

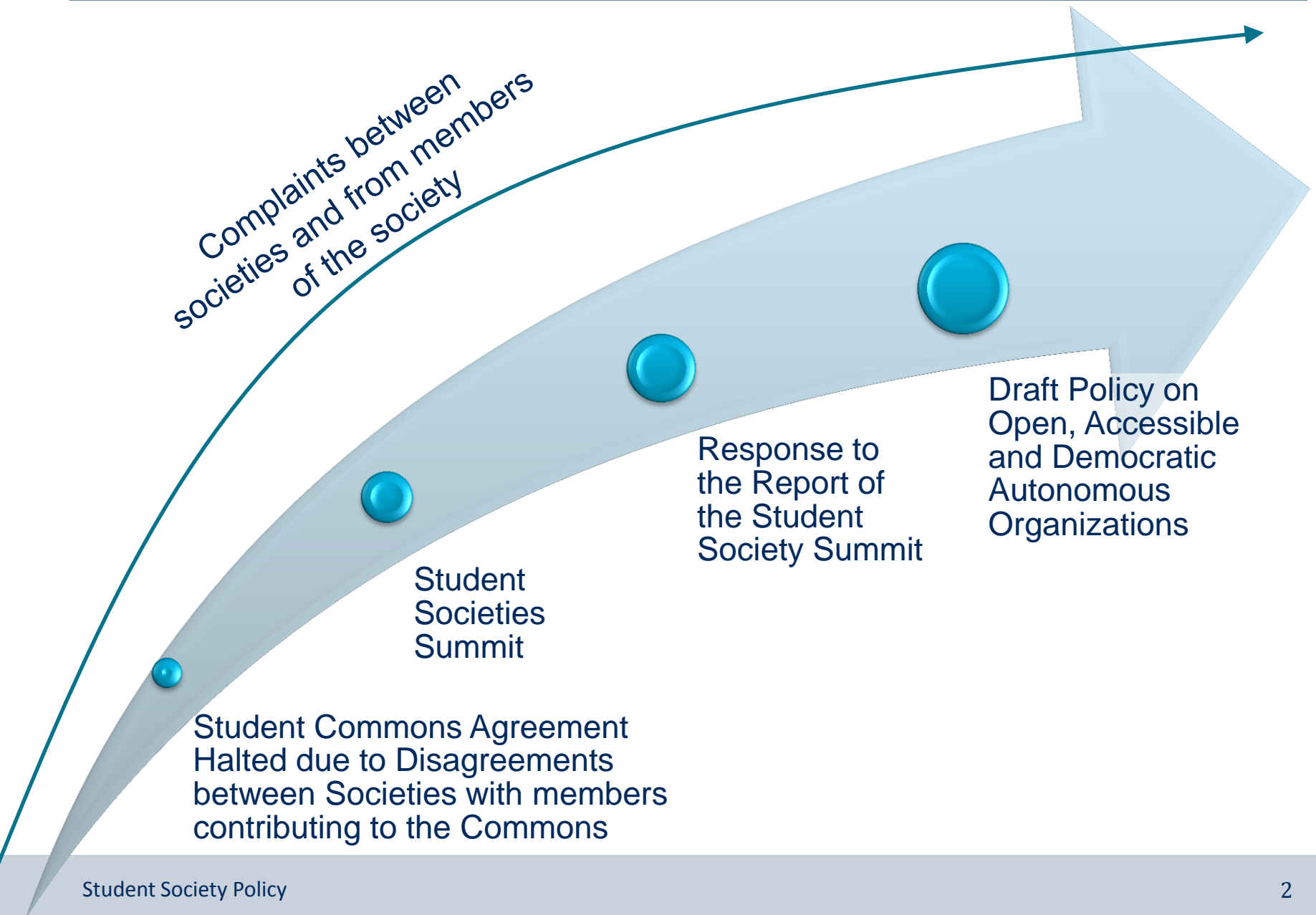


UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

DRAFT Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations

University Affairs Board
March 15, 2016

Background



Student Societies		Campus Groups
<p>Representative Student Committees</p> <p>SAC (UTSU)</p> <p>SCSU</p> <p>UTGSU</p> <p>APUS</p>	<p>Divisional and Faculty Student Societies</p> <p>Over 40 including, for example:</p> <p>Arts and Science Student Union (ASSU)</p> <p>Medical Society</p> <p>UTMSU</p> <p>The Varsity</p>	<p>Recognized Campus Groups</p> <p>Over 800 campus groups recognized by the University.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <p>Ironsports Club</p> <p>UTM Drama Club</p> <p>UTSC Investment Society</p>
<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>

Student Societies

Campus Groups

Representative Student Committees

Divisional and Faculty Student Societies

Recognized Campus Groups

SAC (UTSU); SCSU; UTGSU; APUS

Over 40 including ASSU, The Varsity, UTMSU, MedSoc

Over 800 campus groups recognized by the University.

Subject to the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*

Subject to the *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups*

NEW: Also subject to Sections A and B in the draft *Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations*

NEW: Also subject to Section A in the draft *Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations*

Open, Accessible and Democratic

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 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.

