



GRADUATE STUDENTS' UNION

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
LOCAL 19, CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

## **Academic Planning for 2003 and Beyond**

### **A Response to the Green Papers**

12 February, 2003

At the Graduate Students' Union we recognize the Green Papers issued from the Office of the Vice-President and Provost as a unique and exciting opportunity both to participate in the planning of the future of University of Toronto, and to provide graduate student comments and positions on a broad variety of topics relevant to the future of this (our) institution.

At the Graduate Students' Union we have committed many hours of executive and staff time, as well as many meetings of our various focus committees to developing this response. In addition, we have engaged in our own consultation process, complete with providing online draft versions of this document for comment, and soliciting ideas from our Councilors and members in our over 75 member departments and programs.

We are pleased and encouraged by the overarching theme of diversity and equal access found throughout the document. In order to provide true equality of access, we hope that the University of Toronto will join graduate students (and our undergraduate colleagues who have recently joined the Canadian Federation of Students) in calling for an end to tuition increases which are spiraling out of control. We believe in zero tuition and access for all, and hope we can all work together to realize this long term goal. We need to join voices as a campus community and call for a return to proper funding of public post-secondary education.

At the Graduate Students' Union we have a structure of "focus committees" which meet regularly to discuss matters affecting graduate students. These groups are formed through a planning process at the beginning of the academic year. We feel that the areas of concern for graduate students are clearly reflected by our focus committees, as described below and in specific comments found following this introduction.

**Funding:** Continued progress on the implementation of "guaranteed funding" has been continuously expressed as the number one concern of students. We must not allow the implementation of funding to skew enrolment in our programs, either in terms of department enrolment targets or in terms of masters' versus doctoral programs. These enrolment targets should always be set by the academic priorities of the institution. In order to ensure success of the funding program, models of best-practice for clear communication with students must be developed. Only through clear communication, which describes exactly the sources of funding and the expectations for student work, will we be able to recruit and retain the best and brightest.

**Academic Life:** This committee deals especially with issues of supervision, time to completion, academic appeals, benchmarking and evaluation, etc. We have developed a good working relationship with the School of Graduate Studies and are encouraged by the recent publication of a guide to supervisory practice. We too are concerned by the results of the Higher Education Data Survey, which indicate that time to completion and time to abandonment are equal at our institution, and we feel a focus of the next academic plan should be to shorten both of these time periods, while maintaining realistic time expectations, which may vary between programs and departments.

**Housing:** The lack of affordable graduate student housing in Toronto (especially within a reasonable distance from campus) is becoming a crisis. We feel the University must fulfill its commitment to additional graduate student and family housing, as well as joining with students in calling for the reinstatement of rent control. Funding is only available for some graduate students, and even those students may have trouble paying rent out of the \$12,000 allotment.

**Accessibility:** An increasing number of students with disabilities are choosing to pursue graduate education. In order to recruit and retain the best and brightest of this student population, the University of Toronto needs to promote an inclusive atmosphere for these students, one without barriers of any kind (physical, social, technological, financial, barriers to education, and barriers to involvement). This committee has provided a special report, found at the end of this document.

**Student Services:** This committee works with Hart House, Student Affairs, Student Services, Athletics and other campus groups to provide graduate students with the services we want and need, at an affordable price. We have focused this year on improving access to the services provided by the Graduate Students' Union, as well as providing better connections and outreach between the ancillaries mentioned above and the membership of our union. We encourage the next academic plan to focus on graduate-student specific services and expanded outreach initiatives to encourage more graduate students to become involved in those that currently exist. We provide below some ideas on how to do this. In addition, we continue to maintain that students should not be required to pay for capital projects. Maintenance of university facilities cannot be considered "ancillary", thus should not be funded out of ancillary fees. We feel many of the services currently funded from ancillary fees (especially Hart House and the Hart House Theatre) should be recognized as central to the university experience, and indeed central to the University of Toronto as a whole, and thus funded centrally.

