

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
REPORT NUMBER 77 OF THE COMMITTEE ON
ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS

January 12, 2000

To the Academic Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it held a meeting on Wednesday, January 12, 2000, at 11:00 a.m. in the Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall, at which the following were present:

Professor Wendy Rolph (In the
Chair)
Professor Ruth Gallop
(Vice-Chair)
Professor J. Robert S. Prichard,
President
Professor Carolyn Tuohy,
Deputy Provost
Professor Derek Allen
Professor Rorke Bryan
Professor Francois Casas
Professor Carl Corter
Professor Raisa Deber
Mr. Michael Derzko
Ms Joy Fitzgibbon
Professor Gerald Goldenberg
Professor Hugh Gunz
Professor Ian McDonald
Professor Emmet Robbins
Professor J.J. Berry Smith

Secretariat:
Ms Patti Seaman, Secretary
Ms Susan Girard

Regrets:
Professor David Cook, Vice-Provost
Dr. Claire Alleyne
Mr. Jason Baker
Professor Clare Beghtol
Ms Rakhi Bhavnani
Mr. Eric Brock
Professor Philip Byer
Ms Debbie Chachra
Mr. David Kaplan
Professor Gretchen Kerr
Professor Angela Lange

Non-Voting Assessors:
Professor Heather Munroe-Blum,
Vice-President, Research and
International Relations

In Attendance:
Mr. Louis Charpentier, Secretary of the Governing Council

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ITEM 3 IS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. ALL OTHER ITEMS ARE REPORTED FOR INFORMATION.

1. Report of the Previous Meeting

Report Number 76 of the meeting of December 8, 1999, was approved.

2. Business Arising

There was no business arising from the report.

3. *Growing Ontario's Innovation System: The Strategic Role of University Research: University Response*

The President introduced the item noting that the provincial government had commissioned Professor Munroe-Blum to produce the report. The University would be expected to provide a public response to it by the end of February. The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) had applauded the government and was encouraged by the direction of the report. On receipt of feedback from the universities, the COU would respond formally to the government. At the University level the report would require approval of the Governing Council on the advice of the Academic Board and its Committees. The President stated that the report was excellent and timely for Ontario and that the recommendations were consistent with the directions set out by the University of Toronto. He strongly endorsed the report. He was grateful to Professor Munroe-Blum for her service to the province and thanked her for her work toward advancing excellence in education.

Professor Munroe-Blum gave a presentation, a paper copy of which is attached hereto as Appendix "A."

The Chair thanked Professor Munroe-Blum for her presentation and opened the floor to discussion. All of the members prefaced their remarks with support for the report and congratulations to Professor Munroe-Blum.

A member asked what strategies would be undertaken by the University to keep the issues outlined in the report in front of the government. Professor Munroe-Blum stated that the government was looking for support for the report from universities. A protracted debate about the recommendations would be counterproductive at this time. The report called for government funding of the indirect costs of research. The government would be looking to universities to see what strategies the institutions employed to promote the recommendations of the report. She highlighted universities' responsibility to engage in academic planning that would effectively strengthen teaching/research synergies. Universities should expand programs that optimized their research distinctiveness. She noted that some smaller universities had been moving in that direction. The government would want to see some engagement in the process from the universities.

A member stated that it was important to protect academic freedom and the University's autonomy. She noted that there could be risks in partnerships. She was concerned that government priorities would take the emphasis away from teaching in favor of applied

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3. *Growing Ontario's Innovation System: The Strategic Role of University Research: University Response* (cont'd.)

research. Further, she was concerned about the possibility of accountability mechanisms interfering with autonomy. Professor Munroe-Blum stated that university autonomy and academic freedom were the central principles underlying the report. The importance of this had been made very clear in her consultations. The institutional reporting mechanisms would be designed so that the universities set their own goals and then reported to the government on their progress and achievements. There would not be a standard accountability mechanism imposed across all institutions.

