

REPORT OF THE HART HOUSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May, 2007

Introduction

The objectives of the Hart House Review, as set out in the terms of reference attached to the end of this document, directed the members of the Committee to consider Hart House's contributions to achieving the University's objectives for student learning, and to make recommendations that will strengthen Hart House's role in enriching the student experience at the University, on all three campuses. The membership of the Committee (attached) was drawn broadly from the University community as well as from Hart House itself, enabling the Committee to consider the role of the House with respect to the wider University community. The Committee met on six occasions, considering detailed documentation from the House; the Committee also heard representations from the current Warden, Margaret Hancock, from Hart House senior managers, and from senior members of the University community with deep connections to the House.

General Observations of Hart House from 2002 to 2007

Hart House is a unique facility with no parallel in Canadian universities. It offers singular opportunities for students and others – faculty, staff, alumni, community members – to meet and engage as peers. The leadership and vision of the current Warden, Margaret Hancock, and the support of the superb staff team she has assembled, are reflected in significant changes and improvements at the House in the past several years. These include: dramatic improvement in barrier free access (including the construction of an elevator that blends seamlessly into the House's heritage design); outreach to diverse student groups; the creation of the Social Justice committee; stable food services with a diverse range of offerings; and better signage and improved service orientation for members and visitors. Hart House has become proactive in creating and supporting equity, diversity and accessibility initiatives in the House and across campus; these include the Positive Space campaign, the campus food bank, the Access Centre, and the activities of various faith groups. The Hart House Theatre has been integrated into the House, and an ambitious program of student performance has been created and supported. The Theatre created UofTix, an events ticketing service available to the entire University community. The annual Hart House lecture, organized by a student committee chaired by the Warden, has emerged as a high-profile event that enjoys recognition across the country.

The Warden has provided exemplary leadership and service in promoting Hart House on campus and with the surrounding community. She has linked the House's most recent multi-year plan to the goals of Stepping Up, the University's academic plan. Her participation on the University's recently-established Arts Council is the bridge that connects Hart House's rich arts programs with similar activities in the University and elsewhere. She has worked with dedication and energy to promote greater inclusivity in the House's activities, resulting in broader participation of students with disabilities, queer-identified students, and students from other diverse backgrounds.

Governance

Through the Board of Stewards, Hart House has a democratic governance structure that involves students and provides them with valuable experience, as well as an important voice in overseeing the activities of the House. The Board of Stewards is one of the most durable and effective examples of student involvement on campus, and of student-faculty-staff-alumni collaboration on co-curricular activities. The governance of Hart House was and is modelled on the wishes of its founder. Its continuing vitality is a testament to the leadership of the Warden and the culture of the House.

As the University moves towards a model of collaborative, integrated, intentional learning for co-curricular institutions like Hart House, the House will need to develop stronger links to other divisions of the University. The Board of Stewards will need to balance independence with collegiality. As an *ex officio* member of the University Affairs Board of the University's Governing Council, the Warden is a vital link between the University and the House, and must serve as the conduit through which Hart House staff and members are informed, and work within the context of the University's mission and values.

- Recommendation 1: The Warden should provide guidance to the Board of Stewards and staff in the development, pursuit, monitoring and evaluation of a multi-year learning agenda, in keeping with the University's objectives for students, the restructuring of student life, and the opportunities for collaboration with the academic divisions.

Connections and Engagement across the University

The University is currently in the midst of a process of reviewing and renewing the Student Life programs and services on the St. George campus to enhance collaboration and connection among the services and with academic divisions in order to support holistic student learning and to promote student success. The restructuring of student life programs and services has clear purposes: to enhance the student experience; improve student success; support student learning; and advance the goals and objectives of the University's strategic plan. A new position of Assistant Vice-President, Student Life has been established, and the new Hart House Warden will work closely with that person as a senior member of the Student Life team. The Warden will be expected to sustain the many excellent contributions the House has been making to the student experience, and to enhance those by building strong connections between Hart House and its programming and the rest of the Student Life portfolio.

The House needs to build stronger permanent bridges to a wide range of other activities and services, and we note that the foundations must be built by both sides. Many of the activities of the House have obvious potential connections with others on the campus, from academic programs to other Student Life programs and services. Those connections should be initiated and sustained for several key reasons. They would strengthen the contribution of Hart House to the University's goals as articulated in *Stepping Up*, as well as to the implementation and success of the University's student learning initiatives. Not least, they would create new and different paths for more students to find their way to the House and their place within it. The appointment of a faculty advisor to the Warden and Hart House could

help to connect the co-curricular programs of the House with divisional academic activities and objectives.

