

University Affairs Board 2006-07: Vice-Provost, Students' Report

Restructuring Initiative

As part of a continuing effort to improve the student experience, I have embarked on a significant restructuring process within the central student service and program areas.

I recognize that we already offer a stellar array of services and programs. This initiative is intended to create a more coherent, cohesive and coordinated administrative structure to connect those services and programs and to add some new leadership and vision to the portfolio that will take U of T to the forefront of this area in Canada.

The restructuring process began in April with a review of all student-related units and functions within the divisions of Student Services, Student Affairs and Hart House. The review was conducted with the assistance of Keeling & Associates, LLC, a higher-education consulting firm. Based on their recommendations, I have now initiated a process to rationalize and revamp student services and programs.

The first stage of the restructuring is portfolio reorganization, which includes:

1. Creation of an Office of the Vice-Provost, Students with tri-campus responsibility for communication, policy, crisis response and research and assessment in the area of student experience. The position of Vice-Provost, Students was created nine years ago with only one full-time support staff. Over time, I have started to build a team that can support the many initiatives and issues the office deals with on a daily basis. This initiative completes and formalizes that team.
2. The creation of the new position of Assistant Vice-President, Student Life to oversee the St. George campus services and programs, including Hart House. This position will report directly to the Vice-Provost, Students and will function as the senior student affairs officer for the St. George Campus.
3. A re-organization of the 15 distinct units on the St. George Campus that now fall under the umbrellas of Student Services, Student Affairs or Hart House. As part of this re-organization, three units – the Early Learning Centre, Family Care Office and the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Resources & Programs -- will be relocated to the portfolio of the Vice-President Human Resources & Equity. The remaining units will be grouped into organizational clusters.

Hart House, one of the clusters, is the subject of a concurrent process prompted by the completion of Margaret Hancock's second term as warden. The remaining three clusters – Student Development & Learning, Community Engagement, and Health Programs & Services will be looked at in more depth over the coming months by an administrative task force comprised of members of the University community.

Ultimately, the restructuring initiative will move us into a position where all of our central services and programs are working collaboratively together to plan and assess the learning outcomes associated with a University of Toronto student experience. The re-organization is needed to get us in the position where we can start that next phase of enhanced support for student learning.