



## **2012 Update From the Program Fee Monitoring Committee**

for Governing Council 9 April 2012

### **Introduction**

In May 2011, the Program Fee Monitoring Committee (PFMC) submitted its first [Report](#) to the Governing Council of the University of Toronto, after having presented it to Arts & Science Council at meetings in March and April 2011.<sup>1</sup> At that time Professor Mark G. McGowan, Principal of St. Michael's College and the Chair of the Committee, made a formal presentation of the report to the Council and questions were received by Professor McGowan, Professor Meric Gertler, Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science, and Dr. Glenn Loney, Faculty Registrar, Faculty of Arts & Science. The Governing Council received the report, and in response to a formal motion, the Governors requested that the Committee present to Governing Council an update of their report in 2012.

This request posed some problems for the existing committee, whose initial mandate was to end after the submission of the report. Moreover, all three student representatives were graduating and Professor McGowan was stepping down as Principal and was taking administrative and research leave.

By their mutual consent, the Dean reappointed Professor McGowan as Chair and asked him to reconstitute the committee. The membership mirrored the efforts of the first committee, which was to represent students from each of the major program streams, the constituent and federated colleges, faculty members for each of the program streams, and a college registrar in addition to Dr. Loney, who represented the Office of the Faculty Registrar.

The new committee consists of the following continuing members: Dr. Glenn Loney (Faculty Registrar), Cheryl Shook (Registrar, Woodsworth College), Dr. Mirella Pasquarelli-Clivio (Italian Studies, Humanities), and Dr. Corey Goldman (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Sciences). New members include: Dr. Dwayne Benjamin (Economics, Social Sciences), Ms. Melinda Jacobs (Trinity College, Federated

---

<sup>1</sup> See Governing Council Item 8:

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Boards+and+Committees/Governing+Council/2010-2011+Academic+Year/a0519.pdf>

Colleges, Social Sciences), Ms. Sandra Huynh (New College, Constituent Colleges, Science), and Mr. Jesse Borg (University College, Founding College, Humanities).

It was made clear in the Committee's initial meeting that this reconstituted Committee was continuing the mandate of the original Committee in that it was to monitor the implementation of the Program Fee in the Faculty of Arts & Science and report its findings to Dean Gertler, Arts & Science Council, and ultimately Governing Council. This current Committee, like its predecessor, was not mandated to be a review committee; its task was to pose and answer questions about the implementation of the Program Fee, now entering its second phase in 2011-12, with particular attention to be paid to the effect of the fees on course enrolment, student academic performance, student financial need, and the Faculty of Arts & Science's enhancement of teaching and learning.

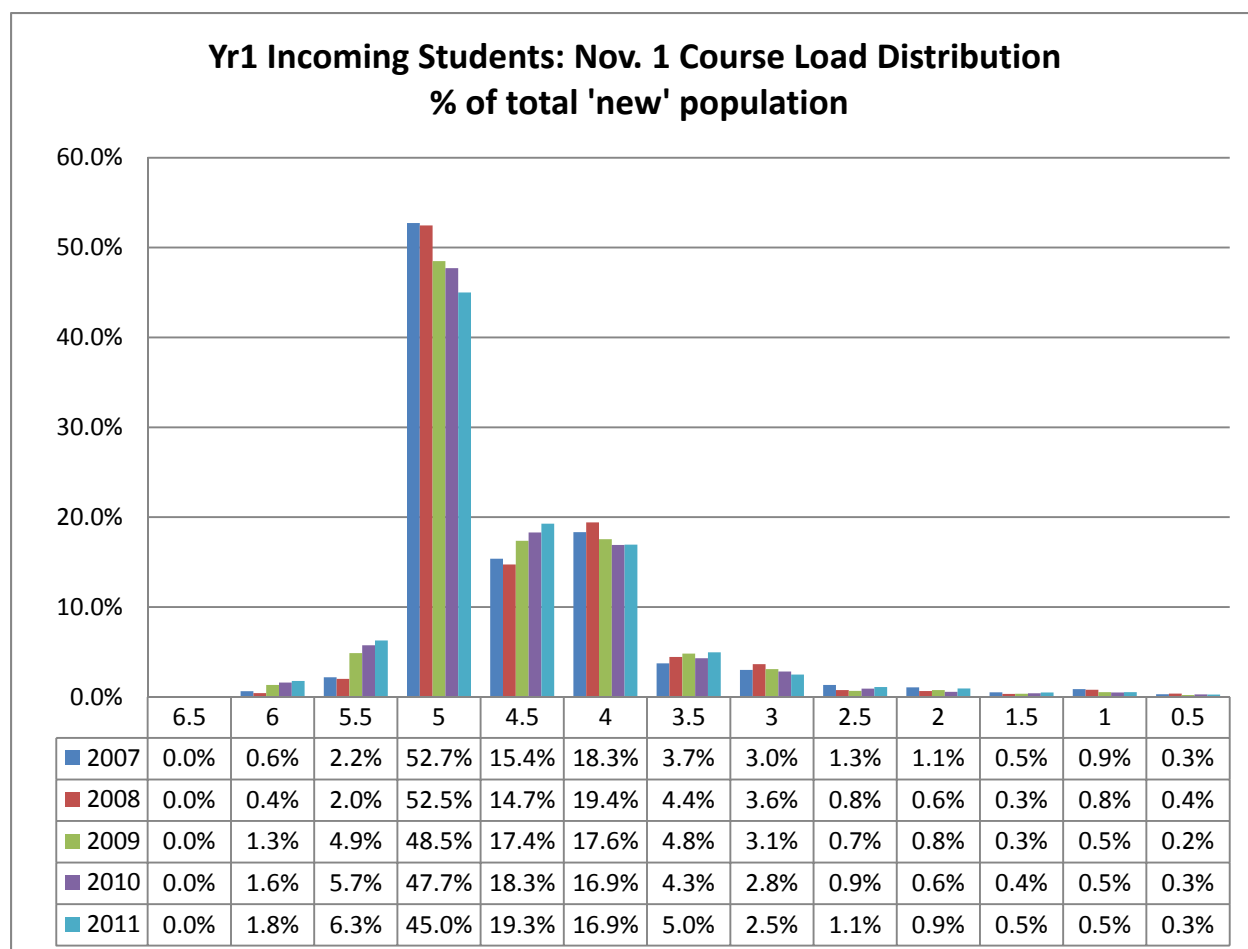
This update report should be read as a supplement to the original [Report](#) published in 2011. (The precise description of the original data that has been updated in this 2012 document is appended to that original 2011 Report.) The new Committee had the advantage of examining data generated by 2.5 cohorts directly affected by the Program Fee: Cohort 1 (2009-10), Cohort 2 (2010-11) and Cohort 3 (2011-12). This third Cohort represents the first group of students within the second phase of the Program Fee, wherein all students (with some notable exceptions) who enroll in 3.0 courses or more are assessed a Program Fee. The figures and tables that follow also include student cohorts from 2007-08 and 2008-09 for comparative purposes.

The questions addressed by the new Committee follow the same pattern as those posed by the original Committee, with the exception of the inclusion of the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) data which was made available to us from the survey taken in 2010-11. All first- and fourth-year students in Arts & Science were included in the NSSE survey. (See Appendix.)

### **Question 1: Did the Program Fee affect student enrolment behaviour?**

Last year the Committee reported that there was an increase in the number of students from Cohorts 1 & 2 committing themselves to 5.0 or more in their first year of registration. As Figure 1 confirms this behaviour of taking 5.5 courses or more continues among members of Cohort 3. In the third Cohort (2011-12) 8.1% of the students were enrolled in 5.5 courses or more; this is at least 0.8% more students than was represented in Cohort 2 (2010-11) and an increase of 5.3% of students when compared to the student cohort of 2007, who were subject to the per-course fee. Overall, since the implementation of the Program Fee, there are an increasing number of students taking 5.5 or more courses in their first year of registration.

Figure 1



When one examines the programs and Colleges of the Yr1 students taking 5.5 courses or more in Cohort 3, the Committee’s findings are similar to observations made in last year’s Report. Students come from across all six entry streams with heaviest representation in Mathematics and Physical Science, Computer Science, and Commerce (the last two streams have been subject to a Program Fee since 1998). Students from all of the colleges are represented in the 5.5 enrolments or higher, and each college shows a marked increase in this category since the introduction of the Program Fee. The highest incidence of students taking 5.5 or more courses is evident at Trinity, Victoria, and Innis Colleges. Although the data are drawn from two separate sources and the comparison not done according to rigorous statistical methods, one might observe that each of these smaller colleges accept fewer first year applicants and those students with higher admission averages; in addition the recent NSSE data indicates that, in these colleges, fewer students in the first year cohort commute to campus or work for wages outside of school hours, when compared to students in other colleges.(See Appendix #2). Perhaps for some students the reduced pressures of wage

work and commuting may make their schedules more flexible to accommodate a larger course load.

