UTM) and Scarborough (UTSC) campuses both enjoy one – but students at St. George do not.

In 2005, the University of Toronto Students' Union (U.T.S.U., formerly the Students' Administrative Council) conducted a plebiscite and found that a majority of students voted in favour of building and financially contributing towards such a facility.

An interim project planning report, approved by the University's Governing Council on June 25, 2007, describes a "Student Commons" facility that would provide the following kinds of space and services:

- 24-hour student space
- commuter space
- prayer space
- club offices and space
- lounge space
- study space
- meeting rooms
- healthy, affordable and diverse food options (e.g., Halal, Kosher, vegan)
- rehearsal space
- used bookstore
- large multi-purpose space
- offices for student organizations
- food bank
- workshop and design space
- bicycle repair space
- space to sell discounted TTC Metropasses for longer periods of time
- space to provide U.T.S.U. services more effectively and efficiently

The Student Commons would be managed, operated, and governed by students – therefore protecting the Student Commons from commercialization, corporatization, and privatization.

U.T.S.U. envisions the Student Commons as a nexus of community, co-operation, and communication.

The Student Commons would be built with a view to achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. The Student Commons would be an accessible facility.

The University has conditionally approved construction of the Student Commons on "site 12," located on the west side of Devonshire Place, just south of Bloor Street. It is expected that construction would commence in September, 2008.

U.T.S.U. is seeking the support of its members registered at the St. George campus to demonstrate that we are fully committed to contributing financially towards the construction and operation of the Student Commons.

The proposed student levies being requested would be less than the similar levies being paid by UTM and UTSC students. The University would match student contributions to the Student Commons at a minimum rate of 50%.

PROPOSAL & QUESTION

Be it resolved that:

1. Every member of the University of Toronto Students' Union ("U.T.S.U.")* registered at the St. George campus ("St. George Member") shall contribute financially to a Student Commons facility ("Student Commons") on the express condition that the Student Commons shall be managed, operated, and governed by students through U.T.S.U..
2. For construction costs of the Student Commons:
 - a) beginning in the summer session of 2008, and until the opening of the Student Commons, every St. George Member shall contribute up to \$5.00 per session; and,
 - b) upon opening of the Student Commons, for a period of no more than 25 years, every St. George Member shall contribute up to \$14.25 per session.
3. For operating and capital renewal costs of the Student Commons, upon opening of the Student Commons, every St. George Member shall contribute up to \$6.50 per session.

Financial contributions collected from St. George Members for operating and capital costs of the Student Commons shall be adjusted annually to a maximum of ten percent (10%) in order to address inflationary cost increases.

Are you in favour of the proposal, as appearing above? [] Yes [] No

* NB. "University of Toronto Students' Union" and/or "U.T.S.U." refers to the Students' Administrative Council of the University of Toronto.