University Affairs Board 2006-07 – Vice-Provost, Students' Report # 1

A comprehensive review of the support provided for students by the St. George student services has begun. **Hart House**, **Student Affairs** and **Student Services** have completed a very inclusive and consultative self-assessment process focusing on student learning, student life, student development and organizational structure. The review is primarily concerned with the support services for student learning and student health on the St. George campus, as UTM and UTSC have extensive and essentially separate student services. Issues concerning the need for central student services verses local support for students are being examined. The review process also is examining the organizational structure of the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students and the staffing required to deal with University wide issues of policy, procedures, and communication with students.

We are beginning a conversation with APUS, GSU and SAC concerning the **Council on Student Services** protocol. Over the years, the COSS process has become increasingly confrontational and these conflicts have become more apparent to individuals outside of the process, especially among members of the Governing Council and among those involved in related governance bodies such as the Board of Stewards of Hart House and the Council on Athletics and Recreation. It is our hope that the process can be improved and that, at a broad systemic level, some of the issues that appear to be surfacing at COSS might be addressed in more effective ways.

In January 2006, the University selected the Blackboard Academic Suite as its new institutional **learning management system and student portal**. The Portal launched in mid-August with courses in Medicine, and for the rest of the community at the beginning of September. The team working on this project includes representatives from eleven faculties, the Resource Centre for Academic Technology, students and student groups, the Library, and the Office of the Provost. Over the summer, approximately, 300 faculty, staff and students received instruction on use of the portal for presenting courses and running clubs. The Portal component is available to community members having a UTORid, regardless of whether they are enrolled in a course. Modules for finding buildings, wireless zones, coffee, accessible entrances, parking, or for getting a T-Card or TTC Metropass, are available. The community of developers and IT staff around the University will be adding more functions, services and content to the portal continuously.