It should also be noted that first year students continued to cluster toward 4.5 courses and move away from course loads less than 4.0. This is much more evident in the Yr 2 students presented in Figure 2, where the enrolments in the 5.5 plus course load category and the 4.5 course load category continue to increase, whereas the number of students taking a 5.0 load dips slightly. This clustering of enrolments on either side of 5.0 FCEs may be an indication of the emergence of a new “culture” among upper-level students who recognize that if they enroll in 4.5 courses in one year, they may make up the difference in enrolling in 5.5 in the future, without extra cost under the Program Fee. This emergence of a new “culture” or behavior among students regarding course enrolments is confirmed in the behaviour of the Cohort 1 students this year, who are now in third year. Figure 3 indicates that students from Cohort 1 (the first PF cohort to reach Yr3) were represented in significantly higher numbers in the 6.0 and 5.5 course enrolment, than their colleagues in third year, from 2007 to 2010. In 2011, 51.7% of students in third year were enrolled in 5.0 courses or better, compared to 45.7% in 2010 and 45.5% in 2007. The number of Cohort 1 students enrolled in 4.5 courses, in 2011, is also slightly higher than numbers of students enrolled in 4.5 in previous years.

Figure 2

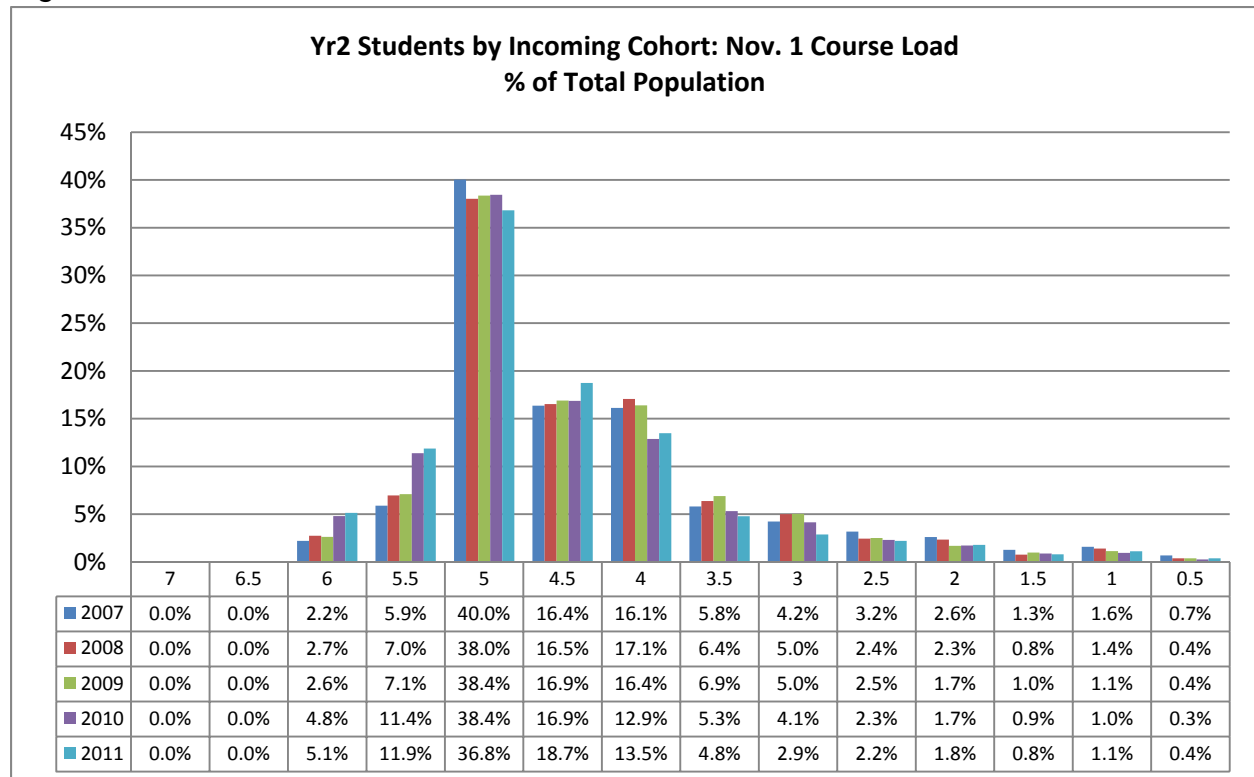
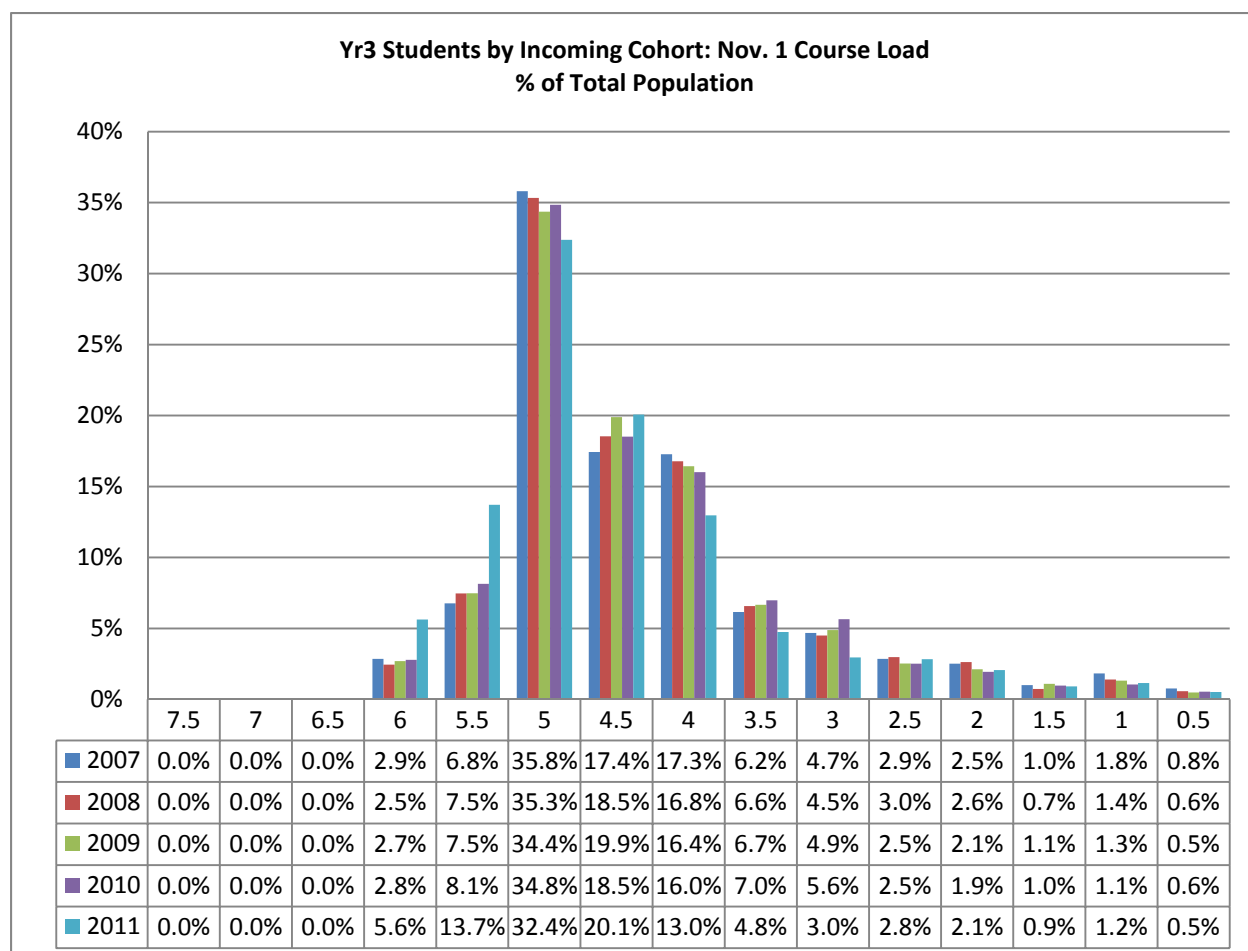


