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OFFICE OF THE VICE-PROVOST, STUDENTS

TO: University Affairs Board

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DATE: November 8, 2002 for November 19, 2002

AGENDA ITEM: #5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Provost's Task Force on Student Housing: Draft Terms of Reference

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The terms of reference of the University Affairs Board indicate that the Board is responsible for campus and student services including student housing. It is also responsible for policy affecting the operation of those services.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The current *Policy on Student Housing* was approved by Governing Council on March 9, 1989. It derived significant strength from the landmark *Report of the Provostial Advisory Committee on Student Housing Policy* (the Silcox Report, July 1988) which helped to inform it, as well as helped to direct subsequent planning documents such as *Student Housing: A Plan for the Next Phase* (February 5, 1999), *Expanding Residence Capacity at the University of Toronto* (October 8, 1999), and a number of other policies and studies on various aspects of the student housing question.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The University of Toronto is committed to the belief that the academic environment and the student experience are improved when students live on or near campus as members of the university community.

Moreover, at the University of Toronto student housing is not only a matter of firmly-held principle, it is a practical necessity. Students choose the University of Toronto not only from the Greater Toronto Area, but from all parts of the province of Ontario, and everywhere in Canada. In addition, the University's ability to offer on-campus housing is an important factor in attracting international students, including international exchange students. The university can also play a significant role in addressing the particular needs of students with disabilities.

Of additional and immediate concern, increasing demand from the double cohort and rising participation rates signal a serious shortage in the ability of the university to meet even current expectations. Demand at present far exceeds supply, and there is every indication that this trend will continue if not intensify.

Changing circumstances and the current context call for a review and update of the existing *Policy on Student Housing* as well as associated university policies, plans, and processes. The timing is both opportune and critical.

For these reasons, the Provost has established a Task Force on Student Housing. The Report of the Task Force will be submitted to the Provost and to the heads of the Federated Universities. The Report and the Provost's recommendations will be brought forward for consideration by the University Affairs Board.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

There are no significant implications to the University's operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is for information only.

PROVOST'S TASK FORCE ON STUDENT HOUSING
TERMS OF REFERENCE
Revised draft - November 4, 2002

The University of Toronto is committed to the belief that the academic environment and the student experience are improved when students live on or near campus as members of the university community. Although the elements of student housing vary among the three campuses and among the Federated Universities, some combination of residence for both undergraduate and graduate students, family housing, and off-campus housing, is a well-established feature of the University of Toronto landscape, and an integral part of college and university life. The University is committed to the assurance and expansion of these opportunities as an essential part of its academic planning toward the goal of being recognized as one of the world's leading public research universities.

Moreover, at the University of Toronto student housing is not only a matter of firmly-held principle, it is a practical necessity. Students choose the University of Toronto not only from the Greater Toronto Area, but from all parts of the province of Ontario, and everywhere in Canada. In addition, the University's ability to offer on-campus housing is an important factor in attracting international students, including international exchange students. The university can also play a significant role in addressing the particular needs of students with disabilities. Consequently, the university takes seriously its responsibility to try to help as many students as possible find accommodation either on campus or within reasonable commuting distance. As efforts to recruit and retain the very best minds continue, the provision of student housing will figure prominently in the kind of experience the university is able to offer.

Of additional and immediate concern, increasing demand from the double cohort and rising participation rates signal a serious shortage in the ability of the university to meet even current expectations. Demand at present far exceeds supply, and there is every indication that this trend will continue if not intensify. Students entering university directly from high school in particular are younger than ever before. For the first time, a "safe environment" emerged as the second most important factor influencing university selection (after "academic reputation") in the annual *2002 University Applicant Survey*, with "guaranteed residence" ranking seventh on a list of thirty-four factors. While the university capital plan includes the construction of new residences, issues of access, capacity, and cost clearly need to be addressed.

