

# THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

## REPORT NUMBER 153 OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD

November 8, 2007

To the Governing Council,  
University of Toronto

Your Board reports that it held a meeting on Thursday, November 8, 2007 at 4:10 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall at which the following were present:

Professor Michael R. Marrus (Chair)	Mr. Aaron Christoff	Professor Audrey Laporte
Professor Brian Corman (Vice- Chair)	Dr. Christena Chruszez	Professor Rhonda Love
Professor Vivek Goel, Vice- President and Provost	Professor John Coleman	Dr. Gillian MacKay
Professor Cheryl Misak, Deputy Provost	Professor Elizabeth Cowper	Professor Douglas McDougall
Professor Paul Young, Vice- President, Research	Mr. Joe Cox	Professor Faye Mishna
Professor S. Zaky, Vice-Provost, Planning and Budget	Professor Alister Cumming	Ms Michelle Mitrovich
Professor Stewart Aitchison	Mr. Ken Davy	Mr. Kaspar Ng
Mr. Taufik Al-Sarraj	Professor Charles Deber	Professor Linda Northrup
Professor Cristina Amon	Professor Miriam Diamond	Professor Donna Orwin
Professor Gage Averill	Dr. Shari Fell	Professor Susan Pfeiffer
Professor George Baird	Professor Robert Gibbs	Ms Judith Poe
Professor Katherine Berg	Ms Pamela Gravestock	Professor Jolie Ringash
Ms Marilyn Booth	Ms Emily Gregor	Mr. Paul Ruppert
Professor John W. Browne	Professor Hugh Gunz	Professor Andrea Sass-Kortsak
Professor Ragnar Buchweitz	Professor Ellen Hodnett	Professor Anthony N. Sinclair
Mr. Ryan Matthew Campbell	Mrs. Bonnie Horne	Professor Pekka Sinervo
Ms Tiffany Chow	Miss Milka Ignjatovic	Miss Lorenza Sisca
	Professor Brad Inwood	Miss Maureen J. Somerville
	Mr. James Janeiro	Professor Kim Strong
	Professor Gregory Jump	Dr. Robert S. Turnbull
	Mr. Alex Kenjeev	Professor Njoki Wane
	Professor Ronald H. Kluger	Dr. Donald A. Wasylenki
	Professor Hon C. Kwan	Professor Catharine Whiteside

### Regrets:

Professor Varouj Aivazian	Professor Russell Hartenberger	Professor Mayo Moran
Professor Derek Allen	Professor Wayne K. Hindmarsh	Professor David Naylor
Professor Christy Anderson	Professor Yuki Mayumi Johnson	Professor Sioban Nelson
Professor Jan Angus	Miss Jemy Mary Joseph	Mr. Roger P. Parkinson
Professor Clare Beghtol	Dr. Allan S. Kaplan	Professor Janet Paterson
Professor J.J. Berry Smith	Professor Bruce Kidd	Professor Doug W. Reeve
Dr. Terry Blake	Dr. Chris Koenig-Woodyard	Professor Cheryl Regehr
Professor Brian Cantwell Smith	Dr. Lesley Ann Lavack	Professor Yves Roberge
Mr. Mitchell Chan	Professor Robert Levit	Dr. Wendy Rotenberg
Professor David Cook	Professor Lori Loeb	Mr. Joshua Rubin
Professor Luc F. De Nil	Professor Hy Van Luong	Miss Pamela Santora
Professor Dickson Eyoh	Professor Roger L. Martin	Professor Tattersall Smith
Professor Guy Faulkner	Professor Jill Matus	Professor Ron Smyth
Mr. John A. Fraser	Professor Brenda Y. McCabe	Professor Lorne Sossin
Professor Jane Gaskell	Professor John R. Miron	Professor Suzanne Stevenson
Ms Bonnie Goldberg	Professor David Mock	Mr. Yang Weng
Professor Avrum Gotlieb	Professor Michael Molloy	Dr. Cindy Woodland
Professor Rick Halpern	Ms Carole Moore	Mr. Ahmed Yousif

