

Report of the Senior Assessor
(Agenda Item 9)

A) STUDENT COMMONS:

As some members know, in the spring of 2007, the Governing Council approved an interim project planning report for a Student Commons on the St. George Campus and the assignment of a portion of Site 12 (on the west side of Devonshire Place) for the project. On April 29, 2008, the University Affairs Board also approved a levy as part of the University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU) fee to fund the capital and operating costs of the project. The University had made a commitment to the students to contribute fifty cents against each dollar raised through the levy for the capital costs of the project, consistent with contributions to student centres on the UTM and UTSC campuses. The Commons would be operated by UTSU, subject to a detailed operating agreement currently being negotiated.

As reported by the Provost to the Planning and Budget Committee on September 20, 2010, the administration has engaged the UTSU in a discussion about an exciting opportunity to consider an alternate location for the Student Commons. 230 College Street, which currently houses the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, will become available if a plan is realized by the Daniels Faculty to move to 1 Spadina Crescent (the building in the middle of Spadina Crescent north of College Street) and undertake an ambitious and exciting renovation and expansion of the building.

UTSU is beginning to discuss this alternative with their members. If it is ultimately decided that the Student Commons should occupy 230 College Street, a number of major renovations to the building will be required. However, we believe the Student Commons could be open sooner, at a lower cost, and with more space than currently envisioned for Site 12. In addition, the Commons would be self-contained, meaning that there would not be any complications related to sharing a complex with multiple occupants.

Assuming that 230 College Street is ultimately considered to be viable for the Student Commons, this Board will see a new project planning report for the Student Commons in the near future.

B) POLICY ON THE TEMPORARY USE OF SPACE:

Since many campus organizations use University space on a temporary basis, and because various aspects of student life are within the areas of interest of the University Affairs Board, I would like to draw members' attention to a new Policy on the Temporary

Use of Space which is currently making its way through governance. On September 20, 2010, the Planning & Budget Committee, which is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and making recommendations concerning the use of University resources including space, considered and recommended to the Academic Board that it approve the new policy replacing the existing Policy for the Allocation of Rooms -- Extracurricular Bookings, which is 22 years old. In addition, new procedures are being established by the Office of the Vice-President & Provost which outline the process for booking space, the rental rates, reasons for refusals of bookings, conditions of use, and other operational issues.

The 22-year-old Policy is not a typical University of Toronto policy document as it contains a combination of principles as well as specific operational guidelines. The proposed new Policy along with the new Procedures are designed to address the lack of clarity that has existed in our policy framework. The new Policy outlines the overarching principles by which space is to be used and assigned for temporary use in both academic and non-academic contexts. Unlike the existing Policy that applied only to a limited amount of space on the St. George Campus, the proposed Policy is more comprehensive as it applies to the temporary use of space on all three campuses. The proposed Policy also applies a consistency of approach to the temporary use of space. Both of these were key objectives of this policy revision exercise.

The new Policy and Procedures were drafted by a group which included representatives of the Provost's Office (Sheree Drummond), the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (Jim Delaney), the Office of Space Management (Steve Bailey), and legal counsel (Nora Gillespie) in consultation with UTM, UTSC, and Student Life on the St. George Campus.

Academic Board will consider the new Policy on October 7, 2010.

C) FRAMEWORK ON OFF-CAMPUS SAFETY:

Hopefully in the next or subsequent cycle, Business Board, which is responsible for policy pertaining to the health and safety of all members of the University, will consider a new Framework for Off-Campus Safety. The need for the new framework and guidelines arises from several areas: (a) the existing policy on safety in field research requires updating and there are a variety of guidelines and practices across the University that would benefit from consolidation under an institutional umbrella to facilitate the consistent application of the general principles in the proposed Framework; (b) there have been suggestions from the Office of the Ombudsperson and elsewhere that there is a need for guidelines on matters related to travel abroad; and (c) there are growing areas of off-campus activity which require similar attention.

Based on the following three principles, the new framework is intended to inform the planning of University activities which occur off-campus:

1. Safety must be taken into account during planning;
2. The University and its members have a shared responsibility on these matters; and

3. Assessment of the level of risk and the measures proposed to address such risks is a key part of determining whether an activity should proceed.

Initially, there are four sets of Guidelines associated with the Framework on Off-Campus Safety:

1. The guidelines on safety in field research were initiated by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and were developed by the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.
2. The guidelines on safety abroad were developed by the Safety Abroad office and are reflective of current procedures implemented by that Office.
3. The guidelines on travel were based in large part on the guidelines in use by the Faculty of Physical Education and Health for intercollegiate team travel.
4. The guidelines on sponsorship of off-campus activities of campus organizations were developed by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students and reflect best practices on this issue.

At present, guidelines on experiential learning and community service are under consideration. Other guidelines may be developed as the need arises.