THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON STUDENT LIFE, LEARNING & COMMUNITY
PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSE

Recommendation	Response
(a) Fostering Greater Dialogue and Genuine Debate at York	
41. We recommend the creation of a Standing Committee on Campus Dialogue (SCCD), composed of students, faculty and administrators, to foster and model the kind of genuine debate and dialogue appropriate to an institution of higher learning. The SCCD should have 8-10 members appointed by the President on the basis of an open and transparent nomination and application process. There should be an equal number of students and faculty/staff members and it should be co-chaired by a student and non-student. The central goal of this body would be to foster an inclusive exploration of important public issues from the widest possible range of perspectives. All members of the SCCD should be selected on the basis of their demonstrated commitment to the achievement of that objective.	Agreed. The President accepts the recommendation to create a Standing Committee on Campus Dialogue composed of up to 10 students, faculty and staff members. The purpose of the Standing Committee on Campus Dialogue will be to foster an inclusive exploration of important public issues from the widest possible range of perspectives. Professor David Leyton-Brown has agreed to serve as Co-Chair of the Standing Committee. Professor Leyton-Brown will be responsible for designing an inclusive process for the selection of the remaining members of the Committee, for approval by the President.
42. A primary activity of the SCCD would be to regularly sponsor balanced and high-quality discussions, debates, seminars and other academic fora on pressing and timely public issues of global, national and local importance. The SCCD would be provided with a budget in support of its activities, would sponsor and advertise at least one major event or activity on campus each term, and the academic events that it sponsors would be attended by senior University leaders, including the President or the Provost. The SCCD would also advise the President on other initiatives that might be undertaken to foster meaningful debate on campus amongst	Agreed. See recommendation 41 above

Recommendation	Response
students, faculty and administrators on issues of public concern.	
43. We recommend the development of an Intergroup Relations program at York to promote dialogue and social engagement between students from different groups, similar to successful programs in US and Canadian universities and NGOs. This will increase cross-group awareness, knowledge and understanding, resulting in collective engagement in lifelong action for progressive social justice.	Agreed. A working group with broad representation from the academic and student community will be convened by the VP Students to examine how this could become incorporated into the curriculum and social activities of York.
44. We recommend that the VP Students, the Office of Human Rights, other relevant University administrators, as well as interested members of the community explore the possibility of partnerships with the Canadian Community for Dialogue and Deliberation (CCDD) and other such organizations.	Agreed. VP Students has registered for the October conference of the CCDD. Representatives from the Office of Human Rights will also be in attendance. It is hoped that this will help to enhance discussion of an intergroup relations program at York.
45. We recommend that the University explore the possibility of introducing initiatives aimed at promoting greater dialogue or tolerance and encouraging a sense of global citizenship at York, potentially in partnership with other universities or with other organizations involved in promoting such efforts.	Agreed. The Standing Committee established pursuant to recommendation 41 will be asked to review and report on this matter.
46. The University should consider creating an annual award to recognize a student who demonstrates a strong commitment to fostering intercultural awareness and constructive dialogue between students on campus.	Agreed. This matter will be referred to Student Financial Services to develop terms of reference with input from students and the Human Rights office.
(b) Student Space	

Recommendation	Response
47. The need for more undergraduate and graduate student space for study and social purposes is one of the highest priorities for students on the York campus. Over the last decade, significant areas that were formerly used or reserved for student use have been converted to other purposes.	Agreed that the need for improving student space on campus should be regarded as a high priority for the University.
48. We recommend a moratorium on conversion of student space to other uses pending a comprehensive review of student space on campus and a plan to develop more student space in the future. This comprehensive review should be undertaken on a priority basis and include the direct participation of students and student governments. The review should consider existing space that could be converted to, or better adapted, or made available for student use as well as the possibility of adding or constructing new student space.	The University will undertake a consultative process to review the student space situation on campus, and in particular define student space and what the specific priorities would be with respect to improving the student space situation. Staff from VP Students will develop and lead the consultation process, supported by CSBO staff from the VP Finance and Administration division. The process of identifying student space priorities should be completed in order to provide input to the University Long-Term Capital Plan update, currently anticipated to be completed May 2010. Pending completion of this review, the University will make best efforts to ensure that there will be no net reduction in student study and lounge space.
49. We recommend that the University make it a priority to allow Scott Library to remain open 24 hours a day to the greatest extent possible throughout the two main academic terms. The feasibility of extended hours at the other libraries and computing facilities on campus should be investigated. Sufficient security should be provided to students making late use of such facilities on campus.	Agreed. Commencing October 4, 2009, Scott Library will be in 24-hour operation Sunday through Thursday; this 24/5 operation will continue through the months of October, November and December as well as from January 31 until the end of April. Students will have access to the study area on the first floor and there will be sufficient staff to ensure adequate supervision and address any security concerns. Security has been involved in the development of the 24/5 plan and there will also be periodic security patrols throughout the night. In addition, the Scott Library will proceed with the design and planning of a "Learning Commons" on the 2nd floor of the Library, intended to serve as a new progressive study space with a mix of open and semi-private multipurpose areas which will facilitate learning, interaction, collaboration, group study and teaching. The Provost will work with the Chief Librarian on the development of this plan, and it will be brought forward for review within the University approval processes, as a matter of priority.