<b>Non-voting Assessors:</b>	<b>In Attendance:</b>	<b>In Attendance (cont'd)</b>
Professor Angela Hildyard, Vice-President, Human Resources and Equity	Mr. Ray de Souza, Chief Administrative Officer, University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM)	Mr. Henry Mulhall, Assistant Secretary of the Governing Council
Professor Edith M. Hillan, Vice-Provost, Academic	Ms Sheree Drummond, Assistant Provost	Ms Anjum Nayyar, Internal Communications Correspondent, The Bulletin
Mr. David Palmer, Vice-President, Advancement	Dr. Anthony Gray, Special Advisor to the President	Ms Linda Vranic, Director, Operations, Office of the Vice-President, Research
Ms Catherine Riggall, Vice-President, Business Affairs	Mr. Matthew Lafond, Committee Secretary, Office of the Governing Council	<b>Secretariat:</b>
Mr. Nadeem Shabbar, Chief Real Estate Officer	Rosanne Lopers Sweetman, Director, Strategic Initiatives and Priorities, Office of the Vice-President and Provost	Ms Mae-Yu Tan

ITEMS 5, 6, AND 7 CONTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.

ALL OTHER ITEMS ARE REPORTED FOR INFORMATION.

The Chair welcomed Professor Paul Young, Vice-President, Research, a voting assessor, to the Academic Board. Professor Young had begun his term on November 1, 2007. On behalf of the Board the Chair recorded his thanks to Dr. Tim McTiernan for his contribution to the work of the Board. Dr. McTiernan had served as a voting assessor in his position as Interim Vice President, Research.

**1. Approval of Report Number 152 of the Meeting held on October 2, 2007**

Report Number 152 of the meeting held on October 2, 2007 was approved.

**2. Business Arising from the Report of the Previous Meeting**

There was no business arising from the Report.

**3. Report Number 140 of the Agenda Committee (October 31, 2007)**

The Chair noted that Report Number 140 of the Agenda Committee had been circulated electronically on November 7, 2007 and copies had been available at the door. There were no questions.

**4. Report from the Vice-President and Provost**

Professor Goel reported on a number of matters.

**(a) Teaching and Learning Symposium**

Professor Goel informed members that the University's second annual Teaching and Learning Symposium had been held on October 25, 2007. The symposium had been well-attended by over 300 faculty and staff. Issues regarding teaching in the future had been addressed during a panel discussion with the five winners of the 2007 President's Teaching Award. 2001 Nobel Laureate in Physics, Professor Carl Wieman, had given the keynote address. Professor Wieman had been actively involved in initiatives to reform science education, and he was currently leading the transformation of science teaching approaches at the University of British Columbia.

**4. Report from the Vice-President and Provost (cont'd).****(a) Teaching and Learning Symposium (cont'd).**

Professor Goel noted that the symposium had resulted in positive media coverage for the University, and he referred to an article in the *Toronto Star* on November 4, 2007 that had highlighted Professor Wieman's comments. The *Star's* education reporter, Ms Louise Brown, had spent a day attending lectures in Convocation Hall and interviewing students and faculty involved with those lectures. In an article on November 5, 2007, she had provided a balanced perspective on how effective instructors could be in large classes.

Professor Goel added that the Report of the Committee to Review the Office of Teaching Advancement had been released. The Report highlighted recent initiatives and contained recommendations on new directions for the continued enhancement of the quality of teaching. Professor Goel encouraged members to read the Report, which was available on the Vice-President and Provost's website<sup>1</sup>.

**(b) University of Toronto Press**

Professor Goel stated that the Report of the Committee to Review Scholarly Publishing at the University of Toronto Press had recently been released. It focused on the Press' successes and outlined the directions that would be followed as the Press continued to achieve its mandate of scholarly publishing at the University.

**(c) Student Services**

Professor Goel advised members that the appointment of the new Assistant Vice-President, Student Life, had recently been announced. Ms Lucy Fromowitz would assume the new position on January 1, 2008. Ms Fromowitz had served for five years as the Vice-President, Student and Community Engagement, at Centennial College. Prior to that, she had held a variety of student-oriented positions at York University. Ms Fromowitz had a strong commitment to student experience, and she was well-suited to the tasks at the University of Toronto, particularly the continued reform of approaches to student services in the central divisions on the St. George campus.

