UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 30 OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

October 2, 2002

To the University Affairs Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it met on October 2, 2002 in the South Dining Room, Hart House, with the following members present:

Professor Michael Marrus, Chair
Ms. Karen Lewis
Mr. Elan Ohayon
Mrs. Susan Scace

Secretariat:
Ms. Cristina Oke, Chief Returning Officer and Secretary
Mrs. Beverley Stefureak, Recording Secretary

Regrets:
Ms. Shirley Hoy

In attendance:

Mr. Mark Braun, member, Governing Council
Mr. David Melville, member, Governing Council
Mr. Sean Mullin, member, Governing Council
Mr. Chris Ramsaroop, member, Governing Council
Ms. Kirstin Cirulis, Senior Client Representative, Student Information Systems
Mr. Michael Foderick, Former Chief Returning Officer, Students' Administrative Council
Professor Jack Gorrie, Provost's Advisor on Information Technology
Mr. Muhammad Kasim, University Affairs Commissioner, Students' Administrative
  Council

The Chair welcomed members and guests to the open meeting of the Elections Committee, the purpose of which was to seek input on elections procedures for 2002-03. Introducing himself and the other members of the Committee, the Chair underscored the need to seek opinions from the University community, to improve the *Guidelines* wherever possible, and to conduct the affairs of the Committee expeditiously.   The Committee's major concern this year was how to increase interest and participation in the election for Governing Council seats among all constituencies and the Committee was particularly interested in receiving input to that issue. A number of written submissions had been received and following this meeting the contributions would be collated for consideration at the next meeting of the Elections Committee on October 28. Following

that, the *Elections Guidelines* for 2003 would be submitted to the University Affairs Board for approval.

Mr. Mullin had requested permission to speak to his written submission which had been distributed to the Committee and Professor Marrus invited him to do so. Mr. Mullin re-iterated the points made in writing and responded to questions for clarification.

Mr. Foderick was invited to speak and commented from the perspective of a former Chief Returning Officer for SAC, highlighting points from his written submission. His concerns focused on fairness in elections with regard to expenses, postering, the electoral divisions, and eligibility to run concurrently in more than one election.

Mr. Melville spoke, addressing primarily concerns about what he felt was the under-representation of students on the Governing Council, the desirability of returning to an electoral process for naming student members of the Academic Board, the exclusionary nature (relative to special students) of the election process, and his perception that web-based voting was disadvantageous to the student voters.

The Chair noted that the representation of students on Governing Council and the process for appointing students to the Academic Board were not within the mandate of the Elections Committee. He asked Professor Gorrie, as a technical expert on information technology, to comment on the issues raised relative to web-based voting. Professor Gorrie's comments on access, privacy, security, trustworthiness and legitimacy of outcome suggested that there was no general disadvantage to web-based voting that did not have an analogy in the use of paper ballots. In his view, students by and large needed access to a computer for academic purposes and Web-based voting was a natural extension of such usage. Web-based votes could be submitted from anywhere in the world, with security equal to paper balloting and, so, were a convenience that enhanced accessibility by students. There was a discussion about the pros and cons of Web-based elections.

Ms. Cirulis spoke from her perspective as an administrative staff member of the University. She thought the visibility of the Governing Council and its elections should be increased. Staff members did not seem aware of the opportunities to become involved.

Mr. Braun provided insight as a newly elected member of the Governing Council. He was very concerned about the conduct of some candidates and some members of the Governing Council during the election period with respect to misrepresentation. He thought the guidelines should be more restrictive in this area. In provincial and federal elections, the type of misrepresentation that had occurred would be public information and the electorate would be informed. In this election process, the electorate did not become aware of dishonest and unacceptable behaviour which, in his view, should be within the mandate of the Elections Committee to police.

Mr. Braun's second point related to raising the awareness of students about the opportunity to serve on Governing Council. He offered to assist by speaking to classes or in student forums. He thought promotion of the opportunity to serve should be widespread before the election process began and that there definitely should be at least one open forum for candidates during the election period.

Mr. Ramsaroop was invited to speak. In his view, the terms of reference of the Elections Committee should be expanded to include a process for appointing student members to the Academic Board. The discussion, at least, should be held. He had continuing concerns that some students in the special student category were disenfranchised, for example, international students and those in continuing education. Finally, he reiterated concerns about web-based voting.

The Chair agreed that inclusion of international students could be seen as supportive of the University's overall goal of achieving a significantly increased presence of international students on campus. However, he recalled that in the current fiscal environment the cost of achieving that goal had to be a major consideration. With respect to categories of special students, Professor Marrus underlined the disadvantages of seeking to amend *The University of Toronto Act.*

Professor Gorrie commented that electronic posters could assist candidates in increasing awareness of issues and platforms. This would be technically easy for the Office of Governing Council to do. His advice was to create a generic template, simple and text-based, linked to the Governing Council home page for the use of candidates.

<div align="center">The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.</div>

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Secretary   Chair

October 29, 2002

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