

# Informational Memo on the Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations

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## Context

At the University of Toronto, students have a vast array of co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities. There are student groups whose organization is informal and in which membership is voluntary. These student groups are subject to the *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups*.

Another category is “Student Societies”. Membership in these organizations is mandatory based on registration in a division or program. Residences may also have student societies, and some – such as *The Varsity* – are tri-campus. All such societies are subject to the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*.

Within this category of student societies, a few have been granted special status by the Governing Council as a “representative committee of students” to act as the voice of students in dealing with the University. These four broad-based representative student committees are the University of Toronto Students’ Union (SAC/UTSU), the Scarborough Campus Students’ Union (SCSU), the Graduate Students’ Union (GSU), and the Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students (APUS). (See Table 1).

## History

In 2014, the Provost recommended the development of two policies in response to the Report of the Student Societies Summit. The first policy is in regards to Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations. The second policy refers to the creation and realignment of student societies.

The issues discussed in the Summit – including complaints from members regarding the operation of societies, and disputes between societies – are evident beyond those societies involved in the Summit. Over the years, complaints have been received by the Vice-President & Provost on election issues, fee increases or implementation issues, and potential non-compliance with the society’s by-laws.

The first new policy provides greater clarity on the terms “open, accessible and democratic”, as used in the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* and creates a dispute resolution mechanism for members of a student society when a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved by the student society.

## Highlights

Currently, the Provost has the authority to review complaints once the societies' internal complaints mechanism has been exhausted under the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*. Under this Policy, the Vice-President and Provost may withhold fees if the society is not operating in an open, accessible and democratic manner.

The proposed draft *Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations* will:

- confirm the principle of the autonomy of student societies;
- describe principles to guide open, accessible and democratic functioning of student societies; and
- establish a complaint and resolution process for disputes not resolved by the student society.

The proposed draft Policy is divided into two sections. Section A outlines the principles of open, accessible and democratic functioning for campus groups and student societies. The principles are not all-encompassing and are intended to provide guidance on the terms “open, accessible and democratic” as per the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*. Section A also provides guidance to principles pertaining to the functioning of campus groups as per the *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups*.

Section B applies only to student societies on whose behalf the University collects compulsory fees as per the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*. This section outlines an appeals process for members should a matter not be resolved at the society level. The proposed *University Student Societies Complaint and Resolution Council (SSCRC)*'s membership is predominantly students. The SSCRC includes a Chair with dispute resolution experience and student members with representation from the “representative student committees” (UTSU, UTGSU, SCSU and APUS) and other student societies. **Note that a proposed change to the membership of the council will be forthcoming based on feedback received.**

The new Policy does not provide any additional power to the Provost, but provides clarity on the terms open, accessible and democratic and establishes a council with student membership to review complaints and resolve the complaint or provide recommendations to the society. The SSCRC may recommend the withholding of fees to the Vice-President and Provost under the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*. The authority to withhold fees remains the Vice-President and Provost's.

Table 2 provides a summary of the intersection with current Policies.

TABLE 1

**Student Organizations at the University of Toronto and Related Policy Framework**

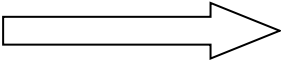
Student Societies		Campus Groups
Representative Student Committees	Divisional and Faculty Student Societies	Recognized Campus Groups
SAC (UTSU) SCSU UTGSU APUS	Over 40 including, for example: Arts and Science Student Union (ASSU) Medical Society UTMSU The Varsity	Over 800 campus groups recognized by the University. Examples include: Ironsports Club UTM Drama Club UTSC Investment Society
<p>Membership is automatic with registration in an academic division.</p> <p>Compulsory fees collected.</p> <p>Organization continues to exist until registration group no longer exists or organization decides to cease operation.</p>		<p>Voluntary membership.</p> <p>No compulsory fees.</p> <p>Yearly renewal of recognition necessary.</p>
Subject to the <i>Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees</i>		Subject to the <i>Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups</i>
<b>NEW:</b> Also subject to Sections A and B in the draft <i>Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations</i>		<b>NEW:</b> Also subject to Section A in the draft <i>Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations</i>