**(d) Capital Projects**

Professor Goel provided an update on the University's plans for some major capital projects in the remainder of the year. He reminded members that the Academic Board had approved interim Project Planning Reports for the Varsity Centre and the Student Commons in Spring 2007. The preliminary results of a recent referendum indicated that 58% of the full-time undergraduate students were in favour of a levy for the Student Commons. Professor Goel congratulated the University of Toronto's Student Union (UTSU) on their accomplishment, commenting that the St. George campus could now join the University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM) and the University of Toronto at Scarborough (UTSC) in having a student-run student-supported facility. Professor Goel noted that the vote would require ratification by the UTSU Board of Directors, which would meet the following week. The University administration would then proceed to work with UTSU in developing the plans for the Student Commons. Professor Goel added that fundraising for the Varsity Centre was ongoing, and it was expected that a final report for both projects would be brought to the Board later in the academic year.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/Assets/assets/otareviewreport.pdf>  
40813

#### **4. Report from the Vice-President and Provost (cont'd).**

##### **(d) Capital Projects (cont'd).**

Professor Goel stated that Site 12 (on the west side of Devonshire Place south of Bloor Street) was one of the few remaining undeveloped building sites on the St. George campus. As such, the administration was exploring means of developing the site to the largest possible capacity.

Among one of the possible academic uses for a part of the site, was the Rotman Executive Development Programs. A project planning committee would be established to examine possible uses of the site, and the administration expected to submit a comprehensive plan for the entire site to the Board later in the academic year.

The administration had been working with the Faculty of Law on a project to provide much-needed, additional space for the Faculty. Development of the site would be complex due to tight spaces, heritage issues, environmental considerations, and green space matters with respect to Philosopher's Walk and Queen's Park. A search for conceptual designs had been undertaken in the spring, and three architectural firms had been selected to submit designs and models in October. The firms had also been asked to review issues relating to development plans for the Faculty of Music and the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) planetarium sites. Ongoing discussions with the ROM and its developer had occurred, and the University was hopeful that the needs of all parties could be met on the combined sites.

##### **(e) Academic Initiatives**

Professor Goel said that there were a number of exciting academic initiatives underway. A proposal for a School of Public Health had been considered by the Faculty of Medicine in the past week, and it was expected that the proposal would be submitted for governance approval later in the year.

A review of the Munk Centre had indicated that it would be appropriate to now consider future growth of the international relations program, and a proposal for the development of a collaborative doctoral program in the Munk Centre had been submitted to the Graduate Education Council. Earlier in the fall, the creation of the new Canadian International Council had been announced. The Council, which might house a number of the National Fellows at the Munk Centre, was vigorously supported by Mr. Jim Balsillie, Co-CEO of Research in Motion. In light of these developments, a committee to review the future of the Munk Centre will be struck.

Professor Goel noted that the Round Table for the Environment had held a full-day retreat earlier in the week. Various models for the improvement of environmental educational offerings to current and prospective students had been discussed.

##### **(f) *Towards 2030***

Professor Goel reported that the *Towards 2030* Task Forces had been announced in the past week. Five areas of focus had been identified and were listed on the website. The Task Forces would engage in active consultation, seeking input from members of the University community. Members of the Board were encouraged to make submissions on areas of interest to the Task Forces.

##### **(g) University Rankings and Ratings**

Professor Goel reported that *Maclean's* magazine and the *Times Higher Education Supplement* had recently published their respective university rankings. Professor Goel referred to the in-depth communication that he and the President had provided one year ago, which had outlined the

#### **4. Report from the Vice-President and Provost (cont'd).**

##### **(g) University Rankings and Ratings (cont'd).**

University's stance on such ranking exercises. While the University declined again this year to submit data directly to *Maclean's*, *Maclean's* was able to obtain the data it required from the Common University Data Ontario (CUDO) website. The University had taken a leadership role regarding the framework for Common University Data Ontario. The CUDO website makes data

from all Ontario universities publicly available in a standard, comparative format. The CUDO information, along with many other accountability reports that the University presented to governance bodies, was available on the University's website. In a few months, the Performance Indicators Report prepared for Governing Council would also be released and presented to the Academic Board.

