

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 139 OF THE UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS BOARD

January 16, 2007

To the Governing Council,
University of Toronto.

Your Board reports that it met on Tuesday, January 16, 2007 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall, with the following members present:

Dr. Claude Davis, In the Chair
Ms B. Elizabeth Vosburgh, Vice-Chair *
Professor David Farrar, Deputy Provost
and Vice-Provost, Students
Ms Anne E. MacDonald,
Director, Ancillary Services
Professor Varouj Aivazian
Ms Diana A.R. Alli
Mr. Terry Buckland
Ms Simona Chiose
Miss Coralie D'Souza
Mr. Robin Goodfellow
Ms Margaret Hancock
Mr. Richard Hydal
Ms Rae Johnson
Professor Bruce Kidd
Mr. Josh Koziembrocki
Mr. Steven Kraft
Mr. Chris McGrath
Mr. Faraz Rahim Siddiqui
Professor John Wedge

* Participated by teleconference.

Non-Voting Assessors:

Ms Susan Addario, Director, Student Affairs
Mr. Louis R. Charpentier, Secretary of the
Governing Council
Mr. Jim Delaney, Associate Director and
Senior Policy Advisor, Student Affairs
Professor Angela Hildyard, Vice-President,
Human Resources and Equity
Mr. Mark Overton, Dean of Student Affairs,
University of Toronto at Mississauga
Ms Elizabeth Sisam, Assistant Vice-President,
Campus and Facilities Planning
Ms Marilyn Van Norman, Director, Student
Services

Secretariat:

Mr. Neil Dobbs
Mr. Henry Mulhall

Regrets:

Mr. John M. Badowski
Professor William Gough
Ms. Melanie Tharamangalam
Ms. Johanna L. Weststar

In Attendance:

Ms Estefania Toledo, Member of the Governing Council
Dr. Robert Bennett, Former Member of the Governing Council and Past-Chair of the University
Affairs Board
Mr. Nouman Ashraf, Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Officer
Ms Francesca Dobbin, Director, Family Care Office and Family Relocation Services
Ms Tina Doyle, Manager, AccessAbility Services, University of Toronto at Scarborough
Ms Deanne Fisher, Associate Director, Program and Communication, Office of Student Affairs
In Attendance: (cont'd)

REPORT NUMBER 139 OF THE UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS BOARD – January 16, 2007

Professor Connie Guberman, Status of Women Officer and Special Advisor on Equity Issues
 Ms Kate Lawton, Employment Equity / *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* Officer
 Ms. Myra Lefkowitz, Manager, Health and Well Being Programs and Services
 Ms. Elizabeth Martin, Manager, AccessAbility Resource Centre, University of Toronto at Mississauga
 Ms. Janice Martin, Coordinator, Accessibility Services, St. George Campus
 Ms. Rosie Parnass, Director, Organizational and Staff Development and Quality of Work Life Advisor
 Professor Aysan Sev'er, Special Advisor to the Principal on Equity Issues, University of Toronto at Scarborough
 Ms Paddy Stamp, Sexual Harassment Officer
 Ms Jude Tate, Coordinator, The Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Resources and Programs

ALL ITEMS ARE REPORTED FOR INFORMATION.

1. Reports of the Previous Meetings

Report Number 137 (September 26, 2006) and Report Number 138 (November 7, 2006) were approved.

2. Business Arising from the Reports of the Previous Meetings

There was no business arising from the Reports of the previous meetings.

3. Annual Report of the Equity Officers: July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006

The Chair reminded members that the University Affairs Board was responsible for consideration of matters of a non-academic nature that directly concerned the quality of life on campus. The Annual Report of the Equity Officers addressed the quality of life for all members of the University community, including students, faculty, and staff. This report was intended to enable the Board to monitor the University's activities in implementing its equity policies. In previous years the Board had received reports from each of the equity officers. For 2005-06 they had been combined into a single Report which highlighted the accomplishments and objectives of each office, while also demonstrating the comprehensive work carried out by the offices as a whole. The Chair introduced the Equity Officers in attendance.

