



FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: University Affairs Board

SPONSOR: Professor Sandy Welsh, Vice-Provost, Students
CONTACT INFO: 416-978-3870, vp.students@utoronto.ca

PRESENTER: See Sponsor

DATE: May 21, 2024, for May 29, 2024

AGENDA ITEM: 3 (a)

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Student Societies: Requests for Fee Increases – University of Toronto Scarborough

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Section 5 of the *Terms of Reference* lists student societies and compulsory non-academic incidental fees among the University Affairs Board’s areas of responsibility.

Section 5.1 of the UTSC Campus Affairs Committee *Terms of Reference* lists student societies and compulsory non-academic incidental fees among the Committee’s areas of responsibility. Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 provide that compulsory non-academic incidental fees for representative student committees and divisional student societies “are approved by the UTSC Council on the recommendation of the UTSC Campus Affairs Committee.”

Following approval by the UTSC Campus Council, student society fee increases are brought forward to the University Affairs Board for information.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. UTSC Campus Affairs Committee [For Recommendation] (May 6, 2024)
2. UTSC Campus Council [For Approval] (May 21, 2024)
3. **University Affairs Board [For Information] (May 29, 2024)**
4. Executive Committee [For Confirmation] (June 18, 2024)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

Requests for changes to existing student society fees and/or the establishment of new fees may be brought forward to the University Affairs Board on one or more occasions each year. The Board was last informed about changes to UTSC student society fees on April 11, 2024.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Scarborough Campus Students' Union (SCSU) has requested a change to the fee charged on their behalf by the University, which was supported by a referendum of their members:

Establishment of a Regenesis UTSC portion of the fee

- Details of designated portion: \$7.23 per session for full-time students; \$3.62 per session for part-time students; refundable; may be adjusted annually in accordance with the Ontario Consumer Price Index
- Referendum results: 904 (54.7%) in favour, 439 (26.6%) opposed, 310 (18.8%) abstained from voting; approximate voter turnout of 12.0%

The SCSU referendum was held concurrently with the SCSU Spring General Elections.

The request above has been reviewed by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students in light of the requirements of the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* and was found to be in compliance. Additional information regarding the request is provided in the attached memorandum from Neel Joshi, Dean of Student Experience & Wellbeing.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no direct financial implications for the University's operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is presented for information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

- Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees: UTSC Student Societies - Proposals for Fee Increases



To: Members of the UTSC Campus Affairs Committee

From: Neel Joshi, Dean of Student Experience & Wellbeing

Date: April 22, 2024

Re: Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees: UTSC Student Societies - Proposals for Fee Increases

A request from a UTSC student society for the fee changes listed below has been received by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (OVPS), which manages the University-wide administrative processes related to student society fee requests. The OVPS works with my office as necessary and keeps me informed with respect to the fee requests received from UTSC student societies.

The application has been reviewed in light of the requirements of the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*. The request below is found to be in compliance with these requirements and is recommended for approval.

Requests for fee increases from student societies must meet a number of requirements. Section B, 4 of the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* outlines the University's general expectations:

Requests to change the fee collected on behalf of a student society and requests for new fees shall be approved only when evidence has been presented that the request has been authorized by due constitutional process in the organization. The procedures to request approval of a new fee or an increase to an existing fee shall be published in the Handbook for Student Societies.

Cost of Living Increases

- (a) *Where the amount of an increase in the fee charged is not greater than the year-over-year change in consumer prices for Ontario as measured by Statistics Canada (December-over-December) as of December 31 of the previous year, the request must be supported by the results of a previous referendum approving the principle of a cost-of-living adjustment. In special circumstances (e.g., when a portion of a student society fee is designated for a health plan or capital project), other inflation indexes or predetermined inflation factors may be used, provided that the request is supported by the results of a previous referendum approving the use of the specific inflation index or predetermined inflation factor.*

Referendum Requirement

- (a) *Where the amount of an increase in the fee charged is greater than the year-over-year change in consumer prices, the request must be supported by the majority of the society's members voting in a recent referendum.*

The procedures for handling fee change requests (from the *Handbook for Student Societies* published by the OVPS) also provide that requests for a fee increase must be supplied with the following:

Evidence that the request to change the existing fee (or to institute a new charge) has been authorized by due constitutional process of the organization. This evidence should include a copy of or specific reference to the section of the society's constitution and/or by-laws which relate to the mechanism for fee changes, minutes of the meeting at which the resolution to request the change was passed, details and results of any referenda related to the subject which may have been held within the division, and publicity given the matter to ensure that those who may be affected by the change are aware of the proposal, including size and purpose of the increase, and have had the opportunity to make their views known.

