



# University of Toronto TORONTO ONTARIO M5S 1A1

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OFFICE OF THE VICE-PROVOST, STUDENTS

TO: University Affairs Board

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DATE: April 20, 2004 for April 28, 2004

AGENDA ITEM: 7

## **ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Report of the Task Force on Student Housing

## **JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The University Affairs Board is responsible for consideration of policy of a non-academic nature and matters that directly concern the quality of student and campus life. The Board considers issues related to campus and student services, including residences, and policies related to housing for students and the provision of on-campus residence accommodation.

## **PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

There has been no previous consideration of matters related to the Task Force. The University's *Policy on Student Housing* was approved by the Governing Council on February 9, 1989.

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

See the "Summary of Recommendations" beginning on page 5 of the report.

## **FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:**

Some recommendations have financial and planning implications for the University's operating budget.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

The report is presented for information only.

TASK FORCE  
ON  
Student Housing

FINAL REPORT

University of Toronto

March 15, 2004

**Task Force Student Housing**

David Farrar (Chair)	Susan Addario
Celine Ariaratnam	John Bisanti
Bruce Bowden	David Clandfield
William Cluett	Jason Hunter
Pearl Karimalis	Sheldon Levy
Glenn Loney	Mark McGowan
Chris McGrath	Sean Mullin
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Mahadeo Sukhai	Marilyn Van Norman
Geeta Yadav	Carol Robb (Secretary)

**REPORT OF THE  
TASK FORCE ON STUDENT HOUSING**

**March 15, 2004**

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## 1. Summary of Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.** That the Provost, in cooperation with the heads of the Federated Institutions as specified in the *Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Toronto and the Federated Universities (July 1, 1998)*, continue to have responsibility for student housing policy, planning and management.

**Recommendation 2.** That residences should be regarded as one of the tools to be used in the recruitment and retention of all academically qualified students at both the undergraduate and graduate level and including international, exchange, and transfer students.

**Recommendation 3.** That the Residence Guarantee for first year students be continued in its current form for the existing categories of students and that it be extended to CEGEP II students.

**Recommendation 4.** That the terms of the Residence Guarantee be transparent, consistent, and clearly communicated in a timely manner.

**Recommendation 5.** That the residence admission process be improved to ensure that it serves the needs of newly-admitted students in a timely manner and meets the objectives of the University in attracting highly-qualified students to accept our offer of admission.

**Recommendation 6.** That a Student Housing Advisory Committee, with representation from all three campuses and from all colleges and divisions, including the federated Universities, be struck to provide advice on critical issues of student housing.

**Recommendation 7.** That the Student Housing Advisory Committee oversee the creation of template codes, guidelines, protocols and communications on core residence issues for adaptation in local environments in order to ensure a more consistent response across the University.

**Recommendation 8.** That residences work to develop mixed-cohort housing with varied combinations of undergraduates, but also including student families, professional degree and graduate students, postdoctoral and even faculty or University visitor residents in some larger units.

**Recommendation 9.** That, in order to develop mixed-cohort housing, the University seek clarity on the Tenant Protection Act as it affects residences.

**Recommendation 10.** That mechanisms be developed so that at least one year in residence is affordable for all students who desire it, regardless of their financial means.

**Recommendation 11.** That each residence develop a re-admission policy and procedure that is transparent, clearly communicated to the community, and approved by the divisional governing body.

**Recommendation 12:** That the Student Housing Advisory Committee develop guidelines to ensure that all full-time first-entry undergraduate students from all Faculties have full and equitable access to all housing options, in first year and upper years.

**Recommendation 13.** That the University commit to offering housing on campus for all students with disabilities who have registered with the Accessibility Service on their campus and who desire accommodation on campus, where it is appropriate and reasonable to do so.

**Recommendation 14.** That all residences identify both what they do offer and what they do not offer in the way of barrier-free accommodation. Residences with limited ability to accommodate students with disabilities should identify their limitations. Information about University housing, including residences should be presented in a manner that assists students with special needs in the selection of housing that best meets their needs.

**Recommendation 15.** That the commitment of housing for students with disabilities extend to cover all years at the University, as long as their disability continues and appropriate documentation is received and kept up-to-date at the Accessibility Service on their campus and provided they meet the academic standards of the University and codes of conduct in the residences.

**Recommendation 16.** That the Housing Service continue to develop listings for off-campus housing which meets the needs of students with a range of disabilities.

**Recommendation 17.** That the design of new student residences or acquisition/conversion of other housing meet fully inclusive guidelines for barrier-free construction, so as to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in every division's housing settings and environments and that, to ensure this, the use of an expert design consultant be required on every project. Accessibility in student housing should be understood as including: appropriateness of physical facilities (including barrier-free rooms and private space, where necessary); access to all amenities in the residence or housing complex; reasonable access to an appropriate meal plan, or alternate food service; and appropriate community support.

**Recommendation 18.** That, if a student at 89 Chestnut or student family housing has a need, transportation from University student housing or residence to classes will be provided through WheelTrans or via the University's shuttle service. An appropriate level of funding must be provided for this.

**Recommendation 19.** That a working group be struck between the University and the three federated Universities to develop University-wide strategies for identifying those parts of the residence or housing complex which are not barrier-free, and develop a strategy and timetable for addressing those features, within the framework of the University's ODA compliance plan.

**Recommendation 20.** That an appropriate group be convened immediately by the Vice-Presidence and Provost to arrange the protocols necessary for the University to best deploy its current barrier-free resources in meeting students' needs.

**Recommendation 21.** That, as long as the University retains ownership of the 89 Chestnut residence, there be no further construction or acquisition of undergraduate residences in the downtown area, unless it can be shown convincingly how new construction will not undermine the financial integrity of the Chestnut residence or unless new construction is timed to coincide with the cessation of an equivalent provision of undergraduate spaces over the ensuing five years.

**Recommendation 22.** That UTM and UTSC should proceed to develop residences, including an expansion of student family housing if demand warrants such an expansion, until those students registered at UTM and UTSC who wish housing can reasonably be accommodated.

**Recommendation 23.** That the provision of affordable student family housing receive the highest priority in future residence expansion planning.

