

FOR APPROVAL

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: UTM Campus Council

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PRESENTER: Mark Overton, Dean of Student Affairs & Assistant Principal,
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DATE: April 14, 2020 for April 21, 2020

AGENDA ITEM: 4

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees – Student Society Fees: UTM Student Society Proposals for Fee Increases

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Section 5.1 of the Campus Affairs Committee Terms of Reference lists student societies and compulsory non-academic incidental fees among the Committee’s areas of responsibility.

Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 provide that compulsory non-academic incidental fees for representative student committees and divisional student societies “are approved by the UTM Council on the recommendation of the UTM Campus Affairs Committee.”

Student society fees are subject to the terms and conditions of the *Policy on Ancillary Fees* (Category 2.0, “Student organizations and services provided by such organizations,” and Category 3.0, “Student levies for specific, limited projects”), and the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* (Preamble, Section A., and in particular, Section B). More information on these sections is appended in the attached memo from Mark Overton, Dean of Student Affairs.

Increases which are greater than the cost of living must be supported by referendum. Other increases must be supported by a previous referendum approving the concept of annual increases by the cost of living or an explicit inflation factor.

The administrative procedures are outlined in the *Handbook for Student Societies*, which is published by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (OVPS).

Requests for increases are brought forward to the Committee by the administration on the assurances of the student societies that due constitutional and fair procedures have been followed within the societies concerned. If a complaint is received about the process related to a fee request from a student society, the OVPS makes inquiries about the issue and, if necessary investigates matter further as part of the assessment of the request.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. UTM Campus Affairs Committee (March 25, 2020) [For Recommendation]
2. **UTM Campus Council (April 21, 2020) [For Approval]**
3. University Affairs Board (April 27, 2020) [For Information]
4. Executive Committee (May 5, 2020) [For Confirmation]

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

Requests for changes to existing student society fees and/or the establishment of new fees may be brought forward to the Committee on one or more occasions each year. This is the second set of requests on behalf of student societies brought forward this year.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The following student societies have requested changes to fees charged on their behalf by the University:

The Medium

Additional information is provided in the attached memorandum from Mark Overton, Dean of Student Affairs & Assistant Principal, Student Services.

The requests have been reviewed by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students in light of the requirements of the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* and are found to be in compliance. Therefore, the requests are recommended for approval.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no net implications for the campus' operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Be it Resolved,

THAT subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee,

THAT beginning in the Fall 2020 session, the fee for *The Medium* be increased as follows: (a) an increase of \$2.00 per Fall and Winter sessions (full-time and part-time) in the society fee.

If approved, the total Fall/Winter fee for *The Medium* will be \$5.63 per session (\$3.21 part-time), charged to all UTM undergraduate students.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees – UTM Student Society Proposals for Fee Increases



TO: Members of the Campus Affairs Committee

FROM: Mark Overton, Dean of Student Affairs

DATE: March 16, 2020

**SUBJECT: Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees – UTM Student Society
Proposals for Fee Increases**

Requests from two UTM student societies for the fee changes listed below have been received by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (OVPS), which manages the University-wide administrative processes related to student society fee requests. OVPS works with my office as necessary and keeps me informed with respect to the fee requests received from UTM student societies.

The applications have been reviewed in light of the requirements of the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*. The requests below are found to be in compliance with these requirements and are recommended for approval.

Requests for fee increases from student societies must meet a number of requirements. Section B.4. of the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* outlines the University's general 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.

Cost of Living Increases

(a) Where the amount of an increase in the fee charged is not greater than the year-over-year change in consumer prices for Ontario as measured by Statistics Canada (December-over-December) as of December 31 of the previous year, the request must be supported by the results of a previous referendum approving the principle of a cost-of-living adjustment. In special circumstances (e.g., when a portion of a student society fee is designated for a health plan or capital project), other inflation indexes or predetermined inflation factors may be used, provided that the request is supported by the results of a previous referendum approving the use of the specific inflation index or predetermined inflation factor.

