

Submission to the Task Forces for Vision 2030 Faculty of Physical Education and Health

February 2008

The Faculty of Physical Education and Health conducts Canada's oldest undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the fields of physical education, kinesiology and exercise sciences. Its faculty members and students contribute research to the examination of the most important issues relating to physical activity, sport and health today, such as the strong relationship between rising physical inactivity and the alarming growth in non-communicable diseases. Its graduates can be found in leadership positions in primary and secondary education, universities and research institutes, all levels of government, international and national NGOs and the private sector.

The Faculty also fields Varsity athletic teams that represent all three campuses of the University across Canada and internationally, conducts the tri-campus intramural program, provides co-curricular physical education, fitness opportunities and recreation to students from all divisions on the St. George Campus, and conducts similar programs for faculty, staff and children, youth and adults across the GTA. It is currently in the process of revitalizing opportunities for the Olympic and Paralympic sports in the GTA, with the plans for the Goldring Centre for High Performance Sport, an integrated research, teaching, training and competition centre of excellence on Devonshire right across from Varsity Stadium. The Goldring Centre will not only fill a major gap in the pan-Canadian program, but raise the bar in new and important ways.

In short, for well over a century, the units that now comprise the Faculty have served as a widely-respected source of expertise, teaching, programming and advocacy about physical activity, sport and health. It has become a leader in the pursuit of equity and excellence. In many ways, it is a 'front porch of the University'.

In addressing the challenges set out in 'Towards 2030', we would like to make the following points:

1. From a governance and administrative perspective, the Faculty of Physical Education and Health is an independent unit characterized by strong links to the Provost and President. This has served the Faculty and University well. Like the faculties of Nursing, Pharmacy and Dentistry, we participate in the Deans of the Single Departmental Faculty (DSDF) meetings and agree that this forum is a useful venue to canvass common issues, discuss budgetary management, communicate with the University Executive and, more generally, participate as part of collective, collegial and interdisciplinary university governance.

We support the submission of the Faculties of Nursing, Pharmacy and Dentistry with respect to governance. Like Nursing, Dentistry and Pharmacy, in order to continue to strive to better ourselves and serve as a critical global institution for research, study and social engagement, we constantly look for ways to strengthen our programs and services. We strongly support the current divisional structure with Deans reporting directly to the Provost. It is clear from discussions at the Canadian Council of University Physical Education and Kinesiology Administrators and the American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education that the strongest units in our field are those that enjoy this autonomy and reporting relationship. We would also say from these discussions that the most educationally supportive programs of intercollegiate athletics across North America occur in divisions that enjoy or report to academic leadership. We strongly support the continuance of the integrated model of academic and co-curricular programs exemplified by this Faculty.

2. A second point of governance relates to the structures for decision-making in co-curricular athletics. Ever since the late 19th century, co-curricular athletics at U of T have been governed by structures that involve student, faculty, staff and alumni representatives working together. The Council of Athletics and Recreation, which was created in 1977 from a merger of the University of Toronto Athletic Association (formed in 1893) and the Women's Athletic Association (1905) is the responsible body today, reporting to Governing Council through Faculty Council (for policy purposes) and the University Affairs Board (on budget). CAR has been an important forum for policy development and exchange among the several constituencies directly interested in physical activity and sport at the University and a school for leadership among students. There are 30 members of CAR, most of whom are elected by and from their respective constituencies. 15 members are students, including a representative of the major student unions. Elected and appointed students enjoy a majority on the CAR Budget Committee. Yet ever since the imposition of the Council of Student Services on the governance structure by the Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Toronto, the Students' Administrative Council, the Graduate Students' Union, and the Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students for a Long-Term Protocol on the Increase of Introduction of Compulsory Non-Tuition Related Fees in 1996, the governance process for athletics has been weakened and distorted. By giving the three student unions on the St. George Campus a veto over fee increases, the Protocol has significantly reduced the ability of the multi-constituency bodies established by the U of T system of governance, namely CAR and the University Affairs Board, to plan effectively for the long term and to make decisions. A case in point is the refusal of COSS last year to provide sustainable funding for the programs planned for the new Varsity Stadium, despite the fact that the Stadium was unanimously approved by Governing Council and its committees a year earlier, with the minuted understanding that such funding was necessary. No other component of the educational enterprise is controlled in this way. It is particularly problematic as the University seeks to enhance the student experience. The Protocol has also discouraged students, faculty, staff and alumni from seeking election to CAR, because they believe that whatever they initiate could be vetoed by COSS.