TABLE 2

Intersection with Existing Policy

<i>Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups</i>		
Related selections in Current Policy		Connection with new draft Policy
2(c)	Membership in groups should be open to all members of the University community without restriction on the grounds of national origin, race, religion, colour, or sex.	The new <i>Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations</i> will provide guidance on the principles of open, accessible and democratic functioning.
2(d)	The University's interest in the constitution is based on its concern that organizations and individuals using its name and its facilities are genuine campus organizations, and that they pursue activities in accordance with the law, and in addition that such things as organizational structure, membership, procedures, rules of conduct, etc. are spelled out so that all members who join a club and take part in its activities may do so with full knowledge of their rights and responsibilities within the group.	
3(a)	The University will not attempt to monitor or review the activities of a group in the normal course of events. It will however investigate complaints or charges that an organization has acted in a manner that is inconsistent with its constitution or with the requirements of this policy. If these complaints or charges prove to be valid, recognition may be withdrawn. Application for a renewal of recognition may be made at any time after the following September 30.	The complaints process and appeal mechanism for Campus Groups is addressed in the current <i>Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups</i> .  Campus Groups will not be subject to Section B on the new policy.
3(b)	Responsibility for the implementation of this policy is delegated to the administration. In the case of denial or withdrawal of recognition, a statement of the reasons will be provided. All administrative decisions to grant, deny, or withdraw recognition will be reported regularly to the University Affairs Board for information.	
3(c)	Groups wishing to appeal a decision may do so through the Office of the Assistant Vice- President, Student Affairs. In the event of an appeal, a hearing shall be held by an administrative officer designated by the Assistant Vice- President, Student Affairs not involved in the original decision.	

<b><i>Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees</i></b>		
	<b>Related selections in Current Policy</b>	<b>Connection with new draft Policy</b>
2.	<p><u>Conditions on Collection of Fee (Audit Requirement)</u></p> <p>The University shall continue to collect fees on behalf of student societies only so long as the individual societies operate in an open, accessible and democratic fashion, following the terms of their constitutions, and submit evidence, in the form of an annual report from an independent auditor licensed under the Public Accountancy Act, that adequate financial records are being maintained and that funds collected are being properly accounted for.</p>	<p>The new <i>Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations</i> will provide guidance on the terms open, accessible and democratic.</p>
3.	<p><u>Procedures to Address Allegations of Irregularities</u></p> <p>If the Office of the Vice-President and Provost has reason to believe that a student society is not operating in an open, accessible and democratic fashion and following the terms of its constitution, it shall inform the society of this in writing along with details of whatever inadequacies in the society's conduct of its affairs are alleged to exist. In the case of a divisional student society, the division head should similarly be informed.</p>	<p>Restated in the new <i>Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations</i></p>
	<p>The Office of the Vice-President and Provost should ensure that the society's internal complaint procedure had been exhausted before it proceeds further unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise, in which case this should be reported to the University Affairs Board.</p>	<p>Restated in the new <i>Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations</i></p>

Related selections in Current Policy	Connection with New Policy
3. If the Office of the Vice-President and Provost intends to proceed further, the student society should be given the opportunity to comment upon the allegations that have been made.	Restated in the new <i>Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations</i>
<p><b>New</b> </p>	The new Policy establishes a complaint and resolution mechanism for when a complaint is not resolved at the society level. The SSCRC membership is predominantly students. The SSCRC has the power to pursue informal resolution; issue a reprimand or make recommendations.
If the Office of the Vice-President and Provost continues to have reason to believe that significant constitutional or procedural irregularities exist, further instalments of fees may be withheld.	The new Policy restates that the Vice-President and Provost maintains the authority to withhold fees.
<p><u>Report of Fees Withheld</u></p> <p>Whenever funds are withheld from a student society, the Office of the Vice-President and Provost shall so inform the next meeting of the University Affairs Board. A decision to withhold funds may be appealed by the student society involved to the University Affairs Board.</p>	No Change.

## DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

# Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations

2016

## Preamble

The University of Toronto has long held that student societies and recognized campus groups are autonomous organizations. Students' membership in student societies is automatically determined by registration and the University collects a compulsory non-academic fee from them on behalf of their societies. Student societies are required under the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* to operate in an "open, accessible and democratic" manner. The *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups* sets out the principles for recognition of campus groups entitled to use the name "University of Toronto" as well as the responsibilities of those groups in attaining and maintaining that recognition, including principles that encompass openness, transparency and democracy. This *Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations* is intended to provide guidance on what constitutes "open, accessible and democratic" in relation to both student societies and campus groups, (for the purpose of this Policy, referred to as "Student Organizations"); and to assist in the resolution of disputes within and among student societies.

### *Purpose*

The *Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations* ("this Policy") is in response to student requests for greater clarity on the terms "open, accessible and democratic", as used in the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* and the creation of an effective dispute resolution mechanism for members of a student society when it is asserted that a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved by the student society. Complaints can include a broad range of concerns from individual members regarding the operations of student societies, elections, as well as issues between student societies. The *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* shall continue to apply, including its Procedures to Address Allegations of Irregularities. Societies themselves have the internal structures and skills to resolve complaints made by their members. However, a process is required to respond to certain complaints that cannot be resolved at the society level and which can inform the decisions of the Vice-President and Provost in carrying out responsibilities under the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* which may lead to a decision to withhold fees.

This *Policy* includes two sections. *Section A* describes principles which are indicative of open, accessible and democratic functioning of student organizations and applies to all student organizations at the University of Toronto. For the purposes of this Policy, "student organization" shall mean any group

approved under the auspices of the *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups*<sup>1</sup> and any group for which the University collects fees under the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*<sup>2</sup>.

*Section B* outlines a complaint and resolution mechanism for complaints involving Student Societies. The definition of “Student Society” used in this Policy shall be the same definition used in the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*. The principles of open, accessible and democratic functioning, outlined in *Section A*, shall inform and guide the complaint and resolution process outlined in *Section B*.

This Policy is intended to work in concert with the *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups* and the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*.

## Policy

The University of Toronto holds freedom of thought, inquiry and speech as among its highest ideals, and such freedoms apply to its student body. The University affirms the value of autonomous student organizations operating independently and without interference from the University in their day-to-day operations. However, autonomy must be exercised in a manner that is compliant with the law and University policy. Further, all student organizations must conduct themselves in an open, accessible and democratic manner.

### A. Open, Accessible and Democratic

**This section applies to Student Societies as defined by the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* and Campus Groups as defined by the *Policy for the Recognition of Campus Groups*.**

Openness, accessibility and democracy are broadly accepted ideals applicable to many community-based organizations. There is no single definition of what constitutes an open organization, an accessible one, or a democratic one. The terms are inter-related, take on meaning depending on the context, and may vary by the size, scope and mandate of an organization. They may evolve as organizations and the expectations of their members change. For a student organization to be considered open, accessible and democratic, the following attributes tend to apply.

The criteria listed below are not absolute, since they are meant to describe general standards in accordance with which student organizations, ranging in size and budget from very small to the very

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<sup>1</sup> Campus Groups are voluntary organizations formed by members of the University community. See: *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups*, Revised May 25, 1993

<sup>2</sup> “A Student Society is an organization on whose behalf the University collects a compulsory non-academic incidental fee, in which membership is automatic and determined by registration and status in a particular division or program, or in one of a number of divisions or programs of the University of Toronto. In the case of a residence student society, membership is determined by residency in a particular University residence.” *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*, September 23, 2003



largest, should act. This Policy acknowledges that unique, autonomous organizations will choose various means to act in an open, accessible and democratic way, and that differences in the application of these principles are to be expected.

