



**TO:** Members of the Executive Committee

**SPONSOR:** President David Naylor, on behalf of the Ceremonials Committee comprising, Chancellor David Peterson, Professor Michael Marrus, Chair, Academic Board and Mr. Louis Charpentier, Secretary of the Governing Council.

**DATE:** May 8, 2007 for May 17, 2007

**AGENDA ITEM:** 8

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:** Policy Revision – *Policy on Presiding Officers for Convocation* (currently, *Convocation Substitutes for the Chancellor and the President*)

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The University of Toronto Act, 1971, section 4(4) states that the Chancellor is chairman of Convocation. In Section 5(3), it also provides for delegation in the absence of the Chancellor, stating that in such instances, “the President shall confer degrees but if he is absent or unable to act, degrees shall be conferred by such person as the Governing Council may designate.”

**BACKGROUND:**

Consistent with these provisions, the Governing Council in 1987 approved a resolution, *Convocation Substitutes for the Chancellor and President*, that defined a protocol for selecting appropriate presiding officers. It specified the following substitutions:

- where both the Chancellor and the President are absent, the Chancellor’s place is to be taken by the head of the academic unit whose students are graduating.
- where the President is absent or acting for the Chancellor, the President’s place is to be taken by the Vice-President and Provost.
- in the event that the Vice-President and Provost is also absent, the resolution provides for the President’s place to be taken by the Dean of Arts and Science (for Arts and Science convocations) or a Vice-Provost.

The resolution was intended to address the occasional circumstances in which either the Chancellor or President could not be present, and the even more infrequent occasions when neither could be present. The resolution was further revised in 2005 to permit the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Governing Council to serve in the role of presiding officer, providing greater flexibility in the event that both the Chancellor and the President are absent from a University convocation. Normally, this substitution would occur only if the relevant academic head were absent or not able to act.

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

The proposed *Policy*, which would replace the 2005 resolution (attached hereto for reference), reflects the directions arising from a comprehensive review of convocation (2006-07)<sup>1</sup> and provides for Principals and Deans to serve as presiding officers in specific circumstances. This June, the University will hold 22 convocation ceremonies and, in November, another six. Even with this expanded number, six of the June ceremonies are projected to have maximum student attendance – that is, in excess of 525 students. Only a slight increase in participation for any of these divisions would lead us to introduce additional ceremonies and we expect that to be the case next year. The proposed *Policy* change allows greater flexibility in sharing ceremonial responsibilities among senior officials of the University.

It is important to note, however, in this context of growth and the need for flexibility, that the intent of the *Policy* and the focus of its implementation are also to preserve a fundamental principle – that convocation is a University ceremony, the occasion on which the institution awards its degrees. Each ceremony, in celebrating our students' achievements, must also reflect the richness of the academic divisions in which they have studied and learned. The *Policy* respects both our institutional obligations and our valued traditions, ensuring a clear framework to guide decisions on University or institutional representation and divisional participation in specific circumstances.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Be It Resolved:

**THAT** the proposed *Policy on Presiding Officers for Convocation*, dated May 7, 2007, be recommended to the Governing Council for approval replacing the resolution regarding convocation substitutes approved by the Governing Council in 2005.

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Committee to Review Convocation* (December 16, 2006) and *Administrative Response* (March 16, 2007)