



**FOR APPROVAL**

**PUBLIC**

**OPEN SESSION**

**TO:** Governing Council

**SPONSOR:** Claire Kennedy, Chair of the Governing Council  
**CONTACT INFO:** [chair.gc@utoronto.ca](mailto:chair.gc@utoronto.ca)

**PRESENTER:** As above  
**CONTACT INFO:**

**DATE:** March 26, for April 2, 2020

**AGENDA ITEM:** 7

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Establishment of the COVID-19 Special Committee of Governing Council

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

Under paragraph 2(14)(e) of the *University of Toronto Act, 1971*, the Governing Council is accorded the power to “*appoint committees and delegate power and authority to act for Governing Council with respect to any matter or class of matters, provided that where power and authority to act for Governing Council are delegated, the majority of the members of the committee shall be members of the Governing Council*”

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

1. Executive Committee (for endorsement and forwarding) (March 24, 2020)
2. **Governing Council (for approval) (April 2, 2020)**

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

None

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

The Government of Ontario on March 17, 2020 made a [Declaration of Emergency to Protect the Public](#) with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic. The rapid spread of the virus has necessitated urgent changes to many aspects of Ontario society, affecting individuals, businesses and government. The University of Toronto itself has been and will continue to be affected. Governing Council needs to be able to respond in an agile way to the evolution of the impacts presented daily by the virus. Some Governance processes may not be well-suited to the exigencies of the COVID-19 response.

The *University of Toronto Act, 1971* gives Governing Council the power to “appoint committees and delegate power and authority to act for Governing Council with respect to any matter or class of matters, provided that where power and authority to act for Governing Council are delegated, the majority of the members of the committee shall be members of the Governing Council” [s.2(14) (e)]. Under these circumstances it is proposed that a COVID-19 Special Committee be created to assist Governing Council to respond to the exceptional challenges it now faces. The COVID-19 Special Committee will be composed of the following members of Governing Council: the Chair; the Vice-Chair; the President; and the Vice-President and Provost (such positions being understood to include any person duly elected or appointed to such position in an interim capacity).

Notwithstanding the creation of the COVID-19 Special Committee, it is expected that until June 30, 2020, the standing committees, campus councils, and boards, under subsection 32(g) of *By-Law Number 2*, will continue to hold their meetings by telephonic or other electronic means as are permissible. It is also expected that arrangements will be made to permit the public to hear deliberations during the open session of meetings.

Furthermore, consistent with subsection 32(i) of the aforementioned *By-Law*, at the discretion of its Chair, a standing committee, campus council, or board, may be asked to consider a matter outside of a meeting of that governance body that would normally be dealt with in closed session or *in camera*; and determine the matter by means of an electronic vote. Such matters would, in the judgment of the Chair, be time-sensitive and delay until the next regularly scheduled meeting would have an adverse effect. Such matters would also, in the judgment of the Chair, normally require little, if any, discussion prior to voting.

It is proposed that a COVID-19 Special Committee shall convene to consider time-sensitive matters when it has been determined that such matters cannot be reasonably considered by a standing committee, campus council, or board under subsections 32(g) or 32(i) of *By-Law Number 2* as outlined above; and in accordance with its own terms of reference. The Secretary or the Deputy Secretary of the Governing Council shall serve as the Secretary to the Covid-19 Special Committee.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

None

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Be It Resolved

1. THAT a Special Committee of Governing Council be created, to be called the “COVID-19 Special Committee of Governing Council”;
2. THAT this Special Committee shall exist up to and including the first regularly scheduled meeting of the Governing Council for the 2020-2021 academic year, at which time it can be discontinued, or, if the Governing Council so approves, be continued with or without modifications for such further specific term as the Governing Council determines necessary to respond to any ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on the University;
3. THAT this Special Committee be composed of the following members of Governing Council: the Chair; the Vice-Chair; the President; and the Vice-President and Provost (such positions being understood to include any person duly elected or appointed to such position in an interim capacity);
4. THAT this Special Committee have the power to make decisions and take actions on matters the urgency of which does not permit their deferral until the next regular meeting of Governing Council or its appropriate standing committee, campus council or board;
5. THAT prior to making decisions or taking actions on such matters the Special Committee will use its best efforts to advise or consult with the Chairs of any such standing committee, campus council or board; and
6. THAT at the next meeting of the Governing Council all actions and decisions taken by the Special Committee, where they would otherwise have required approval of or other action by or in respect of Governing Council or any of its standing committees, campus councils, or boards, shall be reported to the Governing Council for its information.

**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

None