**Open student organizations** have the following qualities:

- Widely-available information on the organization's operations, membership, and mandate
- Transparency about rules of operations
- Willingness to freely share information about the organization with members
- Clear and transparent membership criteria
- Commitment to ensuring that meetings, events and activities of the organization are communicated to the membership in such a way that members are able to participate fully in such meetings, events and activities
- Commitment to ensuring that members' voices and perspectives whether expressed individually or by a group, can be heard and, if appropriate, acted upon

**Accessible student organizations** are characterized by many of the following:

- Willingness and desire to integrate new members into the group
- In the case of voluntary groups, an environment that seeks out and welcomes new members, with clearly articulated and publicly available criteria regarding how to join
- Commitment to encourage and facilitate participation in the full scope of the organization's activities
- Transparency about what the activities are
- Openness to scrutiny
- Commitment to diversity and equity
- Commitment to clarity in communications
- Commitment to allowing a diversity of perspectives to be heard
- Fair processes for members to initiate change

**Democratic student organizations** are characterized by many of the following:

- Openness to the participation of members in all activities
- Effective and clearly identified channels of communication between members and the executive
- Transparency and accountability to the membership, especially in budgeting and expenditures
- Transparent management
- Commitment to consider and respect the range of members' views whether majority or minority in nature
- Ensuring that those affected by decisions have a voice in processes leading to decisions
- Ways for dissent, and for complaints, to be considered and resolved, and, where appropriate, processed at successively higher levels within the organization
- Ability of all members to stand for executive positions
- Impartial and fair elections processes that allow members to participate easily as both voters and candidates, including the provision of an arms-length Chief Returning Officer for elections

## **B. Complaint and Resolution Process**

**The complaint and resolution process shall only apply to Student Societies as defined by *the Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*.**

A dispute resolution process, including a review or appeal of disputes can assist in maintaining the elements of openness, accessibility and democracy within an organization. Part of openness, accessibility and democracy is to have good internal processes that deal effectively and fairly with disputes and complaints, and to ensure that these are well understood and open in a fair and reasonable way to all who are affected. On occasion, a dispute may not be resolved internally and a process of review or appeal that goes beyond the specific student society may be required for resolution to be achieved.

Therefore, there is a requirement for a University-wide complaint and resolution process applicable to Student Societies.

The society's internal complaint and resolution process, referred to in the Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees, must be exhausted before proceeding to the Complaint and Resolution Process outlined in this Policy. Further, the University acknowledges that the societies themselves have a role in the establishment of a complaint and resolution process when disputes are between societies. Therefore, where agreements between Student Societies include a complaints resolution mechanism for inter-student society disputes, such mechanism should first be exhausted before the matter is reviewed by the *University Student Societies Complaint and Resolution Council*.

### ***University Student Societies Complaint and Resolution Council (SSCRC)***

The SSCRC will be established with jurisdiction and authority to consider complaints that a student society is not operating in an open, accessible and democratic fashion and, or following the terms of its constitution.

The following shall apply to the SSCRC and its processes:

- The society's own internal complaint mechanism must be exhausted before a complaint may be referred to the SSCRC
- Where an agreement between two or more student societies contains a mechanism for resolution of disputes among them, such complaint mechanism must be exhausted before such a complaint may be referred to the SSCRC.
- The principles of open, accessible and democratic functioning, outlined in *Section A*, shall inform and guide the SSCRC complaint and resolution process
- The SSCRC has the power, in its discretion, to pursue informal resolution among the parties; to issue a reprimand where it determines that a student society has not operated in an open, accessible and democratic fashion or followed its constitution; to recommend to a society that changes to its by-laws, constitution, or operational processes be made; to recommend that actions be taken by the student society to enhance openness, accessibility and democratic

operation; and/or to recommend to the Vice-President and Provost that fees be withheld pursuant to the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*

- The complaint shall be considered by the SSCRC in a timely manner
- The SSCRC shall avoid any conflict of interest or reasonable apprehension of bias and ensure that none of its members considering a complaint has any significant direct prior or present involvement in the issue that is the subject matter of the complaint being considered
- Members of the SSCRC shall disclose any conflicts of interest in advance of considering any complaint
- The SSCRC will make its recommendations in writing with reasons

The SSCRC membership shall be as follows: one (1) University faculty, staff or alumni member appointed by the Vice-President and Provost with experience in dispute resolution (will act as Chair), two (2) student members appointed by the representative student committees and two (2) student members nominated by the divisional student societies. Student members must be registered in a program leading to a University of Toronto degree. Should the representative student committees or the divisional student societies fail to provide member nominations, the University will appoint the student members. One (1) non-voting member will also be appointed by the Vice-President and Provost.

