

MEMORANDUM

To: University Affairs Board

From: Vivek Goel, Vice-President and Provost

Re: Administrative Response to the Report of the Review of Hart House

Hart House has played a significant role in student experience at the University of Toronto for almost ninety years. It has served as a meeting place for students, faculty and staff from all Colleges and Faculties. It increases significantly our programs in arts, culture, athletics and numerous other areas. With our renewed focus on student engagement, Hart House must continue to play a central role for our community across all three campuses. I thank the current Warden for her tremendous contributions in helping the institution in developing and maintaining this focus on the student experience throughout the University and for her leadership for Hart House as it has continued to evolve to meet the changing needs of our students.

The Advisory Committee for Hart House, which was established last fall, has submitted its Report. I am grateful to the members of the Committee for their work, which is valuable for Hart House and the University as we move forward with the renewal of the Student Life portfolio. The Committee drafted its recommendations with thought and care after substantive discussion, and I shall therefore comment on each one.

Recommendation 1: The themes of connection and collaboration between the curricular and co-curricular dimensions of student learning recur throughout the Report. These reflect the priority given to enhancing the student experience and supporting student success in our academic plan, *Stepping Up*. I intend to work with the new Warden and with the academic divisions of the University to ensure that existing connections are strengthened and new ones developed between Hart House and the University community beyond the House.

Recommendation 2: Hart House is fortunate to have superb staff who have been well served by opportunities for professional development. The University has implemented professional development sessions dealing with student learning theory and outcomes assessment, and members of the House's staff are participants along with their colleagues in other areas of the Student Life portfolio.

Recommendation 3: Hart House, like its partners in Student Life programs and services and co-curricular Athletics, is primarily supported by student ancillary fees. The University will continue to work to ensure that this financial support is used effectively and equitably to provide maximum support for students. I am also committed, with my colleagues in the senior administration, to examining the funding structures for all of the University's ancillary operations. We will seek the cooperation and collaboration of student government leaders in reviewing the processes for allocation of resources to the ancillary services and the processes for allocation of resources to student clubs across the University.

Recommendation 4: In *Stepping Up*, the University reaffirms its commitment to being a full tri-campus institution. Hart House offers students some unique learning opportunities, and it is important that students on all three of our campuses are fully-enfranchised members of the House and that they feel it can be their ‘home’ when they spend time on the St. George campus.

Recommendations 5, 6, and 7: These recommendations fully reflect our principles of connection and collaboration. I have established the University of Toronto Arts Council to enhance the student experience, raise the profile of creative and performing arts activities and programs, and create opportunities for partnerships with other cultural organizations in the GTA – the Warden of Hart House has been a critical member of this Council and has chaired the Co-Curricular Working Group. With the Art Gallery, the Theatre, and many arts activities, Hart House is a key contributor to the University’s cultural life. We need to continue to find opportunities to connect and collaborate across the campuses with other academic and arts oriented organizations. Collaboration and connection with the Faculty of Physical Education and Health and its programs will also be important, particularly as new facilities are developed. I expect to continue to work closely with the Warden to promote and enhance connections.

Recommendation 8: Beyond its current uses, the Hart House Farm offers potential as a place where student learning could be enhanced. I accept this recommendation to strike a committee to consider additional uses for the Farm.

Recommendation 9: The Theatre is valued for its function and its history within the University, and throughout the greater arts community. The University leadership is committed to securing the external resources to sustain the Theatre.

Recommendations 10: I appreciate the Committee’s advice regarding the Warden’s apartment and will review its uses as the new Warden is appointed.

Recommendation 11: While we need to continue to celebrate our history, we must also recognize that the world has changed around us, as has the make up of our student population. The Founder’s Prayer contains important sentiments and principles but its language is not appropriate for our current community. I will ask the new Warden to consider the best approach to continuing to respect our past, while being cognizant of the present.

Recommendation 12: We are reminded by tragic events at other universities and colleges that the safety of our students and our entire community is of paramount importance. The creation of the University’s policy on firearms reflected that priority. The Vice-President, Business Affairs, has agreed to implement Recommendation 12 as soon as possible.

I believe that with these new directions, Hart House will be well-positioned to build on the successes it has achieved under the leadership of the current Warden, Margaret Hancock.