

FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: Campus Affairs Committee

SPONSOR: Sandy Welsh, Vice-Provost, Students
CONTACT INFO: 416-978-3870, vp.students@utoronto.ca

PRESENTER: As above.
CONTACT INFO:

DATE: April 21, 2020 for April 28, 2020

AGENDA ITEM: 6

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Amendments to the *Policy on Recognition of Campus Groups*

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Section 5.5.1 of the Terms of Reference of the Campus Affairs Committee stipulates the following:

“The Committee is responsible for policy concerning representative student societies and campus organizations.”

Section 5.1.4 of the Terms of Reference of the University Affairs Board stipulates the following:

“The Board is responsible for policy concerning multi-campus services campus and student services on the St. George campus and University-wide policies that apply to the St. George, UTM and UTSC campuses. It is also responsible for overseeing their operation.”

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. University Affairs Board [for information] (April 27, 2020)
2. **UTM Campus Affairs Committee [for information] (April 28, 2020)**
3. UTSC Campus Affairs Committee [for information] (May 4, 2020)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The current *Policy on Recognition of Campus Groups* was approved by Governing Council on January 26, 1987 and revised on February 13, 1990 and May 23, 1993.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (OVPS) is proposing changes to the current Policy on Recognition of Campus Groups. This policy has been in existence since 1987 and provides the framework by which groups that are voluntary in nature are recognized by the University. This will be the first revision to this policy since 1993.

The proposed changes include replacing all instances of "campus group" with "student group", including renaming the policy to the *Policy on the Recognition of Student Groups*. This name change reflects the significant contributions that student organizations make to enriching the student experience. The changes ensure that fees paid by students to support recognized groups are directed toward groups that are led by and reflect the interests of students. All groups recognized under the current *Policy* have access to free space on campus, as well as discounted costs for audio and visual equipment, if required.

To this end, the proposed changes ensure that students are holding the majority of leadership opportunities in recognized Student Groups. This and other proposed changes will mean access to space on campus under the *Policy* is directed to student-led groups and their initiatives. Other areas of the University, such as Alumni Relations, have their own guidelines in place for their respective groups and networks.

Students, staff, and faculty were invited to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the *Policy* via an online consultation form or by attending one of in-person consultation sessions offered on each campus. As a result of the disruption to some of the planned in-person consultation sessions due to COVID-19 restrictions, the online consultations were extended.

After consultation with the University community, some of the proposed changes to the eligibility requirements for recognized Student Group status include:

- Student Groups must have a minimum of five (5) members who are registered students of the University of Toronto. Currently there is no minimum.
- Executive members with voting privileges must be currently registered students of the University of Toronto.
- Should a Student Group wish to use “University of Toronto” (or similar) in their name, it must be clear in their name and all related representations that it is a Student Group.
- Clarifying the relationship between external groups and campus groups.

Changes also include minor edits such as formatting and restructuring of existing content and updates to wording. For example, we have proposed organizing the content into sections and have added headers, shifting the position of some content as a result.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

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

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

Draft Policy on the Recognition of Student Groups

Policy on the Recognition of ~~Campus~~Student Groups

Voluntary organizations formed by the University community are a traditional part of campus life, and contribute in significant ways to its intellectual, political, social, and cultural diversity.

In its relations with these organizations, the University is guided by a commitment to the right of University members to communicate and to discuss and explore all ideas, to organize groups for any lawful purpose, to move about the University and to use its facilities in any reasonable way, to distribute on campus, in a responsible way, published material provided that it is not unlawful, to hold meetings, to debate and to engage in peaceful demonstrations, and to freedom from discrimination ~~on the basis of sex, race or religion~~.

Recognition as a “~~campus~~Student Group” is a privilege based upon observance of certain procedures and acceptance of certain responsibilities. It follows that this privilege can be withdrawn if these procedures are neglected or responsibilities abrogated by the organization or group.