**Recommendation 24.** That the business plan for any new residence be integrated into the plan for the division's existing residence ancillary and that the accumulated capital reserve for the existing residences be available to support the capital costs for a new residence without such support being considered as a subsidy for that division.

**Recommendation 25.** That new housing projects combine both academic and residential uses in order to allow for shared funding to the benefit of both the residence and the academic division using the space.

**Recommendation 26.** That, where possible and where the users' group has recommended it, residences include commercial space that is compatible with residence life in order to provide an additional source of revenues.

**Recommendation 27.** That, where possible and where the users' group has recommended it, residences include features that make use of their facilities for conference business attractive in order to provide an additional source of revenues.

**Recommendation 28.** That utilitarian or "low-service" models of housing be avoided, and older residences each be the object of a multi-year plan to bring them up to the standards of newer residences.

**Recommendation 29.** That residences meet the same standards of design and sensitivity to context and mission as those met by new academic capital projects.

**Recommendation 30.** That a variety of forms of housing and residence programs be developed to meet the needs of a highly varied population, including single students, students with families, students with differing sexual orientations and students from a variety of ethno-heritage and religious backgrounds.

**Recommendation 31.** That the Vice-President and Provost strike a group to formulate a new *Policy on Student Housing* based on the recommendations of this report.



## 2. Introduction

In her memo announcing formation of the Task Force on Student Housing, the Provost states that the University of Toronto is committed to the belief that the academic environment and the student experience are improved when students live on or near campus as members of the university community. Although the types of accommodation available may vary among the three campuses and among the Federated Universities, student housing for both undergraduate and graduate students, family housing, and off-campus housing is a well-established feature of the University of Toronto landscape and is an integral part of college and university life. The University is committed to the availability of these opportunities and views student housing as an essential part of academic planning toward the goal of being recognized as one of the world's leading public research universities.

Moreover, at the University of Toronto student housing is not only a matter of principle, it is a practical necessity. Students choosing the University of Toronto come not only from the Greater Toronto Area, but from all parts of the province of Ontario, and everywhere in Canada. In addition, the University's ability to offer on-campus housing is an important factor in attracting international students, including international exchange students. The University can also play a significant role in addressing the particular needs of students with disabilities. Consequently, the university takes seriously its responsibility to try to help as many students as possible find accommodation either on campus or within reasonable commuting distance. As efforts to recruit and retain the very best minds continue, the provision of student housing will figure prominently in the kind of experience the university is able to offer.

Other recent changes in the University's environment focus attention on residences. The Double Cohort caused by changes in the Ontario high school curriculum only highlights increasing enrolments driven by changing demographics and participation rates. Students entering university directly from high school are younger than ever before. For the first time, a safe environment emerged as the second most important factor influencing university selection in the annual 2002 *University Applicant Survey*. While the University capital plan includes construction of new residences, issues of access, capacity and cost clearly need to be addressed.

The current *Policy on Student Housing* was approved by Governing Council on March 1989. It derived significant strength from the landmark *Report of the Provostial Advisory Committee on Student Housing Policy* (the Silcox Report, July 1988), which helped to inform subsequent planning and policy documents. It is clear, however, that changing circumstances and the current context call for a review and update of the *Policy on Student Housing* as well as associated university policies, plans, and processes.

For these reasons, the Provost established a Task Force on Student Housing with the following terms of reference.

## 2.1 Terms of Reference

1. *Principles*: to review institutional principles that guide and govern the development of student housing at the University of Toronto and its federated institutions, including but not limited to questions such as:
  - a) What part does student housing play in developing the overall mission of the university and its academic plan?
  - b) How does student housing contribute to a sense of community and the value of student experience, recognizing priorities such as barrier-free access, personal safety, and environmental sensitivity?
  - c) How are divisional and inter-divisional goals served?
  - d) How does student housing relate to the university's recruitment and retention objectives?
  - e) Respecting the tradition and beauty of the University of Toronto campuses, what principles should govern design and architectural integrity?
2. *UTM/UTSC/St. George*: to consider, in the following assessments, the similar/differing needs of the student housing situations at the Mississauga, Scarborough, and St. George campuses and advise on the implications in terms of University planning (for example, consideration of local conditions at UTM and UTSC is affected by issues such as off-campus housing, availability of transit, etc.);
3. *Federated Universities*: to consider, in the following assessments, the role of the Federated Universities with a view to achieving a consistent set of student housing policies for the entire University of Toronto community;
4. *Demand*: to assess projected demand for the full range of student-housing types likely to be sought over the next 10 years (including but not limited to undergraduate, graduate, residences, family housing, etc.);
5. *Financial issues*: to examine financial issues in respect of student housing, including:
  - a) financing the construction of new facilities;
  - b) the role of subsidies from diverse sources, including external;
  - c) the principles guiding the establishment of residence rates, including affordability;
  - d) potential revenue-generating strategies for maximizing use of residence space 12 months/year;
  - e) the parameters and sustainability of student housing as a discrete ancillary operation;
6. *Impact on student services*: to comment on the effect of additional housing on and near campus upon the demand for student services, particularly student study and activity space, food services, and athletic facilities;

7. *Objectives/indicators*: to propose priority objectives for student housing over 10 years, including estimates of what the University should and could realistically achieve, with benchmarks and indicators to evaluate progress towards those goals;
8. *Selection criteria*: in a context where supply must be allocated across demand, to assign priority selection criteria to applicants for student housing (including but not limited to special needs, equity, geography, grades, discipline and divisional mix, entering/returning students, students in professional faculties, etc.), to review a possible range of allocation models, mechanisms and systems, and to review the first-year Housing Guarantee;
9. *Process for making offers*: to comment on the effectiveness of the present process for making student housing offers in terms of attracting the best students and providing the best student experience at the University of Toronto, including coordination, decentralization, and the role of colleges, and to make any suggestions for strengthening or modifying structures and processes;
10. *Management of off-campus housing*: to review residence management in off-campus locations, including lines of responsibility and communication;
11. *Reporting date*: to make recommendations in respect of the above items, and to provide a report for consideration by April 30, 2003.