Referendum Requirement

- (b) *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 procedures for handling fee change requests (from the *Handbook for Student Societies* published by the OVPS) also provide that requests for a fee increase must be supplied with 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 these processes at two points. Initially, student societies are asked to seek advice from the OVPS on the wording of the referendum questions (with respect to clarity and technical language). The second point occurs after the referendum when the student society makes the formal request for a fee increase. 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 requests for fee increases is normally based upon the following expectations:

1. The student society must make the request in a manner consistent with the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* and the University's procedures for increases 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 itself should be clear and provide enough information to students in order to gain a full understanding of the implications of the question and proposed fee for them;
4. The referendum must be held in a fair manner, advertised and promoted in a reasonable manner, and the members of each organization should be given a reasonable opportunity to vote; and
5. Each organization must comply with the provisions of its own by-laws, rules of procedure, and specific policies and procedures approved by the society's board or council.

Societies which have previously received approval (by referendum) from their members for an annual cost of living increase in the society's portion of the fee may request increases, upon approval by the society's board or council, of up to the previous Ontario December-over-December cost of living increase (consumer price index) calculated by Statistics Canada. The December 2019 consumer price index for Ontario was 2.1%.

As outlined in the excerpt from the *Policy* above, where members of a society have given consent (through a previous referendum) to the concept of inflationary increases according to a specific inflation factor or measure, this inflation factor may be used.

It is important to note that when dealing with a student society request for a fee change, it is the society's own constitution, by-laws, or 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 increases based upon the results of a referendum, and increases which require only the approval of the society's board or council, the administration relies on the assurances of student societies that due constitutional processes and fair procedures have been followed.

The Medium

Background:

In Fall/Winter 2019-20, the society fee for *The Medium* was \$3.63 per session for full-time University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) undergraduate students (\$1.21 part-time).

Requests:

- i. *An increase in the society fee.*

A referendum was held from February 11, 2020 to February 13, 2020, in which UTM undergraduate students were asked to support an increase to the society fee of *The Medium*. The wording of the question was as follows:

The Medium would like to increase its levy for the fall/winter session of 2020/2021 for full-time and part-time undergraduate students. The increase would help support The Medium in the following ways:

1. *The higher levy would help The Medium ensure that our staff has a more equitable pay rate and allow a salary increase equivalent to the minimum wage increase.*

2. *We would be able to provide students with an increased number of journalism outreach opportunities, including but not limited to networking events, panels, and seminars with professional journalists across the industry.*
3. *Create full-time Illustrator and Videographer positions to help expand our content, both online and in print. This will also allow more students to get involved in different capacities with the newspaper.*
4. *Increase our presence on campus and engage with students by allocating more funding towards a more frequently released magazine (i.e. rather than one every two years or more, there would be one every year). This would allow more students to engage in various styles of writing rather than purely article writing in our usual six sections.*

The Medium is proposing an increase of \$2.00 per fall/winter session (\$4.00 per year) for full-time and part-time undergraduate students at UTM beginning in Fall 2020.

Full-time undergraduate students currently pay \$3.63 per fall/winter session (\$7.26 per year) and part-time undergraduate students currently pay \$1.21 per fall/winter session (\$2.42 per year).

Should the proposal be accepted, a total of \$5.63 per fall/winter session (\$11.26 per year) for full-time students will be paid, and a total of \$3.21 per fall/winter session (\$6.42 per year) will be paid by part-time students.

Do you support this proposed increase? (Yes/No/Abstain)

The results of the referendum were as follows:

YES:	43 (50%)	Approximate Number of	
NO:	36 (41.9%)	Eligible Voters:	13,966
ABSTAIN/SPOILED:	7 (8.1%)		
TOTAL:	86 (100%)	Voter turnout:	86 (0.6%)

In the course of considering this request, the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students has not received any complaints.

Summary of Changes

Student Societies	Summer 2020		Fall 2020		Winter 2021		Summer 2019		Fall 2019		Winter 2020	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
The Medium Society [O]			5.63	3.21	5.63	3.21			3.63	1.21	3.63	1.21
TOTAL			\$ 5.63	\$ 3.21	\$ 5.63	\$ 3.21			\$ 3.63	\$ 1.21	\$ 3.63	\$ 1.21
Change From Previous Year			+55.1%	+165.3%	+55.1%	+165.3%			0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
			\$ 2.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.00			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -