



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

Council on Student Services
Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, October 7, 2015
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 pm in room SL232

Members: Desmond P., Scott M., Laura B., Liza A., Nicole D., Camille G., Jessica K., Tinting Z., Ruxiao T., Muhanad A., Tijuana T., Glenda O., Rowshyra C., Trina J.,

Non-Members: Tasneem L., Katie K., Megan L. (Secretary)

1. Approval of Agenda

Moved: Rowshyra C.
Seconded: Jessica K.

2. Approval of Minutes

Jessica K. asked if members are allowed to step down from advisory committees. Liza A. said they are, but must let the Director know so they can find a new member.

Moved: Camille G.
Seconded: Rowshyra C.

3. NSSE

Liza A. explained what NSSE is, how it is divided and explained that discussion is encouraged. The discussion that arose from the NSSE presentation is below.

- “Is the ability to integrate considered in UTSC and U15 comparisons? For example, UofT students can do double majors and minors but other universities can’t.”

Discussions with Diverse Others: International vs Domestic Students

- “University is a new environment and it is human nature to group with people of shared background. It’s easier to talk about issues.”
- “Creating intersections is something we can work on.”
- “When I arrived as an international student I was asked if I wanted to meet other Jamaicans.”
- “Target international and exchange students and ask about how they adopt and/or adjust to a new culture.”
- “Provide space that accommodates their cultural needs. It’s a lot to ask an international student to adopt the Canadian culture, we need to provide space.”
- “As an international student I thought about money and studies before I considered socializing. Then I realized university was about more than studying, but I still don’t interact with other Filipino students.”
- “Education is valued, work over socializing.”
- “At International Friendship Club, Chinese students said there is no socializing in their culture.”

- “There may be a language barrier. As a TA, Chinese students ask if they can speak Chinese but I reply in English.”
- “Economics is a huge issue. You hang out with who you can hang out with.”
- “There’s a notion of priority. In 4th year students get comfortable and socialize more.”
- “The UTSC campus is more like high school and people are more willing to help. It doesn’t feel like that at St. George.”
- “Is there room for qualitative follow-up?”

Discussions with Faculty

- “Lots of students come to TA’s and not faculty. Is there anything that addresses interactions with TA’s who are the direct link to faculty?”
- “Blackboard says TA’s are the first point of contact.”
- “With larger classes, students may not feel comfortable interacting.”
- “International students interact with professors more because teaching is a high-respect career in Asia.”
- “Greenpath students have exposure to professors in the summer.”
- “At the university level in Jamaica it’s hard to get 1-on-1 time with a professor, so having access is a big deal. International students access profs because their accessible.”
- “Maybe find international students’ best practices to increase domestic interactions.”
- “The distance at St. George is a factor in accessing office hours.”
- “At UTSC in some disciplines students will have the same profs through years 1-4 and get more comfortable.”

Campus Environment

- “Is it possible to pull information between commuters and non-commuters to examine if the quality of interactions and supportive environment is different for students who commute?”

High Impact Practices

- “How do we create opportunities for more high impact practices? More research, service learning, study abroad for example.”
- “Other schools like Laurier have co-op in all programs and UTSC lost a Social Science co-op.”
- “If international students have more experience with travel they are more likely to travel.”
- “The struggle with first year students is their parents not wanting their kids to leave home.”
- “Part of Study Abroad programming is to convince parents to let their kids leave.”
- “For international students it is cheaper to take 3 Summer Abroad courses than take a full year.”
- “International students figure ‘I’m here paying for everything I have to take advantage.’ They have to get involved to get ahead.”
- “Senior students have greater commitments preventing them from HIP. Need to pull data for this.”
- “How do commuters have the time and energy to engage if they are commuting 2 hours?”
- “Need to look at how students use their time and compare.”
- “Students want to participate but don’t know how.”
- “People who are interested in studying abroad need to think about it in first year. Students in first year don’t know the situation, they’re just getting used to classes. They can give up a part time job to go abroad. Reality changes your ‘want to do’.”
- “We need to determine what the gap is and how to fix it.”

- “If students take a semester off to gain experience it doesn’t look good for grad school applications. Students would rather hurry and graduate.”
- “We haven’t done a good job of explaining the value of international experience.”
- “There is no international access funding. Yes there are UofT scholarships but there’s no MTCU funding anymore.”
- “Study Abroad is heavily controlled by St. George and it can have an impact on involvement.”
- “We’re currently looking for more funding. Currently it is guaranteed for certain places and there is a Study Abroad for graduate students.
- “With a ratio of 20% international to domestic students, more domestic students are still going abroad.”
- “We want to increase abroad opportunities for students who want to go abroad, not as part of a program.”
- “Is travel to Canadian destinations included in the study abroad numbers (e.g. Explore, field courses)”
- “We will look at anything that will get credit for going abroad.”
- “How can we get students to engage in research projects?”
- “There are limited research opportunities for students.”
- “There is also a difference between disciplines, with a lot of Science-based opportunities but not many in Social Sciences or Humanities.”

Senior Year Projects/Capstone

- “Some students don’t know where to go to learn about opportunities. The Research Catalogue might help.”
- “Some faculty don’t pay. Domestic students need to work for money. Related to campus demographics, commuting students who live at home need to work.”
- “What do UTSC students think should be addressed?”
- “Need clarification on how to use TA’s”
- “There are many TA’s in Social Sciences/Humanities at St. George. Some TA’s aren’t trained in the exact course they’re teaching and can’t answer specific questions.”
- “There needs to be more discussion on why doing an assignment related to your program is valuable.”
- “Would be interested to see discipline vs discipline comparisons. While there are lots of offerings in the Calendar, there are few courses actually offered each semester.”
- “There is no physical space to put new faculty.”
- “There is active involvement between AA&CC and VP Research using CLN to try to focus and make priorities and make more capstone projects.”
- “There are international research opportunities, UTSC faculty can connect with abroad faculty.”
- “The options for international experiences get pulled if people don’t go. It can be hard if you’re going on a research trip because it’s lonely. With the Research Catalogue maybe there will be opportunities that meet the interests of graduate students.”
- “A Global Mobility Coordinator will be hired at UTSC to match abroad opportunities with programs. International research opportunities are constantly changing but will communicate with abroad faculty to see what is out there.”
- “There is an attempt to explore the Social Sciences more. For example, the University of Lund has a joint program in City Building and a program in Japan in the Social Sciences.”
- “Management opportunities exist as well.”

Campus Space

- “Space is always going to be an issue with the number of students increasing.”
- “The Study Space Survey will be in mid-November and will include times and spaces.”
- “We may not be able to build new spaces but we can improve existing spaces, for example for safety, electricity, lighting, etc.
- “One possible suggestion is a laptop program like UOIT which may change the way study space is used.”

Final Thoughts

- The purpose of NSSE isn't to just do the survey every two years and see improvement, the purpose is to see the results and act.
- There are lots of ways to improve but we need to target a few:
 - Mobility Coordinator
 - Financial piece to encourage participation in study abroad programs
 - Uncertainty factor, the known vs unknown
- Find ways to start improving some areas this year
- New Vice Provost recognizes importance and is trying to get involved
- Would be good for small groups to get together to discuss the key issues, determine buckets and have issues identified in the right places.
- Advisory groups can discuss what applies to their area and provide structure
- Would be good to condense findings and discuss with DSA's
- Explore opportunities for graduate students
- Would be great if a few people want to get together to have a smaller group session.

Meeting adjourned.