

University Affairs Board

Vice-Provost Students' Report # 6

(Agenda item #13)

Task Force on Student Housing - The Task Force continues to work on developing a set of policies, setting targets for the future and developing best practices for various student housing models. Three subcommittees have been constituted to develop draft reports on Policies and Principles, the terms of a Student Housing Advisory Committee and a Program of Residence Expansion. A final report will be presented to UAB in the fall term.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) remains a significant problem; the outbreak continues in Asia and has re-surfaced in Toronto. As an institution we need to consider our policies for faculty, staff and students who have been in SARS affected areas in the previous ten days.

Currently Health Canada advice for individuals from affected areas is that they should monitor themselves for symptoms for 10 days after departure. This is our practice as well. We have been concerned with the importation of SARS from an affected country into a residence. Respiratory disease outbreaks can be devastating in such an environment. Students arriving from an affected area may be concerned to disclose a symptom as they may worry that they will be asked to go home. We might also face concerns from other students, parents and perhaps staff about these students. Options are:

1. Ban on students from affected areas. This is an extreme measure and in against our values - Berkeley has backed off on its ban.
2. Ten day quarantine - this will be difficult to implement and may be perceived to be overboard and discriminatory.
3. Institute a surveillance program for the first 10 days - public health has suggested this as a reasonable option. Ideally, a screening assessment and temperature would be taken twice a day.
4. Simply follow the Health Canada advice and tell the arriving students to declare if they have symptoms. (this is the status quo)

An alternative between (3) and (4) is proposed for implementation. We are developing a simple questionnaire that could be completed once or twice a day. Students will be provided with a thermometer if necessary. We also will provide educational materials in the appropriate languages. On arrival, there will be a health assessment with counselling. We will work with HR to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for faculty and staff returning from affected areas.

Finally, we will work with COU to try and ensure a consistent response across Ontario Universities.

The **Co-ordinator of First Nations House**, Anita Benedict will be leaving the university and her position in early September. Anita has been at the university since 1994 and has been Co-ordinator of First Nations House since 1998. She has made an enormous contribution to the Aboriginal Community both within and outside the University, as well as greatly enhancing the University's understanding of Aboriginal issues and support for the Aboriginal Studies Program. Under Anita's leadership First Nations House has become a place where Native students are able to receive the support and assistance they choose, while non-Native students have the opportunity to learn about Aboriginal culture and tradition. Anita will be greatly missed.

The **Passport Program** was launched last August by the Office of Student Affairs in order to improve the experience of incoming U of T students, particularly commuter students. New students on all three campuses received, with their T-card, a "passport" in which they were encouraged to collect stamps throughout the year for their participation in events and activities. The Passport website provided details of the program, an events calendar and an option to sign for an email news list.

The many sponsors of the program -- The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the UTAA, SAC, the U of T Bookstore, MBNA Canada, Travels CUTS, Second Cup and Sodexo, Hart House, Physical Education and Health, and MicKinsey & Company -- provided financial contributions and prizes. Throughout the year, students attended events and workshops. More than 350 students attended Toronto Symphony concerts, and more than 300 events were posted on the Passport website throughout the year.

Forty students completed the entire program. Most of these were off-campus or commuter students. Student feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Students said the program kept them motivated and encouraged them to explore areas and activities of the University they would not have otherwise. The program will continue to operate next year on all three campuses, with changes made to the design of the Passport and to the website to reflect different events and experiences on each campus.