



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
ENGINEERING SOCIETY

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**MEMORANDUM**

**From:** Mauricio Curbelo, President (Engineering Society)

**To:** Engineering Society Members

**Cc:** Board of Directors (Engineering Society)  
Rhonda Meek, Business Manager (Engineering Society)  
Faculty Summit Members  
Jill Matus, Vice-Provost, Students and First-Entry Divisions  
Susan McCahan, Vice-Dean, Undergraduate

**Date:** February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014

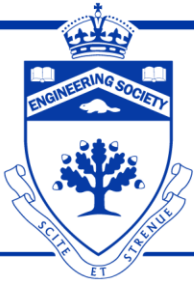
**RE:** **Update on fee diversion from the UTSU**

**Background**

In March 2013, engineering students voted to cease paying compulsory fees to the University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU) and increase the Engineering Society (EngSoc) fee by an amount equal to that which they were paying the UTSU ("fee diversion"). This referendum had 29% turnout, with 95% voting in favour. This represents overwhelming support. Simultaneously, similar referenda held by the Trinity College Meeting (TCM) and Victoria University Students' Administrative Council (VUSAC) also indicated strong student support for fee diversion.

**Student Societies Summit**

Concerned that the UTSU would cease to represent all full-time undergraduate students and would therefore be unable to manage the Student Commons on those students' behalf, the University initiated a consultative process involving the UTSU, and divisional student societies representing full-time undergraduate students whose members are also members of the UTSU (EngSoc, MedSoc, Students' Law Society, Arts & Science College Councils, UTMSU, etc.).



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Dubbed the “Student Societies Summit”, this series of meetings was tasked with the following questions:

- *In a Policy environment in which there are currently four representative student governments (UTSU, SCSU, GSU, APUS) recognized by Governing Council and supported by mandatory fee deductions from students in the relevant constituencies, how can the sometimes distinct interests of divisional societies be supported and respected in a democratic manner?*
- *What are the implications of these answers on the evolution of the democratic structures of the student governments or on fee support for the activities of the divisional societies?*

The meetings are chaired by professors who are experts on matters of governance and democratic processes (“Faculty Summit Members”), able to listen to the various opinions of student society representatives and identify room for compromise, determine where agreement is not possible, and provide recommendations to student societies to improve their own processes. As we understand it, the end goal of the Summit is to provide a recommendation to the University administration and/or Governing Council on how to resolve the longstanding disputes between divisional student societies and the UTSU which students have thus far been unable to resolve themselves.

### **Engineering Society participation**

The Engineering Society representatives at these meetings are myself and Thomas Santerre, VP Communications. Our position has remained unchanged since we received a mandate from you to seek fee diversion from the UTSU. The Engineering Society can replace the UTSU’s services at less cost to engineering students, while simultaneously improving the quality of those services due to our stronger understanding of engineering student life. Fee diversion would result in a better, cheaper health and dental plan, double the funding for our affiliated clubs, and an increase in funding for individuals, such as conference funding and book bursaries. We have a strong mandate from engineering students to seek fee diversion, and the University should give effect to the democratically-expressed will of our members.

We understand that fee diversion would result in governance complications for the University (e.g. if we are no longer UTSU members, what should be put in place so engineering students can be represented to the central administration and various University committees?). We are committed to working with other student societies and with the University administration to ensure that engineering students can continue to be well-represented in the University’s central governance structures with or without the UTSU.



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Simultaneously, we have been using the Summit as an opportunity to propose stricter rules that all student societies must follow in order to be able to collect a compulsory fee from students. Our hope is that the University will implement changes to its *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* that will make all student societies more open, accessible, and democratic. This will hopefully resolve recent disputes over the UTSU's democratic processes (or lack thereof), but the Engineering Society continues to believe that as long as we can provide our membership with better services at lower cost, the UTSU will continue to be irrelevant to engineering students even if it is open and democratic.

### **Recent developments**

I am proud to let you know that we have reached a consensus with several other student societies as to what changes we would like to see implemented in the University's *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*. You can find detail of this in our written submission to the Summit dated February 10<sup>th</sup> 2014.

At the February 10<sup>th</sup> Summit meeting, the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union (UTMSU) announced [it would no longer participate](#) in the process.

### **Additional documentation**

Please find attached:

- Our joint written submission dated February 10<sup>th</sup>, written in collaboration with TCM, VUSAC, UCLit, UCSS, NCSC, KPEUA, TCM, and SMCSU
- Our submission dated November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013
- Our submission dated October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013
- A memo from the Vice-President and Provost outlining the purpose of the Student Societies Summit
- Our June 10<sup>th</sup> submission to the Informational Session of Governing Council
- Our Report on the Feasibility and Implications of Separation from the UTSU

For any questions or comments, please contact me at [president@skule.ca](mailto:president@skule.ca).