Professor Hildyard provided an overview of the equity reports, and stated that reports of the last several years had sought ways to demonstrate more clearly the University's breadth of expertise in equity areas broadly defined. The University was a leader in terms of the range of equity related activities that it carried out. The highlight of the previous year had been the approval by the Governing Council on December 14, 2006 of the *Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence*. The 2005-06 Report of the Equity Officers was intended to demonstrate the synergy and integration that existed among the various offices and within the portfolio of the Vice-President, Human Resources and Equity as they worked together to address equity issues. The Report did not attempt to provide a comprehensive description of all the initiatives related to equity, diversity and excellence that occurred across the institution, many at the divisional level. Some of these would be included in other annual reports such as the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act* (ODA) Accessibility Plan, and the Employment Equity Report. It was hoped that, in future years, the Annual Report of the Equity Officers would also capture some of the activities that occurred within the divisions.

3. Annual Report of the Equity Officers: July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006 (cont'd)

REPORT NUMBER 139 OF THE UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS BOARD – January 16, 2007

In the discussion that followed, a number of members were complimentary of the Report, in particular its new format which they felt clarified the close working relationships that existed among the various equity officers, and demonstrated the positive impact of their collective efforts.

A member noted that there had been a significant increase during the past year in the use of the services of the Family Care Office, and asked whether the reason for the increase was known, and whether sufficient resources were available to meet the increased demand. Professor Hildyard responded that the increased use of the Office had been by students, faculty and staff, in particular for its children's programs and in dealing with child care issues. The use of family care offices was, generally speaking, a growth area, and Professor Hildyard would be looking at ways to increase the availability of resources in collaboration with the Vice-Provost, Students and Vice-Provost, Academic.

A member asked why more quantitative data related to issues of community safety and access had not been included in the 2005-06 Report. Professor Hildyard responded that University policy required that statistics be reported only in one specific area related to equity issues, namely with respect to incidents of sexual harassment. Some data related to access and community safety was included in other annual reports, and future Reports of the Equity Officers could perhaps include references to websites where these reports were available.

A member referred to Appendix A, which provided statistics with respect to formal and informal complaints of sexual harassment, and asked for clarification of the final sentence which read: "The figures for 2005-06 are within the usual range." Ms Stamp responded that these statistics were reported in the same manner each year, that those in 2004-05 had been anomalous, and that the 2005-06 statistics had returned to the range of previous years.

The Chair noted that many of the statistics in the Report were indicators of activities and initiatives, which demonstrated that much was being done in addressing equity issues. Most of these initiatives ultimately had the goal of changing behaviour. He asked whether it was possible to augment these participatory measures with outcome measures that would assess the impact of these initiatives in changing behaviour in the University community. Professor Hildyard responded that this was a difficult challenge. Much of the work of the equity offices had the initial goal of raising awareness of issues. More tangible outcome measures could be developed over time, however, using data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Graduate and Professional Student Survey (GPSS), and the faculty and staff surveys.

Referring to the Health and Well-Being Programmes and Services section of the Report (p. 27), the Chair asked whether accommodation was available for all employees, or just those with disabilities. Professor Hildyard responded that accommodation was provided both for employees with disabilities, and those who were ill and were returning to work, and was part of the broader goal of promoting healthy lifestyles and well being within the University community.

4. Student Experience: Report of the Vice-Provost, Students on Measuring Up

Professor Farrar provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation entitled: 'Measuring Up on the Undergraduate Experience: Results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2006'. He noted by way of introduction that the University's use of NSSE had arisen out of two important initiatives: its focus on the enhancement of the student experience as the highest priority of the current *Stepping UP* academic plan, as well as its commitment to finding ways to measure what it valued.