Referring to the *Times* and *Maclean's* issues, Professor Goel informed members that the University of Toronto's ranking in both exercises had dropped; it had been ranked as fourth by *Maclean's* in the medical/doctoral ranking, with McGill University in first place, and Queen's and University of British Columbia tied in second place. He noted that there continued to be a data issue across the country, and there had been changes in the methodology used by *Maclean's*.

Professor Goel drew members' attention to the dramatic differences in the *Times*' ratings for a number of institutions in comparison with those from the previous year. He suggested that members critically examine the list in the 2007 issue, attending to the face validity, rank ordering of the list, and relative place of peer institutions. He noted that there had been significant changes in methodology that had resulted in marked shifts in ratings.

##### **(h) Government Relations**

Professor Goel reported that a new provincial Minister for Training, Colleges, and Universities, and a Minister for Research and Innovation had been appointed as part of the new Cabinet. The administration had begun to work with those Ministers on behalf of the University. It was expected that the Throne Speech would be delivered within the coming weeks, and the provincial budget would likely be tabled some months after that, perhaps in Spring 2008. If that were the case, the University might have to prepare the 2008-2009 budget prior to obtaining firm details on government funding for the upcoming year.

The federal government's fall economic statement and Speech from the Throne had been presented but had not signaled significant changes in priorities for post-secondary education. While there had been some reference to the innovation agenda, much work remained to be done by the research universities in making a case for ongoing enhanced investment in post-secondary education.

#### **5. Capital Project: Project Planning Report – University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM) Medical Academy**

The Chair explained that the Project Planning Report for the University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM) Medical Academy had been considered by the Planning and Budget Committee (P&B) on October 24, 2007. The proposal would be considered for approval by the Governing Council on December 6, 2007, subject to a favourable recommendation by the Academic Board.

Professor Diamond informed members that in October 2006, the P&B Committee had approved the Project Planning Report for the Medical Academy at UTM. It had originally been intended that space in the South Building on the UTM campus would accommodate the Medical Academy.

**5. Capital Project: Project Planning Report – University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM) Medical Academy (cont'd).**

With the deferral of the original project, the Project Planning Committee had had to reconsider possible building site options for the new Academy on the UTM campus.

Professor Diamond stated that the current Project Planning Report proposed to create a stand-alone building for the Medical Academy to address long-term space requirements. The P&B Committee had been advised that the intent was eventually to enroll fifty-four first-year students in the program, and that future expansion would be possible. The project would create approximately 3,000 net assignable square metres (nasms) of space, with a total cost of \$36.155 million.

Professor Diamond reported that in response to a question about the security of long-term annual funding from the Province of Ontario, Professor Goel had noted that the government had utilized that form of financing for capital projects in many transfer sectors since the 2005 budget.

The Chair welcomed Mr. Ray de Souza, Chief Administrative Officer, UTM, to the meeting of the Board. Mr. de Souza commented that the Medical Academy would be well-situated at UTM and would be functional and designed to blend into the natural landscape.

A member asked whether the Medical Academy Building would be available for use by non-medical students at UTM. Mr. de Souza confirmed that it would; one-third of the building would be assigned for academic use by UTM. However, the space program had not yet been finalized.

On motion duly moved and seconded

**YOUR BOARD RECOMMENDS**

1. THAT the Project Planning Report for the Medical Academy Building at the University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM), a copy of which is attached hereto as [Appendix “A”](#), be approved in principle.
2. THAT the project scope of 2,980 net assignable square metres (5,960 gross square metres) for the Medical Academy Building having a total estimated project cost of \$36.155 million be approved.
3. THAT the \$36.155 million funding required for the UTM Medical Academy Building comprise the following:
  - i) For the Mississauga Academy portion (totalling \$25.476 million):
    - a. Provincial funding in the form of annualized payments having a present value of \$8.637 million, and
    - b. \$16.839 million in contingency financing carried by the Faculty of Medicine.
  - ii) For the University of Toronto at Mississauga portion:  
Funding of \$10.679 million through borrowing, paid from the UTM operating budget.

**6. Capital Project: Project Planning Report – University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM) Storm Water Management Pond**

The Chair stated that the Project Planning Report for the UTM Storm Water Management (SWM) Pond had been considered by the Planning and Budget Committee (P&B) on October 24, 2007.