## 2.2 Membership

David Farrar, Vice-Provost, Students (Chair)  
Susan Addario, Director of Student Affairs  
John Bisanti, Chief Capital Projects Officer  
Bruce Bowden, Registrar and Dean, Trinity College  
David Clandfield, Principal, New College  
William Cluett, Vice-Dean (Undergraduate) and Chair, First Year, Applied Science and Engineering  
Kendra Coulter, Vice-President Internal, GSU, graduate student; replaced by Mahadeo Sukhai  
Jim Dunsdon, Director, Student Housing and Residence Life, University of Toronto at Scarborough; replaced by Celine Ariaratnam  
Pearl Karimalis, Director of Student Housing  
Sheldon Levy, Vice-President, Government and Institutional Relations  
Glenn Loney, Registrar, University College  
Mark McGowan, Principal, St Michael's College  
Chris McGrath, Director, Residence Centre, University of Toronto at Mississauga  
Sean Mullin, Governing Council member, undergraduate student  
Paul Perron, Principal, University College  
Robin Rix, Senior Don, Victoria College, law student; replaced by Jason Hunter  
Wendy Rolph, Senior Decanal Advisor, International Exchanges, Faculty of Arts and Science  
Elizabeth Sisam, Director, Campus & Facilities Planning  
Rebecca Spagnolo, Assistant Dean, Graduate House, School of Graduate Studies  
Marilyn Van Norman, Director, Student Services  
Geeta Yadav, University Affairs Board member, undergraduate student  
Carol Robb, Assistant Vice-Provost (Secretary)

### 2.3 Process

The Task Force was formed by Vice-President and Provost Shirley Neuman in January 2003 and was Chaired by David Farrar, Vice-Provost, Students. Between January and November the Task Force met ten times. At its first meeting the committee reviewed the terms of reference and met with the Provost to discuss emerging issues around student housing and the mandate of the Task Force. At the second meeting there were three presentations. Pearl Karamalis, Director of Student Housing, gave a presentation on the process of admission to residence. Ron Venter, Vice-Provost, Space and Facilities, spoke briefly on the acquisition of 89 Chestnut. Jennifer Adams and Gail Milgrom from Campus and Facility Planning gave a presentation on the status of residential planning for the UofT campuses. The third meeting focussed on a discussion of student life issues. Chris McGrath, Director of Residence at UTM, Jim Dunsdon, Director of Student Housing and Residence Life at UTSC, and Susan Addario, Director of Student Affairs, each gave a presentation on various aspects of residence life. Throughout the following meetings, the committee discussed the values and principles that should underlie formulation of policies for student housing.

In May, the Task Force broke out into three subcommittees to discuss specific aspects of the strategy for student housing. One subcommittee discussed the values and principles that should govern student housing. A second subcommittee proposed creation of the Student Housing Advisory Committee. The third subcommittee formulated a program for residence expansion. The Task Force reconvened in November to discuss and incorporate these subcommittee reports into the final report.

The Task Force on Student Housing was advertised widely. An announcement and call for submissions was published in *The Bulletin* in January. A website was established and a notice was posted on the UofT homepage. An announcement was sent to the leaders of APUS, SAC and GSU asking them to inform their constituencies of the opportunity to make submissions to the Task Force. An announcement and call for submissions was also published in student newspapers. Twenty-one submissions received from students from a variety of backgrounds and administrative staff working in the student services/residence areas informed the deliberations of the Task Force.

Lastly, a discussion draft of the report was posted on the provost's website in February. Members of the university community were invited to comment on the report's recommendations. Five responses were received and taken into consideration in preparation of the final report.

### 3. General Principles

#### 3.1 Vision and Mission

The University's vision in relation to student housing focuses on the development of high-quality communities on and off-campus that support the academic and educational aims of the University community. At its best, student housing provides safe, secure and stimulating environments that are conducive to students' academic success and personal growth, and foster a sense of community, civic responsibility, and an appreciation of the diversity of the University community. Since the purpose of student housing relates directly to the University's academic mission, the Task Force recommends that the Vice-President and Provost should continue to have responsibility for coordinating planning and policy concerning issues of residence life. Also, in recognition of the unique relationship with the Federated Universities, the Vice-President and Provost should cooperate as appropriate with the heads of the Federated Institutions as specified in the *Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Toronto and the Federated Universities (July 1, 1998)* on University-wide issues regarding the organization and management of student housing.

**Recommendation 1.** That the Provost, in cooperation with the heads of the Federated Institutions as specified in the *Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Toronto and the Federated Universities (July 1, 1998)*, continue to have responsibility for student housing policy, planning and management.

### 4. Admission to Residence

#### 4.1 Student Recruitment.

The Task Force accepts that the availability of appropriate forms of student housing is a crucial factor in the University's capacity to attract and retain the most academically qualified students at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Adequate housing is also a key factor in the successful recruitment of international, exchange, and transfer students. Academic performance should continue to be a primary criterion in the selection for places in student residence.

**Recommendation 2.** That residences should be regarded as one of the tools to be used in the recruitment and retention of all academically qualified students at both the undergraduate and graduate level and including international, exchange, and transfer students.

#### 4.2 First-year Residence Guarantee.

The Task Force believes that ideally all students should have the opportunity to live in residence at some point in their academic careers. Currently, student residence is guaranteed for all full-time students entering their first year of university in an undergraduate program, whether they live inside or outside Toronto, who are offered admission by July 1 and who have indicated their interest in residence on the application form. While the Guarantee proved challenging to implement in recent

years, its impact on the University's ability to attract highly-qualified applicants has been undeniable. The Task Force is committed to continuing the first year Residence Guarantee in its current form.

The Task Force also recommends that Quebec CEGEP II students be included in the Guarantee. Currently, the Guarantee covers students admitted from CEGEP I but not from CEGEP II, since CEGEP II generates transfer credit. The lack of guaranteed housing has badly hurt the University's ability to attract students from Quebec at the end of their CEGEP II year, the natural entry point for their university studies. However, we extend the Guarantee to students completing a three-year diploma from an Ontario college of applied arts & technology, and so consistency suggests we extend it to CEGEP II students as well.