4. Student Experience: Report of the Vice-Provost, Students on Measuring Up (cont'd)

REPORT NUMBER 139 OF THE UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS BOARD – January 16, 2007

According to some existing measures, such as retention and graduation rates, the University performed quite well. However, other measures of student satisfaction did not produce such positive results. NSSE was designed specifically to measure levels of student engagement. It assessed how well students were learning, and what they put into and got out of their undergraduate experience. The University had first participated in NSSE in 2004, and the results had been reported to the University Affairs Board in February of 2005. This year's report provided the results of the second administration of the survey which had been carried out in March and April of 2006, and it incorporated comparisons with the 2004 data. Professor Farrar highlighted the following points in his summary of the Report.

The NSSE survey was based on the premise that what mattered most was what students did with their time while in university. Levels of student engagement were closely tied to levels of student learning. NSSE was used extensively, having been administered at almost 600 universities across North America in 2006. This included all Ontario universities, as well as the University's 'Group of Ten' (G10) national research-intensive peers. The survey had been administered to first and fourth/fifth year students in first-entry undergraduate faculties (Arts and Science, Applied Science and Engineering, Music, Physical Education and Health) and had achieved a 39% response rate.

Professor Farrar referred members to the Benchmark Comparisons in the Appendix to the Report. These compared the University's overall performance to selected peers on the basis of five broad clusters of effective educational practice. The University's performance was comparable to Canadian peer institutions with respect to Level of Academic Challenge, as well as Student-Faculty Interaction. The latter was somewhat surprising given the University's relatively high student:faculty ratio. It performed somewhat less favorably in terms of Active and Collaborative Learning, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment, and had also seen some decline in its scores relative to the 2004 data. The benchmark data would be further analysed in order to make comparisons between the many distinct communities across the University's three campuses.

The survey also provided valuable demographic data on the composition of the student population. For example, a question which asked students if they considered themselves a member of a visible minority group indicated that the University was roughly twice as diverse as its Ontario peers, and it was becoming increasingly more diverse. This reflected the fact that approximately 75% of the University's students came from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

The University performed most strongly in the following areas based on the perceptions of both first-year and senior students: the degree to which courses required analysis and synthesis of ideas or theories, the amount of time required for class preparation, the emphasis on study and academic work, and the frequency of serious conversations with students of another race or ethnicity. Conversely, the University performed less well in terms of the likelihood of first-year and senior students to: write papers between 5 and 19 pages in length; ask questions, contribute to class discussion or make a class presentation; work with classmates outside of class to prepare assignments; or develop positive relationships with faculty members. Senior students were also less likely to positively rate relationships with other students, or to say that the institution provided substantial support for academic success. There was some evidence that the quality of relationships between students and both faculty and administrative staff had declined since the 2004 survey, perhaps reflecting the increasing size of the student body and the limited resources available to meet their needs. Other significant changes since 2004 were that more students were interested in studying abroad, more upper year students were engaged in research and the arts, while,

4. Student Experience: Report of the Vice-Provost, Students on Measuring Up (cont'd)

REPORT NUMBER 139 OF THE UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS BOARD – January 16, 2007

conversely, fewer first-year students were engaged in the arts. There was also evidence of less interaction between students of different races, ethnicities, religious beliefs and political opinions, particularly in first year.

A number of new initiatives had been introduced in the University's administration of the 2006 NSSE survey. Nine Ontario-specific questions had been included, and the data had been augmented by greater use of focus groups and open-ended comments. The University had also administered the Before College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) to students in high school, and then included them in the NSSE survey once they enrolled, in order to assess how their intended and actual levels of student engagement compared. These students reported that they spent less time preparing for class, working for pay on or off campus, and participating in co-curricular activities, and more time relaxing and socializing, than they had expected.

Students focused strongly on academic issues when asked what items the University needed to address in improving the learning experience both inside and outside the classroom. Within the classroom this included reducing class sizes; ensuring a better fit between course content, assignments and tests/exams; and improving the quality of course instruction. Priorities outside the classroom included increasing contact with faculty outside of class hours, providing more opportunities to undertake research with faculty, improving the quality and availability of study spaces, and providing an enhanced social environment for students.

