



TO: University Affairs Board

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DATE: January 26, 2009 for February 3, 2009

AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Student Experience: Report on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) – 2008.

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The University Affairs Board is responsible for consideration of policy of a non-academic nature and matters that directly concern the quality of student and campus life. The Board has the mandate for monitoring matters within its area of responsibility including campus and student services.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The report of the results of the National Survey of Student Engagement in 2004 was presented to the Board on February 22, 2005. The 2006 NSSE results were reported to the Board on January 17, 2007.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The University of Toronto, along with a number of other Canadian institutions, participated in NSSE for the first time in 2004 and is committed to participating every two years. Beginning in 2006, all Ontario universities participated in NSSE. All leading research-intensive universities in Canada now participate in the survey.

Unlike ranking systems and other forms of data collection, NSSE was designed as a tool for individual institutions to engage in educational quality improvement. The survey asks students directly about their experiences, their activities, their challenges, their own perceptions of the skills and knowledge they are gaining, and about their interactions with faculty and peers. The 86 items that make up the core survey instrument are based on

decades of research into the kinds of practices that have been shown to affect positive outcomes. The Ontario consortium, in which U of T participates, includes 11 additional questions on the survey instrument.

As a measure of educational quality, NSSE is an important means of assessing progress toward the undergraduate student experience goals articulated in *Stepping Up*. It is important to note that NSSE is a University-wide instrument. Additional tools are used within academic divisions and provide further data concerning a variety of measures. Bringing together all of these research findings provides a rich information resource from which the University and the academic divisions can assess progress in meeting goals and objectives.

See the Executive Summary on page 1 of the report for the highlights of the 2008 survey.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

The information in report will be used to assist in the planning of various academic and co-curricular initiatives. The financial implications of these plans will be considered and approved through the normal governance procedures.

RECOMMENDATION:

The report is presented for information.