**NOTE:** As a result of consultation, a revised membership of the council will be proposed.

The SSCRC will have the authority to recommend that no further action is required, to undertake informal resolution including mediation; to recommend changes to by-laws, constitutions or operational processes; and, or to recommend other actions to be taken by the society. The SSCRC may also recommend the withholding of fees to the Vice-President and Provost under the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*. The authority to withhold fees remains the Vice-President and Provost's.

The Vice President and Provost will consider the recommendations of the SSCRC in the determination of whether or not to withhold fees. However, should there be a compelling reason to do so, the Vice-President & Provost may take immediate action under the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* without the recommendation of the SSCRC.

Procedures for *University Student Societies Complaint and Resolution Council (SSCRC)* will be set by the Office of the Vice-President & Provost and reported for information to the Governing Council or its designated Board or Committee.

## Glossary

**Student Society:** Organization for which membership is compulsory, and based on registration and status. The University collects compulsory fees from the members on the society's behalf.

Relevant Policy: *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees, September 23, 2003*

*A student society is an organization on whose behalf the University collects a compulsory non-academic incidental fee, in which membership is automatic and determined by registration and status in a particular division or program, or in one of a number of divisions or programs of the University of Toronto. In the case of a residence student society, membership is determined by residency in a particular University residence.*

**Representative Student Committees:** Student societies with special status, derived from the authority that exists in the *University of Toronto Act* for the University to recognize a representative committee of the students, to act as the voice of the students in dealing with the University.

Currently there are four (4) representative student committees: Students' Administrative Council acting as the University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU), Association of Part-time Students (APUS), Scarborough Students' Union (SCSU), and University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union (UTGSU).

Relevant Policy: 1947 University of Toronto Act, Section 34 (1):

*The Board may make provision for enabling the students of the University, University College and the federated universities and federated colleges to appoint a representative committee of themselves to be chosen in such manner as shall be approved by the Board, which shall be the recognized official medium of communication on behalf of such students between them and the Board.*

**Divisional Student Society:** Those student societies as defined by the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* that are not representative student committees.

**Campus Group:** Voluntary organizations formed by members of the University community. Membership in campus groups is open to all members of the University community.

Relevant Policy: *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups, Revised May 25, 1993*

**Student Organizations:** For the purposes of this Policy, "Student Organization" shall refer to student societies and campus groups as defined above.

Relevant Policies: *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups* and the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*.

## DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

# Procedures for the Student Societies Complaint and Resolution Council

2016

These administrative procedures accompany the *Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations* (hereinafter referred to as the *Policy*) and in particular, relate to the *Student Societies Complaint and Resolution Council* (hereinafter referred to as the *SSCRC*).

These administrative procedures have been developed by the Office of the Vice-President and Provost in accordance with the *Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations*. The Office of the Vice-President and Provost will monitor, review and amend these procedures from time to time as appropriate for the implementation of the *Policy*.

### **Council Membership:**

Membership shall be appointed as follows: one (1) member appointed with experience in dispute resolution (will act as Chair), two (2) student members appointed by the representative student committees and two (2) student members nominated by the divisional student societies. Student members must be registered in program leading to a University of Toronto degree. Student members shall reflect the diverse nature of the University's student community. One (1) non-voting member will be appointed by the Vice-President and Provost, to provide secretariat support and advice on relevant University policies and procedures.

The Chair will be appointed by the Vice-President and Provost and will be a staff or faculty member, or member of the alumni of the University of Toronto. The Chair must be appropriately qualified and experienced in dispute resolution.

The representative student committees shall name an additional two (2) students and the divisional student societies shall name two (2) additional students as alternate committee members.

**NOTE:** As a result of consultation, a revised membership of the council will be proposed.

The names and contact information for student members shall be provided to the Office of the Vice-President and Provost by June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

Should the representative student committees or the divisional student societies fail to provide member names, the University will appoint the student members.