Normally, the administration intersects with these processes at two points. Initially, student societies are asked to seek advice from the OVPS on the wording of the referendum questions (with respect to clarity and technical language). The second point occurs after the referendum when the student society makes the formal request for a fee increase. The recommendation for approval is derived from the assessment of whether or not the society has met the requirements established in the *Policy* and relevant procedures.

Occasionally, the OVPS is asked to look into complaints about referendum procedures and compliance with relevant portions of the society's constitution and/or by-laws. The results of these investigations play a significant role in the assessment of the request and the recommendation for approval.

The assessment of requests for fee increases is normally based upon the following expectations:

1. The student society must make the request in a manner consistent with the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* and the University's procedures for increases to student society fees;
2. When required, there must be a positive result in a referendum for a fee increase (special conditions established by the society's by-laws, such as quorum, must also be met);
3. The referendum question itself should be clear and provide enough information to students in order to gain a full understanding of the implications of the question and proposed fee for them;
4. The referendum must be held in a fair manner, advertised and promoted in a reasonable manner, and the members of each organization should be given a reasonable opportunity to vote; and
5. Each organization must comply with the provisions of its own by-laws, rules of procedure, and specific policies and procedures approved by the society's board or council.

Societies which have previously received approval (by referendum) from their members for an annual cost-of-living increase in the society's portion of the fee may request increases, upon approval by the society's board or council, of up to the previous Ontario December-over-December cost-of-living increase (consumer price index) calculated by Statistics Canada.

As outlined in the excerpt from the *Policy* above, where members of a society have given consent (through a previous referendum) to the concept of inflationary increases according to a specific inflation factor or measure, this inflation factor may be used.

It is important to note that when dealing with a student society request for a fee change, it is the society's own constitution, by-laws, or established policies that set the standards for acceptable results in referenda. In some cases, society constitutions establish a minimum voter turnout in order to

consider a referendum result to be valid. The University has not established additional criteria with respect to valid referendum voter turnout.

In addition, with respect to both requests for increases based upon the results of a referendum, and increases which require only the approval of the society's board or council, the administration relies on the assurances of student societies that due constitutional processes and fair procedures have been followed.

Scarborough Campus Students' Union (SCSU)

Background

The total SCSU fee for Fall/Winter 2023-24, charged to all full-time UTSC undergraduate students, was \$493.07 per session for full-time students and \$53.62 per session for part-time students.

Request

1. Establishment of a Regenesis UTSC portion of the fee.

A referendum was held from March 4, 2024, to March 6, 2024, in which all undergraduate students at the University of Toronto Scarborough were asked to support the establishment of a dedicated Regenesis UTSC portion of the SCSU fee. The wording of the question was as follows:

Preamble

Regenesis is an environmental organization at the University of Toronto Scarborough. We are seeking the consent of SCSU members at the Scarborough Campus to help fund Regenesis programs and initiatives. Starting in 2024, each SCSU member at the Scarborough campus who is a full-time student would pay a fee of \$7.23 per session for full-time students and \$3.62 per session for part-time students and would be able to obtain a refund of said fee through Regenesis.

Regenesis would be required to spend all of the collected fees on its environmental and community-related projects and initiatives. The collected fees would go towards supporting environmental initiatives and programming on/near campus, including:

- *Free Store that provides students free clothes and books while diverting waste*
- *Free meals and cooking workshops for students*
- *Reducing food waste on campus by rescuing and distributing food from catered events on campus*
- *Item library that lends tools, board games, and other items to students for free*
- *A bulk buying collective that purchases bulk food items and provides it at-cost to students*
- *Free repair, resize and restyle of clothing, repair of electronics, and other items to reduce waste*
- *Growing produce at UTSC Farm. The produce will be provided to student gardeners and provided to the SCSU Food Centre*
- *Community Bike Centre that provides bike repair, services, and education*

Question

Do you agree to a levy of \$7.23 per session for full-time students and \$3.62 per session for part-time students; adjusted annually in accordance with the Ontario Consumer Price Index?