**6. Capital Project: Project Planning Report – University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM) Storm Water Management Pond (cont'd).**

The proposal would be considered for approval by the Governing Council on December 6, 2007, subject to a favourable recommendation by the Academic Board.

Professor Diamond reported that expansion at UTM had been monitored by the conservation authority and the City of Mississauga for several years. Further expansion on that campus would require the creation of a SWM facility that would satisfy water quality and erosion control concerns in the Credit Valley. The proposed Medical Academy had triggered the requirement.

Professor Diamond stated that the total cost of the project was approximately \$2.7 million, to be apportioned between the Medical Academy, UTM Parking Services, and borrowing to be repaid from the UTM operating budget.

At the Committee meeting, in response to a question about the impact of the Pond on parking, Professor Orchard (Vice-President and Principal, UTM) had replied that there was sufficient parking on campus to meet demand, but that there would be continued monitoring.

Invited by the Chair to comment, Mr. de Souza stated that the SWM Pond would contribute to improved quality of water that entered the Credit River, and it would regulate the rate of flow into the river, ensuring that set guidelines were met by UTM.

A member inquired whether the government had provided any funding for the project. Mr. de Souza responded that there had been no direct government funding for the project, although the Medical Academy Project, which received some capital funding from the provincial government, would contribute to its share of the costs.

In response to a question of the possible outcome if the University chose not to proceed with the SWM Pond in order to conserve funds, Mr. de Souza stated that UTM would not be granted a building permit for new construction on the campus.

On motion duly moved and seconded

**YOUR BOARD RECOMMENDS**

1. THAT the Project Planning Report for a Storm Water Management Pond at the University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM) for \$2.7 million, a copy of which is attached hereto as [Appendix “B”](#), be approved in principle.
2. THAT a maximum of \$1.6 million be allocated from borrowing to be repaid from the UTM operating budget.

**7. Capital Project: Project Planning Report – SciNet High Performance Computing Facility**

The Chair said that the Project Planning Report for the SciNet High Performance Computing Facility had been considered by P&B on October 24, 2007 and would be considered for approval by the Governing Council on December 6, 2007, subject to a favourable recommendation by the Academic Board.

Professor Diamond stated that the SciNet project was the latest of several grants from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and the province that would result in a significant increase in high performance computing capabilities for both the University of Toronto and the wider research community. The P&B Committee had been advised that the significant power

## **7. Capital Project: Project Planning Report – SciNet High Performance Computing Facility (cont'd).**

requirements (approximately three megawatts) made it impractical to locate the facility on campus. Therefore, a five-year lease, matching the current funding term of the grant, had been executed for space at 7700 Keele Street, which could accommodate the facility. If funding were renewed, the lease could be extended. Space on campus at 256 McCaul Street would be provided for associated technical support.

Invited by the Chair to comment, Professor Pekka Sinervo, Vice-Provost, First Entry Programs, and Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science, stated that the selection of the Keele Street location had been influenced by the high cost of potentially suitable sites on or near campus that could provide the necessary electrical power.

The Chair noted that some members had submitted questions on this item in advance of the meeting and thanked them for doing so. This was particularly helpful when technical matters were being addressed.

Noting that the audio-visual infrastructure would be state of the art and would be funded outside of the proposal, as stated on page 19 of the Project Planning Report, a member asked about the cost of such technology. Professor Goel responded that based on similar networks in other institutions, the University was considering installing two access grid systems, which might cost about \$50,000 each. He indicated that further costs might be involved in setting up the network.

Members of the Board inquired about backup infrastructure plans to protect data storage. Professor Sinervo explained that the most comprehensive strategy involved placing the uninterruptable power supply (UPS) on a file server that would allow approximately fifteen minutes for shut down of the systems during a power outage. He noted that much of the data was archived and reproducible, so temporary loss of access to the data and machines would not result in a significant loss. Professor Goel stated that while a standby power source for an extended blackout was not considered, UPS capacity would be available on site. The cost of such a system was estimated at \$100,000 - \$200,000.