**Recommendation 3.** That the Residence Guarantee for first year students be continued in its current form for the existing categories of students and that it be extended to CEGEP II students.

#### *4.3 Admission Processes.*

If we believe that housing is an important component of attracting the most academically-qualified students to the University, then the processes that generate and deliver offers of residence to applicants should be aligned with those objectives. In particular, some offers should have priority and the content and timing of those offers should be such as to have the greatest impact on the applicant's acceptance of our offer of admission. The Task Force noted that for the 2003 admissions cycle, the early offers to roughly the top 10% of Arts & Science admits did include in the letter of admission a guarantee of the specific college residence rather than simply the generic guarantee of housing. However, the Task Force also noted that last year the great majority of admitted students were required to respond to the admission offer without knowing where they would be housed. There must be a much greater willingness to link the offer of admission with acceptance to a designated residence, as well as better information about the Housing Guarantee. The Task Force also recommends improvements in the residence admission process and better coordination with the overall admissions process. For example, there should be more consistency of communication with students, and the residence admission process should be streamlined. Students become frustrated with a process that drags out over the summer until mid-August.

**Recommendation 4.** That the terms of the Residence Guarantee be transparent, consistent, and clearly communicated in a timely manner.

**Recommendation 5.** That the residence admission process be improved to ensure that it serves the needs of newly-admitted students in a timely manner and meets the objectives of the University in attracting highly-qualified students to accept our offer of admission.

## 5. Residence Life

### 5.1 *Goals of Residence Life*

There is a link between student accommodation and the University's desire to provide students with a full educational experience. At its best, residence life provides an educationally purposeful community that values learning and supports the intellectual growth of students who choose to live in residence. All of a student's experience can be framed as a continuum of learning. Residence life has a unique and important role in this continuum.

The most attractive and successful housing models in post-secondary education are grounded in a commitment to student learning and development that moves beyond housing as mere service delivery. Residence life should promote a personally and intellectually rewarding university experience beyond the classroom and should enable students to be involved in the civic and cultural lives of their cities. Residence life creates environments in which the rights of individual students are balanced against the rights and interests of the community. It should facilitate the 'embodied education' and personal and community exploration that comes from co-curricular intramural and intercollegiate athletics, dance and other forms of physical activity. Residence life provides for disciplined communities, where students accept their responsibility for maintaining the order and good management of the community and adhering to the University community's standards for good behaviour. Residences should provide inclusive, fair and equitable communities, where individual differences are acknowledged, welcomed and accepted.

### 5.2 *Common Standards*

The Task Force considered the question of whether there are core services that every residence should provide, and core elements of residence life that all residences should make available. For example, should all residence staff have standardized training? Should there be a standardized set of guidelines for response to crises? Currently, our response to issues such as mental health concerns, personal crises, severe illness, discipline problems, alcohol and drug use, and appropriate use of information technology differs from community to community, and this puts the University at risk.

Students should expect the University to set and maintain the acceptable level of student residence experience across all divisions of the University, and they should expect consistency of official response on serious issues. Therefore, the Task Force recommends the creation of a Student Housing Advisory Committee (a more detailed proposal follows below in item #9). Working with a revised *Policy on Student Housing*, this Advisory Committee would monitor housing practices and policy issues across the University and advise the Provost on issues as they arise.

Regarding consistent standards, the Advisory Committee would be mandated to develop University-wide guidelines and protocols related to student housing matters.

It would develop policy templates for local implementation, identify best practices, and advise the Provost on issues such as alcohol where there is a need for a consistent University-wide response. For example, the Task Force strongly supports a University-wide code of residence behaviour that includes a prescribed plan of action in response to violations. This too could take the form of a template residence code that could be modified from residence to residence, but with a core of agreed-upon expectations and sanctions. The mandate of the Student Housing Advisory Committee would include developing such templates.

The Advisory Committee should have broad representation from across the University, including all three campuses, and its purview should extend to all three campuses. Local culture and practice will continue to vary, but values, approach, and services should be consistent at the core across the University.

**Recommendation 6.** That a Student Housing Advisory Committee, with representation from all three campuses and from all colleges and divisions, including the federated Universities, be struck to provide advice on critical issues of student housing.

**Recommendation 7.** That the Student Housing Advisory Committee oversee the creation of template codes, guidelines, protocols and communications on core residence issues for adaptation in local environments in order to ensure a more consistent response across the University.

### *5.3 Mixed-Cohort Housing*

The Task Force noted that most students desire a mix of occupants in residence rather than single-focus houses. They want social and intellectual contact with students from varied backgrounds, areas of study and future careers. Even in areas designated as 'living/learning units' where a single theme is given prominence, students still prefer a variety of students be brought together to engage in this experience as a mixed community. Accordingly, the Task Force believes that each undergraduate residence should include a mix of students from the various first-entry divisions and programs and a mix of students from various years, with, a maximum of 50% of the spaces being allocated to first year students. The Task Force recognizes that mixed-cohort housing is an ideal that must be pursued with an awareness of the limitations in the Tenant Protection Act.

**Recommendation 8.** That residences work to develop mixed-cohort housing with varied combinations of undergraduates, but also including student families, professional degree and graduate students, postdoctoral and even faculty or University visitor residents in some larger units.

**Recommendation 9.** That, in order to develop mixed-cohort housing, the University seek clarity on the Tenant Protection Act as it affects residences.



#### 5.4 *Affordability*

The Task Force noted that, while most students understand the potential benefit of residence for a rewarding university experience, many who want to live in residence cannot afford to do so. The Task Force believes that at least one year in university residence should be affordable for all who want it, regardless of their financial means.

**Recommendation 10.** That mechanisms be developed so that at least one year in residence is affordable for all students who desire it, regardless of their financial means.

### 6. **Residence Re-admission**

#### 6.1 *Re-admission Process*

The Task Force favours a broad consistency of selection criteria for residence re-admission, arising from our broad agreement on the role and purpose of residence in the University. However, it recognizes that different emphases or ordering of priorities may be appropriate in different locales. The Task Force identified—but did not prioritize—the factors it thought relevant to consider for re-admission:

- academic performance
- geographic origin
- contribution to community life
- extraordinary need
- exceptional circumstances
- residence code of behaviour history

The Task Force noted the wide variety of re-admission practices across the University, not all of which are clearly understood by residents. Local priorities may give differing emphasis to the various relevant criteria, but these should be clearly formulated and widely known. International applicants, for example, often need to know re-admission policies before committing to accept the University's initial offer of admission. The Task Force also thought the principles involved in re-admission are so closely connected with the role of residence life in the university experience as to deserve the attention of divisional governing bodies.