- Yes, I support funding Regenesis UTSC*
- No, I do not support funding Regenesis UTSC*
- Abstain*

The results of the referendum were as follows:

Yes:	904 (54.7%)	Eligible Voters (approx.):	13,805
No:	439 (26.6%)	Voter Turnout (approx.):	1,653
Abstain:	310 (18.8%)		(12.0%)
Total:	1,653		

In the course of considering this request, the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students has not received any complaints.

Summary of Changes

If approved, the total fall/winter SCSU fee, charged to all UTSC undergraduate students, will increase from \$505.68 to \$544.84 per session for full-time students and from \$56.05 to \$61.80 for part-time students. These totals include the increases previously approved in Cycle 4.

Scarborough Campus Students' Union	Summer 2024		Fall 2024		Winter 2025		Summer 2023		Fall 2023		Winter 2024	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Society (cost-of-living increases permitted without referendum)	31.20	1.93	32.26	2.00	32.26	2.00	29.43	1.82	31.20	1.93	31.20	1.93
Health Plan (including sales tax; increases up to 10% permitted without referendum; refundable)			103.58		103.58				94.16		94.16	
Dental Plan (including sales tax; increases up to 10% permitted without referendum; refundable)			130.91		130.91				119.01		119.01	
Student Centre (cost-of-living increases permitted without referendum)	46.48	13.92	48.06	14.39	48.06	14.39	43.85	13.13	46.48	13.92	46.48	13.92
Blue Sky Solar Car (refundable)	0.13		0.13		0.13		0.13		0.13		0.13	
Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) (Canadian CPI cost-of-living increases permitted without referendum)	9.34		9.34		9.34		8.79		9.34		9.34	
Day Care Subsidy (refundable)	0.50		0.50		0.50		0.50		0.50		0.50	
Downtown Legal Services (refundable)	0.50		0.50		0.50		0.50		0.50		0.50	
Environmental Resource Network (refundable)	0.25		0.25		0.25		0.25		0.25		0.25	
Foster Children Program	0.05		0.05		0.05		0.05		0.05		0.05	
Frontier College Students for Literacy (refundable)			0.50	0.10	0.50	0.10			0.50	0.10	0.50	0.10
Health Initiatives in Developing Countries (refundable)	0.25		0.25		0.25		0.25		0.25		0.25	
Orientation (refundable)	0.50		0.50		0.50		0.50		0.50		0.50	
Regenesis UTSC (cost-of-living increases permitted without referendum; refundable)			7.23	3.62	7.23	3.62						
Wheelchair Accessibility Projects	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Women's Centre (refundable)	1.50		1.50		1.50		1.50		1.50		1.50	
WUSC Fund			0.30		0.30				0.30		0.30	
WUSC Program (through 2024-25; SCSU Board approval required for continuation)	0.75	0.25	0.75	0.25	0.75	0.25	0.75	0.25	0.75	0.25	0.75	0.25
UTSC Sports & Recreation Complex Levy (through 2038-39; increases up to 4% permitted without referendum)	207.23	41.44	207.23	41.44	207.23	41.44	199.26	39.85	199.26	39.85	199.26	39.85
TOTAL	\$299.68	\$57.54	\$544.84	\$61.80	\$544.84	\$61.80	\$286.76	\$55.05	\$505.68	\$56.05	\$505.68	\$56.05
Change from Previous Year	+4.5% \$12.92	+4.5% \$2.49	+7.7% \$39.16	+10.3% \$5.75	+7.7% \$39.16	+10.3% \$5.75	+4.2% \$11.68	+4.3% \$2.27	+2.6% \$12.61	+4.5% \$2.43	+2.6% \$12.61	+4.5% \$2.43

Recommendation

THAT, beginning in the Fall 2024 session, the Scarborough Campus Students' Union fee be modified as follows: (a) the establishment of \$7.23 per session (\$3.62 part-time) in the Regensis UTSC portion of the fee.