



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT & PROVOST

TO: Business Board
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DATE: March 1, 2011 for March 7, 2011
AGENDA ITEM: 7

ITEM IDENTIFICATION: Framework on Off-Campus Safety

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Business Board has responsibility for monitoring and recommending policy on the occupational health and safety of members of the staff of the University and other policy pertaining to the health and safety of all members of, and visitors to, the University except for those matters falling within the terms of reference of the University Affairs Board.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The *Policy on Safety in Field Research* was approved by Governing Council on May 19, 1988.

HIGHLIGHTS:

It is recommended that the *Framework on Off-Campus Safety* replace the *Policy on Safety in Field Research*. The initial set of Guidelines under the Framework is provided for information.

The need for the new Framework and Guidelines arises from several areas:

- (a) the existing *Policy on Safety in Field Research* requires updating and there are a variety of guidelines and practises across the University that would benefit from consolidation under an institutional umbrella to facilitate the consistent application of the general principles in the proposed *Framework*;
- (b) there have been suggestions from the Office of the Ombudsperson and elsewhere that there is a need for directives on matters related to travel abroad; and
- (c) there are growing areas of off-campus activity which require similar attention.

Based on the following three principles, the new *Framework* is intended to inform the planning of University activities which occur off-campus:

- (a) Safety must be taken into account during planning;
- (b) The University and its members have a shared responsibility on these matters; and
- (c) Assessment of the level of risk and the measures proposed to address such risks is a key part of determining whether an activity should proceed.

Initially, there are four sets of Guidelines (which are provided for information) associated with the *Framework on Off-Campus Safety*:

- (a) The *Guidelines on Safety in Field Research* were initiated by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and were developed by the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.
- (b) The *Guidelines on Safety Abroad* were developed by the Safety Abroad Office and are reflective of current procedures implemented by that Office.
- (c) The *Guidelines on Travel* were based in large part on the guidelines in use by the Faculty of Physical Education and Health for intercollegiate team travel.
- (d) The *Guidelines on Sponsorship of Off-Campus Activities* of Campus Organizations were developed by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students and reflect best practices on this issue.

Other guidelines may be developed as the need arises.

In general, a *Framework* and Provostial Guidelines under the *Framework* are appropriate to address off-campus safety issues because (a) the guidelines can be amended and updated to reflect new needs and new situations; and (b) safety issues must be assessed in the context of the particular circumstances of the activity and principles and best practises need the flexibility of a *Framework* and guidelines in order to effectively address a broad range of activities and circumstances, some of which are not currently foreseeable.

During the development of the framework and guidelines, guidance and feedback were received from a number of offices including the Faculty of Arts and Science – International Programs and Partnerships, the Dean's Office – Faculty of Law, Environmental Health and Safety, the Safety Abroad Office, Risk Management, the Health and Well-Being Office, the School of Graduate Studies, as well as from principals, deans, academic directors and chairs, or their respective offices.

The draft framework and guidelines were discussed at two meetings of principals, deans, academic directors and chairs. In addition, requests for feedback and input were sent to student governments, student societies and student members of the governing council in November, 2010. Finally, the Vice-Provost, Students, Jill Matus, and the director of her office, Jim Delaney, convened a meeting with students in leadership positions to discuss the draft framework and guidelines on December 6, 2010. As only one representative attended this meeting and no substantive comments were received either at the meeting or in response to the call for submissions, it is believed that the proposed framework and guidelines are regarded favourably in the campus community

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

There are no implications for the University's operating budget beyond the necessary costs to maximize safety in off-campus activities.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the *Framework on Off-Campus Safety* be recommended to the Governing Council for approval replacing the *Policy on Safety in Field Research*, effective immediately.