



To: Student Leaders

From: Cheryl Misak, Vice-President & Provost

Date: August 20, 2013

RE: Undergraduate Student Societies Summit

In an ongoing effort to resolve disputes between divisional student societies and student governments regarding the distribution of student fees and democratic reform, I am pleased to announce the **Undergraduate Student Societies Summit**. For background on those disputes, please see the attached memos.

At its meeting on June 17th, the Executive Committee of Governing Council determined that the proposed Student Commons Agreement and the Report of the Project Planning Committee for the Student Commons would be deferred for consideration by Governing Council in a future cycle. The Committee approved the following motion:

THAT the proposed Student Commons Agreement, as outlined in the memorandum dated May 1, 2013 from the Vice-President and Provost, and the Project Planning Committee Report for the Student Commons at 230 College Street, dated April 16, 2013, be brought back to the Executive Committee for consideration for inclusion on a Governing Council meeting agenda within a reasonable time during which issues among the Students' Administrative Council (SAC / UTSU) and various divisional student societies, which may impinge on aspects of the Student Commons Agreement, may be further discussed and satisfactorily resolved or constructively dealt with by the societies and the Administration.

At the June 27th meeting of Governing Council, UTSU and the University Administration agreed to the following joint statement, to be read into the minutes:

The Student Commons project is of vital importance to students, and hence to the University. Both the Administration and the UTSU are optimistic that the process currently being set up will resolve, in a timely fashion, the disputes that make it impossible to take the Student Commons motions forward to Governing Council this academic year.

In order to resolve those outstanding disputes, experts in democratic theory and practice will, in a Summit including student group representatives, consider the issues and facilitate both discussion between the student groups and a satisfactory outcome on which we can proceed.



I am asking the Summit participants to consider the following:

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?

These questions should be explored in the context of the issues raised by recent fee diversion referenda but are not limited to the fee diversion issue alone.

Although the Summit cannot effect policy changes (only the Governing Council can do that), if it is of the opinion that further analysis should be undertaken, it may suggest issues that would be helpful to consider as part of a policy review.

In order to broaden the group of student leaders providing input into the discussion, each of the following societies (UTSU and all the divisional/collegiate societies represented by UTSU) is invited to name up to two members to the Summit. We would appreciate having these nominations by September 1, 2013, so we can get started on what is likely to be a multi-meeting process.

- University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)
- UTM Students' Union (UTMSU)
- Arts & Science Student Union (ASSU)
- Dental Students' Society
- Engineering Society (EngSoc)
- Faculty of Music Undergraduate Association
- Innis College Student Society
- Medical Society
- New College Student Council
- Nursing Undergraduate Society
- Physical Health & Education Undergraduate Association
- St. Michael's College Students Union
- Student Teachers' Union
- Students' Law Society
- Transitional Year Program Student Association
- Trinity College Meeting
- Undergraduate Pharmacy Society
- University College Literary & Athletic Society (UCLit)
- Victoria University Students' Administrative Council (VUSAC)
- Woodsworth College Students' Association



Please note that this is intended to be a substantial, principled, and facilitated conversation, not a 'majority takes all' process. Other student groups – including the Scarborough Campus Student Union (SCSU), the Graduate Students' Union (GSU), and the Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students (APUS), student clubs, and other members of the University community are invited to make written submissions and the Summit members might invite in-person submissions as well. Please send written submissions to David Newman, Director, Student Life (dl.newman@utoronto.ca) by October 1, 2013.

The faculty Summit members will be:

- Professor Donald Ainslie (Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts & Science, and Principal, University College)
- Professor Joe Desloges (Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, Faculty of Arts & Science, and Principal, Woodsworth College)
- Professor Graham White (Department of Political Science, University of Toronto Mississauga)
- Professor Linda White (Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts & Science)

Professor Jill Matus, Vice Provost, Students, and Professor Mark McGowan, Special Advisor to the Vice Provost Students, and Mr. David Newman, Director, Student Life, will provide support from the Administration.

Professor Desloges will act as Chair of the Summit meetings.

The Summit is likely to meet on numerous occasions and it may call on Professor Brian Langille, from the Faculty of Law, to facilitate the discussions and/or the outcome.

The Summit will meet as necessary through the Fall 2013 term. It will give updates and report its conclusions to both Governing Council and the Provost.

Cheryl Misak
Vice-President and Provost
University of Toronto