The current *Policy on Student Housing* was approved by Governing Council on March 9, 1989. It derived significant strength from the landmark *Report of the Provostial Advisory Committee on Student Housing Policy* (the Silcox Report, July 1988) which helped to inform it, as well as helped to direct subsequent planning documents such as *Student Housing: A Plan for the Next Phase* (February 5, 1999), *Expanding Residence Capacity at the University of Toronto* (October 8, 1999), and a number of other policies and studies on various aspects of the student housing question.

It is clear, however, that changing circumstances and the current context call for a review and update of the existing *Policy on Student Housing* as well as associated university policies, plans, and processes. The timing is both opportune and critical. The urgency of rising demand calls for a carefully considered, but early, response.

For these reasons, the Provost has established a Task Force on Student Housing. In establishing the Task Force, the Provost has the full co-operation of the Federated Universities, who are responsible for student housing policy for the students enrolled in their colleges. The Federated colleges will be represented on the Task Force. The Report of the Task Force will be submitted to the Provost and to the heads of the Federated Universities, and its recommendations will be considered by the University Affairs Board and the respective authorities in the Federated Universities.

The Task Force will be chaired by ----- . Its Terms of Reference follow:

1. **Principles** - to review institutional principles that guide and govern the development of student housing at the University of Toronto and its federated institutions, including but not limited to questions such as:
 - a) what part does student housing play in developing the overall mission of the university and its academic plan?
 - b) how does student housing contribute to a sense of community and the value of student experience, recognizing priorities such as barrier-free access, personal safety, and environmental sensitivity?
 - c) how are divisional and inter-divisional goals served?
 - d) how does student housing relate to the university's recruitment and retention objectives?
 - e) respecting the tradition and beauty of the University of Toronto campuses, what principles should govern design and architectural integrity?
2. **UTM/UTSC/St. George** - to consider, in the following assessments, the similar/differing needs of the student housing situations at the Mississauga, Scarborough, and St. George campuses and advise on the implications in terms of University planning (for example, consideration of local conditions at UTM and UTSC is affected by issues such as off-campus housing, availability of transit, etc.)
3. **Federated Universities** - to consider, in the following assessments, the role of the Federated Universities with a view to achieving a consistent set of student housing policies for the entire University of Toronto community;
4. **Demand** - to assess projected demand for the full range of student housing types likely to be sought over the next 10 years (including but not limited to undergraduate, graduate, residences, family housing, etc.);
5. **Financial issues** - to examine financial issues in respect of student housing, including:
 - a) financing the construction of new facilities;
 - b) the role of subsidies from diverse sources, including external;
 - c) the principles guiding the establishment of residence rates, including affordability;
 - d) potential revenue-generating strategies for maximizing use of residence space 12 months/year;
 - e) the parameters and sustainability of student housing as a discrete ancillary operation;
6. **Impact on student services** - to comment on the effect of additional housing on and near campus upon the demand for student services, particularly student study and activity space, food services, and athletic facilities;
7. **Objectives/indicators** - to propose priority objectives for student housing over 10 years, including estimates of what the University should and could realistically achieve, with benchmarks and indicators to evaluate progress towards those goals;
8. **Selection criteria** - recognizing that supply will not accommodate demand in the immediate future, to assign priority selection criteria to applicants for student housing (including but not limited to special needs, equity, geography, grades, discipline and divisional mix, entering/returning students, students in professional faculties, etc.), to review a possible range of allocation models, mechanisms and systems, and to review the first-year guarantee;
9. **Process for making offers** - to comment on the effectiveness of the present process for making student housing offers in terms of attracting the best students and providing the best student experience at the University of Toronto, including coordination, decentralization, and the role of colleges, and to make any suggestions for strengthening or modifying structures and processes;
10. **Management of off-campus housing** - to review residence management in off-campus locations, including lines of responsibility and communication;
11. **Reporting date** - to make recommendations in respect of the above items, and to provide a report for consideration by [date].