- Recommendation 2: The Warden should develop, maintain and strengthen active, ongoing connections with divisions, services and programs whose interests and focus parallel those of Hart House. Hart House staff should receive support and training in student learning theory and practice, especially with respect to the assessment of outcomes.

The clubs and committees of the House enjoy distinct advantages in having substantial financial, staff and physical support. Support for these clubs, which comprise the program of the House, should be considered in the broader context of the University's student clubs and organizations as a whole. The allocation of funding available for the clubs and committees of the House, which flows in large part from student ancillary fees, should be considered against the backdrop of the broader landscape of student activity at the University.

- Recommendation 3: The funding structure for all student clubs and committees should be reviewed by the Vice-Provost, Students, the Assistant Vice-President, Student Life and the Warden, to develop a broader, more equitable system of support for student clubs across the University.

Space for student activities ranging from organized clubs to casual relaxation is now conceived, on the St. George campus, to be multi-nodal. Hart House is an important node within that framework. The House needs to continue to strive to break down the barriers, real and perceived, which can arise from its history, tradition and architecture. Outreach to students in all programs and at all levels must continue to be a priority.

UTM and UTSC students

Students at UTM and UTSC have their own student centres, and are also members of Hart House. Because it offers some unique opportunities and programs, and because Hart House is in many ways iconic, this arrangement should be sustained. In the interest of equity, it is reasonable that these students continue to pay a nominal fee for their membership. Some use the House only as a place to hang out while they are on the St. George campus; others will participate annually in the House's drama or dance festivals, attend events during orientation, or bring their families to the House during special ceremonies such as Convocation. Hart House membership is a valuable component of being a U of T student.

- Recommendation 4: Students enrolled at UTM and UTSC should continue to enjoy full membership privileges in Hart House and pay a nominal fee. In return, the Warden and the staff will continue and extend collaborative activity and programs with centres on the other campuses, and will ensure that UTM and UTSC students know that they are welcome at Hart House. The House will actively provide ongoing information about activities and events to all U of T students.

Finances

The finances of the House are generally secure, and its business operations (the Gallery Grill, the Arbor Room, catering, ticket sales) are growing. This is a very

encouraging state of affairs. We note, however, that the financial success of the House's ancillary operations, in a University that has suffered from chronic under funding for the past two decades, comes at the cost of shifting energy away from a stronger focus on student activity. The Warden has been extremely resourceful in steering the House through this difficult terrain. We feel that the current funding model, with revenue derived primarily from student ancillary fees and outside revenue generation, is fundamentally problematic and should be re-examined by the University. In addition, we suggest that all the University's ancillary operations would benefit from a more integrated approach.

Specific Facilities of Hart House

The Committee has been asked to consider the current functions and successes of a number of particular aspects of Hart House: the Art Gallery, the Athletic Wing, the Farm, and the Theatre. Previous observations about the need for stronger connections and co-ordination apply especially to the Gallery, athletic activities and the Theatre. The principles of student learning, especially the establishment and assessment of learning outcomes, are highly relevant to each of these areas of the House's operations. The Committee discussed these issues and suggests the following:

- Recommendation 5: The principle of connectedness is especially relevant to the Art Gallery, the Athletic Wing and the Theatre and should guide the planning for and operations of these facilities.
- Recommendation 6: The Co-curricular Working Group of the Arts Council and the Warden continue to consider ways of integrating the arts and cultural initiatives of Hart House more deeply with those in the academic divisions and other parts of the University.
- Recommendation 7: The Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education and Health and the new Warden should form a working group to examine the administration and delivery of recreational athletic programs on the St. George campus.

The programmed activity and use of the Farm benefits the University as a whole. The Farm is used by student groups from across the University, including UTM and UTSC, for social gatherings and community-building activity. Programming at the Farm is especially important to student families and international student groups. The Farm is a valuable resource that should be used to foster learning as well as providing purely recreational space. In addition, informal, student-run activities at the Farm need to be structured to ensure the safety of participants.

- Recommendation 8: The Vice-Provost, Students, the AVP, Student Life and the Warden should strike a committee to consider the additional uses of the Farm, especially those that promote student learning.

The Theatre has been repatriated to the control of the House, which is a positive and enriching development, but it continues to require the infusion of funds to survive. There are significant subsidies in place that will expire in 2009. A primary goal in fund-raising for the House must be securing a very significant endowment that will generate sufficient annual revenue for the Theatre to be self-sustaining.