The committee membership shall be posted on-line.

## **Terms of Voting Members:**

The Chair of the *SSCRC* shall be appointed for a term of two years. Student members shall be appointed for a one year term. The Chair and student members may be re-appointed. Appointments shall begin on July 1.

## **Process:**

The *SSCRC* may develop its own process but such process must include the following:

- The complainant shall outline the nature of the complaint and confirm that the society's complaint procedure has been exhausted, in writing to the Chair.
- An alternate student member may be used when a committee member is in a position of conflict of interest or has had significant direct prior or present involvement in the matter complained of. The Chair will select the alternate member(s).
- Before proceeding, the Chair shall ensure that the society's own internal complaint mechanism has been exhausted as per the *Policy for Compulsory, Non-Academic Incidental Fees*. Further, the Chair shall ensure that, where applicable, any complaint mechanisms contained in agreements between the societies shall be exhausted.
- The Chair shall inform the student society of the complaint.
- The *SSCRC* shall provide the society with the opportunity to comment on the allegations.
- The *SSCRC* shall review the information provided, request additional information and/or conduct interviews.
- The *SSCRC* shall review the complaint in the context of the *Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations* and the *Policy for Compulsory, Non-Academic Incidental Fees*.
- The *SSCRC* shall determine the outcome based on the information gathered.
- Wherever possible and appropriate the *SSCRC* will consider informal resolution including mediation.
- Should the *SSCRC* be unable to come to a decision by consensus, the decision shall be made by a simple majority.
- The *SSCRC* may determine that no further action is required.
- Given that the student societies vary in mandate, size, budget, etc., and given that the standards of open, accessible and democratic functioning may evolve over time, the *SSCRC* may consider, but is not bound by, previous decisions.

Should informal resolution not be possible or appropriate, the *SSCRC* may:

- recommend changes to the societies by-laws, constitutions or operational processes;
- recommend other actions to be taken by the society;
- write a formal reprimand; and/or
- recommend the withholding of fees to the Vice-President and Provost as per the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*.

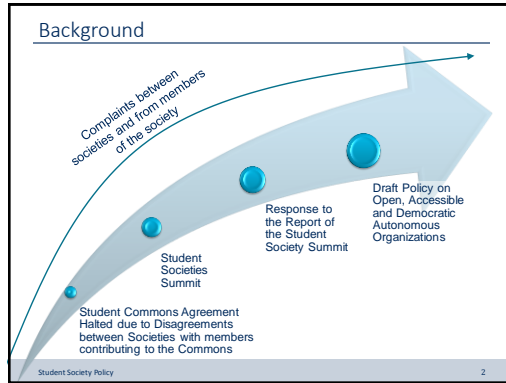
The decision of the *SSCRC* will be issued in writing to both the student society and the complainant in a timely manner. Summaries of the *SSCRC*'s decisions will be posted on-line. Copies of the decisions and related materials will be maintained by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students.



**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

**DRAFT Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations**

UTSC Campus Affairs Committee  
April 27, 2016



Student Societies		Campus Groups
<b>Representative Student Committees</b>	<b>Divisional and Faculty Student Societies</b>	<b>Recognized Campus Groups</b>
SAC (UTSU); SCSU; UTGSU; APUS	Over 40 including ASSU, The Varsity, UTMSU, MedSoc	Over 800 campus groups recognized by the University.
Subject to the <i>Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees</i>		Subject to the <i>Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups</i>
<b>NEW:</b> Also subject to Sections A and B in the draft <i>Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations</i>		<b>NEW:</b> Also subject to Section A in the draft <i>Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations</i>
Student Society Policy		3

**Open, Accessible and Democratic**

Applies to Student Societies and Campus Groups

No single definition of what constitutes an open organization, an accessible one, or a democratic one.

Terms are inter-related, take on meaning depending on the context, and may vary by the size, scope and mandate of an organization.

May evolve as organizations and the expectations of their members change.