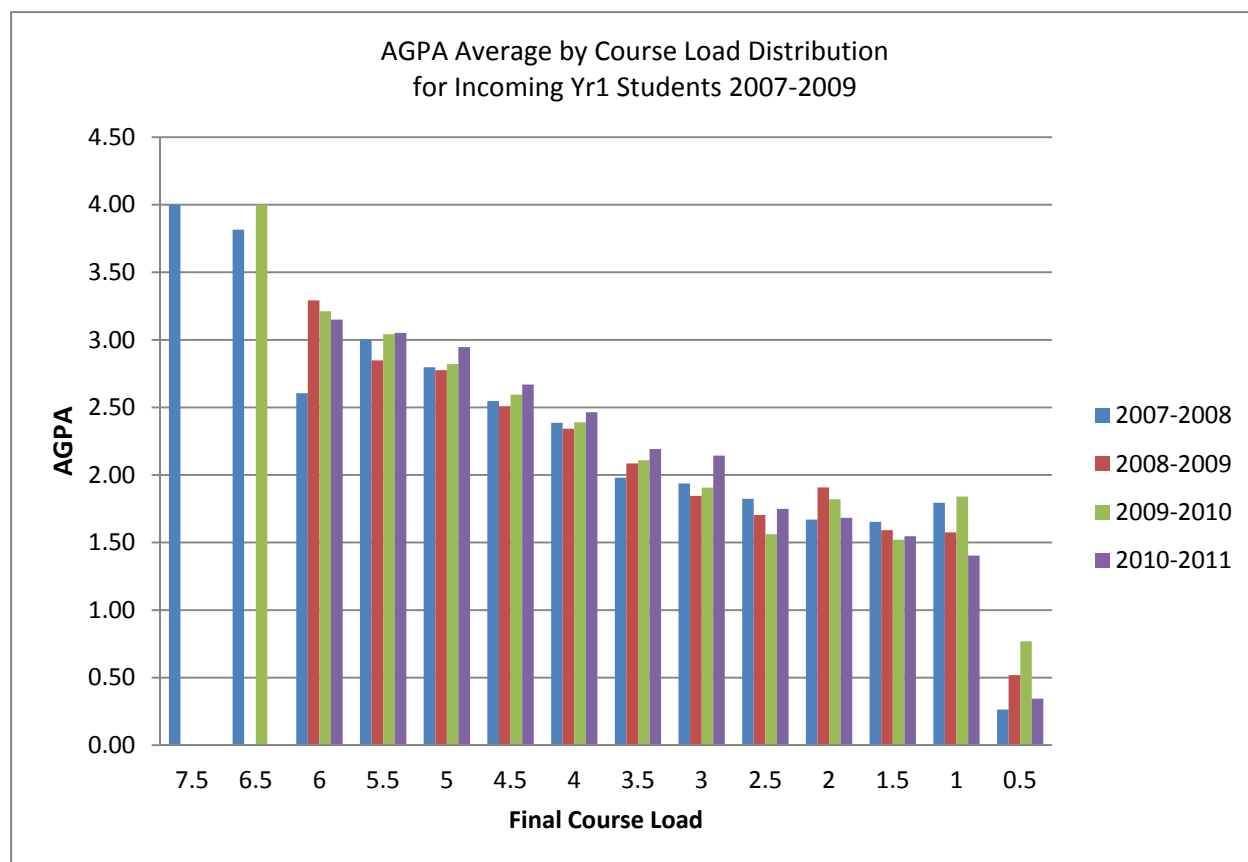
Figure 3



**Question 2: Did the Program Fee affect academic behaviour or performance/achievement?**

When the Program Fee was implemented, there had been concern that it might have a negative effect on student academic performance. This was not found to be the case in the 2011 PFMC Report when Cohort 1 data were examined. As Figure 4 indicates, when the 2010-11 cohort is added as a comparator to the three previous cohorts, there has been a slight increase in annual grade point averages in almost every course load category above 3.0 FCE. This has probably less to do with the implementation of the Program Fee than it does with the recent attention to grading guidelines and practices by the Faculty of Arts & Science and by the provision of a limited number of late withdrawals, which allows students to have courses (often with poor grades) deleted from their academic record.

Figure 4

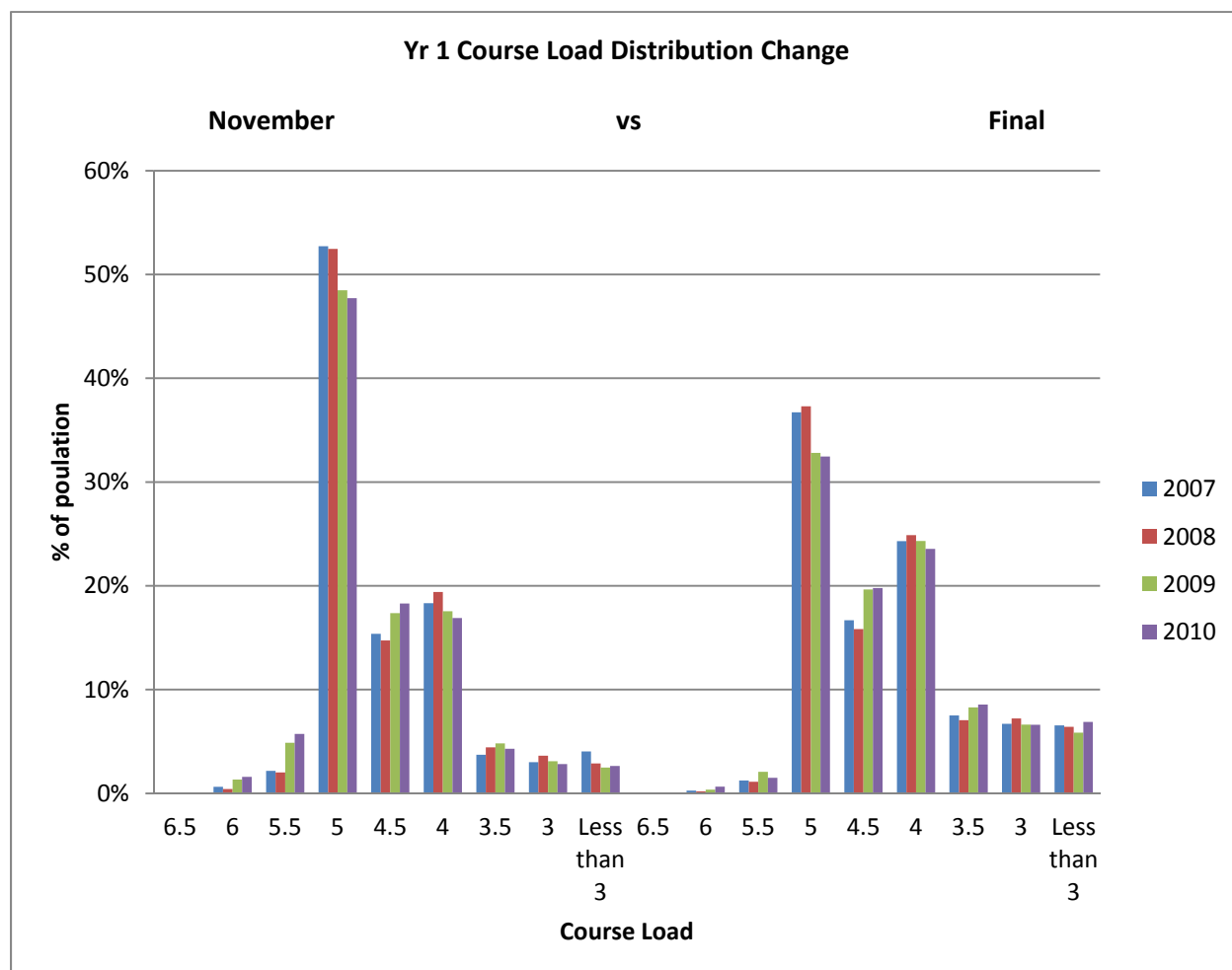


As was discovered last year, the Committee continues to note the association between high GPAs and higher course loads, as evident in Figure 4.

