



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: Planning and Budget Committee

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DATE: March 3, 2006

AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Stepping *UP* - Academic Initiative Fund Third Round allocations

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Excerpt from the terms of reference for the Planning and Budget Committee:

4.3.3 Designated funds: The Committee is responsible for recommending to the Academic Board for consideration the creation and allocation of general University Funds established in the Operating Budget, Capital Renewal Fund or elsewhere.

PREVIOUS ACTION:

April 29, 2004 - Governing Council approved the Academic Program Planning fund (\$5 million in base) as part of the approval of both the *Long Range Budget Framework* and the *Budget Report 2004-05*

February 10, 2005 - Governing Council approved the first round of Academic Initiative Fund allocations.

June 29, 2005 - Governing Council approved the second round of Academic Initiative Fund allocations.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Our academic plan, *Stepping UP*, articulates the University's vision to be a leader among the world's best public teaching and research universities in the discovery, preservation and sharing of knowledge through its teaching and research and its commitment to excellence and equity. This vision is rooted in our mission as a public university to contribute to our local, national and international community. We accomplish our vision through our public stewardship of ideas, and as a student-centred research university, our education of students who will become tomorrow's leaders.

The *Stepping UP* vision was developed through a process that included extensive, grass-roots consultation with the broader University community. This has led the University to clearly identify a key set of values, goals and priorities. *Stepping UP* identifies a substantial number of initiatives, actions and recommendations that form the strategy towards achieving this vision.

The *Stepping UP – Synthesis*, identifying the major themes that emerged from the consultations and Divisional plans through the *Stepping UP* exercise, focused on those initiatives upon which we can work together. Within the *Synthesis*, five priority objectives were identified for the University, each of these building on one or more of our unique characteristics. These objectives are intertwined and linked with our overall mission. The *Synthesis* presented five items for continued action that are necessary to enable our mission.

Consistent with our vision and mission, we set up a fund to assist in the implementation of initiatives arising from the academic planning process. This Academic Initiative Fund (AIF) consists of a total of \$30 million in base funding to be available through the new Long-Range Budget, with \$5 million in each year over the next six years. Funds can be used for a broad range of base budget and one-time only (OTO) purposes including capital, operating or development initiatives. Of importance is the support of existing initiatives that further build on and/or consolidate current programs or that indicate the potential to significantly leverage other resources. In the initial years, investments are being made in more OTO initiatives, which allow for the pool of OTO and base funds available in the later years to be greater. This will also provide time for the lateral conversations and planning required for significant new investments.

This year we had our third call for Submissions to the AIF with proposals due December 9, 2005. Proposals were submitted to the Vice-President and Provost's office by Principals and Deans, not from individual faculty, departments or units. Proposals were required to include information outlined in a standard AIF Proposal Submission Guidelines format. Initiatives arising from the planning process that were to be considered for funding from the AIF were those that are consistent with the mission and values of *Stepping UP* and identified in the *Synthesis*. The criteria that were indicated that would be used to assess initiatives included:

- Enhancing the student experience at the University.
- Enhancing interdisciplinary, interdepartmental, interdivisional and cross campus collaborations.
- Bringing together undergraduate and graduate activities with research opportunities.
- Connecting the University with the broader community (locally, nationally or internationally) through terms of public policy and outreach.
- Improving equity and diversity.

Initiatives that were able to address multiple criteria were encouraged. We also believe in the importance of supporting existing initiatives that are consistent with the criteria and further enhance or consolidate current programs or that indicate the potential to capitalize on other resources. Priority was given to initiatives that improve efficiency by generating new revenues or reducing program delivery costs.

In response to our third round call for AIF proposals, we received 41 proposals from seventeen University divisions. The total requests are for \$11 million of base and \$55 million of OTO support. The Vice-President and Provost's allocation decisions were based on advice from a committee, chaired by the Vice-President and Provost and including representation from Principals & Deans and the Provost's Office (Appendix 1).

The Planning and Budget Committee is being asked to recommend to the Academic Board the actual allocations for this third round of AIF (Appendices 2 and 3). It is important to note that approval of the allocations of these funds does not represent governance approval for any new programs, centres or institutes. Proposed new academic programs and units will still follow the divisional submission process through governance in order for them to be established. Proposals involving capital expenditures are approved in principle, subject to development of budget plans and discussion with the Assistant Vice-President, Space and Facilities Planning. Approvals will then be sought through AFD or governance, as appropriate.

The Vice-President and Provost's Office will review and monitor detailed budgets, deliverables and benchmarks according to which each project will be accountable. Within multi-year projects, the annual benchmarks and deliverables will be used to monitor funding for subsequent years.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

The recommendations are consistent with the approved budget for 2004-05 of both the *Long Range Budget Framework* and the *Budget Report 2004-05*.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Planning and Budget Committee recommend to the Academic Board for approval:

THAT the Third Round of the Academic Initiative Fund be allocated as per the attached table (Appendices 2 & 3).