

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
REPORT NUMBER 190 OF
THE UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS BOARD

October 8, 2015

To the Governing Council,
University of Toronto

Your Board reports that it met on Thursday, October 8, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall, with the following members present:

Mr. Andrew Szende, Chair
Professor Sandy Welsh, Vice-Provost,
Students
Ms Lucy Fromowitz, Assistant Vice-
President, Student Life
Ms Erin Cicinelli
Mr. Kawin Ethayarajh
Ms Susan Froom
Ms Sandra Hudson
Ms Jenna Leigh Jacobson
Mr. Nykolaj Kuryluk
Mr. Paul Kutasi
Dr. Joseph Leydon (Chair, Campus
Affairs Committee, UTM)
Mr. Rhain P. Louis
Professor Jan Mahrt-Smith

Mr. John F. Monahan
Ms Sylvia Mwangi
Mr. Vikram Sainadh
Professor Elizabeth Smyth
Professor Nicholas Terpstra
Mr. Lawrence Zhang

Non-Voting Assessors:

Mr. Desmond Pouyat, Dean of Student Affairs,
University of Toronto Scarborough
Ms Meredith Strong, Director, Office of the
Vice-Provost, Students and Student Policy
Advisor

Secretariat:

Mr. Patrick McNeill, Secretary

Regrets:

Professor Gretchen Kerr
Ms Sue Graham-Nutter
Mr. Ridwan Olow
Ms Catherine Riddell
Mr. Mark Henry Rowswell
Mr. Amir Torabi

In Attendance:

Ms Althea Blackburn-Evans, Director, News
and Media Relations
Ms Joan Griffin, Assistant Director, Office
of Student Life
Mr. Chris Harding, PhD Candidate, Civil
Engineering
Ms Shannon Howes, Manager, Student
Policy Initiatives & High Risk

Ms Heather Kelly, Senior Director, Student
Success
Mr. Mike LeSage, Coordinator, Student
Policy Initiatives
Ms Rita O'Brien, Chief Administrative
Officer, Hart House
Professor Matti Siemiatycki, Department of
Geography

ITEM 10 IS PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL AND ALL OTHER ITEMS ARE REPORTED FOR INFORMATION.

1. Welcome and Orientation

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the University Affairs Board for the 2015-16 governance year, and invited them to introduce themselves. He also welcomed Professor Welsh and Mr. Monahan in their new positions.

The Chair provided an overview of the composition, role and responsibilities of the Board and its members.

Professor Welsh provided an overview of her portfolio and priorities for 2015-16, as well as an update on various initiatives. Highlights included:

- Student Recruitment, Admissions, Student Awards and Student Financial Aid had undergone some additional changes over the past year to provide improved services to recruit and retain the best possible students;
- The ‘Future Students’ website had been completely redesigned which had included a program finder tool for users to better access information on admissions, financial aid and awards, etc.;
- “*Take U of T Home*” was designed to facilitate communication between current international students at U of T, and prospective international students;
- Consultation with student groups to discuss the principles and factors on a proposed ‘Policy on Open, Democratic and Accessible Operation of Student Organizations’ would continue.
- Longer term discussions would be held regarding policy recommendations related to the recognition, restructuring and evolution of student societies;
- Training sessions for new and current Investigating Officers and Hearing Officers, as well as Division Heads, related to their roles under the *Code of Student Conduct* had been held over the summer;
- Work would continue to implement the 22 recommendations of the Mental Health Framework; One of the recommendations that would be discussed further is the development of an involuntary leave policy.
- “*The Step Up*” program which was a week-long, residential, pre-orientation program for international students was expanded to include graduate students. UofT had a welcoming booth for all students arriving through Pearson International Airport this year.
- The work of the Presidential and Provostial Committee on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence continued to develop university wide recommendations which would be presented to the President and Provost;
- A new website had been created at safety.utoronto.ca

One member expressed enthusiasm regarding the many initiatives and focus on mental health issues. Another member suggested that the university place more emphasis on the needs of the Trans student community and their related issues which could be incorporated into the discussions on mental health initiatives and anti-sexual harassment initiatives that were already underway.

Professor Welsh stated that she welcomed the feedback. She noted that she was a Member of the Presidential and Provostial Committee on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence since it had

been created; and, was now the Co-Chair along with the Vice-President Human Resources and Equity. Together, they would work closely on these important issues and would continue to provide updates to the Board.

The Chair thanked Professor Welsh for her first presentation to the Board.

2. Calendar of Business: 2015-16

The Chair referred members to the Calendar of Business and noted that it would be updated online every Friday on the Governing Council website.

3. Summer Executive Authority: Annual Report on UAB Approvals

The Chair noted that there were no approvals under Summer Executive Authority.

4. Presentations:

Update on Student Mental Health Initiatives

Ms Fromowitz provided an update on the University's student mental health initiatives. She explained that the 22 recommendations contained in the *Report of the Provostial Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health* continued to be implemented by staff, faculty and students.

Ms Fromowitz stated that a "just in time" communication strategy that ensured students were informed of all programs and services available and how and when to access them was launched. This included print-based navigation pieces (distributed to members) and Student Life web-based enhancements promoting a "HealthyU", which were available via a variety of delivery modes, including Facebook and other social media.

