

## Policy on the Recognition of Student Groups

Voluntary organizations formed by the University community are a traditional part of campus life, and contribute in significant ways to its intellectual, political, social, and cultural diversity.

In its relations with these organizations, the University is guided by a commitment to the right of University members to communicate and to discuss and explore all ideas, to organize groups for any lawful purpose, to move about the University and to use its facilities in any reasonable way, to distribute on campus, in a responsible way, published material provided that it is not unlawful, to hold meetings, to debate and to engage in peaceful demonstrations, and to freedom from discrimination.

Recognition as a “Student Group” is a privilege based upon observance of certain procedures and acceptance of certain responsibilities. It follows that this privilege can be withdrawn if these procedures are neglected or responsibilities abrogated by the organization or group.

Under the terms of this policy, the University will not attempt to censor, control or interfere with any group on the basis of its philosophy, beliefs, interests or opinions expressed unless and until these lead to activities which are illegal or which infringe the rights and freedoms already mentioned. By the same token, recognition as a “Student Group” by the University implies neither endorsement of a particular group’s beliefs or philosophy, nor the assumption of legal liability for the group’s activities. It assumes only that the University has a responsibility to inform itself of organizations which use its facilities and name and to deny or withdraw recognition if the requirements of this policy are not observed.

- a) The University should maintain a policy and mechanism for the recognition of Student Groups. All such groups wishing to use “University of Toronto”, “University of Toronto Mississauga”, “University of Toronto Scarborough”, “U of T”, “UTM”, “UTSC”, or similar in their names and all groups wishing to claim internal status under the *Policy on the Temporary Use of Space at the University of Toronto* must be recognized.
- b) Responsibility for the maintenance of the policy and mechanism, where campus-wide organizations or organizations drawing members from more than one division or constituency of the University are concerned, should be vested in the University Affairs Board of the Governing Council.
- c) The responsibility for recognition of Student Groups that are not campus-wide and drawing members from only one division or constituency of the University should rest with the council of that division or constituency.

## I. Eligibility for Recognition

Eligibility for recognition should be assessed annually against the following technical constitutional areas rather than ideological ones:

- a) The objectives and activities of groups seeking recognition should be seen as attempting to contribute to the educational, recreational, social or cultural values of the University. These values are intended to be interpreted in the broadest sense. However, the University's essential "value" of freedom of enquiry and association must be preserved.
- b) Recognized Student Groups may not engage in activities which are essentially commercial in nature. This is not intended to preclude the collection of membership fees to cover the expenses of the organization, or of charges for specific activities, programs or events, or to prohibit groups from engaging in legitimate fundraising. However, a recognized Student Group cannot:
  - i. as a major activity, have a function that makes it an on-campus part of a commercial organization;
  - ii. provide services and goods at a profit when that profit is used for purposes other than those of the organization; nor
  - iii. pay salaries and/or stipends to some or all of its executive members or officers.
- c) Membership in Student Groups should be open to all registered student members of the University without restriction on the grounds outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code's *Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination*. While discriminatory membership practices are not allowed, it is recognized that certain Student Groups could well be homogeneous in nature without being discriminatory.
- d) The University's interest in a Student Group's constitution is based on its concern that:
  - i. groups and individuals using its name and its facilities are genuine Student Groups;
  - ii. Student Groups pursue activities in accordance with the law;
  - iii. organizational structure, membership, procedures, rules of conduct, etc. are articulated so that members who join a Student Group and take part in its activities may do so with full knowledge of their rights and responsibilities within the Student Group; and
  - iv. Student Groups are operating in an open, accessible and democratic fashion, as per the Policy on *Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations*, and following the terms of their constitutions.

- e) Where a group applying for recognition has a direct connection with another body outside the University of Toronto, the nature of this connection and the name of the body must be disclosed fully and substantially in the application for recognition.
  - i. Student Groups must be a distinct entity from the body outside the University of Toronto. The executive members, officers, and contact person of the Student Group shall not be executive members of the external organization.
  - ii. Student Groups shall not confer financial benefit to external organizations without fully and completely disclosing the nature and amount of the benefit to the University. The method of disclosure will be outlined by Student Affairs/Student Life offices on each campus.

## II. Composition of Student Groups

- a) Executive members with voting privileges shall be currently registered students<sup>1</sup> of the University of Toronto.
- b) Staff, faculty, or alumni members may hold non-voting executive positions. These non-voting executive positions shall be limited to a maximum of one (1) or ten per cent (10%) of the full executive body, whichever is greatest. Persons holding these non-voting executive positions cannot serve as an officer (including financial signing officer) or contact person of the Student Group.
- c) Registered students may be executive members on one or more Student Groups but may only serve as a financial signing officer on one Student Group at a time.
- d) Student Groups must have a minimum of five (5) members who are registered students of the University of Toronto.
- e) Non-voting membership may be extended to interested staff, faculty, and alumni, or persons from outside the University, without restriction on those grounds outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code's *Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination*.
- f) Groups seeking recognition must supply the following:
  - i. An application in the form prescribed.
  - ii. The names of two officers and a contact person (who could be one of the officers) responsible for all bookings of University space, rentals of University equipment, and use of other University services. Groups must also supply a

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in S.1.1(l) in the University of Toronto Act, 1978

mailing address and a telephone number. This information will be considered to be public information.

- iii. The total number of members, the size of the governing body (i.e., number of executive members), and the proportion of registered U of T student members and other members at the time of registration.
- iv. A copy of the constitution and/or by-laws of the group.

Applications for Student Group status may be submitted at any time during the year. Groups meeting the requirements of this policy will be granted recognition in accordance with the due processes, guidelines, and timelines established on each campus. Recognition may be renewed in successive academic years upon request by the new executive. If constitutional and/or by-law changes have been proposed, the amended constitution and/or by-laws should be submitted and will be considered in the course of the renewal process.

1. Where a group applying for recognition wishes to use “University of Toronto”, “University of Toronto Mississauga”, “University of Toronto Scarborough”, “U of T”, “UTM”, “UTSC”, or similar, in their name, it shall be clear in their name and all related representations that it is a Student Group.
  - a) Student Groups shall not use the University’s signatures, crests, word marks, or letter marks without expressed written consent from the Trademark Licensing Office.
2. Applicants for recognition or recognized Student Groups handling extensive funds may be required to submit audited statements annually to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students.

At the discretion of the Vice-Provost, Students, Student Groups supplying goods or services for which a charge is made may be required to indicate in all advertising, contractual, and other material that the University neither endorses the Student Group’s activities nor assumes legal liability in connection with the goods and services provided.
3. Recognized Student Groups must report to the Vice-Provost, Students the name of the bank, trust company, or credit union; the branch; account numbers; and financial signing officers for all financial accounts opened in their name.

### III. Complaints, Appeals and Reporting of Administrative Decisions

- a) The University will not attempt to monitor or review the activities of a Student Group in the normal course of events. It will however investigate complaints or charges that an organization has acted in a manner that is inconsistent with its constitution and/or by-laws, or with the requirements of University policy. If these complaints or charges prove to be valid, recognition may be withdrawn.
- b) Student Groups must operate in accordance with the *Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations*.

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- c) Responsibility for the implementation of this policy is delegated to the administration. In the case of denial or withdrawal of recognition, a statement of the reasons will be provided. All administrative decisions to grant, deny, or withdraw recognition will be reported regularly to the University Affairs Board for information.
- d) Student Groups wishing to appeal a decision made by the Student Affairs/Student Life offices on their campus may do so through the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students. In the event of an appeal, a review shall be held by an administrative officer designated by the Vice-Provost, Students not involved in the original decision.

### Glossary

**Contact person:** The registered U of T student member who is the primary point of contact between a Student Group and the University.

**Executive member:** A member of a Student Group who is serving on its executive, as outlined by the constitution and/or by-laws of the Student Group.

**Member:** A person who has signed up to participate in a Student Group, whether it be on an on-going or provisional basis, such as to participate in a class or workshop.

**Officer:** A member of a Student Group who has been assigned duties by the constitution and/or by-laws of the Student Group, or by this policy.

**Student Groups:** Voluntary organizations formed by registered students at the University of Toronto. This Policy applies the recognition of Student Groups, which differ from student organizations that are granted status through other policies (i.e., student societies, affiliates of student societies).