Under the terms of this policy, the University will not attempt to censor, control or interfere with any group on the basis of its philosophy, beliefs, interests or opinions expressed unless and until these lead to activities which are illegal or which infringe the rights and freedoms already mentioned. By the same token, recognition as a “~~campus~~Student Group” by the University implies neither endorsement of a particular group’s beliefs or philosophy, nor the assumption of legal liability for the group’s activities. It assumes only that the University has a responsibility to inform itself of organizations which use its facilities and name and to deny or withdraw recognition if the requirements of this policy are not observed.

- a) The University should maintain a policy and mechanism for the recognition of ~~campus organizations~~Student Groups. All such groups wishing to use “University of Toronto”, “University of Toronto Mississauga”, “University of Toronto Scarborough”, “U of T”, “UTM”, “UTSC”, or similar in their names and all groups wishing to claim internal status under the *Policy ~~for on the Allocation of Rooms – Extracurricular Bookings~~Temporary Use of Space at the University of Toronto* must be recognized.
- b) Responsibility for the maintenance of the policy and mechanism, where campus-wide organizations or organizations drawing members from more than one division or constituency of the University are concerned, should be vested in the University Affairs Board of the Governing Council.
- c) The responsibility for recognition of ~~organizations~~Student Groups that are not campus-wide and drawing members from only one division or constituency of the University should rest with the council of that division or constituency.

I. Eligibility for Recognition

Eligibility for recognition should be assessed annually against the following technical constitutional areas rather than ideological ones:

- a) The objectives and activities of groups seeking recognition should be seen as attempting to contribute to the educational, recreational, social or cultural values of the University. These values are intended to be interpreted in the broadest sense. However, the University's essential "value" of freedom of enquiry and association must be preserved.
- b) Recognized campusStudent Groups may not engage in activities which are essentially commercial in nature. This is not intended to preclude the collection of membership fees to cover the expenses of the organization, or of charges for specific activities, programs or events, or to prohibit groups from engaging in legitimate fundraising. However, a recognized campusStudent Group cannot:
 - i. as a major activity, have a function that makes it an on-campus part of a commercial organization;
 - ii. provide services and goods at a profit when that profit is used for purposes other than those of the organization; nor
 - iii. pay salaries and/or stipends to some or all of its executive members or officers.
- c) Membership in Student Groups should be open to all registered student members of the University without restriction on the grounds of national origin, race, religion, colour, or sex outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code's Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination. While discriminatory membership practices are not allowed, it is recognized that certain Student Groups could well be homogeneous in nature without being discriminatory.
- d) The University's interest in thea Student Group's constitution is based on its concern that organizations:
 - i. groups and individuals using its name and its facilities are genuine campus organizationsStudent Groups;
 - ii. Student Groups pursue activities in accordance with the law;
 - iii. organizational structure, membership, procedures, rules of conduct, etc. are articulated so that members who join a clubStudent Group and take part in its activities may do so with full knowledge of their rights and responsibilities within the groupStudent Group; and
 - iv. Student Groups are operating in an open, accessible and democratic fashion, as per the Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations, and following the terms of their constitutions.

- e) Where a group applying for recognition has a direct connection with another body outside the University of Toronto, the nature of this connection and the name of the body must be disclosed fully and substantially in the application for recognition.
 - i. Student Groups must be a distinct entity from the body outside the University of Toronto. The executive members, officers, and contact person of the Student Group shall not be executive members of the external organization.
 - ii. Student Groups shall not confer financial benefit to external organizations without fully and completely disclosing the nature and amount of the benefit to the University. The method of disclosure will be outlined by Student Affairs/Student Life offices on each campus.

II. Composition of Student Groups

- a) Executive members with voting privileges shall be currently registered students¹ of the University of Toronto.
- b) Staff, faculty, or alumni members may hold non-voting executive positions. These non-voting executive positions shall be limited to a maximum of one (1) or ten per cent (10%) of the full executive body, whichever is greatest. Persons holding these non-voting executive positions cannot serve as an officer (including financial signing officer) or contact person of the Student Group.
- c) Registered students may be executive members on one or more Student Groups but may only serve as a financial signing officer on one Student Group at a time.
- d) Student Groups must have a minimum of five (5) members who are registered students of the University of Toronto.
- e) Non-voting membership may be extended to interested staff, faculty, and alumni, or persons from outside the University, without restriction on those grounds outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code's Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination.
- f) Groups seeking recognition must supply the following:
 - i. An application in the form prescribed.
 - ii. The names of two officers and a contact person (who could be one of the officers) responsible for all ~~room bookings and rentals of University equipment~~ and services bookings of University space, rentals of University equipment, and