If U of T physical activity and sport are to contribute to the life of the student body, the University and the broad community in the way that they can and should, a way must be found to restore multi-constituency responsibility for athletics in governance. To this end, the University should work to abolish the provincial regulation of ancillary fees and establish a system of 'earned autonomy' in its place.

3. The quality of student life is a major issue raised by 'Towards 2030'. This issue touches upon the co-curricular opportunities we provide in physical activity and sport. In our view, co-curricular physical activity and sport will only increase in importance for students in the decades ahead. We are embodied creatures, not just 'great minds'. We require the knowledge, skills and habits of regular physical activity (and other lifestyle choices) for productive, healthy and enjoyable lives. And yet, growing numbers of young people no longer participate in physical activity to the extent that it contributes to their health. The World Health Organization warns that physical inactivity and unhealthy eating are directly related to the startling growth in chronic non-communicable diseases in the world today, especially cardio-respiratory illness, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, and cancer. Some say that we may be raising the first generation in more than a century to live shorter life spans than their parents. The systematic reduction of physical activity in daily life is as serious an unexpected consequence of the great transformations of transitions of work, place and time of the last two centuries as is the environmental crisis. Reversing these trends is a complex challenge, requiring the involvement of researchers, professions, and institutions in many areas, not just physical educators and exercise scientists. But it must be squarely addressed in any long term planning by the entire academic community. The University can expect to face growing social pressure to contribute to the education of the next generation in healthy physical activity in the years ahead.

At the same time, while many young people are inactive, others determinedly seek out opportunities, especially in the engrossing culture of competitive sport, arguably the most accessible form of popular culture today. For those students, the strength of a university's offerings in physical activity and sport are an important criterion for application and enrolment.

These considerations lead us to argue that as U of T moves towards 2030, it must enhance the opportunities it provides students, faculty and staff in physical activity and sport, and ensure that the lessons, health and pleasures they bring are available to all, especially undergraduates. To this end, we recommend that the University subsidize increased opportunity for physical activity and sport for all members of the University community, plan to provide time in each person's schedule for this purpose, ensure that there are adequate facilities and programs and undertake research to better understand and overcome the other barriers. The Faculty is committed to contributing its expertise to this goal.

4. A related issue is enrolment planning, given the expected pressures in the decades ahead. We are pleased to see that physical capacity is one of the factors that the discussion documents take into account. It is essential that in this complex discussion, the University considers the facilities available for physical activity and sport. The most recent wave of enrolment expansion simply swamped the facilities available on the St. George Campus. With the construction of the new Varsity Stadium and Varsity Dome, we have already begun to reduce the long waiting lists for the intramural field sports and other activities, and demonstrated the benefits of the remarkable new technologies available. We expect that the proposed Goldring Centre will reduce those lineups further. But in order fully to engage every student in a healthy program of physical activity, we need to turf and bubble the Back Campus fields, and undertake major renovations in the Athletic and Physical Education Centre. Similar challenges exist on the suburban campuses, especially at Scarborough. At the very least, no further enrolment expansion should be contemplated without a plan for additional athletic facilities, designed and constructed to complement open space and the existing buildings, and to be universally accessible and environmentally sustainable.

5. Finally, the discussion papers raise many issues with respect to the tri-campus structure. One issue on which it is silent is whether the University should continue to operate an integrated intercollegiate program, so that the Varsity teams that represent U of T in Ontario University Athletics (OUA) and Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) are drawn from all three campuses. In former years, some representatives of the suburban campuses have argued for the right of UTM and UTSC teams to enter intercollegiate competition directly, and to compete against U of T teams, just as some representatives of those campuses have argued that they should become free-standing universities. More recently, the Council of Athletics and Recreation agreed that UTM and UTSC could explore the possibility of competing in the Ontario College Athletic Association. In our view, the current system works well. Every effort is made to accommodate UTM and UTSC student-athletes on the St. George-based Varsity teams. Since the location of Varsity baseball on the new field at UTSC has been so successful, no doubt other Varsity teams could move to one of the suburban campuses. The symbolism is even more important. Given the powerful 'representational status of sport', as long as U of T is governed as an integrated university, with 'TORONTO' the largest type in all branding, there should only be one U of T team in every sport in every OUA and CIS competition.

Submitted by Liz Hoffman, Gretchen Kerr, Bruce Kidd, Karen Lewis and Scott Thomas, the Deans of the Faculty of Physical Education and Health.