

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 14, 2026, for May 27, 2026

AGENDA ITEM: 6

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

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

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 [For Information] (May 27, 2026)

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 23, 2026.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Oak House Residence Council (OHRC) 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 society fee: \$12.00 per fall and winter session; eligible for cost-of-living increases on an annual basis
- Referendum results: 28 (65.1%) in favour, 13 (30.2%) opposed, 2 (4.7%) abstained from voting; approximate voter turnout of 9.9%

This request was reviewed by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (OVPS) in light of the requirements set out by the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* and was found to be in compliance with these requirements. In the course of considering this request, the OVPS has not received any complaints from members of any of the OHRC.

Details regarding this request and the recommendation below are provided in the included memorandum.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

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

RECOMMENDATION:

BE IT RESOLVED,

THAT, beginning in the Fall 2026 session, the Oak House Residence Council society fee be established at \$12.00 per fall and winter session and charged to all residents of Oak House.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

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



To: Members of the University Affairs Board
From: Professor Sandy Welsh, Vice-Provost, Students
Date: May 14, 2026
Re: Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees: St. George Student Societies – Proposals for Fee Increases

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (OVPS) has received a request to establish a new society fee. The OVPS has reviewed this request in light of the requirements set out by the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* (the *Policy*), has found it to be in compliance with these requirements, and has recommended it for approval.

Fee increase requests from student societies must meet a set of requirements. Section B.4 of the *Policy* outlines the University's 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 *Handbook for Student Societies*, which is published by the OVPS on an annual basis, also provides that student society fee change requests must include 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 student society fee change processes at two points. Initially, student societies are asked to seek advice from the OVPS on the wording of their referendum questions (with respect to clarity and technical language). The second point occurs after the referendum, when the society makes the formal request for a fee change. 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 fee change requests is normally based upon the following expectations:

1. The student society must make the request in a manner consistent with the *Policy* and the University's procedures for changes 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, such as quorum, must also be met);
3. The referendum question should be clear and provide enough information for the society's members to gain a full understanding of the implications of the question and the proposed fee;
4. The referendum must be held in a fair manner, promoted in a reasonable manner, and provide all of the society's members with a reasonable opportunity to vote; and
5. The student society must comply with the provisions of its own constitution, by-laws, rules of procedure, and specific policies and procedures approved by its governing body.

It is important to note that, it is the student society's own constitution, by-laws, and 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 fee changes based on a referendum and those only requiring the approval of a society's governing body, the administration relies on the assurances of student societies that due constitutional processes and fair procedures have been followed.

Oak House Residence Council (OHRC)

Background

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

Request

In the course of considering the following request, the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students has not received any complaints from the members of the OHRC.

1. *Establishment of a new society fee with a cost-of-living allowance.*
A referendum was held from April 3, 2026, to April 10, 2026, in which residents of Oak House were asked to support the establishment of a new society fee with a cost-of-living allowance. The wording of the question was as follows:

Preamble

The Oak House Residence Council (OHRC) is seeking approval from Oak House residents to establish a Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fee to support the creation and operation of a formal Residence Council.

The proposed Oak House Residence Council Fee is intended to fund initiatives that enhance the residential experience at Oak House, including but not limited to:

- *Social, cultural, academic and wellness programs*
- *Community-building events that meet student interests/demand*
- *Purchases and resources that benefit Oak House residents*
- *Operation costs necessary for running the OHRC*

The proposed fee is \$24.00 per academic year, divided equally between academic sessions:

- *\$12.00 in the Fall session*
- *\$12.00 in the Winter session*

If approved, this fee will be charged annually to all Oak House residents as a Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fee, beginning in the 2026/2027 academic year.

The fee will be collected through the University of Toronto's established student fee collection process and will be used exclusively to support Oak House Residence Council activities in accordance with University's policies and Ministry guidelines.

To cover inflation, the fee may increase by up to the Ontario Consumer Price Index on an annual basis (applied per session). The decision for increased fees shall be at the discretion of the Council's Executive of Finance after consulting programming plans and occupancy rates. The final decision for increased fees must also be voted by Council Executives through majority vote, with at least 80% of Executive Members affirming the decision.

Question

Do you approve the establishment of the OHRC fee as described in the preamble?

Yes / No / Abstain

The results of the referendum were as follows:

Yes:	28 (65.1%)	Eligible Voters (approx.):	436
No:	13 (30.2%)	Voter Turnout (approx.):	43 (9.9%)
Abstain:	2 (4.7%)		
Total ballots:	43		

Recommendation

THAT, beginning in the Fall 2026 session, the Oak House Residence Council society fee be established at \$12.00 per fall and winter session and charged to all residents of Oak House.