A member expressed concern about the large amounts of waste heat that would be generated from the facility and suggested that an industrial use for the waste heat be identified. Technology to recover heat did exist. The member also requested that stronger language with respect to the recovery of heat be used in the proposal. Professor Goel thanked the member for raising the points and noted that the need for large amounts of power had motivated the Project Planning Committee to lease the space on Keele Street. He indicated that the facility had not yet been designed and confirmed the commitment to follow the *University Environmental Protection Policy*. Professor Goel stated that the University would seek appropriate use of the waste heat and would explicitly indicate that this be considered in the Request for Proposals that it would issue to consultants. As the facility was being leased, the University would need to collaborate with the landlord on any building changes.

Professor Sinervo commented that when the proposal had been developed, the timeframe of the project had been unknown. Upon consultation with vendors, and given the external funding, and that any generated cost savings would remain in the project, the Committee had thought the most prudent route would be to ensure that the necessary capacity for power would be available.

Professor Goel reminded members that the approval of such capital project planning reports was “in principle” allowing the administration flexibility in implementation of the project. He noted that in some cases, the reports were written a few years prior to the start of construction. The Board was asked to approve the scope, site, and overall budget of a project, assuming that the



## **7. Capital Project: Project Planning Report – SciNet High Performance Computing Facility (cont'd).**

administration would act in the most reasonable manner in the best interests of the University. Professor Goel observed that recovery of waste heat in the SciNet project could result in cost savings or in additional expense. There was a requirement on the University's part for responsible property development, and it would want to avoid a situation where it was bound to an Academic Board resolution that resulted in increased expense on an external grant.

A member noted that much of the renovation work planned for the leased site would not occur for some time and could not be transferred elsewhere. Since the grant funding for the project was only for a five-year term, what plans had been made if the funding was not renewed? Professor Sinervo replied that the current federal funding was an extension of a project initially approved in 1998, and he was optimistic that a further funding extension would be granted.

On motion duly moved and seconded

### **YOUR BOARD RECOMMENDS**

1. THAT the Project Planning Report for the SciNet project, a copy of which is attached hereto as [Appendix "C"](#), be approved in principle.
2. THAT the project scope for leasehold improvements at 7700 Keele Street consisting of 1,100 square metres with a total project cost of \$4,771,970 be approved.
3. THAT the project scope for 256 McCaul Street of approximately of 320 net assignable square metres with a total project cost of \$1,110,620 be approved.

## **8. Items for Information**

### **(a) Semi-Annual Report: Academic Appeals Committee, Individual Cases, Fall 2007**

The Chair stated that the Fall 2007 Report of the Academic Appeals Committee contained reports of individual cases which had come before the Committee, and it was provided to the Board for information. The Chair thanked the two members who had submitted questions on this item prior to the meeting of the Board.

A member asked whether there were any guidelines for professors when ruling on individual student requests for special consideration of term work. In his opinion, professors had wide discretion in this matter. In contrast, guidelines for divisional committees that considered petitions on final examinations did exist. Professor Hillan explained that the University's *Policy on Academic Appeals Within Divisions* provides guiding principles and guidelines for academic appeals processes at the divisional level. However, given the size and complexity of the University and differences among divisions, the Policy provides that divisions should decide how best to implement the policy at the local level. The Office of the Vice-President and Provost was responsible for monitoring the implementation of divisional appeals processes, and for conveying information to the divisions about suggested best practices. Professor Sinervo informed members that only a very small fraction of petitions submitted within the Faculty of Arts and Science proceeded to the Academic Appeals Committee. Approximately 4,000 petitions addressing issues on exams were processed by the Faculty each year. The cases presented to the Board were those which had not been resolved through the usual petition process, and they were often the most challenging cases.

