



# University of Toronto

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OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PROVOST AND VICE-PROVOST, STUDENTS

TO: University Affairs Board

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DATE: February 7 2006 for February 14, 2006

AGENDA ITEM: Presentation on the Student Experience

## **ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Report on the Student Experience: From Research to Action

## **JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The University Affairs Board has responsibility for extra-curricular programs, campus and student services and other aspects of the student experience.

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

At this time last year, I reported to you the University of Toronto's results in the 2004 National Survey of Student Engagement. The survey results provided a detailed description of our undergraduate first-entry students, their experiences both inside and outside of the classroom and gave us clear indications of where institutional change was most needed.

One year later, I am pleased to report that our understanding of the student experience grows both deeper and broader and has led to a number of exciting initiatives that show great promise in meeting the goals of Stepping UP.

We have come to understand the student experience as a confluence of conditions that exist in and around campus environments that impact the degree to which students engage with others, their environments, and develop knowledge and skills, and their own *within* institutions than between institutions and it is for that reason that we continue to discuss our progress in as many different venues and contexts as possible.

Our research of the student experience has now been broadened by a survey that tells us more about the graduate student experience. The Graduate & Professional Student Survey (GPSS) was conducted in spring 2005, a summary of which is attached. The relevant

results will be presented to the University Affairs Board by Susan Pfeiffer, Dean of Graduate Studies and Vice-Provost, Graduate Education.

These and other surveys will continue to play an important role as we assess our progress in meeting institutional goals of improving the experience of commuter students, enhancing student services, increasing student involvement and sense of community, creating opportunities to participate in community service and increasing student-faculty interaction.

At the same time, we are continuing to move forward on interventions, programs and projects that show great potential in meeting these goals. I am pleased to be able to present to the Board, a selection of our most promising practices in the enhancing the student experience:

- **Rez One** (UTM), a residence-based program that helps facilitate the transition to university for first year students through academic and life skills workshops as well as mentorship.
- **Spirituality & the Student Experience** (Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity), a new series that explores intersections between faith and various aspects of the student experience.
- **Departmental Student Associations** (UTSC), an initiative to enhance faculty-student interaction through the creation of new department level opportunities.
- **The Extern Program** (Career Centre, St. George Campus), a unique career exploration opportunity designed to help students learn more about a career by job shadowing placement.
- **The Unza Workshop** (Faculty of Physical Education & Health), a unique collaboration between FPEH students and the University of Zambia, focusing on the use of physical education, sport and traditional games to address HIV//AIDS through the education sector in Africa .
- **Learning Communities** (Faculty of Arts & Science), including the First-Year Learning Communities (FLCs) a program that connects commuter students in the traditional Life Science foundation courses through linked courses, regular FLC meetings and a peer mentor, and BIOME, the on-line community for Life Science students.
- **Hart House Social Justice Committee**, bringing students together as concerned citizens in today's society, and **Hart House's *Creativity Conceived*** program, linking campus and community through multidisciplinary programming that explores the nature of creativity in its many diverse forms.
- **Tutors in the Classroom** (Centre for Community Partnerships, Student Affairs), a partnership with the Toronto District School Board that places U of T students as tutors for grade nine students in high need areas.