Ms Fromowitz also described the following:

- Strength-based programming initiatives such as FITA (From Intention to Action) which provided personal and learning support for students who felt overwhelmed by the pressures of being a student;
- An embedded counselling program that had been expanded to include graduate students;
- The opening of the Conflict Resolution Centre at Grad Studies and the hiring of a counsellor to address supervisory relationship issues, isolation and others issues, with a focus on graduate student mental health needs;
- Mental health literacy programs and other educational offerings for staff and faculty;
- The development of a standardized mental health education program for all student leaders, including orientation leaders, residence dons, student peer mentors and others.
- The development of metrics to track usage within the health services area, along with targets for service delivery.

Ms Fromowitz responded to earlier comments regarding resources for Trans students and explained that the University would continue to work with the community to improve services. Improved signage and mapping of the location of gender-neutral bathrooms had been undertaken for the entire

tri-campus. The expansion of gender neutral spaces (e.g. sport spaces including change rooms; space for Trans youth summer program) had also been identified.

The Chair thanked Ms Fromowitz for her update to the Board.

StudentMoveTO Survey

Professor Matti Siemiatycki and Mr. Chris Harding provided a presentation on the *StudentMoveTO* Survey.

Professor Siemiatycki explained that the survey research project came about as a result of discussions among the 4 university presidents of U of T, Ryerson, York and OCAD regarding the challenges that the GTA universities collectively confronted: public transportation was one such issue. The discussions led to the formation of the *StudentMoveTO Survey* which had been announced at a symposium on urban issues at U of T.

Professor Siemiatycki stated that despite having somewhat unique travel needs and challenges, university students' travel patterns and woes had not been well documented, and as a result were not adequately discussed in policy and popular debates. The survey which would include over 175,000 students was designed by top transportation researchers in Toronto, and for the first time, would yield systematic insights into post-secondary student travel behaviour and needs across the region.

Professor Siemiatycki stated that the researchers would make the anonymized data publicly available to students who would be able to use the data to improve their own understanding of the gravity of their transportation problems, and make informed demands to policy makers, and to the media to "write about students' travel woes". The public research data would also be made available to other researchers and professionals (i.e. engineers, city planners, etc.), so they could produce informed policies that would improve the quality of life for students who had attended one of the 4 universities.

Mr. Harding provided a step by step demonstration of the survey tool and the series of questions contained in it such as how students normally get to campus, how many days a week do they make their way to campus, what the typical travel time was, means of transportation, etc..

In response to several members' questions, Professor Siemiatycki stated that research funding was provided by and shared among the 4 current participating universities. The next step would be to approach the numerous colleges in the GTA to determine their interest to participate. The college student population was over 300 thousand.

The Chair thanked Professor Siemiatycki and Mr. Harding for their informative presentation.

CONSENT AGENDA

On motion duly moved, seconded, and carried

YOUR BOARD APPROVED

THAT the consent agenda be adopted and items on it approved.

5. Reports of the Previous Meetings: May 26, 2015 (No. 188) and June 2, 2015 (Special Meeting No. 189)

Report number 188 (May 26, 2015) and 189 (June 2, 2015) were approved.

6. Business Arising from the Report of the Previous Meeting

There was no business arising from the report of the previous meeting.

7. Date of Next Meeting: Monday, November 23, 2015 at 4:30 p.m.

The Chair informed members that the next meeting was scheduled for November 23, 2015 at 4:30 p.m.

8. Report of the Senior Assessor

The Vice-Provost reported on the following:

Online Threats

Professor Welsh reported that some very disturbing threats had been made towards feminist scholars in the Departments of Sociology and Women and Gender Studies on an online blog. She explained that in all cases when there were threats against a member of the community, the university worked closely with Toronto Police Services and Peel Regional Police and at times also engaged the services of a threat assessment expert. Although all the experts with whom the university consulted had indicated a low level of risk, it was understandable that some members of our community had felt unsafe.

Professor Welsh stated that the university would be looking at the centralized structures and resources that were in place for supporting faculty, staff and students who had felt they were at risk to determine if there was a need to augment or change its approach to ensure that people were safe and felt safe.

Professor Welsh stated that she appreciated the feedback from members and others regarding the need to further examine more effective ways to communicate with student leaders and others in such situations.

Voting on Campus

Professor Welsh reminded students that Elections Canada would have special ballot locations on all three campuses, and Election Day voting booths on the St. George campus for the 2015 Federal election.

9. Other Business

a) Call for Nominations for Striking Committee and Service Ancillaries Review Group (SARG)

The Chair stated that the University Affairs Board had a Striking Committee with the responsibility to recommend to the Board appointed, non-Governing Council members of the Board. He informed

members that a call for nominations for the Board’s Striking Committee and for the Service Ancillaries Review Group (SARG) would soon be issued by the Secretary.

The Committee Moved *In Camera*.

10. Appointments: Chair, Council on Student Services (COSS)

On motion duly moved, seconded and carried

YOUR BOARD APPROVED

THAT Mr. Eric Schwenger be appointed Chair of the Council on Student Services, effective immediately until April 30, 2016, as outlined in the memo by Professor Sandy Welsh, Vice-Provost, Students.

The Committee returned to open session

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Secretary

Chair

October 19, 2015