A member stated that, as a humanist, he was pleased with the emphasis in the report on the humanities and social sciences but he had concerns about the government “cherry-picking” items that suited its own agenda and ignoring matters that were important to the universities. He was concerned that the government would only support research that was to its own benefit, or would try to influence research in the interests of economic gain. Professor Munroe-Blum thanked the member for his comments. She agreed that research in the humanities and the social sciences had been chronically underfunded. She noted that there was new government money coming forward for these disciplines. She recommended that by systematically building funding for these disciplines into the policy framework, improvements in support would ensue. She also emphasized that it was important to celebrate the successes and achievements of researchers in these disciplines to highlight the added value they brought to society.

A member reiterated that it was important to show the external community the value of research in terms of its multiple benefits to society, beyond the obvious economic benefits. What were the ways to build awareness? Professor Munroe-Blum reported that one of the means to build public awareness was community outreach. Outreach had double benefits in that it directly benefited the recipients and also raised the participating university's profile. Engaging in unique outreach could create strong public support for the University with voters. Professor Tuohy added that Statistics Canada was working on social indicators, which could be of benefit in the longer term in assessing the impact of the University. Professor Munroe-Blum noted that the community had a poor impression of universities; she hoped that providing the community with more information would turn this around.

A member asked about the ways to strengthen the teaching-research relationship for the benefit of students. How would the University pursue the development of this synergistic relationship? Professor Munroe-Blum noted that an academic plan would be the most useful tool in improving the relationship between teaching and research. It was vital to plan programs to extend the benefits of research to students. She drew members' attention to the situation in some professional programs. In consultation, it was discovered that in some cases in the professional programs, the high course-load needed to fulfill the professional requirements precluded opportunities to be involved in research. Plans to improve teaching-research synergies would need to be division specific.

A member noted that the report placed an emphasis on the need for universities to be competitive in the global environment. He suggested that university research in Ontario should be intended specifically to benefit Ontario as a distinct environment.

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3. *Growing Ontario's Innovation System: The Strategic Role of University Research: University Response* (cont'd.)

Professor Munroe-Blum noted that the report placed a great value on the unique strengths of Ontario and its educational institutions. However, research that was designed only to benefit a region, though the prevalent strategy many years ago, was no longer sufficient in a global knowledge society. The recommendation was that institutions should build strategically on their unique areas of skill to foster global competitiveness. The recommendations did, however, encourage the building of a regional identity for Ontario through increased global competitions.

A member was concerned about the levels of government funding and questioned whether the universities could expect a sustained government commitment to support research. He drew members' attention to the percentage comparisons provided in the financial chart viewed at the end of Professor Munroe-Blum's presentation. Professor Munroe-Blum noted that the chart provided one method of comparing funding sectors. Although it would be beneficial and highly desirable to receive government funding at the same levels as the U.S., it wasn't necessary to have parity with the U.S. She emphasized the fact that the University of Toronto made extremely efficient use of the funds it received toward research. The important point was to have adequate sustained levels of government funding for the full costs of research, including the indirect costs. A member asked about the various governments' responsibility with respect to funding in this area. The President noted that constitutionally, education funding was a provincial responsibility. There was disagreement between federal and provincial governments in regard to federal transfer payments. Professor Munroe-Blum noted that the federal government was increasing its support of research. She reiterated that success in innovation would be dependent on the sustained public support of research. Private support could enhance, but not substitute for, adequate levels of sustained public support.

On the recommendation of the President,

YOUR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS

THAT whereas research and scholarship are central to both the mission of the University and the benefit and prosperity of the Province; and

Whereas the University applauds the articulation of a provincial policy framework for the support of research and scholarship; and

Whereas the University agrees that a policy framework premised on university autonomy, peer review, excellence and accountability together with appropriate funding is best suited to the dynamic world of knowledge and innovation; and

Whereas, within the context of the urgent need for improved operating funding, the University applauds the identification of the need for substantially increased resources for research;

Therefore:

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3. *Growing Ontario's Innovation System: The Strategic Role of University Research: University Response* (cont'd.)

The University of Toronto welcome the issuance of the report, *Growing Ontario's Innovation System: The Strategic Role of University Research* (1999), prepared for the Government of Ontario by Professor Heather Munroe-Blum, and strongly endorse the directions recommended therein.

The chair noted that the motion was passed unanimously.

4. Date of Next Meeting – February 23, 2000

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Secretary
January 14, 2000

Chair