The University continued to face a challenge in its efforts to create a sense of community and a positive environment for social interaction for its students. It did not compare favorably to its Ontario peers in this regard. Further use of focus groups would be needed, as well as analysis of the survey data to compare student perceptions at different divisions.

Professor Farrar concluded by identifying areas where the survey results indicated that the University needed to take action. Further analysis of the survey data was required to determine which initiatives to enhance the student experience were producing positive results, for example learning communities, service learning, and on-campus work. Resources could then be focused where they would have the greatest effect. Cooperative efforts were needed with the first entry divisions to isolate problem areas and to develop solutions. Finally, the University should be open and transparent about what needed to change and what was needed to create a culture of respect for students.

Among the issues that arose in discussion were the following.

A member asked whether similar survey data was available for students in professional faculties such as medicine. Professor Farrar responded that NSSE surveyed undergraduate students in first-entry programs, the Graduate and Professional Student Survey (GPSS) surveyed graduate students in doctoral as well as both research and professional master's programs, but that an appropriate tool was still required to survey undergraduate students in professional faculties.

A member asked a number of questions regarding the use of controls and comparable universities in the NSSE survey. He suggested that the appropriate control might be a large publicly funded urban research-intensive university much like the University of Toronto. The member also recommended that the data be disaggregated across the University's various divisions for more detailed analysis. Professor Farrar responded that NSSE currently provided a high level analysis, but that disaggregation of its rich data was currently being considered. Because the University did not have many comparators among Ontario

4. Student Experience: Report of the Vice-Provost, Students on Measuring Up (cont'd)

universities, the 2006 benchmark data had also incorporated comparisons to Canadian G10 universities, as well as members of the Carnegie Group of large American research-intensive universities. The

REPORT NUMBER 139 OF THE UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS BOARD – January 16, 2007

University was somewhat unique, and there were only a small number of large publicly funded urban research-intensive universities to use as comparators. A member asked whether the University's uniqueness was more a product of its size or its urban setting. Professor Farrar responded that it was due to both. It was one of the largest universities in North America, and had doubled in size every 25 years since its founding. However it also differed from many large American universities in that it drew a very large percentage of its students from the local urban population. Canadian students were less likely to move to attend university, and chose rather to live at home and commute to campus. The differences in the experiences of commuter students and those who lived on campus was a theme that emerged clearly in the University's NSSE data.

A member asked whether the data indicated that the University's urban setting was a negative factor for some students, and whether this was an issue that needed to be considered in recruitment efforts. Professor Farrar responded that there were indications that some students at the University likely would have preferred to have studied elsewhere, but that they had chosen, often for financial reasons, to remain in Toronto so that they could continue to live at home.

A member noted that the question on page 23 regarding physical fitness and recreation did not distinguish between on-campus and off-campus activities. Ms Fisher responded that there were also a number of questions regarding the arts and volunteer activities where this was the case. NSSE did not place significant emphasis on the distinct student experience of commuter students since this was not a major issue at many North American universities. This issue might possibly be addressed in future surveys in the questions that were specific to the Ontario consortium of universities.

A member suggested that student perceptions that were critical of the University might in part have arisen from its very high academic standards. Students often achieved grades considerably lower than they had in high school, and lower than they thought they would have received if they had attended another Ontario university. Professor Farrar agreed that this was possible, and he referred to the data on page 14 of the Report which seemed to indicate that there was some truth to this perception that grades at the University, particularly in first year, were lower than at peer institutions. Another member suggested that the University should find ways to address this situation, for example through a mandatory course for first-year students on how to write papers and on how to negotiate the transition from high school to being a student in a very large institution.

Members also made the following comments and suggestions. One member questioned the use of the word 'often' in questions that asked students how often they participated in particular activities, and suggested clearer wording was needed. Another encouraged an increased use of focus groups to ask students how individuals could take responsibility to improve the student experience. A member recommended that faculty members be engaged in efforts to enhance the student experience, for instance in encouraging students to have an appropriate balance between academic and non-academic activities in their lives. Another member urged the University to move beyond analysis of the survey data to design specific intervention strategies that would address the large issues that had been identified. Finally, a member cautioned that potential biases in the data due to self selection should be addressed prior to the design of any intervention strategies.