## 8. Items for Information

### (a) Semi-Annual Report: Academic Appeals Committee, Individual Cases, Fall 2007 (cont'd).

A few members commented that there appeared to be some inconsistencies in decisions of the Committee between cases. One member noted that Report Number 317, page 2, stated that “Mississauga has a policy of permitting students to withdraw late without academic penalty on one occasion before strictly applying the deadlines to drop courses.” Yet other reports of the Committee indicated that “...permission for late withdrawal without penalty may be granted, but such relief is far from a matter of course” (Report Number 314, page 3). The member suggested that UTM reconsider this policy. Otherwise, in his view, such a policy should be publicized and made available to all students at the University. In response, Professor Hillan stated that such a policy does not exist at UTM. She explained that the Committee on Standing evaluated each petition on an individual basis. Only when circumstances warranted did it grant a late withdrawal without academic penalty. Such an outcome was not automatic. In many cases, students do not participate in courses believing that they have withdrawn, without having actually done so. In such cases, a notation of “WDR” was placed on the student’s academic record, indicating that late withdrawal without academic penalty had been granted, and that in the future the student would be held fully responsible for observing University deadlines and withdrawal procedures. This was the practice at UTM and, to her knowledge, was also the practice within other divisions at the University.

Professor Sinervo said that the University made a great effort to address such petitions with understanding, particularly when they were submitted by first-year students. It was the objective of the divisional committees to examine each case thoughtfully. Professor Goel added that the administration of justice was of the utmost importance to the University. Contextual factors were considered, and divisional officers gave careful thought to cases. Compassion was frequently demonstrated in the decisions made. Referring to the balance that existed in the University’s judicial system, Professor Goel noted that, on occasion, the Academic Appeals Committee had overturned the decisions of some divisional committees if, in its view, rules had been inappropriately applied. He did note that some of the wording contained in the reports of the Academic Appeals Committee might not always reflect current practice.

Referring to a case in which a student’s request for retroactive withdrawal from a course had been denied despite the student’s well-documented mental illness<sup>2</sup>, a member questioned whether it was reasonable to expect students in such trying circumstances to meet academic obligations. In other cases, similar requests for retroactive withdrawal had been granted to students without documented illnesses who had been experiencing difficult circumstances. The Chair noted that the reports were being presented to the Board for information only, and that individual cases would not be retried. Professor Goel reiterated that while University-wide guidelines did exist, each division was expected to implement its own procedures as appropriate. It was not possible to have a single process that could be applied across the University, given the diversity of programs. However, the University recognized that inconsistencies in decisions might occur, and partly for that reason the appeal system was in place.

Members of the Board discussed the language used in the reports of the Academic Appeals Committee. In particular, the reference to a “free pass” was thought to be inappropriate and did not convey the substance of the situation. It was suggested that more sensitive wording fitting to the seriousness of the appeals process be used in the future.

A member commented on the level of detail contained in the reports of the Committee. Although students’ names were withheld, it was possible for them to be identified through other information in the reports, such as thesis titles.

---

<sup>2</sup> Report Number 315  
40813

**8. Items for Information****(a) Semi-Annual Report: Academic Appeals Committee, Individual Cases, Fall 2007**  
(cont'd).

Professor Goel explained that the Academic Appeals Committee reported to the Academic Board, rather than to the administration, and he suggested that the Chair might discuss the concerns raised with the Senior Chair of the Committee. He indicated that it was appropriate for members to express to the Board any concerns they might have about phrasing used in the reports. In the future when such reports were presented, it would be useful for one of the Chairs of the Committee to attend the Board meeting.

The Chair noted that the common law of the divisional committees often involved a system of precedents that had been developed over time, as members gained experience in making decisions. He thanked members for the insightful discussion that had taken place, stating that their comments would be forwarded to the Academic Appeals Committee. The Chair also acknowledged the hard work and time commitment of the Committee members.

**(b) Semi-Annual Report: University Tribunal, Individual Cases, Fall 2007**

The Chair said that the Fall 2007 Report of the University Tribunal, Individual Cases, had also been provided to the Board for information. There were no questions.

**(c) Report Number 121 of the Planning and Budget Committee (October 24, 2007)**

The Chair noted that the draft Report Number 121 of the Planning and Budget Committee had been circulated electronically on November 7, 2007 and copies had been available at the door. There were no questions.

**(d) Appointments and Status Changes Report**

The Chair informed members that the report had been included in their agenda package for information. There were no questions.

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

The Chair reminded members that the date of the next meeting was Thursday, December 13, 2007, at 4:10 p.m.

**10. Other Business**

There were no items of Other Business.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

---

Secretary

---

Chair

November 15, 2007