**Student Representation:** We advocate that with student involvement must come proper student representation on the governance structures of the University and each departmental unit. Student experience will be enhanced by including elected students, or student government appointees, on the boards and committees of Governing Council, on the task forces and search committees of the Office of the Provost, and on planning and search committees at the faculty and departmental level. The practice of co-opting students for such important positions must stop. Perhaps the lack of policy encouraging such practice is one reason that we see high graduate student apathy towards participation University management. Just as faculty must be encouraged to participate, the Academic Plan should include ideas to increase student involvement in elections, and increased democratic student representation at all levels of the University.

Many parts of the Green Papers contain ideas for the development of highly desirable policies and practices. In our response we have highlighted only those which we feel command specific support. In addition, we have provided constructive criticism and many new ideas which we hope will guide the next Academic Plan, as well as future cooperative efforts of the Graduate Students' Union and the Administration of the University of Toronto.

*Section Headings correspond to those used in the Green Papers, except those in section C.3, which are new.*

## **B. A Green Paper for Public Discussion Describing the Characteristics of the Best (Public) Research Universities**

The focus of the Green Papers is clearly on benchmarking and comparison with other institutions in the English-speaking world, in particular the United States. In order to truly support globalization and diversity in the academy, we feel it is important to recognize the good ideas and contributions of peer institutions in other areas of the world.

### **1. Academic Freedom**

- Ensure freedom from corporate influence in curriculum.

### **3. The Student Experience**

- This section does not include graduate students. We cannot discuss offering outstanding student services without including graduate students. The best public research universities certainly have outstanding services for graduate students.

### **5. Student Diversity**

- Current focus in this section is on ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and gender diversity. We must also talk about age, sexual orientation, and disability.

### **10. Staff**

- In addition to the recruitment, recognition, and training of staff mentioned in this section, we feel the best public research universities also promote good environmental citizenship among staff by offering incentives to use energy-efficient means of transportation as well as encouraging staff to incorporate considerations for the environment into their work at the University.

### **13. Strength in Professional Programs**

- This section hints at downsizing of OISE/UT. Enrollment planning is key to the future of graduate research at U of T. Every department should ensure they can

accommodate (and fund) any graduate student to whom they make an offer of admission.

#### **14. Interdisciplinary Teaching and Research**

- Work hard to enable graduate student cross-appointment for interdisciplinary research, as well as faculty cross-appointments. Create a comprehensive mechanism to deal with funding students who are involved in interdisciplinary research.

#### **17. Public Accountability**

- In addition to assisting in addressing the most pressing cultural, social, economic, and policy issues of their immediate region, the best public research universities are also leaders in addressing pressing environmental issues, and they recognize their environmental impact on the region.

#### **19. Academic Infrastructure**

- In reference to providing residences, classrooms, and offices that are modest, but technologically "smart" and efficient, we must ensure that "technologically 'smart'" includes considerations of energy efficiency and environmental impact.

### **C. A Green Paper for Public Discussion: The Student Experience**

#### **1. Recruiting for Quality and Diversity**

- This section ignores recruitment of promising graduate students, who form a very important part of the University of Toronto community. Our comments are applicable to both undergraduate and graduate recruitment efforts.

##### **A. Access**

- Expansion of "no student be turned away for financial reasons" guarantee to qualified international students.
- The idea of requiring all work-study positions to provide academic or career-related experience if a good one.
- Attention to equal access is important. One way to ensure access is to reduce tuition fees.

##### **B. Scholarship**

- All students, regardless of province or country of origin, should be eligible for scholarships and financial support.

### C. Outreach and Diversity Efforts

The ideas in this section are very encouraging and should be considered a priority. Diversity in skills is also an important consideration. When we define “best and brightest”, we should recognize those students whose grades may not be the best, but who show exceptional involvement in extra-curricular and leadership activities.

- One possibility to make our diverse student body feel more welcome is to increase diversity in the food services offered on campus. The Vegetarium has been a great success. Offering variety is also a method to increase revenue.
- Create more “recruitment weekends”, and give a travel allowance to qualified graduate school applicants, so they can visit U of T. This currently only happens in “wealthy” departments.
- Website attractiveness is a key tool in graduate student recruitment. Departments and units with poor websites should be targeted for renewal. All websites at the University should be fully accessible by the guidelines set by our own “Websavvy Project”
- Enrollment of women declines from undergrad, to masters’, to doctoral programs. The implied change in direction, with a greater focus on PhD and professional masters’ program could result in fewer women graduate students.
- Recognition of the “best and the brightest” must take into account the

### D. Student Housing

- The GSU Housing committee is pleased to see a focus on housing in the Green Papers.
- We must work to address the housing crisis in Toronto. The University of Toronto should join with students and other universities to call for rent control in the Cities of Toronto and Mississauga. The more affordable housing available adjacent to our campuses, the less strain placed on the University to provide housing.
- A focus on better management of existing housing, especially family housing, is needed. The University should facilitate the revival or creation of a tenants' association in family housing, in order for students to be more involved with the management/operations of their housing.
- Develop long-term strategies for housing, including multi-use community buildings. As mentioned in this section of the Green Paper, "Development of mixed cohort housing" is a good idea. A graduate student, post-doc, faculty, and family housing mix would work well and would bring down the cost of family housing. The GSU Housing Committee is not opposed to having commercial or academic use of a portion of the buildings.
- The academic plan should address the needs of family housing and graduate student housing. The current waiting list is over 1400 for family housing and over 150 for Graduate House.
- Given the "connecting with the GTA" theme, the University should work with the city and province to produce more affordable housing. The University should

also assist and encourage community groups that are building alternative types of housing, such as co-ops.

- Graduate housing at the UTSC and UTM should also be considered. Currently, graduate students at UTM have to wait 1.5 years for a place in residence.
- Off campus housing at UTM is difficult due to poor public transportation into the campus. If additional housing is not built on campus, strong efforts should be made to improve transit connections.

#### E. Pro-active Recruitment of the Best Students and of a Diverse Student Body

- Improved communications to graduate students, especially in the area of funding packages (composition, number of TAships expected, campus resources, etc.), is needed. A best practices model should be developed to help units communicate clearly and recruit the best students. Letters should be sent every year, early in the year.
- This section mentions developing a recruitment program that makes it clear why a student should attend U of T as opposed to another Ontario university (or a U.S. university). We must recognize other peer universities in Canada as options for students whom we are trying to recruit.
- A commitment must be made to include students with disabilities. Accommodation and finances for these students must be made available so as to allow full participation in University life.
- The ideas in this section are great recruitment tools and should be implemented. Inclusion of current students in recruitment work could also help – offer potential students a current student contact information for questions, etc.

#### F. Student Friendly Student Services

- Great services exist on campus, but an awareness campaign is needed at the dept/faculty level, where students often start asking questions when they need help
- The University should offer an emergency childcare program.
- We should work hard to help students find the right office to answer questions the first time, and to avoid the cases of multiple referrals to different parts of campus. A “1-stop” information centre, which could direct students to the different offices on campus, would be helpful.
- The issue of limited space at Student Services should be addressed. Additional office space should be made available to allow expansion of current services to meet the demand of the double cohort.
- The School of Graduate studies should consider offering services (form pick-up and submission) at the campuses of UTM and UTSC, depending on graduate student enrollment expansion at these campuses.
- Graduate students at the campuses of UTM and UTSC should be made more aware of the services at the St. George campus.
- Athletics and recreation are central to a healthy University experience. To allow these activities to best serve the student population, the University of Toronto

should resume its financial support of athletics, recreation and other co-curricular activities. In particular, spending on deferred major maintenance and capital projects should be funded by the University to prevent the resulting constant increase in ancillary fees. The current situation, where these activities are funded almost completely through ancillary fees creates an impression that co-curricular activities are somehow separate or additional, rather than central, to life at the University. In addition, these fees are increasing the financial burden on students, especially given that our students pay the one of the highest athletics fees in Canada. However, such funding by the University should not result in increased spending by the Faculty for inappropriate expansions, for example, expanding high performance athletics over activities that serve the health and well being of the general university population.

## **2. Improving the Undergraduate Learning Experience Beyond the Classroom**

Some comments below speak directly to improving the *graduate* learning experience beyond the classroom. Many of the ideas in this section could be applied to both categories of student.

### **A. Steps to Create Student Cohorts and Vibrant "Campus Communities"**

- Many of the ideas in this section are exciting, especially the idea of “alternative spring breaks”. Graduate students could be included with faculty to make these breaks a great learning experience for undergraduates.
- Creating “cohorts” might also result in segregation of the campus community to a greater extent than it is now. Caution should be taken, and all students should be encouraged to get involved with those organizations, such as GSU or athletics, which are available to all students, regardless of their particular interests.

### **B. Connecting: the academy/the world**

#### *i. Connecting with the GTA*

- Sponsor special “U of T” nights at community venues and events. Arrange for reduced prices at opera, symphony, theatre, sports, jazz festival, etc. This can bring together students, faculty, and the community of the GTA.
- We encourage developing a more cooperative relationship and partnering with the cities of Toronto and Mississauga.
- The University should also promote good “environmental citizenship” and recognize the impact our population can have on the environment and as leaders in environmental responsibility in the community. We could offer incentives to students that use energy-efficient means of transportation (bicycles or public transit), and work with the GTA to minimize wasteful use of resources (such as water, paper, and electricity).

#### *ii. Building on Our Diversity*

- We should try to recognize that pedagogical research shows people learn in many ways. Course instructors and TAs should be trained and encouraged to employ a variety of teaching methods to engage and serve a diverse range of learning styles.

### iii. Creating More Meaningful International Experiences

- We should ensure graduate student funding continues while students are partaking in fieldwork related to their research. Currently this only applies in departments which require such fieldwork, and not in many departments where fieldwork is optional.

### iv. Creating undergraduate research experience

- Care must be taken to ensure that such a program does not create additional work for graduate students (i.e. graduate students should not be required to supervise or support undergraduates in research.)

## D. Writing

- The ideas in this section are very important. Excellent writing skills are an important requirement for undergraduates who wish to continue to a graduate program. Careful attention must be made as to what the University considers writing norms and standards, allowing for diversity of style and expression.

## E. Academic Honesty (*new section*)

- With the introduction of academic technologies such as “[www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)”, all students must be taught to recognize and avoid plagiarism, and the University should not sway from its commitment to discourage, as well as detect, this problem.

## 3. The Graduate Student Experience

As described in the Green Papers, the Higher Education Data Survey indicates graduate students at University of Toronto are dissatisfied with their non-academic experiences. The Graduate Students’ Union is committed to working with the Provost and the School of Graduate Studies to develop strategies to address this. As the graduate student experience is central to the future of a research intensive institution such as University of Toronto, this section deserves more attention. We have provided some suggestions, as well as suggested sub-categorization. Once again, many of the comments made above, in relation to the undergraduate student experience, are certainly applicable to graduate students.

### A. Fostering “Community”

*Many of the comments in this section can benefit also undergraduate students and other members of the campus community.*

- Continue to work for a more traditional “student centre” on St. George campus. Care must be taken to avoid student levies for construction. Strategy to get SuperBuild money for a mixed-use student centre and academic complex should be devised.
- Encourage graduate student non-academic activity, perhaps via Hart House. Organize graduate student interdisciplinary seminars, etc. Offer incentive

- (perhaps like the “Passport”) for new graduate students to learn about and use available services.
- Increase publicity of student recitals and music on campus, especially free concerts at the Faculty of Music. Hold more (daytime) recitals at Hart House.
  - Improve GSU building along with the West campus improvement project.
  - Encourage ancillaries such as Athletics, Student Services, Student Affairs, and Hart House to create graduate student specific programs.
  - Promote U of T’s volunteer bureau to graduate students
  - Assist in the creation of more “cultural centres” on campus. Target ethnic groups to increase involvement in university and student governance and extra-curricular activities. Provide international students with adequate financial resources to participate.
  - The centralized email system (UTor) should be used to distribute a weekly or bi-weekly “U of T events” message to all students. In addition, the customizability of the events listing on [my.utoronto.ca](http://my.utoronto.ca), should be made clearer to students. Many do not know that student clubs listings are available, perhaps because these listings are hidden by default. New users should be given the option to customize this listing when they log in for the first time. Listings by student governments, clubs, and societies should be solicited.
  - Department culture depends on socialization. Good research results from working in a pleasant environment.
    - Community building should be encouraged,
    - wine & cheese parties, supervisor/student socials, debates, outings, etc. should be strongly encouraged (in collaboration with departmental graduate student associations) to enhance graduate student life.
  - Improve transportation connections with the campuses of UTM and UTSC
  - The University could start a project to facilitate club/group communication, for example a central space with mail-boxes, a cross-university clubs email list to promote events, etc.

## B. Funding

- A conference and travel funding plan for graduate students, as suggested in the Orchard Task Force on Graduate Student Financial Support (<http://www.utoronto.ca/provost/gradfinanc/FinalMay2000/finalMay.htm>), should be created. Conference travel is an integral part of academic life and should be promoted and encouraged for graduate students. A central fund should be created for students in departments where funding is not available. This is also one way in which University of Toronto can promote itself as a great public research university, and create “buzz” about the work going on here.
- Extend guaranteed funding to students in 2<sup>nd</sup> year masters’ and professional masters’ programs.

### C. Tuition and Fees

- The University of Toronto should work with student groups to publicize the crisis in post-secondary education funding, and to decrease the burden of tuition.
- All capital projects on campus, including at Hart House, should be funded centrally, never by ancillary fees.
- This Green Paper calls Hart House and the Hart House theatre "significant campus resources". In this case, U of T should directly provide support for them. The three-year grant given to the theatre was intended to subsidize the operation costs of the theatre, and to give Hart House time to build an endowment fund to cover future operation costs. With aggressive fundraising, the theatre endowment is projected to bring in an interest of \$50,000 for 2004/2005. Meanwhile, the operating cost of the theater is projected to be about \$240,000. In light of this large shortfall in revenue, it is clear that the three-year grant is not sufficient to assist Hart House to achieve the goal initially intended by the University. Therefore, we believe the University should provide Hart House an extension to the theatre grant, for a sufficient time period, such that Hart House can raise an adequate endowment fund to cover the theatre's future operating costs.

### D. Increasing Student Participation in Governance

- Participation in University governance is missing from the list of aspects of the student experience.
- Guaranteed student government representation on all hiring, review, and task force committees of the offices of President, Provost, or SGS.
- Guaranteed student government representation on the Governing Council and its Boards.
- The legitimacy of student government must be recognized fully. All co-opted positions on the Boards and Committees of the Governing Council must be replaced by appointees of student governments.
- Green papers call for increased faculty participation governance. Student interest (and influence) in governance is at a low. This is affecting the "student experience". Students must be made to feel welcome and appreciated in the governance process. Co-operation through the recognized student governments could increase participation. Graduate students must have academic extensions for participation on Governing Council and GSU Executive.
- Continue Vice-Provost, Space and Facilities Planning consultations with students on new buildings and large capital expenditures.
- Increase graduate student involvement in governance at the department level. Encourage departments to create clear policies on graduate student participation in appeals, hiring committees, and planning committees. Pass these policies through SGS Council to ensure consistency. Fully recognize that graduate student participation in student government and university committees is a good introduction to academic planning and administration, and useful preparation for future academic careers.

## E. Academic Life

- Using HEDS data, work to shorten the time to completion or abandonment.
- Graduate student internships and interactions with public research labs (i.e. NRC) should be increased.
- Alignment of PhD funding with “real” time to graduation – in some programs this is 5 years. Indeed, the average time to completion (HEDS survey, 2002) is 5 years. We should work to ensure that the recommended (and average) time to completion reflects the workload of the program. Pressures of funding should not influence departments into calling a 5 year program a 4 year program, or into making a 2 year masters’ a 1 year masters’.
- Increased mentoring and preparation for the “teaching” aspect of academic life. So far, the only things available for teacher training are the course on Teaching in Higher Education and the TATP. The TATP does have a range of offerings, but they are geared to the T.A. and not to the professor who must consider course development as well as departmental development. Seminars on course design, choosing textbooks, recognizing plagiarism, etc, would be very useful. The university should provide avenues for students to develop professionally as educators and will provide opportunities for them that will enable them to be competitive when seeking job placement in academics.
- Offer more graduate student seminars on intellectual property issues. Through the School of Graduate Studies, create best practice templates of intellectual property agreements for each division.
- The loan time at University of Toronto libraries should be extended for graduate students, and more than 2 renewals should be allowed.
- Despite trends at U.S. universities, it is important that the University of Toronto continue to recognize that the Masters' programs are substantial, meaningful and valuable degrees in themselves, and to recognize that not every discipline or person is the same.
  - Some students can go far with a 2 year masters’ degree. Others are not ready to enter a PhD program directly, or after a 1 year coursework professional masters’.
  - With the current structure of department and student funding, many Masters' programs are being degraded to fit the funding cohort's timelines, devaluing the degrees by requiring coursework instead of research theses, leaving students unprepared to enter doctoral programs, locally or other institutions. The University must defend these degree programs and demand the work and provide the resources necessary within each discipline.
  - Outside of academia, many career choices require only a masters’ degree and consider PhD training too focused or too expensive to hire them
  - We must then plan for a program to allow more back-transfers, if we allow more direct entry PhD.
- Evaluation of the quality of graduate supervision as a factor in tenure, promotion, and merit and evaluation of departments could certainly improve compliance with

the best-practice models outlined by the School of Graduate studies, in conjunction with the GSU. Students should be anonymously consulted when departmental reviews are conducted. Due to the close relationships between supervisors and their students, student comments in evaluations must be held confidential.

#### F. Evaluation and Benchmarking

- Remove restrictions to interactive programming on the U of T web server. This will allow units, student services, and student governments to survey students more easily.
- Continued comparisons with other North American institutions, such as the *Higher Education Data Survey* is a good idea. However, as some of our peer institutions may not have enviable records regarding equity, diversity, access, community outreach, and non-academic student experience, it is important that a broad discussion take place on how best to evaluate graduate student experiences, and how to set goals for ourselves, not necessarily dependant on the work of our North American peers.

#### G. Orientation

- Graduate orientation to different services, TA training, etc. should be spread throughout year to prevent information overload in September.
- An orientation should be held specifically for women graduate students. Issues like campus safety, sexual harassment, and relationships with supervisor could be covered.
- Students should be encouraged immediately to get involved in University and student governance, and these opportunities for involvement should be clearly promoted in welcome materials.
- The September orientation events should be expanded beyond the single day at Hart House. The Graduate Student Union should become more involved in the planning and staging of orientation.
- More workshops on how to choose a supervisor and committees should be offered, perhaps in cooperation with the Graduate Students' Union.

#### H. Housing

- The mention of housing in this section is weakly worded: "a study of the possible options..." The general needs are already known and the University has already made a commitment (Spring 1999) to build 300 family units. The next academic plan should include a plan for action to fulfill that commitment.
- Due to planned enrollment expansion at UTSC and UTM, graduate housing at these campuses should be considered.

## I. Diversity

- Additional paid training for teaching assistants who may experience a chilly classroom climate, especially female TAs and those who speak English as a second language.

## **D. A Green Paper for Public Discussion: Faculty, Staff, and Academic Leadership in Research and Teaching**

### **10. Administrative, Technical, and Service Staff**

- The University of Toronto must recognize that student satisfaction depends greatly on face to face interaction with staff. Overworked staff persons (especially graduate student administrators) are sometimes unwelcoming to students. The University should work with student and staff unions to make sure that front-line staff have the resources and abilities to make students feel welcome.

### **11. Evaluation and Benchmarking**

- While benchmarking can be a useful tool, and we support evaluation and benchmarking by the institution and individual units, we would like to stress that such evaluation should:
  - Account for the different social contexts of each institution – not all benchmarking is directly comparable
  - Recognize that comparability with peer institutions cannot be the ultimate goal, as perhaps our peers do not in fact have enviable records on issues of equity, diversity, outreach, and access
  - Include institutions outside North America, and the English-speaking world
- We support accountability – strong consequences following the results of benchmarking and evaluation. However, such consequences should not affect students currently enrolled in a department or program.
- The research of our own institution, as well as the other prevailing research in the area of institutional evaluation should be carefully considered. There is a growing body of research which suggests incorporating “benchmarking” and “performance indicators” into university governance and management can have dubious or damaging effects.
- Careful attention is needed when evaluating and benchmarking a graduate program. If measures such as time to completion are used with budgetary implications on a unit, the result could be a loss of access and recruitment for those students who do not fit the conventional definition of “excellent”. Benchmarking and evaluation of graduate programs should account for the diversity of backgrounds and experiences of graduate students. Recruitment of students who come from previous academic careers where they have experienced

structural or institutional barriers (and therefore may require additional support or a longer time to completion) must be encouraged.

## **E. A Green Paper for Public Discussion: Resources for the Academic Plan**

### **1. Accountability**

- Allocations will be accompanied by a high degree of accountability from units and from the administration. In addition to those types of accountability mentioned, this accountability should include upholding the environmental standards recommended by the environmental protection advisory committee (EPAC) at all levels of university activity. This would include (but not be limited to) a comprehensive (campus-wide) recycling program, creation of additional green space (i.e. rooftop gardens) on campus, commitment to research into and use of renewable energy sources, and a commitment to include environmental considerations in all budgetary decisions (including both capital and operating expenditures).

### **2 Fiscal Resources**

#### **A. Revenue Generation**

- This section calls for further deregulation of fees, as well as increases in the provincial operating grant. We must leave out the option of fee deregulation and call for increases in operating grants as the major avenue for revenue generation.
- Fundraising should be matched by the government, as occurs in some other provinces.
- Continued pressure on government for an inflationary increase in per-FTE transfer money. Show a crisis is building in universities, do not off-load problem onto students. Run an awareness campaign to tell people Ontario gives the lowest funding in NA. Get the message out that from 1987-8 to 2001-2, provincial operating grants per University student in Ontario have fallen 32.5% in constant dollar terms, and are currently lowest of all Canadian provinces. In the last six years, Ontario's per University student funding has declined by 3% while the average state funding in the USA has risen by 37%.
- More mentoring and seminars for graduate students in order to increase successful grant application writing. Such seminars are currently held by the School of Graduate studies. The frequency should be increased, and students should be offered support and free advice and reviewing of grant and fellowship applications.
- The University of Toronto should work with students, community, and faculty to encourage the Council of Ontario Universities to further pressure for increased public funding for post-secondary education. We should bring a united voice about the crisis in post-secondary education.

## B. Capital Expenditures

- Establish a "capital budget" separate from the operating budget. Encourage all departments and units, especially Hart House, to do the same. Because Hart House is an important asset to the University and capital projects at Hart House benefit the University as a whole, the Graduate Students' Union believes that the University should work towards the goal of funding capital projects at Hart House. We believe students should not have to fund capital projects through the Hart House fee. By implementing budget separation, better cooperation between student governments and ancillaries can be fostered, as student ancillary fees can go to fund only operations.

***Special Report:***

**A response from the perspective of graduate students with disabilities**

***Endorsed by the Graduate Students' Union***

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An increasing number of students with disabilities are choosing to pursue graduate education. In order to recruit and retain the best and brightest of this student population, the University of Toronto needs to promote an inclusive atmosphere for students with disabilities, one without barriers of any kind (physical, social, technological, financial, barriers to education, and barriers to involvement). While there are many issues that are common between graduate and undergraduate students with disabilities, we must recognize that graduate students with disabilities have their own subset of issues that are important. It is also important to recognize that there are many types of disability, each with its own unique and distinctive problems, and what may be applicable to one may not be applicable to all. Therefore, it is necessary for the university community to be as flexible and open-minded about this issue as possible.

**Physical Accessibility:**

- There needs to be a commitment to improving the physical accessibility of all new and old buildings in order to meet accepted guidelines and provincial legislation. This should come with ambitious deadlines for campus-wide compliance.
- In addition to these considerations, accessibility of individual classrooms, lecture theatres and laboratories is a definite and growing concern that needs to be addressed.
- A method of prioritizing capital accessibility projects and a formula for funding these projects needs to be developed and a comprehensive system and timeline for completion put in place. Other universities have a committee comprised of students with disabilities and members of the accessibility services provider to make these decisions.
- The concept of “universal design” – that it is better and, ultimately cheaper, to design buildings and products for use by all, and not just the able-bodied majority – needs to be integrated into engineering, architectural and other course syllabi.

**Technological Accessibility:**

- Adaptive technology and accommodations necessary for students of all levels to obtain a university education are relatively expensive; a commitment from the university to provide funding for these accommodations to the students who require them goes hand-in-hand with the idea of “financial accessibility” presented in the green papers.
- Furthermore, some universities maintain an “adaptive technology” pool of resources and equipment for use by the disabled student population, which is owned by the university and may be loaned to students as necessary during the academic year.
- This is a complementary alternative to the previous point, but it needs to be recognized that the accommodations needs of graduate students with disabilities are often far more specialized than their undergraduate counterparts. Therefore, a

financial commitment on the part of the university is still required, to ensure an adequately sized pool, and in providing accommodations for graduate students with disabilities, whose needs are more specialized than undergraduates.

**Social Accessibility:**

- A commitment to diversity in the student body also involves a commitment to the recruitment of students with disabilities. >18% of the population is considered disabled in one form or another, yet this population is under-represented in the student population of the University of Toronto.
- The university needs to increase efforts to recruit this specific population, and to facilitate their accommodation within programs of study in their chosen discipline.
- “It takes a village to raise a child” – the university community has a social responsibility to produce future leaders in all fields of endeavor, who have high social, moral and ethical values.
- Ensuring the inclusiveness of the university environment for students with a disability is not something that should be limited to the province of the Accessibility Services provider – it is something that requires strong commitment by the entire university (all academic and nonacademic departments, services and residences).

**Financial barriers:**

- Disability-related accessibility accommodations for academic purposes can be expensive. Currently, there are limited funding sources (OSAP Bursary for Students with a Disability, for example). However, the university needs to establish and maintain a fund for disability accommodations.
- Additionally, the University needs to maintain an internal database of funding sources available to students with a disability, as these kinds of awards and bursaries are rarely accessible to the appropriate population.
- Furthermore, it is necessary for the university to ensure that the Accessibility Services provider on campus has enough funds to meet the accommodations needs of their current client base and that which the increasing enrolment will place on the Service.

**Barriers to education:**

- “Extraordinary circumstances lead to extraordinary actions.” Graduate students with disabilities often need alternative arrangements or special accommodations within their program of study (e.g., flexible completion times, alternative exam formats, etc.).
- Recognition of this fact is necessary, as is a commitment to ensuring that there are no barriers to the implementation of these accommodations or the completion of the degree.
- Furthermore, the university’s preparation of students for careers that may intersect with the disabled population needs to be increased.
- Dedicated interdisciplinary programs at the graduate and undergraduate level in disability studies are necessary to meet this goal.

- Finally, there needs to be a recognition that graduate and professional students with disabilities are undergoing training and will enter careers that, for many years, have been considered “nontraditional.”
- Every effort needs to be made to encourage and support their efforts and education, without acting as “gateways” or “guardians” of the field.
- In line with this philosophy, all courses need to be revised or designed to fit universal access standards, such that all students, disabled or not, may be able to take courses, attend classes and obtain the best educational experience possible.

**Barriers to involvement:**

- “Diversity – our strength.” The excellence of the university community is enhanced by every group on campus reflecting the diverse backdrop of the city of Toronto. Thus, the identification, support and encouragement of a community of disabled persons within the University of Toronto are essential.