REPORT NUMBER 139 OF THE UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS BOARD – January 16, 2007**5. Report of the Senior Assessor**

Professor Farrar referred members to his written report and provided further detail regarding the restructuring exercise that was underway in the portfolio of the Vice-Provost, Students. This was intended to create a more coherent administrative structure that would support the University's top institutional priority of enhancing the student experience. One major initiative would be the creation of an Office of the Vice-Provost, Students with tri-campus responsibility for communication, policy, crisis response, and research and assessment in the area of the student experience. In addition, the new position of Assistant Vice-President, Student Life would be created to function as the senior student affairs officer on the St. George Campus with operational responsibility for the services and programs currently grouped within the divisions of Student Affairs, Student Services, and Hart House. The 15 distinct units within these three divisions would also be reorganized into organizational clusters based on their goals and outcomes. Finally, Hart House was undergoing a review and search process prompted by the completion of the second term of the current Warden, Ms. Margaret Hancock.

6. Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees: Annual Report and Analysis: 2006-2007

The Chair noted that the University Affairs Board was responsible for the approval of non-academic incidental fees. In order to provide context for this approval process, the administration provided an annual report on the full set of fees charged across the University's three campuses.

Professor Farrar noted that the Board would consider student society proposals for fee increases for the 2007-08 academic year at its May 1, 2007 meeting. The annual report on the table provided detailed data on all the compulsory non-academic incidental fees collected by the University during the 2006-07 year. It allowed comparisons across the University's divisions, and provided historical data dating back to 1973.

A member expressed his concern regarding the manner in which the Board's fee approval process had occurred in 2006, and asked for an update on the review undertaken by the Vice-Provost, Students of this process. Professor Farrar responded that frank discussions were ongoing with leaders of student groups regarding the issues that needed to be addressed in order to improve the process. Mr. Delaney added that the discussions were moving slowly, but that the Office of Student Affairs was committed to their continuation. In particular, the Council on Student Services (COSS) process needed to be examined, clarifying that its role was one of budget setting, rather than dispute settlement.

7. Recognized Campus Groups, 2006-07: Report #1

Professor Farrar stated that this was the first of two such reports submitted each year to the University Affairs Board for information. It consisted of a list of campus groups recognized by the central administration under the *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups*. He noted that this was only a subset of the total number of recognized campus groups across the University's three campuses, being those which drew their membership from more than one academic division. There were hundreds of other groups which drew their membership from a single academic division, including the Mississauga and Scarborough campuses, which, under the *Policy* were recognized by the governance body of the individual division.

REPORT NUMBER 139 OF THE UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS BOARD – January 16, 2007

8. Date of the Next Meeting

The Chair informed members that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled for Tuesday, February 13, 2007 at 4:30 p.m.

9. Other Business

Governing Council Elections: Deputy Returning Officers – Appointment

The Chair noted that the *Elections Guidelines 2007* provided for the appointment of one or more Deputy Returning Officers to assist the Chief Returning Officer with the conduct of Governing Council elections. The appointments were made by the Secretary of the Governing Council and reported to the University Affairs Board for information. The Secretary had advised that he had appointed Ms Cristina Oke, Assistant Secretary of the Governing Council, and Ms Mae-Yu Tan, Special Projects Officer in the Office of the Governing Council.

There was no other business to transact in open session.

On a motion duly moved and seconded,

The meeting moved *in camera*.

10. Council on Student Services (COSS) – Chair: Appointment

On a motion duly moved and seconded,

YOUR BOARD APPROVED

THAT Ms Andréa Armbrorst be appointed Chair of the Council on Student Services (COSS), effective immediately until June 30, 2007.

On a motion duly moved and seconded,

The meeting returned to open session.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Secretary

Chair

February 1, 2007