FOR RECOMMENDATION            PUBLIC            OPEN SESSION

TO:                      UTSC Campus Affairs Committee

SPONSOR:   Prof. William Gough, Vice-Principal Academic and Dean
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DATE:  April 27, 2020 for May 4, 2020

AGENDA ITEM:  4

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Creation of the Centre for Global Disability Studies as an Extra-Departmental Unit C (EDU:C)

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under section 5.1 of the Terms of Reference, the CAC is responsible for the “Establishment, termination or restructuring of academic units and proposals for Extra-Departmental Units.” Section 5.8.1 of the Terms of Reference provides that the CAC recommends to the UTSC Council “on plans and proposals to establish, disestablish, or significantly restructure academic units...regardless of the source of funds. Proposals for Extra-Departmental Units (EDU)-A’s and B’s are considered and recommended for approval while those for EDU-C’s are considered and approved, pursuant to the Policy on Interdisciplinary Education and Research Planning.”

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. UTSC Campus Affairs Committee [For Recommendation] (May 4, 2020)
2. UTSC Campus Council [For Approval] (May 26, 2020)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

No previous action in governance has been taken on this item.
HIGHLIGHTS:

The University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) is proposing the creation of the Centre for Global Disability Studies (CGDS) as a new Extra-Departmental Unit C, to be effective as of July 1, 2020. UTSC will be the Lead Division; the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean will assume active administrative and budgetary responsibility for the Centre, and will appoint a Director, who will be responsible for the administrative and financial operations of the Centre. The Centre for Critical Development Studies and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Health and Society will jointly provide an intellectual home for the CGDS.

Disability studies is a transdisciplinary field of study defined by (1) a commitment to pursuing more just futures for people with disabilities, (2) foregrounding the perspectives of people with disabilities with a critical intersectional approach, and (3) contributing to an emergent disability studies canon. A disability studies approach focuses on the social and political organization of disability, and takes a critical approach to medical understandings of health, illness, disability, sensory impairment, and mental health.

In global disability studies we trace the way that ideas of disability are configured across varied historical and cultural contexts, and transnational networks shift changing local understandings of disability and care. Global disability studies demands attention to the politics of disability advocacy and organizing in diverse national and transnational contexts, some of which challenge civil and human rights-based paradigms, questioning the nation state as the primary arbiter of justice. Moved by the diversity of cultural constructions of normalcy and disability, global disability studies also explores how our relations to disability are connected to our socio-cultural and historical contexts.

CGDS will be based in a social science and humanities approach to the study of disability, access, and ableism; disability studies in this tradition is distinct from clinical, medical, behavioral, or physiological approaches to human bodily and mental variation that involve research paradigms designed toward preventative and curative ends. CGDS will serve as a locus of disability studies expertise, and from that position interface with research groups with complimentary foci and other approaches to the study of disability. CGDS will support research that focuses on the following key areas: (a) transnational and global flows of categorizing disability as human difference, (b) systems that generate oppression and produce disabling situations, and (c) cultural differences in understandings of disability around the globe.

CGDS will position UTSC as a regional and international leader of the emerging field of global disability studies. It will capitalize on, and foster, collaboration between research faculty in the Centre for Critical Development Studies and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Health and Society, as well as faculty and staff across the campus, including the UTSC Library and AccessAbility Services, to promote and strengthen research activities, mentorship, graduate student training, and public-facing activities in the sphere of critical global disability studies. In addition, the CGDS will act as a tri-campus hub to foster interdisciplinary research and scholarly interest in the field, and will promote an ethos of
accommodation founded in the belief that the participation of people with disabilities in our scholarly community enriches the quality of the research that the University produces. In this way, the CGDS will contribute to raising the University’s public profile as a leading global research university with a resounding commitment to groundbreaking, engaged scholarship addressing persistent issues of social and political justice in Canada and across the globe. Furthermore, the CGDS will activate core elements of UTSC’s strategic plan Inspiring Inclusive Excellence.

CGDS will be supported by faculty with active and distinguished careers producing and supporting scholarship in disability studies. The CGDS Director will be appointed for a fixed term of not more than five years, and the Dean, with input from the Director and participating faculty, will appoint an Advisory Board to provide non-binding advice to the Director. CGDS will be supported in terms of administrative issues, including budget and allocation of funds, printing, and publicity by appointed university staff as determined by the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean (or designate) in consultation with the Director.

The proposal to create the CGDS was developed by a team of scholars comprised of faculty and staff members of the UTSC Dean’s working group. There has been extensive consultation with other related entities across UTSC and U of T, including: the SCOPE Lab (the Health Humanities Learning Lab at UTSC), CCDS, Equity Studies at New College, Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies (SDS), Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), AccessAbility Services at UTSC, and the University of Toronto Mississauga.

CGDS will be subject to periodic review commissioned by the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean of the University of Toronto Scarborough.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

CGDS shall, under the authority of the Dean, administer a budget to sustain its activities. The Vice-Principal Academic and Dean has reviewed, and supports, the budget model. For more information, see the budget outlined in the proposal.

In addition, CGDS may also seek external funding to host postdoctoral fellows, to host visiting international researchers, and to promote other interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaborations.
RECOMMENDATION:

Be It Recommended to the UTSC Campus Council,

THAT, the creation of the Centre for Global Disability Studies as an Extra-Departmental Unit C as described in the proposal recommended by the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, Professor William Gough, and dated April 7, 2020, be approved to be effective as of July 1, 2020.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

1. Proposal: EDU:C – Centre for Global Disability Studies, dated April 7, 2020