**Question 3: Did the numbers of completed courses change?**

Similarly, when the Program Fee was implemented, there was concern raised that it might prompt students to load up on courses at the beginning of the term, but then drop courses, resulting in students actually having completed fewer courses by the end of term. The 2011 PFMC Report noted that the overall pattern of behaviour did not seem to have changed notably with the Program Fee, based on one cohort of data. As seen in Figure 5, the Committee again discovered that the number of courses remaining on Yr1 students' transcripts at the end of the academic year has not changed significantly when one compares the cohorts of students paying a per course fee versus those paying the Program Fee. Students at the end of their first academic year continue to have fewer courses than they had in November of the first term.

Figure 5:



**Question 4: Did the Program Fee affect the Faculty’s capacity to recruit students?**

When the Program Fee was introduced, there were some concerns within the Faculty of Arts & Science that it might inhibit the Faculty’s ability to recruit students. Confirming the 2011 PFMC Report, as Figures 6 and 7 make clear the applications to the Faculty have steadily increased over the period of 2007 to 2011, particularly those applicants making the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Arts & Science their first choice, and the numbers of students “taking up” their offers of admission have not changed significantly over this same period.

Figure 6

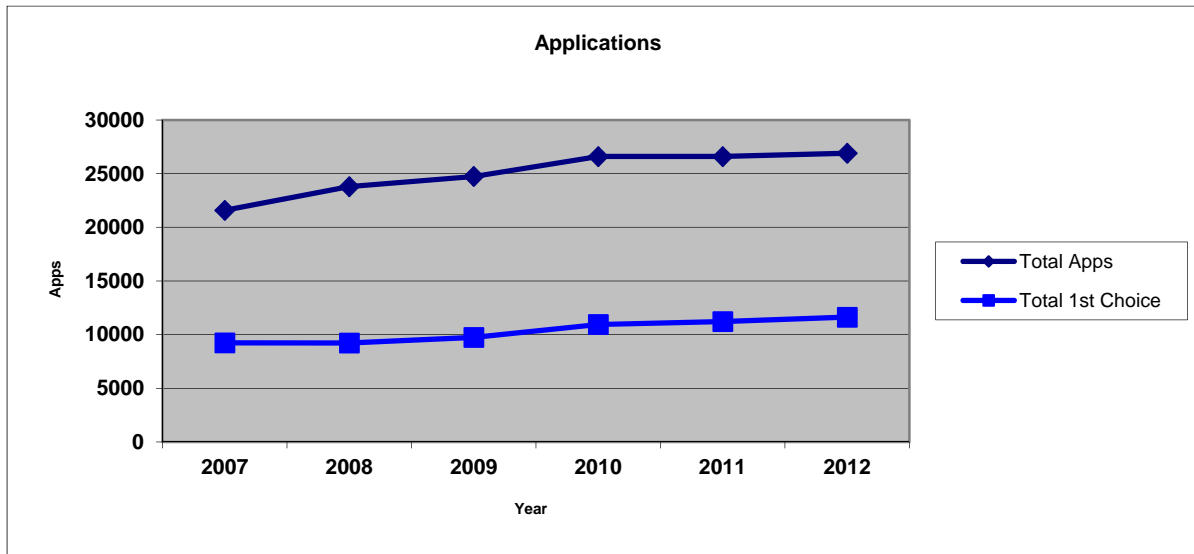
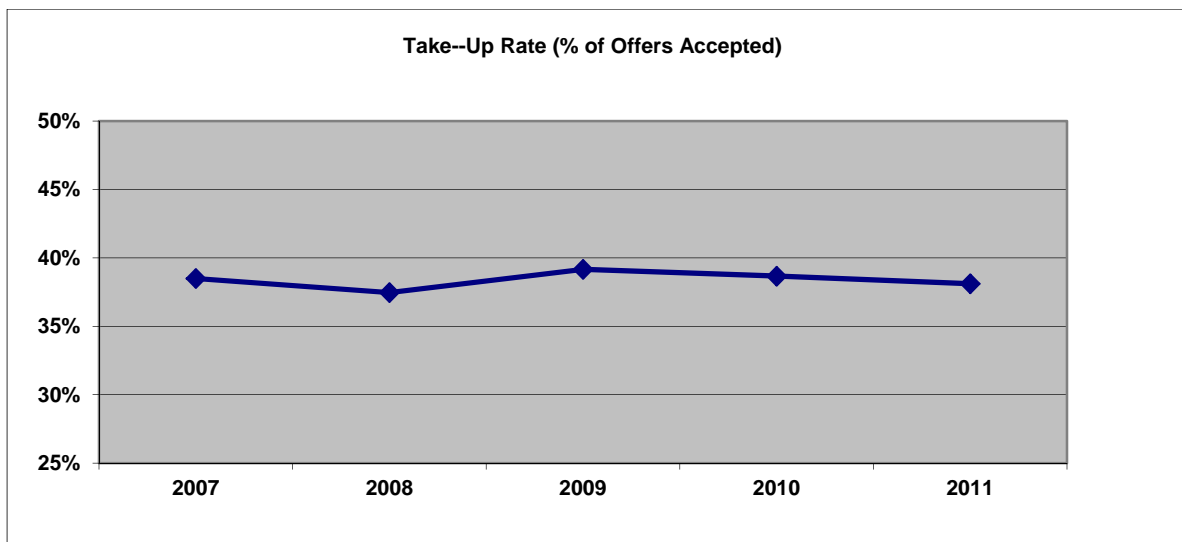


Figure 7



The current Committee also examined the possibility of students transferring out of the St. George Campus to the Arts & Science Programs offered by UTSC and UTM, where the per course fee is in operation. As was discovered last year, Figure 8 confirms that the opposite behaviour is occurring—students from UTSC and UTM are transferring to the St. George campus in greater numbers than the students moving from St. George to the western and eastern campuses. The Program Fee does not appear to be a deterrent to students seeking the programs offered by the Faculty of Arts & Science on the St. George campus.



Figure 8

Transfers OUT from FAS				Transfers INTO FAS			
Year	to UTM	to UTSc	Total	Year	from UTM	from UTSC	Total
2008	35	30	65	2008	43	76	119
2009	42	37	79	2009	56	78	134
<b>Prog Fee</b>				<b>Prog Fee</b>			
2010	35	27	62	2010	71	105	176
2011	35	25	60	2011	67	98	165

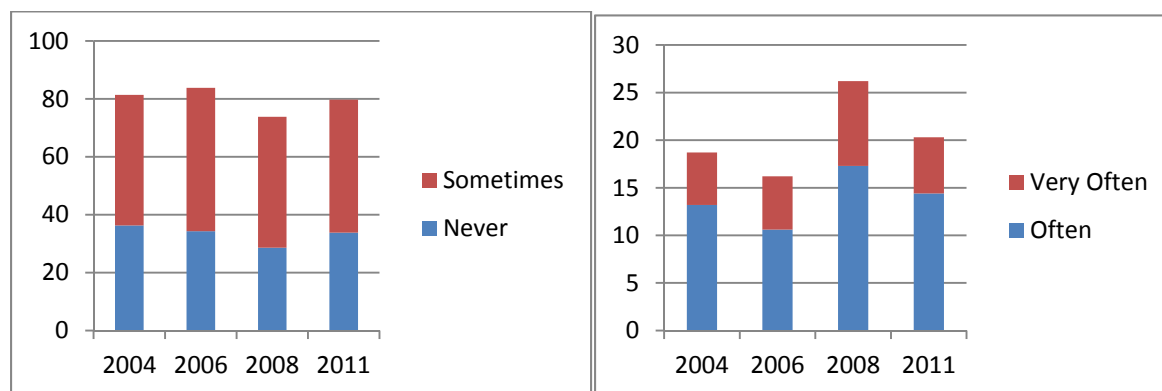
### Question 5: Did the Program Fee affect student life?

Last year the Committee did not have empirical data upon which to draw any observations on the ways in which the Program Fee may have affected student participation in extra or co-curricular activities. So last year, the Committee commissioned the University's Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (CTSI) to conduct a series of focus groups, which posed questions similar to those asked by NSSE regarding wage work, co-curricular activities, and recreational activities. The purpose of the focus groups was not to measure quantitatively the level of non-academic activity but to see whether the Program Fee's effect on non-academic activities was identified as an issue in the focus groups, in lieu of having quantitative data. Together with reports from Registrars, Deans of Students, College Principals, and the comments from individual students, the 2011-12 Committee gleaned a number of important observations regarding the perceived impact of the Program Fee on student activities. When contacted by the Chair again this year, those college officials mentioned above who responded repeated last year's observation that the Program Fee did not appear to have had an effect on student life.

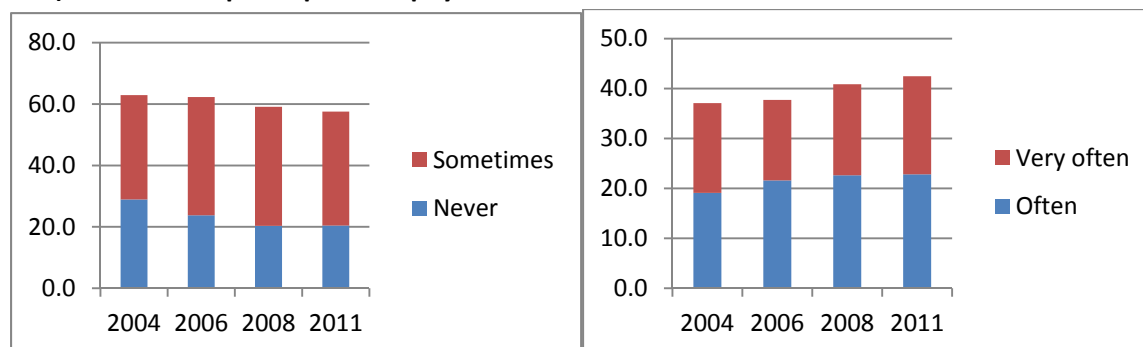
The examination of the NSSE data, which compared students from Cohort 2 under the program fee in 2011, with Yr1 cohorts from 2004, 2006, and 2008, appears to confirm the Committee's observations from these informal reports [last year and this year that there appears to have been no significant diminution of first year student participation in extra or co-curricular activities as a result of the implementation of the Program Fee. As Figure 9 indicates, there appears to be little difference between these four groups of first year students in the levels of extra-curricular participation, wage work, or recreational activities. In fact, fewer students in the 2011 Cohort worked for wages off campus for 1-20 hours per week, when compared to the cohorts surveyed by NSSE in the previous three years: 2004, 2006, and 2008. The Program Fee does not appear to have deterred the 2011 Cohort (Cohort 2 of the Program Fee) from participating in a wide variety of student activities on and off campus.

Figure 9: Faculty of Arts & Science NSSE Data [source: Office of Student Life]

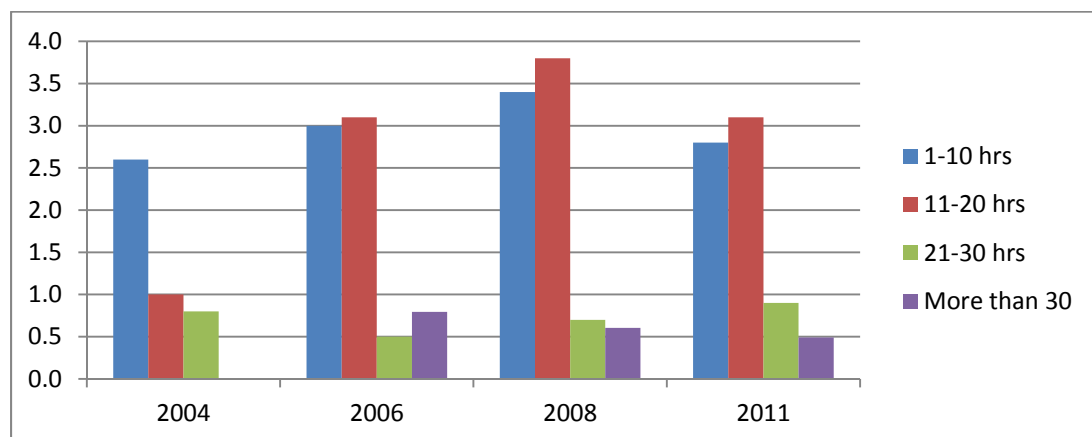
6. a) Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theatre, or other performance.



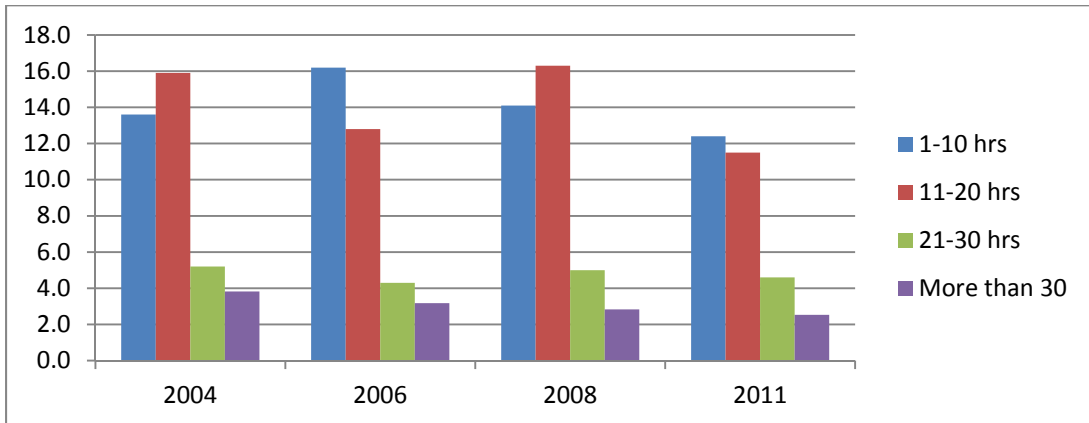
6. b) Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities.



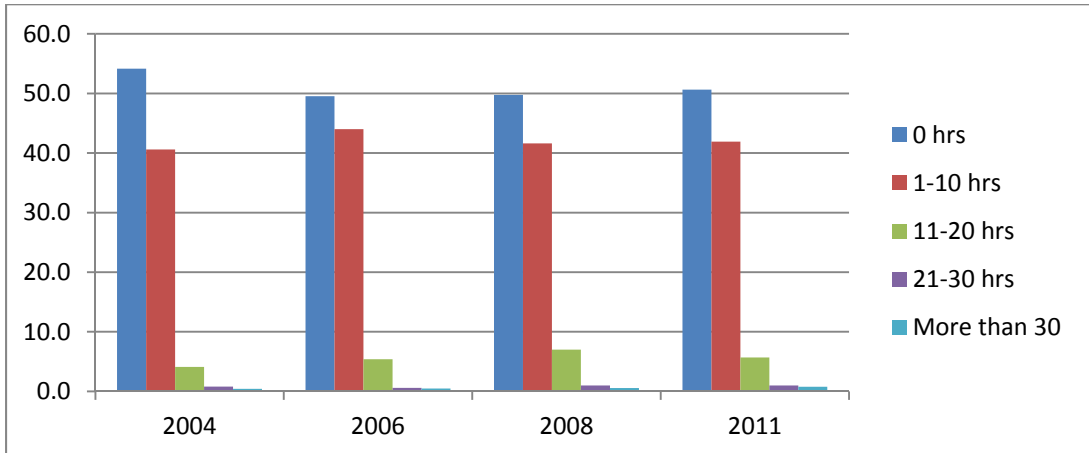
9. b) Hours per 7-day week spent working for pay ON CAMPUS.