Policy acknowledges that unique, autonomous organizations will choose various means to act in an open, accessible and democratic way, and that differences in the application of these principles are to be expected.

Student Society Policy 4

**Student Societies Complaint and Resolution Council (SSCRC)**

Applies to Student Societies

The SSCRC will be established with jurisdiction and authority to consider complaints that a student society is not operating in an open, accessible and democratic fashion and, or following the terms of its constitution.

Student Society Policy 5

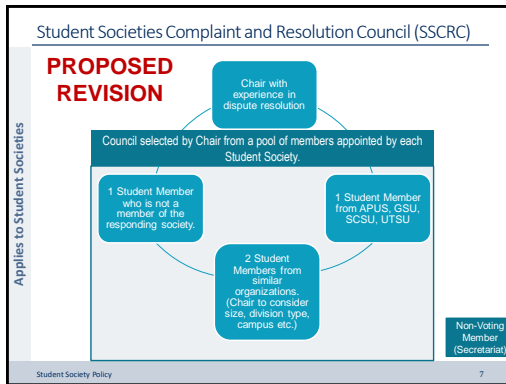
**Intersection with Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees**

Sec 3: Procedures to Address Allegations of Irregularities

Applies to Student Societies	✓	If the Office of the Vice-President and Provost (OVPP) has reason to believe that a student society is not operating in an open, accessible and democratic fashion and following the terms of its constitution, it shall inform the society of this in writing.
	✓	The OVPP should ensure that the society's internal complaint procedure has been exhausted before it proceeds further unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise.
	✓	If the Office of the Vice-President and Provost intends to proceed further, the student society should be given the opportunity to comment upon the allegations that have been made.
	<b>NEW</b>	The new Policy establishes a complaint and resolution mechanism for when a complaint is not resolved at the society level.
	✓	If the Office of the Vice-President and Provost continues to have reason to believe that significant constitutional or procedural irregularities exist, further instalments of fees may be withheld.

Student Society Policy 6





- ### SSCRC Membership (PROPOSED REVISION)
- Applies to Student Societies
- Each student society will appoint a member to the pool for the Council.
    - The appointee will be a student registered in a program leading to a degree.
    - The appointee will not be a member of the Society's Executive or a staff member of the Society.
  - Membership of the Council shall be determined by the Chair based on the following criteria:
    - One representative from a representative student committee.
    - One representative that is not a member of the subject organization(s).
    - Two additional members to be selected from similar organizations. The Chair will consider:
      - the type of society, for example, residence council, media-based society;
      - campus affiliation;
      - division type (graduate, undergraduate (first entry or professional faculty)); and
      - size of the organization.
- Student Society Policy 8

- ### SSCRC
- Applies to Student Societies
- The society's own internal complaint mechanism must be exhausted before a complaint may be referred to the SSCRC
  - Where an agreement between two or more student societies contains a mechanism for resolution of disputes among them, such complaint mechanism must be exhausted before such a complaint may be referred to the SSCRC.
  - The principles of open, accessible and democratic functioning shall inform and guide the SSCRC complaint and resolution process
- Student Society Policy 9

- ### SSCRC
- Applies to Student Societies
- The SSCRC has the power, in its discretion,
    - to pursue informal resolution among the parties;
    - to issue a reprimand where it determines that a student society has not operated in an open, accessible and democratic fashion or followed its constitution;
    - to recommend to a society that changes to its by-laws, constitution, or operational processes be made;
    - to recommend that actions be taken by the student society to enhance openness, accessibility and democratic operation; and/or
    - to recommend to the Vice-President and Provost that fees be withheld pursuant to the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*
- Student Society Policy 10

- ### SSCRC
- Applies to Student Societies
- The complaint shall be considered by the SSCRC in a timely manner
  - The SSCRC shall avoid any conflict of interest or reasonable apprehension of bias and ensure that none of its members considering a complaint has any significant direct prior or present involvement in the issue that is the subject matter of the complaint being considered
  - Members of the SSCRC shall disclose any conflicts of interest in advance of considering any complaint
  - The SSCRC will make its recommendations in writing with reasons
- Student Society Policy 11