



FOR CONCURRENCE WITH PROSPECTIVE RECOMMENDATION OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD

TO: University Affairs Board

SPONSOR: Gail Milgrom, Director, Campus and Facilities Planning

CONTACT: 416-978-5515

DATE: April 30, 2013 for May 15, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 6

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

The Report of the Project Planning Committee for the Student Commons at 230 College Street.

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Section 4 of the UAB terms of reference states that the UAB “is responsible for... matters that directly concern the quality of student and campus life,” and section 5.7 states that the UAB “considers capital projects within its areas of responsibility, advises Governing Council on their implications, and concurs with the recommendations for approval of the Academic Board.”

BACKGROUND:

The St. George campus at the University of Toronto is one of the few Canadian university campuses without a large, student-operated community facility. Although both the Mississauga (UTM) and Scarborough (UTSC) campuses have recently-built student-run centres, the St. George Campus has relied on its numerous excellent nodes of student activity space, such as Hart House, to provide students with facilities for their activities.

Planning began in 2005 to address student activity space needs with the formation of a planning Committee which in turn produced the ‘*Final Report of the Committee to Review Student Activity Space on the St. George Campus*’ in September 2006. The Committee’s report reaffirmed the multi-nodal approach to student activity space and also proposed the development of a new larger node of student activity space and recommended that the University establish a Project Planning Committee to begin the formal planning process, in collaboration with student governments and other key stakeholders.

This subsequent Project Planning Committee produced an Interim Project Planning Report in June, 2007 which described a ‘Student Commons’ facility that would provide 24-hour student space; commuter space; multi-purpose space; club offices and space; lounge and study space; meeting rooms; diverse, healthy, and affordable food options; rehearsal space; a used book store; offices for student organizations; a food bank; workshop and design space; a bicycle repair shop; and space to provide University of Toronto Students’ Union (UTSU) (the Students’ Administrative Council of the University of Toronto is operating under the name University of Toronto Students’ Union) services more efficiently and effectively.

Fundraising for the project was addressed by an UTSU-held referendum in October 2007, in which students voted in favour of the establishment of the levy for a Student Commons. The Levy was then approved by the University Affairs Board (UAB) in April 2008. Beginning in fall 2008, the UTSU fees for full time undergraduates on the St.

George Campus would include “a new designated portion of the fee for the Student Commons Project of \$5.00 per session increasing to \$20.75 per session in the session in which the Student Commons open.”

In April 2011, Governing Council approved the site assignment of 230 College Street to the Student Commons.

The Report of the Project Planning Committee was reviewed by the Vice-President and Provost and the Vice-President, University Operations at meetings of the Provost’s Advisory Group, and the Executive Committee of CaPS (Capital Projects and Space Allocation Committee) and is being recommended for consideration.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Once established, the new Student Commons at 230 College Street will provide approximately 3,440 nasm of program area within renovated facilities. The centre is envisioned as a nexus of student community, co-operation and communication.

The proposed renovation of and move into 230 College Street represents an opportunity to expand on the services currently being offered to students and to create new amenities previously unavailable on campus. The Student Commons will also allow for an expansion of campus clubs services, including more meeting space, workshop/design space, more campus club office space, rehearsal space, and expand on many of the above services so that more campus organizations will have the opportunity to grow and interact with students across the St. George campus.

The general goals of the Student Commons are to enrich the social and personal experiences of students at the University of Toronto, to foster social and cultural interaction by creating an environment for groups of people from various backgrounds and viewpoints to gather, to afford an opportunity for members of like-minded groups to meet and for all to interact in a relaxed setting, and to act as a community facility that is convenient and accessible.

The Student Commons will be fully managed, operated, and governed by students under an operating agreement as described below, thereby ensuring that the Commons is operated in harmony with student values.

Since 2007, there have been detailed discussions with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (later including the Vice-Provost, Academic Operations and then the Vice-President, University Operations) regarding an operating agreement which addresses governance of the proposed facility. Subject to the conditions of the Student Commons Agreement (going through governance in May/June 2013), and compliance with University policies, the Student Commons will be managed by the University of Toronto Students’ Union. The property is retained as a University asset. The agreement, which spans an initial period of 25 years (renewable for an additional 25 years) also addresses management structure and accountability, financing of the capital and operating costs of the Student Commons through the UTSU levy, a license for occupancy of the building and terms and conditions for sub-licensees, terms and conditions related to on-going management of the building, and other operational matters such as insurance, access and security.

Existing student groups and the UTSU executive moving into the Student Commons will free a total of approximately 695 nasm of space across campus for reallocation. As part of the relocation of UTSU’s executive and services, the Stewart Observatory building and other spaces will be reallocated for other institutional purposes.

There will be no significant staging requirements as all groups moving into the Student Commons are currently accommodated in other buildings across the St. George campus. However, the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design will need to be partially accommodated in interim space until their new site at 1 Spadina Crescent is ready for occupancy.

The 230 College Street building should be renovated with the goal of achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Commercial Interiors Gold certification for the new Student Commons.

At the earliest, construction for the project could begin by August 1, 2014 with the earliest possible occupancy by September, 2015.

The Student Commons project is to be funded by the Student Commons Capital Cost Student Levy

- from support already collected
- and debt to be repaid with interest over a period of approximately 25 years with payment of required principal and interest payments to be funded from the planned student levy income, with that student levy income continuing until the debt is fully repaid

SCHEDULE:

Estimated schedule is:

Governing Council	- June 2013
Design Team Selection	- July/August 2013
Construction Start	- August 2014
Occupancy	- September 2015

RECOMMENDATION:

BE IT RECOMMENDED,

THAT the University Affairs Board concur with the prospective recommendation of the Academic Board,

THAT the Project Planning Committee Report for the Student Commons at 230 College Street, dated April 16, 2013, be approved in principle; and

THAT the project scope to accommodate the Student Commons in a renovation comprising 6,735 gross square metres and an addition of approximately 600 gross square meters (approximately 3,439 nasm) be approved in principle, to be funded from the Student Commons Capital Cost Student Levy support already collected and debt to be repaid with interest over a period of approximately 25 years with payment of required principal and interest payments to be funded from the planned student levy income, with that student levy income continuing until the debt is fully repaid.