¹ As defined in S.1.1(l) in the University of Toronto Act, 1978

- use of other University services. Groups must also supply a mailing address and a telephone number. This information will be considered to be public information.
- iii. The total number of members, the size of the governing body (i.e., number of executive members), and the proportion of ~~members on and off campus~~ registered U of T student members and other members at the time of registration.
 - iv. A copy of the constitution and/or by-laws of the group.

~~Groups meeting the requirements of this policy will be granted recognition for the academic year in which application is made. (For this purpose the academic year is considered to run from October 1 to September 30.)~~ Applications for Student Group status may be submitted at any time during the year. Groups meeting the requirements of this policy will be granted recognition in accordance with the due processes, guidelines, and timelines established on each campus. Recognition may be renewed in successive academic years upon request by the new executive. If constitutional and/or by-law changes have been proposed, the amended constitution and/or by-laws should be submitted and will be considered in the course of the renewal process.

1. Where a group applying for recognition wishes to use “University of Toronto”, “University of Toronto Mississauga”, “University of Toronto Scarborough”, “U of T”, “UTM”, “UTSC”, or similar, in their name, it shall be clear in their name and all related representations that it is a Student Group.
 - a) Student Groups shall not use the University’s signatures, crests, word marks, or letter marks without expressed written consent from the Trademark Licensing Office.
2. Applicants for recognition or recognized Student Groups handling extensive funds may be required to submit audited statements annually to the Office of the ~~Assistant Vice-President–Student Affairs~~ Vice-Provost, Students.

At the discretion of the ~~Assistant Vice-President–Student Affairs~~ Vice-Provost, Students, Student Groups supplying goods or services for which a charge is made may be required to indicate in all advertising, contractual, and other material that the University neither endorses the Student Group’s activities nor assumes legal liability in connection with the goods and services provided.

3. Recognized ~~Campus~~ Student Groups must report to the ~~Assistant Vice-President–Student Affairs~~ Vice-Provost, Students the name of the bank, trust company, or credit union; the branch; account numbers; and financial signing officers for all financial accounts opened in their name.

III. Complaints, Appeals and Reporting of Administrative Decisions

- a) The University will not attempt to monitor or review the activities of a Student Group in the normal course of events. It will however investigate complaints or charges that an organization has acted in a manner that is inconsistent with its constitution and/or by-laws, or with the requirements of University policy. If these complaints or charges prove to be valid, recognition may be withdrawn. ~~Application for a renewal of recognition may be made at any time after the following September 30.~~
- b) Student Groups must operate in accordance with the Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations.
- c) Responsibility for the implementation of this policy is delegated to the administration. In the case of denial or withdrawal of recognition, a statement of the reasons will be provided. All administrative decisions to grant, deny, or withdraw recognition will be reported regularly to the University Affairs Board for information.
- d) Student Groups wishing to appeal a decision made by the Student Affairs/Student Life offices on their campus may do so through the Office of the ~~Assistant Vice-President-Student Affairs~~ Vice-Provost, Students. In the event of an appeal, a hearing ~~review~~ shall be held by an administrative officer designated by the ~~Assistant Vice-President, Student Affairs~~ Vice-Provost, Students not involved in the original decision.

Glossary

Contact person: The registered U of T student member who is the primary point of contact between a Student Group and the University.

Executive member: A member of a Student Group who is serving on its executive, as outlined by the constitution and/or by-laws of the Student Group.

Member: A person who has signed up to participate in a Student Group, whether it be on an on-going or provisional basis, such as to participate in a class or workshop.

Officer: A member of a Student Group who has been assigned duties by the constitution and/or by-laws of the Student Group, or by this policy.

Student Groups: Voluntary organizations formed by registered students at the University of Toronto. This Policy applies the recognition of Student Groups, which differ from student organizations that are granted status through other policies (i.e., student societies, affiliates of student societies).

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