**Recommendation 11.** That each residence develop a re-admission policy and procedure that is transparent, clearly communicated to the community, and approved by the divisional governing body.

#### 6.2 *Professional-faculty Student Housing*

The Task Force noted the concern expressed by professional faculties, especially at the first-entry level, about lack of access to housing for their students, and differential treatment during residence re-admission. It also noted widespread support in principle for students being exposed to a varied mix of students in residence. The Task Force saw value in every residence housing a mix of students that includes professional-faculty students. However, the Task Force recognizes a clear structural

tension on this issue: a division or federated college must build and maintain its residences from its own financial resources; generating and spending those resources to house another division's students poses a problem.

Viewed in the context of fair and equal treatment for all UofT students, it could be argued that full-time first-entry undergraduate students should be distributed evenly across all College residences, and that all Colleges would view these students as their own throughout their years in residence and beyond. The Task Force decided that recommending an appropriate mix of students in residence would fall within the mandate of Student Housing Advisory Committee, as part of ensuring that all full-time first-entry undergraduate students from all faculties are treated equitably and have full access to all housing options, in first year and upper years.

**Recommendation 12:** That the Student Housing Advisory Committee develop guidelines to ensure that all full-time first-entry undergraduate students from all Faculties have full and equitable access to all housing options, in first year and upper years.

## 7. Accessibility

The Task Force noted that ideas about accommodating students with disabilities, complex enough with academic buildings, became even more so when the full living situation came into play with residence. Our heterogeneous built environment, some of it 150 years old, does not make progress easy; however, the Task Force thought it important to press for progress.

### *7.1 Accommodating Students with Disabilities*

Students with disabilities face particular barriers in the selection of appropriate University housing. Not all the University's college residences and divisional residences are equally barrier free. Some have accessible bedrooms, but other amenities such as dining rooms or laundry rooms are not accessible. Other residences have few or no barrier-free features. Students often choose a college without being aware of the extent of available accessible accommodation.

Accommodating a student with a disability in University housing is a complex undertaking, requiring not simply an appropriately-designed physical facility but also appropriate life safety features, space for equipment storage, a food plan that meets the student's needs, and appropriate levels of community support. Information about the kind of housing and the kind of meal plans available in each college and divisional residence should be highlighted in ways that assist students to select housing that will best meet their needs. The Task Force believes that the University should commit to accommodating students with disabilities first in the assignment of residence spaces and places in other University housing. The process for making offers should incorporate information about barrier-free accommodation, and should

invite the student to work with relevant University offices to ensure that accommodation is timely, appropriate and meets the student's needs.

**Recommendation 13.** That the University commit to offering housing on campus for all students with disabilities who have registered with the Accessibility Service on their campus and who desire accommodation on campus, where it is appropriate and reasonable to do so.

**Recommendation 14.** That all residences identify both what they do offer and what they do not offer in the way of barrier-free accommodation. Residences with limited ability to accommodate students with disabilities should identify their limitations. Information about University housing, including residences should be presented in a manner that assists students with special needs in the selection of housing that best meets their needs.

**Recommendation 15.** That the commitment of housing for students with disabilities extend to cover all years at the University, as long as their disability continues and appropriate documentation is received and kept up-to-date at the Accessibility Service on their campus and provided they meet the academic standards of the University and codes of conduct in the residences.

**Recommendation 16.** That the Housing Service continue to develop listings for off-campus housing which meets the needs of students with a range of disabilities.

### *7.2 New Housing Stock*

The Task Force recommends that, when designing new buildings or acquiring new stock, the University apply the same high standard for barrier-free access to residence buildings as it does to academic buildings. It is not sufficient to build accessible bedrooms; there must be access to other important parts of the residence or housing complex, including the recreational, cultural and social spaces. The University has undertaken to retain barrier-free design consultation for all capital projects; this is especially critical for new and acquired residences and housing stock.

**Recommendation 17.** That the design of new student residences or acquisition/conversion of other housing meet fully inclusive guidelines for barrier-free construction, so as to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in every division's housing settings and environments and that, to ensure this, the use of an expert design consultant be required on every project. Accessibility in student housing should be understood as including: appropriateness of physical facilities (including barrier-free rooms and private space, where necessary); access to all amenities in the residence or housing complex; reasonable access to an appropriate meal plan, or alternate food service; and appropriate community support.

**Recommendation 18.** That, if a student at 89 Chestnut or student family housing has a need, transportation from University student housing or residence to classes will be

provided through WheelTrans or via the University's shuttle service. An appropriate level of funding must be provided for this.

**Recommendation 19.** That a working group be struck between the University and the three federated Universities to develop University-wide strategies for identifying those parts of the residence or housing complex which are not barrier-free, and develop a strategy and timetable for addressing those features, within the framework of the University's ODA compliance plan.

### *7.3 Cooperative Processes*

While the University's goal is to have every residence fully barrier free, or at least to have barrier-free spaces in every division's residence stock, the Task Force recognized this is a medium- to long-term goal and students must be accommodated in the interim. Members of the Task Force involved with residence admission and placement were confident that there is already sufficient barrier-free stock and enough administrative goodwill to make significant progress in the short term. The interim steps will be for each residence dean to identify what stock can now accommodate students with specific kinds of disabilities, and then for the University to develop protocols so we can respond collectively as a system to a particular student's need, deploying suitable spaces across the system without regard to the student's college or divisional affiliation.

**Recommendation 20.** That an appropriate group be convened immediately by the Vice-President and Provost to arrange the protocols necessary for the University to best deploy its current barrier-free resources in meeting students' needs.

## **8. Program of Residence Expansion and Renewal**

### *8.1 Residence Expansion and 89 Chestnut*

In September 2003, the University of Toronto saw four new residences ready to receive undergraduate students. New residences were opened at UTM (197 beds) and UTSC (230 beds). On the St. George campus, completion of New College's 45 Willcocks residence added 206 new beds; the purchase of the former Colony hotel and its conversion into the 89 Chestnut Residence added 1086 beds. The resulting impact of these additional spaces on the University's Housing Guarantee to incoming first-year undergraduates was spectacular, especially on the St. George campus. For the first time in several years, the University was able to honour its guarantee for St. George students without recourse to rented space in downtown hotels, the nursing residence on Gerrard Street West, or the Tartu residence on Bloor Street West.

Indeed, such was the success of our recent new residence initiatives that almost all St. George campus residence facilities showed some vacant space in September of this year. Colleges referred their waiting lists to 89 Chestnut, and even when some college beds became available in the wake of rejected offers and cancellations, there were few students who had not already accepted space elsewhere. Excess space at 89

Chestnut was even made available to students in neighbouring institutions (George Brown, Ryerson, and the Ontario College of Art & Design) to protect the financial viability of the new facility.

Looking forward, the Task Force sees a dramatically different landscape at the end of its mandate than at the beginning. Pressures from a shortage of space have turned into financial concerns over a possible surplus. Any over-supply of downtown residence space would have an immediate impact on projected revenue in all residences, especially the 89 Chestnut residence with its predominantly double rooms.

On the one hand, the Task Force heard repeatedly of unsatisfied demand for residence spaces from non-first-year students during the period when everything was geared to honouring the Housing Guarantee for first-year students. As we adjust our proportions of first-year to returning residents, and as we make the availability of residence space known through a full admission and re-admission cycle, some of this demand may re-appear. On the other hand, two current construction projects will produce further challenges: the opening of the new Woodsworth residence in 2004 (350 new beds) and Morrison Hall at University College in 2005 (277 new beds) will reduce the demand for undergraduate beds in 89 Chestnut significantly. This decline will be exacerbated further by projected reductions in the intake of first-year students on the downtown campus. The ten-year projection suggests little will change. The undergraduate population is not expected to increase sufficiently to reach its 2003 levels, since instructional space is already at capacity and there are no plans to add substantially to that capacity. The Task Force thought this new environment called for a measured but cautious response.

**Recommendation 21.** That, as long as the University retains ownership of the 89 Chestnut residence, there be no further construction or acquisition of undergraduate residences in the downtown area, unless it can be shown convincingly how new construction will not undermine the financial integrity of the Chestnut residence or unless new construction is timed to coincide with the cessation of an equivalent provision of undergraduate spaces over the ensuing five years.

### *8.2 Residence Expansion and UTM and UTSC.*

In light of recent expansion on the St George campus of residence places for first entry undergraduate students, the University is able to honour the guarantee without recourse to external facilities and even faces the spectre of oversupply in some residences. The same is not true of residence supply at UTM and UTSC. Off-campus housing in the suburbs is some distance from the campuses, can be expensive and usually has rental policies that are not compatible with academic sessional living arrangements. In order to meet the Residence Guarantee, housing for returning students, graduate students and students with families has been restricted. Finally, the impact of the Double Cohort and changing demographics has resulted in significant enrolment increases largely at the east and west campuses. Significant enrolment increases, shortage of residence spaces and increasing need to house upper year and

graduate students indicate that construction of further residences spaces at UTM and UTSC is well justified.

**Recommendation 22.** That UTM and UTSC should proceed to develop residences, including an expansion of student family housing if demand warrants such an expansion, until those students registered at UTM and UTSC who wish housing can reasonably be accommodated.

### *8.3 Residence Expansion and Student Family Housing.*

The University of Toronto has two apartment buildings, comprising 713 apartments, for student family housing. The buildings, though an incomparable resource are not adequate to meet the demand from University of Toronto students with families. There are currently 1900 families on the waiting list. *Student Housing: A Plan for the Next Phase (February 1999)*, a *Raising Our Sights* companion document, recommended that an additional 300 apartments, with a variety of bedroom configurations be created on or near the St George campus in order to meet the needs of student families and that, in line with the University's Policy on Student Housing, provision should be made for affordable child care in or near the new family housing. Given that in light of the recent expansion on the St George campus of residence places for first entry undergraduate students the University is able to honour the guarantee without recourse to external facilities, the Task Force recommends that priority now be given to addressing the problem of lack of affordable student family housing.

**Recommendation 23.** That the provision of affordable student family housing receive the highest priority in future residence expansion planning.

### *8.4 Financial issues*

Realistically, construction of new residential space is not feasible in the downtown core without some form of subsidy. The doctrine that each individual residence must stand alone self-sufficiently with respect to both its capital funding and its operating costs seems unnecessarily restrictive. Two constituent colleges each operate two or three residence halls as an integrated ancillary, without requiring that each one stand alone. This arrangement could readily be extended to include the other two constituent colleges and the School of Graduate Studies (which operates Graduate House).

**Recommendation 24.** That the business plan for any new residence be integrated into the plan for the division's existing residence ancillary and that the accumulated capital reserve for the existing residences be available to support the capital costs for a new residence without such support being considered as a subsidy for that division.

**Recommendation 25.** That new housing projects combine both academic and residential uses in order to allow for shared funding to the benefit of both the residence and the academic division using the space.

**Recommendation 26.** That, where possible and where the users' group has recommended it, residences include commercial space that is compatible with residence life in order to provide an additional source of revenues.

**Recommendation 27.** That, where possible and where the users' group has recommended it, residences include features that make use of their facilities for conference business attractive in order to provide an additional source of revenues.

#### *8.5 Construction Standards for Residential Housing*

The Task Force emphatically rejects "low-service" models for new student housing and expresses the wish that older housing stock be brought up to newer standards as soon as possible, with the provision of air conditioning, room telephones, room connectivity, common rooms, study space, music practice rooms, or physical activity and assembly space, for example. The quality of residence life is important not only as a central feature of the student experience for those in the residences but also as a recruitment tool. New residences should not be designed simply as utilitarian boxes but should demonstrate the same commitment to design and sensitivity to context and mission evinced by new academic buildings.