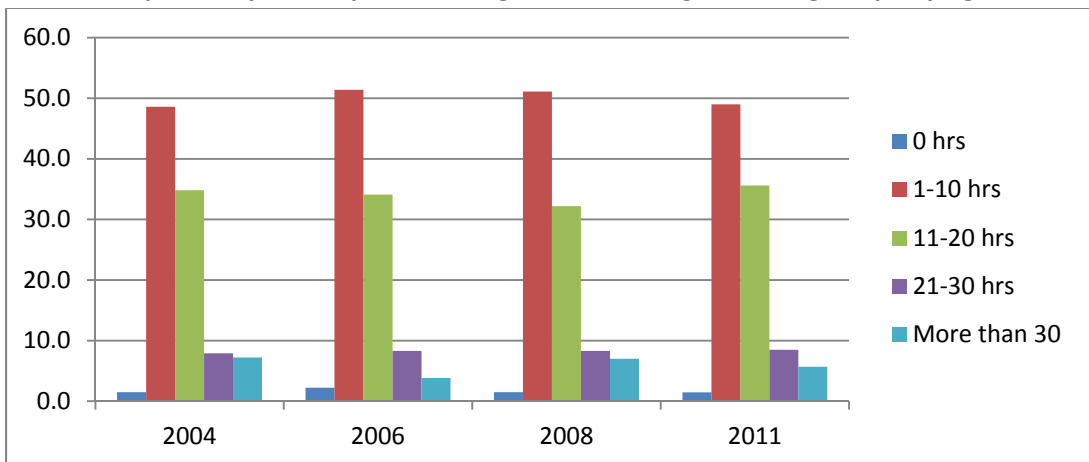
**9. c) Hours per 7-day week spent working for pay OFF CAMPUS.**



**9. d) Hours per 7-day week spent participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.).**



**9. e) Hours per 7-day week spent relaxing and socializing (watching TV, partying, etc.).**



## **Question 6: Did the Program Fee affect student financial aid?**

When the Program Fee was implemented, concerns were expressed within the University community that it would disadvantage students with financial need and add to their indebtedness from student loans. In addressing this important issue the Committee reported:

“The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) is the primary vehicle for assessing student financial aid. A student’s grant and loan entitlement is based on an assessment that a student’s financial needs that includes an institution’s annual structure of mandatory fees. Students taking a course load of 60% (i.e. 3.0 full course equivalents or FCEs) or more are eligible for OSAP. The Program Fee is calculated automatically into the assessment of a student’s financial needs. If the student’s assessed need is below the allowable grant and loan entitlement, the entitlement is adjusted upward accordingly. If the assessment shows the student’s financial need exceeds the maximum grant and loan for OSAP, the University of Toronto’s own student assistance program (UTAPS) makes up the needed amount in the form of a non-repayable grant. Thus students under the Program Fee who have financial need will continue to be provided with the resources to enable their studies, as required under the University’s Financial Aid Guarantee.”

The Appendices of the 2011 Report contain valuable information about how financial assistance works within the University.

The current Committee continued the investigation of the amounts of OSAP and UTAPS disbursed and the participation rates over the past four years to see if there had been any increase in financial need perhaps attributable to the Program Fee. Figure 10 indicates that OSAP and UTAPS entitlements for Cohorts 1 thru 3 held steady after the implementation of the Program Fee. Once again, the trends in the Faculty of Arts and Science at the St. George campus appear to differ little from the data available from UTM and UTSC, where a per course fee is in place. Figure 10 confirms the findings of last year’s Committee, that there appears to be no spike in indebtedness among Arts & Science students in Cohorts under the Program Fee, when compared to students in previous years, and there is no relative increase when they are compared to UTM and UTSC.

Figure 10

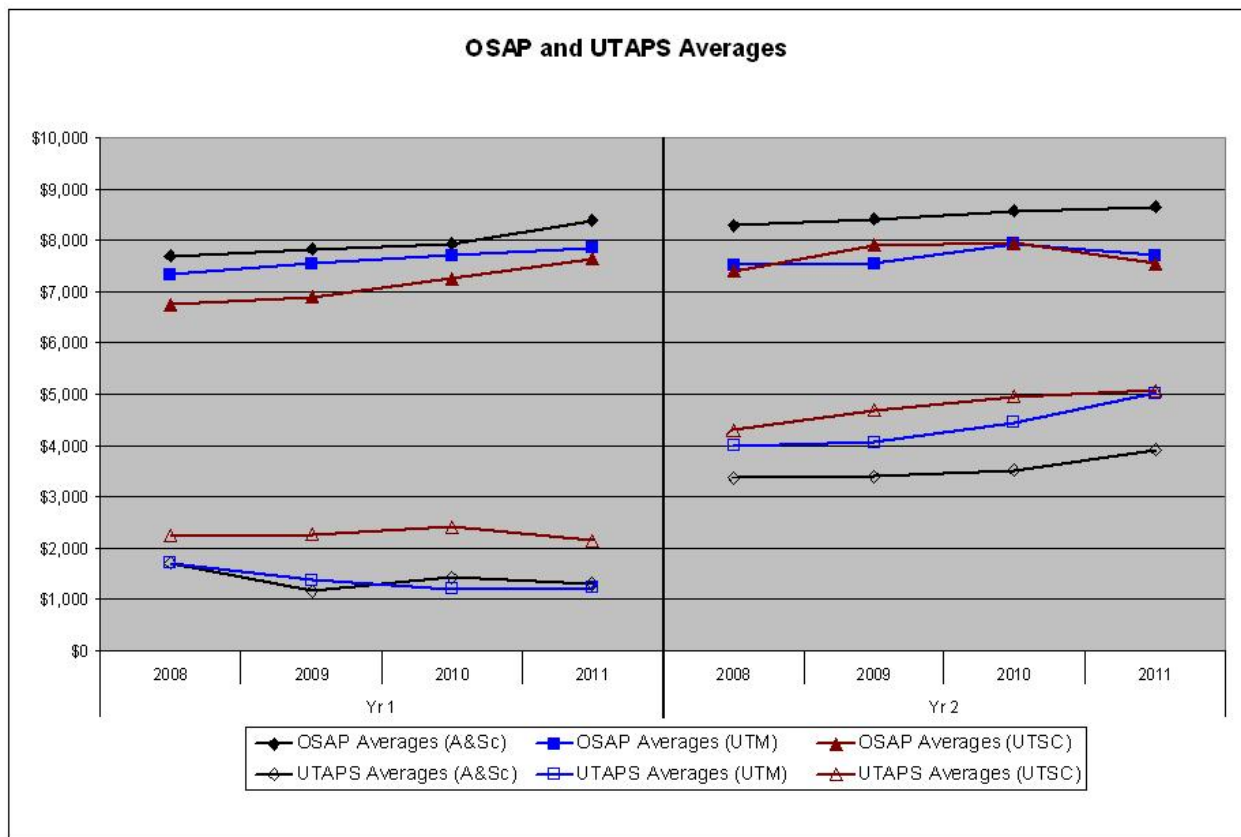
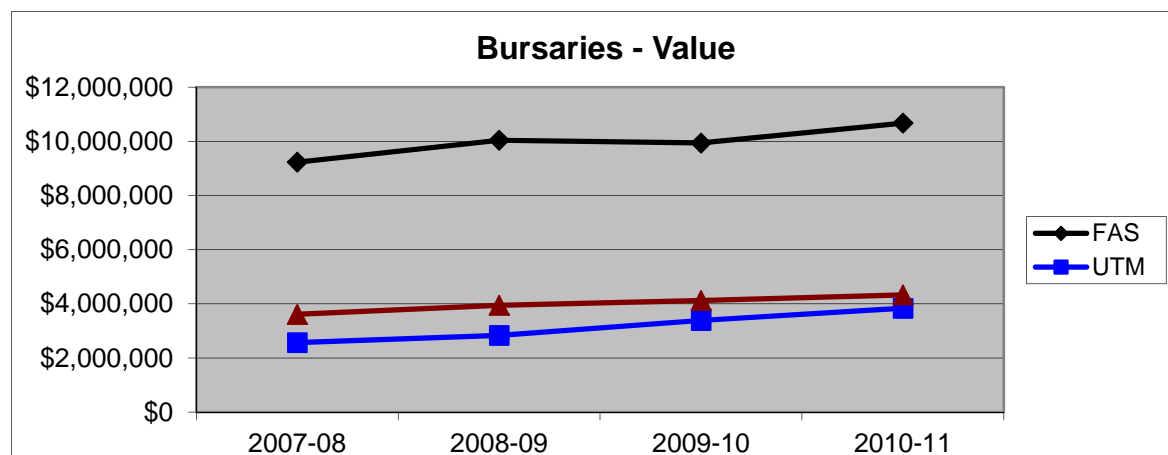
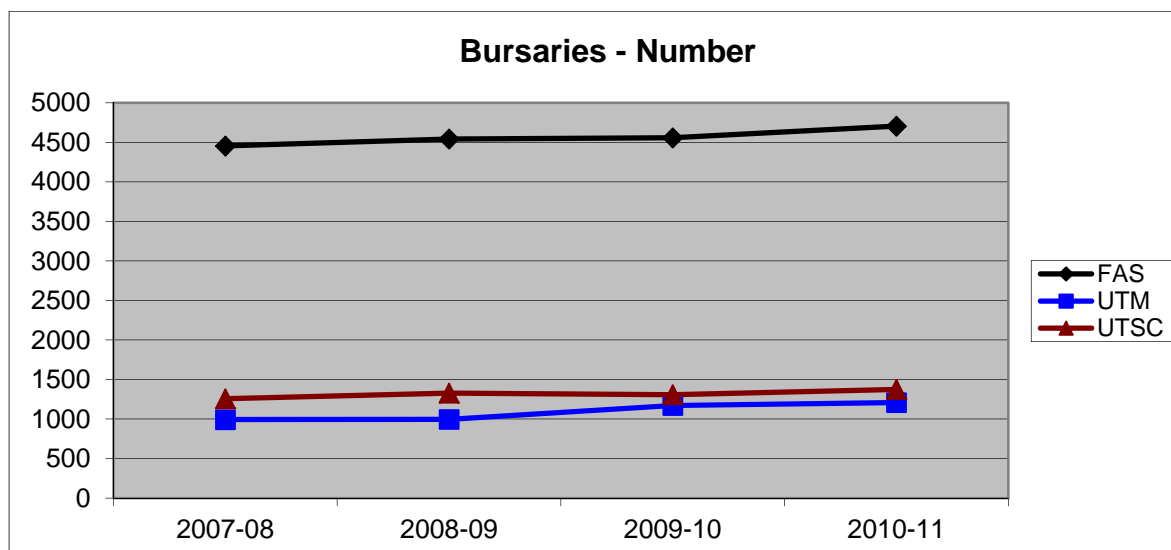