- Recommendation 9: As a fund-raising priority, the Warden should work with the advancement staff both in Hart House and central DUA to secure permanent private support for the Theatre.

Unresolved Issues from Previous Reviews

A large apartment was created after World War II in a space on the 3rd floor of the west side of the House. All but one Warden have lived in the apartment as a principal residence. Previous reviews have discussed the suitability of requiring that the Warden reside in the House. This Committee also examined this issue.

- Recommendation 10: The new Warden should not necessarily be permanently resident in the House, and the best uses of the apartment should be reconsidered.

The Founders' Prayer guided the activities of the House since it opened its doors in 1919. Previous reviews, like this one, have considered whether or not it is still an appropriate vision for the House.

- Recommendation 11: The Founder's Prayer should be preserved as a piece of the House's history, but it should not continue to be given prominence in its original form. Although it contains sentiments and principles that continue to be relevant, it reflects a unidimensional perspective that no longer reflects or addresses all members of the University community. (It can be noted that the recent review of Convocation resulted in the elimination of the Convocation Prayer.)

The large basement room in the North Wing houses a rifle range. Previous reviews have discussed its appropriateness.

- Recommendation 12: Previous reviews have addressed the matter of the revolver and rifle clubs, and the use of space in Hart House as a shooting range. Although those reviews did not explicitly recommend the abolition of the clubs, they spoke to the inappropriateness of guns in an urban environment, and suggested that no particular activity should enjoy permanently dedicated space in the House. We too feel that, while firearms and other weapons can serve some purposes, they are also a painful reminder and a symbol (and, regardless of the safeguards, a potential agent) of more sinister uses. The Committee is aware that this issue has been and continues to be divisive, and that the clubs provide a recreational activity valued by their members. Nonetheless, we believe that the abolition of the clubs, and the reallocation of the space for other purposes more consistent with the University's current values and mission, will serve the greater good. Consistent with the University's Statement on the Bearing of Firearms¹, we recommend that the Chief Administrative Officer

¹ **Statement on the Bearing of Firearms**, Governing Council, January, 1994:
The University of Toronto prohibits anyone other than a peace officer or a member of the Canadian forces in the course of duty from having or using firearms on the premises of the University of Toronto without the permission of the Chief Administrative Officer of the

permanently withdraw permission for firearms to be kept or used at Hart House or at any of its facilities.

It has been the pleasure of this Committee to conduct this review and offer this report.

Yours sincerely,

David Farrar, (Chair)

Deputy Provost and Vice Provost, Students

Nouman Ashraf, Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Officer

Office of the Vice-President, Human Resources & Equity

Mia Baumeister, Student Representative

Joseph Cheng, Alumnus

Saswati Deb, Student Representative

Barbara Fischer, Director/Curator, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

Patrick Fothergill, Alumnus

Vinitha Gengatharan, Assistant Director, Student Affairs

Rick Halpern, Principal, New College

Bruce Kidd, Dean, Faculty of Physical Education and Health

Victor Likwornik, Director and Psychiatrist-in-Chief, U of T Student
Psychiatric Service

Jill Matus, Vice-Principal, University College

Matto Mildenerger, Student Representative

Liza Nassim, Dean of Students, Woodsworth College

John Nestor, Alumnus

David Pereira, Student Representative

Janna Rosales, Student Representative

Karel Swift, University Registrar

University. Permission to conduct research involving firearms or ammunition should be sought through the Chief Academic Officer.

**Terms of Reference for the Hart House Review and
Search for a new Warden.**

A review was commissioned by the Vice-President and Provost to address the following issues:

- 1) To consider, review and evaluate the work of Hart House during the second term of the current Warden (2002-2007);
- 2) To assess the extent to which Hart House reflects the University's current values, principles and policies, and to consider and recommend Hart House's contribution to achieving the University's objectives for students;
- 3) To consider and make recommendations concerning Hart House's engagement with other central student life programs and services, Athletics and Recreation, and the student life activities offered by academic divisions;
- 4) To consider and make recommendations regarding Hart House's role in enriching the experience of students, and, in particular, students enrolled at UTM and UTSC;
- 5) To assess alumni relations, communications and development / fundraising strategies with respect to Hart House;
- 6) To review and make recommendations concerning all aspects of Hart House, including the art gallery, athletic facilities, the farm and the theatre;
- 7) To consider and make recommendations about the role Hart House plays in furthering the University's objectives of building campus community among students, faculty, staff and alumni, and of strengthening relations with the wider community;
- 8) To review, search and make recommendations on the appointment of a new Warden who will be a senior member of the University's evolving Student Life team.