**Recommendation 28.** That utilitarian or "low-service" models of housing be avoided, and older residences each be the object of a multi-year plan to bring them up to the standards of newer residences.

**Recommendation 29.** That residences meet the same standards of design and sensitivity to context and mission as those met by new academic capital projects.

#### *8.6 Inclusive Communities*

An important goal of residence life is to provide fair, inclusive and equitable communities, where individual differences are acknowledged, welcomed and accepted. In order to accommodate a wide variety of students from a wide variety of backgrounds, the Task force recognizes that a variety of forms of housing and residence programs are required. Space for prayer and meditation should be included in all new residence plans and food services should include provision of dishes that are consistent with the faith requirements of the world's major religions. Ingredient lists are also important in this context.

**Recommendation 30.** That a variety of forms of housing and residence program be developed to meet the needs of a highly varied population, including single students, students with families, students with differing sexual orientations and students from a variety of ethno-heritage and religious backgrounds.

## **9. Student Housing Advisory Committee**

### *9.1 Role of the Student Housing Advisory Committee*

The Task Force recommends above that a Student Housing Advisory Committee, with representation from all three campuses and from all colleges and divisions including the Federated Colleges, be struck to provide advice on critical issues of

student housing, which may fluctuate from year to year or take on varying degrees of emphasis in different years. The Student Housing Advisory Committee will advise the Vice-President and Provost and, as appropriate, the heads of the Federated Institutions as specified in the *Memorandum of Agreement (July 1, 1998)* on the organization and management of student housing, including planning and policy development for issues of residence life. Where there is a need for a consistent University-wide response, the Student Housing Advisory Committee will develop guidelines, templates and protocols centrally that could be modified locally and adapted to a division's specific needs.

The Student Housing Advisory Committee will meet regularly (at least four meetings per year) to review housing concerns, update information, and provide advice in areas where change or new direction is required.

#### 9.2 *Terms of Reference*

- (a) Development or review of overall principles for student housing and residence contracts;
- (b) Development or review of university-wide training programs (annual and on-going) for all student housing and residence staff;
- (c) Development of university-wide protocols and procedures for critical residence and housing issues, including:
  - response to alcohol use and abuse;
  - response to the use of illegal drugs;
  - response to student crises, including mental health crises;
  - response to students in threatening and violent relationships;
  - student housing discipline codes and procedures.
- (d) Compilation and publication of annual reports on the student housing experience, including reports on students housed, current issues, training and support;
- (e) Development and review of annual safety audits for each housing community or residence;
- (f) Review of new and planned residence construction, for adherence to university policy and guidelines;
- (g) Periodic review of research or literature findings on issues of student life in housing or residence communities;
- (h) Periodic review of current residence processes and practices, e.g., admission, re-admission, to ensure they are transparent and clearly communicated
- (i) Annual monitoring of the mix of Arts and Science and Professional Faculty students in undergraduate residences and advice concerning same;
- (j) Annual monitoring of progress on accommodation of students with disabilities and advice on next steps;
- (k) Annual monitoring of the effectiveness of residences for recruiting purposes and advice on next steps;
- (l) Review and publication of best practices as submitted by Resnet and the Student Housing Network or other working groups formed for the purpose.



### 9.3 Membership

*Chair:* Provost or Provost's designate

*Graduate:* President of the Residence Council, Graduate House, or Don of Hall, Massey College, or President of the Student Family Housing Tenants' Association

*Undergraduate:*

- (a) Representative from the Residence Council of a Constituent College
- (b) Representative from the Residence Council of a Federated College
- (c) Representative from the Residence Council of UTM
- (d) Representative from the Residence Council of UTSC

Residence Dean, Constituent College

Residence Dean, Federated College

Residence Dean/Director, UTM

Residence Dean/Director, UTSC

Residence Dean, 89 Chestnut

Coordinator, Student Housing

Director of Student Services

Director of Student Affairs

Dean of SGS or designate

Principal of Principals or designate

Federated College Head or designate

Vice-President and Principal, UTM

Vice-President and Principal, UTSC

Professional Faculty Dean or designate

Community Safety Officer

A representative of affiliated colleges will be invited on a rotating basis by the Chair

A representative of a campus-wide student association will be invited on a rotating basis by the Chair

To be nominated by Provost in cooperation with the heads of the Federated Institutions

To be nominated by Provost

There will be a need for administrative support for the Advisory Committee.

## 10. Next Steps

**Recommendation 31.** That the Vice-President and Provost strike a group to formulate a new *Policy on Student Housing* based on the recommendations of this report.

## 11. Appendices

### 11.1 PDAD&C #32, 2002-03

The announcement of the Task Force on Student Housing can be found at:  
[http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts\\_6\\_1805\\_1.html](http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts_6_1805_1.html)

### 11.2 List of Presentations to the Task Force

Residence Admissions Process: Student Housing Guarantee. (Pearl Karimalis)  
Acquisition of 89 Chestnut. (Ron Venter)  
Status of Residential Planning for the University Toronto Campuses as of October 2002. (Jennifer Adams and Gail Milgrom)  
Unlocking the potential of tomorrow's great minds: A Look at Residence Life at the University of Toronto at Mississauga. (Chris McGrath)  
Looking to the Future: Student Housing and Residence Life at UTSC. (Jim Dunsdon)  
Residence Life Staff Training Program. (Susan Addario)

### 11.3 List of Documents consulted by Task Force

Report of the Provostial Advisory Committee on Student Housing Policy (Silcox Report) (July 1988)  
Policy on Student Housing (March 1989)  
A Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Toronto and the Federated Universities (July 1, 1998)  
Student Housing: A Plan for the Next Phase (a Raising Our Sights companion document (February 1999)  
Student Housing Committee: Principles to Guide the Development of Student Housing (APUS, SAC, GSU; February 23, 2000)  
Response to the Browne Report on Residence Expansion (Student Affairs; January 7, 2000)  
Woodsworth College Student Residence: Report of the Users' Committee (May 25, 2000)  
New College Residence Expansion – Phase 1 (January 2000)  
UTM Users' Committee Report for a Phase 7 Residence (March 2000)

