



**FOR APPROVAL**

**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 (b)

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Student Societies: Requests for Fee Increases – St. George

**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.

Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 provide that compulsory non-academic incidental fees for representative student committees and divisional student societies “are approved by the Board”.

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

1. University Affairs Board [approval] (May 29, 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 St. George student society fees on April 11, 2024.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

The Knox Residence Council (KRC) has requested to establish a society fee, to be charged on their behalf by the University, which was supported by a referendum of their members:

**Establishment of a society fee**

- Details of new society fee: \$10.00 per fall and winter session
- Referendum results: 19 (90.5%) in favour, 2 (9.5%) opposed, no students abstained from voting; approximate voter turnout of 22.3%

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 Robyn Parr, Executive Director, Office of the Vice-Provost, Students.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

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

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Be It Resolved

THAT, beginning in the Fall 2024 session, the Knox Residence Council society fee be established at \$10.00 per fall and winter session and charged to all residents of Knox Residence.

**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

- Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees: St. George Student Societies - Proposals for Fee Increases



**To:** Members of the University Affairs Board

**From:** Robyn Parr, Executive Director, Office of the Vice-Provost, Students

**Date:** May 15, 2024

**Re:** Student Societies: Requests for Fee Increases – St. George

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The Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (OVPS) has received a request to establish a new society fee. The application has been reviewed in light of the requirements of the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*, 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.*

*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 which related 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 may 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.

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.

## Knox Residence Council (KRC)

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### Background

As the University does not currently collect student fees on the KRC's behalf, it is not currently a student society. As such, the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students has reviewed the KRC's constitution and proposed membership and has found them to be in compliance with the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*.

### Request

1. **Establishment of a new society fee.**

A referendum was held from March 25, 2024, to March 31, 2024, in which residents of Knox Residence were asked to support the establishment of a new society fee. The wording of the question was as follows:

**Preamble**

*The Knox Residence Council (KRC) is seeking consent from its members to establish a Resident Activity Fee.*

*The Resident Activity Fee is an annual fee paid by the residents to support Knox College Residence activities. In the 2022-23 academic year, the fee was \$139 per resident and was approved by Knox College and the Toronto School of Theology. As Knox College has since been acquired by UofT, the Resident Activity Fee must be re-established and approved by the UofT.*

*The KRC is proposing a Resident Activity Fee of \$20.00 per year, half of it for the Fall session and the other half for the Winter session. If passed, the gathering of the Resident Activity Fee will begin next year in the 2024-2025 academic year, and would be used to benefit the residents' experience in the areas of programming (events) and purchases for the building.*

*If establishment of this fee is approved, the KRC fee would be \$10.00 per fall session and \$10.00 per winter session, charged to residents of Knox Residence, beginning in the Fall 2024 session.*

**Question**

*Are you in favour of establishing the KRC society fee as described in the preamble?*

*Yes / No / Abstain*

The results of the referendum were as follows:

Yes:	19 (90.5%)	Eligible Voters (approx.):	94
No:	2 (9.5%)	Voter Turnout (approx.):	21 (22.3%)
Abstain:	0 (0.0%)		
Total ballots:	21		

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

**Recommendation**

THAT, beginning in the Fall 2024 session, the Knox Residence Council society fee be established at \$10.00 per fall and winter session and charged to all residents of Knox Residence.