

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

REPORT ON AN OPEN FORUM TO THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

October 3, 2003

To the Elections Committee,
University of Toronto.

This report represents a summary of an open forum held by the Elections Committee on October 3, 2003 in the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Medical Sciences Building, with the following members present:

Michael Marrus (Chair)
Susan Scace
Karen Lewis
Adam Watson

Secretariat:

Ms. Cristina Oke, Chief Returning Officer
Mr. Andrew Drummond, Secretary

Regrets:

Ms. Shirley Hoy

Guests in attendance:

Ashley Morton, President, Students' Administrative Council
Paul Tsang, Executive Director, Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students
Howard Tam, University Affairs Commissioner, Students' Administrative Council
Michael Foderick, Governing Council Member

Summary of Discussion and Recommended Actions:

Following initial greetings and introductions, the Chair notified all present the purpose of the open forum. All present agreed that discussion should be conducted in a format that would allow discussion of written submissions as well as any oral submissions received at the forum.

Prior to the meeting, members had received copies of seven written submissions, each of which was discussed in turn. In addition, members discussed concerns raised by guests present at the open forum.

The main points of discussion centred on the following:

- A series of suggestions that, strictly speaking, fell outside the purview of the Elections Committee, namely, that recruitment for the Academic Board was difficult, especially in larger Faculties, and that the balance among different

constituencies on Governing Council and its Boards was on occasion inappropriate. In particular, suggestions cited that alumni were overrepresented on Governing Council, students were underrepresented on the Academic Board, and that staff were underrepresented throughout governance structures.

ACTION: The Chair agreed that he would communicate with the Chair of Governing Council that these issues had been raised and should be taken under consideration.

- Suggestions from student members that the division of seats within the undergraduate estate was inappropriate for a variety of reasons. In particular, the Students' Administrative Council (SAC), as well as students at both suburban campuses, were considering a formal split to allow campus-based student groups to appear. If that change were to occur, it would perhaps be appropriate to designate a Council seat each for undergraduate students from each of the Scarborough and Mississauga campuses.

ACTION: None during 2003. All present agreed that students should be free to define their own organizational structure, and Governing Council would be informed in part by the status of student representation resulting from any reorganization.

- A suggestion to allow campaigning during the voting period. The Chair polled those present and noted that representatives of full-time students supported the change but that a representative of the Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students opposed the change.

ACTION: Elections Committee to consider amending guidelines to allow campaigning during the voting period.

- The introduction of a ballot box alternative to web-based voting, with a single box at each of the three campuses. One intervenor suggested that it would introduce very few problems to offer that alternative to those who were unable to vote by web ballot, as had been the case during the SAC elections. For the record, it was noted that there had been some computer difficulties during the 2003 elections and concerns around privacy and confidentiality of web-based balloting still existed in some quarters. Furthermore, it may possible to prevent web-based balloting under existing systems.

ACTION: Chief Returning Officer to investigate feasibility and report back to Elections Committee. Chief Returning Officer to consult with Computing and Network Services to improve system's functioning. Chief Returning Officer to investigate whether student clubs require student identification numbers as part of signup.

- The alignment of elections periods for Governing Council and Students' Administrative Council, as well as the alignment of elections rules.

ACTION: Chief Returning Officer to investigate feasibility and report back to Elections Committee.

- Improvement of awareness of elections, their importance, and ability to get involved. Suggestions included mass e-mailouts, improved links from main University web pages, request for library systems to make elections page the home page of Information Common during balloting period.

ACTION: Chief Returning Officer to consider all feasible methods to increase awareness.