### 11.4 List of submissions to the Task Force

Emma Johnson, student  
Pan Beiqing, student  
Hamid Reza Ghorbani, student  
Mohammad Pouran, student  
Zhenjin Zhu, student  
Julia Fedotova, student  
Dean of Men, St Michael's College  
Kostantin Stamenkovic, student  
Pedro Contreras Escalante, student  
Gabriela and Michal Kasprzak, students  
Jaslyn McLean, student

Anthony Kola-Olusanya, student  
Mary Patton, student  
Jie Liu, student  
Aoi Okuno, student  
Anne Lewis, Manager, Student Accounts, FSD  
Leo Trottier, student  
Rae Johnson, Co-ordinator, Student Crisis Response Programs  
Janice Martin, Accessibility Services  
Michael Marrus, Dean, School of Graduate Studies  
Florence Silver, Director, Student Recruitment

*11.5 Policy on Student Housing*

The Policy on Student Housing (March 9, 1989) can be found at:  
<http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/sthouse.html>.

*11.6 Submissions in response to discussion draft*

Students' Administrative Council  
David Zutautas, Recruitment Counsellor, Office of Student Recruitment  
Larry Richards, Dean, Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design  
Kevin Dacey, Assistant Dean of Men, St Michael's College  
Pekka Sinervo, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science

## **Provost's Response to the Report of the Task Force on Student Housing April 15, 2004**

In 1988, a committee chaired by Professor Peter Silcox produced the *Report of the Provostial Advisory Committee on Student Housing Policy*, a landmark document which informed subsequent planning and policy documents addressing student housing at the University of Toronto. The current *Policy on Student Housing*, based on the Silcox Report, was approved by Governing Council in March 1989. Since then, changing circumstances—such as enrollment growth, changing demographics and renewed recognition of the importance of student housing in the recruitment and retention of academically qualified students—have resulted in the need to review and update the current *Policy on Student Housing*. For these reasons, the Provost established a Task Force on Student Housing with a mandate to review the institutional principles that guide and govern student housing at the University of Toronto and its federated institutions.

Under the leadership of David Farrar, Vice-Provost, Students, the Task Force on Student Housing has completed a broad and thorough review -- addressing both the fundamental principles that guide our policies and programs as well as specific areas for growth and enhancement. Most importantly, the Task Force managed to reach consensus on a number of critical issues that will help the University move forward in its commitment to meeting student needs. I am grateful to the members of the Task Force for their time and expertise and will address the recommendations in turn.

### **Admission to Residence [Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5]**

The Report notes that the availability of appropriate forms of student housing is a crucial factor in the University's capacity to attract and retain the most academically qualified students. I agree with *Recommendation 2* that it is appropriate for residences to be used as a tool in the recruitment and retention of such students, as well as *Recommendations 4 and 5* that residence admission processes should be aligned with this objective. I accept *Recommendation 3* which reaffirms the Residence Guarantee for first year students. However, I believe there should be more discussion about whether the categories of students prioritized for places in residence in the Residence Guarantee should include part-time students. I will refer this to the group that will be struck to formulate the new *Policy on Student Housing* based on the recommendations of this Report.

### **Residence Life [Recommendations 6, 7, 8, 9, 10]**

The Report argues that the University should set and maintain an acceptable level of student residence experience across all divisions that includes consistency of official response of serious issues. To this end, the Report recommends creation of the Student Housing Advisory Committee, with broad representation to develop and oversee common standards

(*Recommendations 6, 7*). I support these recommendations in principle. However, it is essential that the Student Housing Advisory Committee does not operate in isolation from other groups in the University. The Student Housing Advisory Committee must be part of a rational committee structure to ensure effective cross-communication on issues affecting all students. I will consult further with the Vice-Provost, Students on this. I support the ideal of mixed-cohort housing in principle as proposed in *Recommendation 8*, subject to clarification on the Tenant Protection Act as it affects residences as noted in *Recommendation 9*. *Recommendation 10* needs more discussion. It is not appropriate for residence costs to be subsidized by student financial aid. The scope of this recommendation is broad and the finance implications need more consideration. Because of the potential implications of this recommendation I am referring it to the Provost's senior advisory group for more discussion.

### **Residence Re-admission [Recommendations 11, 12]**

I accept *Recommendations 11 and 12* on residence re-admission policies and procedures as well as ensuring equitable access to housing options.

### **Accessibility [Recommendations 13-20]**

The Report is eloquent on the need for the University to do a better job accommodating students with disabilities. I agree in principle with *Recommendations 13-20*, that this is the direction in which the University should be progressing. As a first step, we need to have an idea of the resource implications of these recommendations. This matter is referred to the Vice-Provost, Space and Facilities Planning, for further analysis. At the same time, the Vice-Provost will be developing a proposal to make 89 Chestnut more accessible.

### **Program of Residence Expansion and Renewal [Recommendations 21-30]**

In light of the negative consequences of any over-supply of residence space on the St George campus, I agree with *Recommendation 21* to defer further construction or acquisition of undergraduate residences in the downtown area with reference to the financial integrity of 89 Chestnut. I support *Recommendation 22* to develop new residences at UTM and UTSC, provided that capital plans are fiscally feasible. I accept *Recommendation 23* that provision of student family housing should be a priority in future residence expansion planning, with the proviso that family housing will have to be offered at a realistic cost. I accept *Recommendations 24, 25, 26 and 27* in the interest of generating revenues for support of residences. *Recommendation 27* should include not only conferences business but also students enrolled in summer programs. I agree in principle with *Recommendations 28 and 29*, recognizing that a commitment to standards that include air conditioning, music rooms and assembly space for existing as well as new residences will be constrained by the fiscal feasibility of residences. It should also be noted that availability of land is another constraint on new construction. I support *Recommendation 30* which proposes that a variety of forms

of housing and residence programs should be developed to meet the needs of a highly varied population of students.

**Next Steps [Recommendation 31]**

In response to *Recommendation 31*, I will strike a group to formulate a new *Policy on Student Housing*, based on the recommendations of this Report and my response to the recommendations.

Vivek Goel  
Interim Vice-President and Provost

April 19, 2004