Figure 11 indicates that the number of bursaries that the University grants to address emergency financial need outside the OSAP assessment has continued to rise over the past year, but the Committee noted that the weak economy has continued. It is still too early to predict the impact of the tuition rebate promised by the current Provincial Government during the Fall General Election of 2011 and introduced in 2012.

Figure 11





#### **Question 7: Did the Program Fee affect students with accessibility issues?**

As reported by last year's Committee, students who register under Accessibility Services at the University of Toronto, and may need a reduced course load as an accommodation, are exempt from the Program Fee. There has been no change in this policy.

#### **Question 8: Did the Program Fee affect student advising?**

When consulted again by the current Committee, Registrars report fewer and fewer administrative issues or even student inquiries or concerns about the Program Fee. There is still the task of manually moving students from the Program Fee who are supposed to be on the per course fee back to their proper status. This work is done in individual Colleges and centrally in the Faculty Registrar's office, and there is confidence that coming changes to the student information system (New Generation Student Information System or NGSIS, which is to replace ROSI), will make these changes simpler and more automatic.

The twin issues of unbalanced course loads and course hoarding were concerns identified by students and registrars alike. 'Unbalanced course loads' refers to students dropping courses and using the flexibility of the Program Fee to enroll in many courses in the second term, resulting in an imbalanced course load and either wasted course spaces or academic difficulty from too heavy a course load. 'Course hoarding' refers to students enrolling in more courses than they intend to complete, thus depriving other

students of the spaces. This is especially problematic when students hoard S courses in anticipation of dropping F or Y courses, especially when they do not relinquish their space while other students may take advantage of them before the last day to add in January. This places great pressure on those students who need a second-term course.

The Committee has noted that the Faculty of Arts & Science has addressed these twin issues to the extent possible. Arts & Science Council recently approved a term course load limit, extending the sessional course load limit of 6.0 course units to each of its terms, which should address the issue of imbalanced course loads. Regarding course hoarding, the Committee was assured by the Faculty Registrar that the Faculty's enrollment procedures ensure that all Arts & Science students have an opportunity to enroll in 5.0 courses *before* anyone is permitted to add a sixth course. The course-hoarding issue will continue to be watched by the Faculty Registrar as part of the normal monitoring of enrolment practices and procedures.

The Faculty has also addressed the issue of "field work" courses offered only in the Summer session, which would not normally be covered by the normal Fall/Winter Program Fee. Field work courses that are only offered in the Summer session and are taken by students as part of fulfilling program requirements will be included in the student's Fall/Winter course load covered by the Program Fee.

The Ombudsperson, in her report for the 2010-11 academic year, echoed the concern expressed by the Committee in the 2011 Report, about the situation faced by students who wished to discontinue their studies at mid-year and "cancel their registration." Students were prevented from doing so, with attendant refund problems, because they had final standing in F courses and so could not cancel their registration. This problem resulted from the configurations of ROSI programming, as well as from problems student's faced interpreting the refund policy. The Faculty Registrar reported to the Committee that these problems will shortly be overcome, by adjusting ROSI and clarifying the interpretation of the refund policy. The result is that students who withdraw from their studies by mid-year (at least those who have not already completed a full-time course load by mid-year) will receive the appropriate fees refund.

#### **Question 9: Did the Program Fee affect the Faculty's revenue stream?**

The revenue figures provided represent only a partial implementation of the Program Fee (two cohorts of students at the 4.0 course threshold and one cohort at the 3.0 course threshold). While budgetary matters are the responsibility of the Dean, the Committee thought it important to learn if any of the expected increase in revenues had occurred.

As of 2011-12, three years after the implementation of the Program Fee, the Faculty estimated that approximately \$12.7 million in cumulative additional gross revenue was collected since 2009-10. Of this amount \$1.3 million was directed towards student financial aid, as per University policy. In terms of cumulative net revenue (after central deductions for University Wide Costs) the Faculty of Arts and Science has received approximately \$6.1 million in additional net revenue since 2009-10.

**Question 10: Has the Faculty dedicated additional curricular resources to facilitate teaching and learning since the Program Fee was introduced?**

Just as had been the case with the original Committee's mandate, the current monitoring Committee requested that the Faculty provide information regarding the ways it has deployed additional resources to enhance teaching and learning across the Faculty of Arts & Science over the past three years. The Faculty's response to the Committee points to the following initiatives:

- Expanded the offering of 399 research courses.
- Funded International Course Modules (ICMs).
- Expanded the First Year Learning Communities (FLCs).
- Expanded English Language Learning Opportunities.
- Expanded the Writing Instruction for TAs (WIT).
- Developed and implemented (with ASSU) the Undergraduate Research Fund for implementation in 2011-2012.
- Committed to funding supplementary counseling and advising resources .
- In response to enrolment demands, nearly \$2.5 million in assistance was disbursed to departments for additional teaching assistants, more student spaces in existing course sections, and additional course sections to meet the increased student demands for courses.

In addition, as recommended by the Faculty Appointments Committee, a key expenditure for the Faculty was the approval of 27 new faculty positions for search in 2011-12. Overall, these positions will support departments where the need to alleviate enrolment pressures is most critical.

**Conclusion**

Last year, the Program Fee Monitoring Committee concluded that most of the concerns about the implementation of the Program Fee did not come to pass. Since the publication of our 2011 Report, many of the administrative problems that we observed



have been remedied or are in the process of being addressed by the University. From the examination of this year's figures from Cohort 3, when compared to the previous cohorts under the program fee or under the per course fee, there appears to be no significant change in any of the categories addressed, except for the emerging trend of more students enrolling initially in more than 5.0 FCEs per year and the emergence of a culture in which students are regarding their course selection process as more flexible, wherein a year with fewer than 5.0 FCEs subscribed can be complemented by a year in which more than 5.0 FCEs may be undertaken, without additional cost.

Dr. Mark G McGowan  
Professor of History, Principal Emeritus  
St. Michael's College, University of Toronto  
Chair, Program Fee Monitoring Committee