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

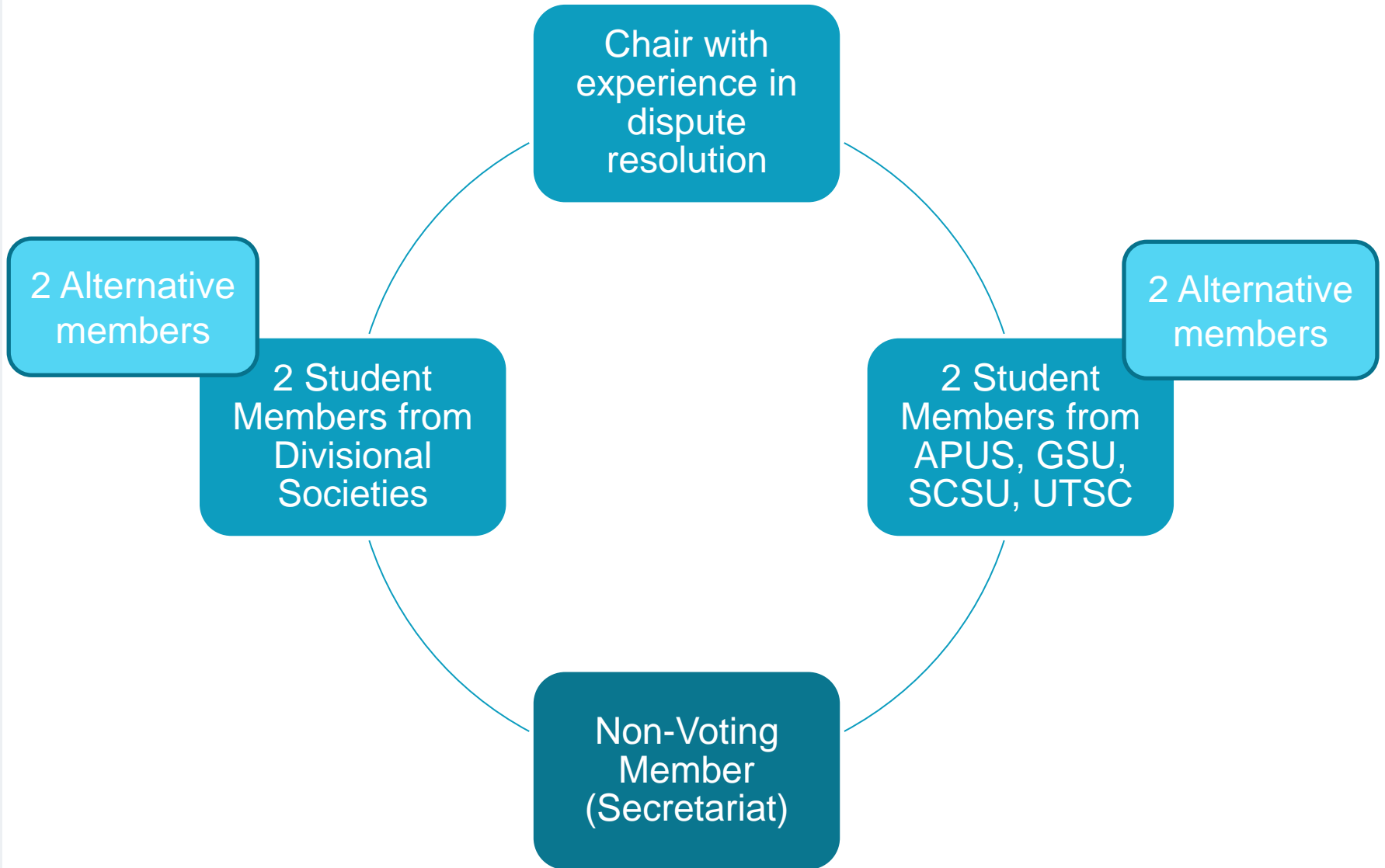
Sec 3: Procedures to Address Allegations of Irregularities

✓	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.
NEW	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.

Applies to Student Societies

Student Societies Complaint and Resolution Council (SSCRC)

Applies to Student Societies



SSCRC

- 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

- 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*

SSCRC

- 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

Consultation





Student Consultations

Consultation on: Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations

We are seeking input from U of T students on current policy development regarding Student Societies.

In 2014, the Provost recommended the development of two policies related to Student Societies in response to the Report of the Student Societies Summit. The issues discussed in the Summit – including complaints from members regarding the operation of societies, and disputes between societies – are evident beyond just those societies involved in the Summit. Over the years, complaints have been received by the Vice-President & Provost on election issues, fee increase or implementation issues, and potential non-compliance with the society's by-laws.

This current consultation process pertains specifically to a proposed policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations and supporting documentation.

About the documents:

The draft *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 (as defined in the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*) and campus groups (as defined in the *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups*); and to assist in the resolution of disputes within and among student societies. The documents provided are for consultation purposes.

It is recommended that you review the *Informational Memo on Policy* before you proceed to reviewing the draft policy document and procedures, or completing the Feedback Forms. The Feedback Forms will walk you through the various sections of each document or you can jump to the end to provide over all comments. Provide comments for all or just those sections that you are most interested in.

Feedback Forms and Draft Policy Documents

To access this information, students will need to login using your UTORid. If you are not a current U of T students, please contact the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (vp.students@utoronto.ca).

Confidentiality

Comments on this consultation will be collected by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students. Individual students' comments will be stripped of any identifying information to ensure confidentiality. Clearly identifiable comments received from student organizations will be reported as coming from those organizations. A summary report of the consultation will also be developed for and presented to various boards and committees.

Login

Policy Feedback Form

The University of Toronto is seeking feedback on the development of a new policy regarding Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations. Please take the opportunity to share your thoughts.

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION: Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations February 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* and any group for which the University collects fees under the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*.

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*.

Provide feedback on the "Preamble" & "Purpose" sections:

What we have heard to date:

- **Concerns regarding the Membership of the Council**
 - More faculty members and/or more student members?
 - No student society executive members?
 - How are differences in societies – mandate, number of members, graduate/undergraduate students, campuses etc. addressed?
 - How the membership of the Council is chosen?