## APPENDIX

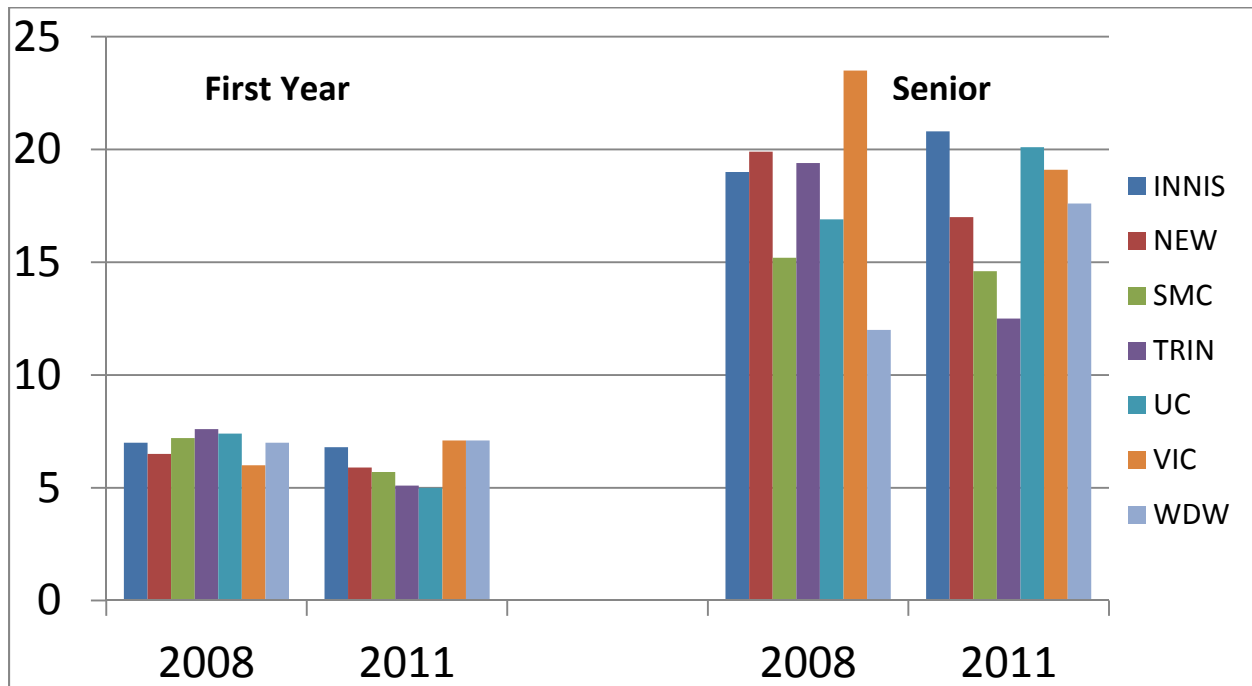
### 1. NSSE National Survey of Student Engagement

NSSE is a survey of undergraduate students done across North America. University students in their first and fourth years are surveyed every 2-3 years on a number of questions about the time and effort they invest in various activities while in university, both inside and outside the classroom. NSSE was developed in the United States, and in 2004 UofT was one of the first Canadian universities to participate in the survey. In 2008, all Ontario universities were mandated to participate. Institutions may track their own performance against previous years' surveys, and also compare against clusters of comparator universities without knowing specific identities of the individual universities.

For the 2011 survey, the University chose to survey the entire relevant populations to gain more accurate data, and had a response rate of approximately 25%. The graphs reflect the results of all 4 surveys in which the University has participated. The 2011 Yr1 results are the first ones reflecting the behaviour of students under the Program Fee.

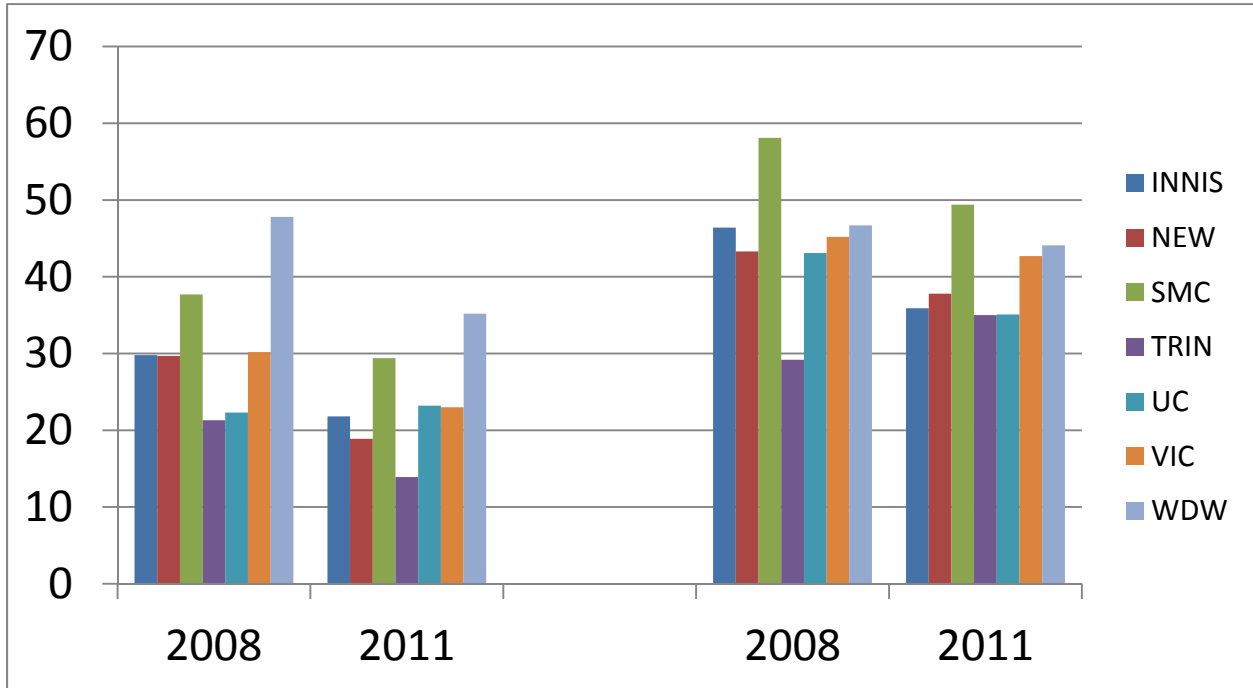
### 2. Arts & Science NSSE Results on Non-Academic Obligations, by College.<sup>2</sup>

9 b) Working 6 hours or more per week ON campus.

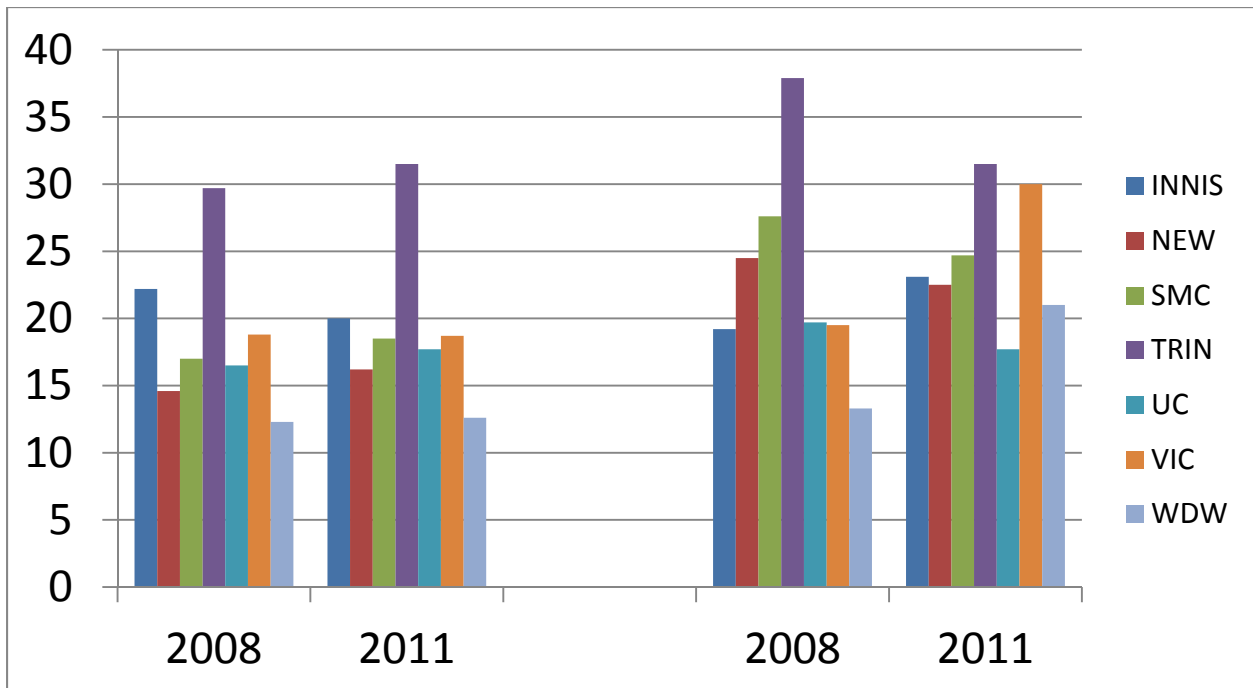


<sup>2</sup> The y axis shows percentage of respondents.

9 c) Working 6 hours or more per week OFF campus.



9 d) Participate in Extra-curricular activities 6 or more hours per week.



9 g) Commute 6 or more hours per week