Recommendation	Response
50. The mortgage for the Student Centre will be paid off in 2012. This means that the student capital levy that has been used to fund the mortgage could be utilized for the development of additional student space. We recommend that the University engage with the Student Centre Corporation to discuss ways in which the student capital levy could be utilized in the context of a longer term space plan for students at York.	Agreed. The University representatives named to the Student Centre Corporation Board will initiate discussions with the Executive Director of the Student Centre Corporation to explore possible options.
51. The student space plan should take into account the fact that the subway may significantly reduce or eliminate the need for public transit buses on campus, making it possible to repurpose some of the roadways that are currently used for buses.	Agreed. Options for routing of public transit buses on campus will be included in the ongoing discussions with the TTC as part of the subway planning and development process. Opportunities for relocating buses from the Harry Arthurs Common will be explored in order to provide the basis for a renewal of this important space to improve the quality of student experience on campus.
(c) Temporary Use of University Space (TUUS) Policy	
52. Respect for the procedures around booking of space on campus is essential. These procedures are designed to protect the rights of users of the space, as well as others whose rights or activities might be infringed or unreasonably impeded by particular uses. At the same time, the procedures must be fair, not unduly onerous or bureaucratic, and applied in a transparent manner. As noted in the previous section of this report, the University is committed to the widest range of debate on issues of public concern. The TUUS policy should be administered consistent with this commitment to free expression.	Agreed. The TUUS policy and procedures have been and will continue to be administered in a fair and transparent manner, and consistent with the University's commitment to free expression.
53. Meetings or other activities should be assigned to spaces suitable for the planned event, based on the numbers of attendees, the structure or format, concerns over security, etc. At the same time, as described in the previous paragraph, access to space should not be determined on the basis of the	Agreed. This has been and will continue to be the basis for assigning space for events. Also, sanctions should be imposed in situations where proper booking of space for events has not occurred – this is linked to recommendation 72 below.

Recommendation	Response
content of what is to be discussed at the event in question and must not be used to dissuade or prevent discussion of controversial topics from taking place. All events must be booked however; otherwise sanctions must be imposed (proportionate to the size and the nature of the event and proportionate to whether the organizers are aware of the policies).	
54. The procedures surrounding the booking of space on campus through the Temporary Use of University Space Policy should be streamlined and simplified. An online procedure should be implemented which will allow those wishing to book space to do so electronically. Efforts should be made to shorten the time needed to assess and process requests.	Agreed. The University has developed an online process for space bookings and the procedure will be in place by November 1, 2009.
55. We support continued utilization of local reservation agents for booking space within individual faculties or units.	Agreed.
56. Any cancellations of space bookings by the University should be in accordance with a fair and transparent procedure. The grounds for cancellations should be set forth in the TUUS Policy, and in cases of cancellations there should be timely notification to users.	Agreed. Section 3.2 of the TUUS will be reviewed and updated by January 1, 2010 to provide greater clarity with respect to the grounds and notification process for cancellations.
57. There needs to be greater communication with student groups regarding policies and procedures for booking space on campus.	Agreed. Presentations to student clubs and organizations have occurred during orientation. A webinar will be developed for the SCLD website. Significant improvements are needed to the Current Student website to facilitate easier access to booking reservations policies and procedures. This is linked to the new, enhanced online booking utility.
(d) Student Code of Conduct	

Recommendation	Response
58. The Student Code of Conduct fulfills an important purpose at York. It is designed to protect students and others in the community and ensure a safe campus and an appropriate learning environment for all members of the community. It was produced through an extensive consultative process involving public fora, focus groups and a working committee that included representatives of student governments, faculty and staff. Over 2500 individuals had input into the creation of the Code and of those who participated in its development, 95 per cent were students. The fundamental principles of respect and safety emerged out of the consultation process, and these tenets are reflected throughout the Code and its provisions. Also pervasive are the values of civility, diversity, equity and respect. The Code calls on students to help make York a safe learning environment, to support the dignity of individuals and groups, and to uphold essential freedoms. Students serve not only as members of all tribunals in the adjudication process but also as peer mentors to disseminate information to other students on the Code of Conduct.	Agreed.
59. Nevertheless there is a concern amongst some student groups that the Code may unduly limit student freedom or rights of dissent. We believe that a Student Code of Conduct that focuses only on negative conduct by students is incomplete and that the Code could be strengthened and made more complete by moving beyond a focus on negative conduct by students. We recommend that the Student Code of Conduct be amended to include certain student rights, and the Code should be renamed the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities (SCRR).	Agreed. See recommendation 61 below.
60. The SCRR should recognize fundamental student rights including: the right to free expression, association and mobility on campus; the right to participate in all University activities free of harassment, disruption, intimidation or discrimination	Agreed. See recommendation 61 below.

Recommendation	Response
on prohibited grounds; the right of freedom of thought, conscience, and inquiry; the right of freedom to engage and participate in dialogue and to examine diverse views and ideas; the right to a fair process in any University proceeding determining his/her rights and obligations; and a procedure to enforce such rights when violated.	
61. We recommend that the President create a procedure for consulting widely with students and members of the community with a view to developing the SCRR during the current academic year. This consultative process should be similar to the process that was utilized in developing the Student Code of Conduct, and involve students, student governments, staff and faculty. The revised SCRR should be broadly publicized to students through an annual awareness campaign so that they have an understanding of their rights and responsibilities.	Agreed. The Code of Conduct is scheduled to be reviewed this academic year. A panel consisting of representatives from YFS, GSA, student members at large, faculty, Associate Deans, and staff will be established by October 31 to consult with the community in the review of the Code and the development of a Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. The objective is to have a revised Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities in place by April 30, 2010.
62. We recommend that the Office of Student Conduct and Dispute Resolution be renamed to more accurately reflect the recommendations that are made by the Task Force.	Agreed. The President has instructed the VP Students to review this matter and determine the most appropriate name for the office.
63. The University administration, YFS and the GSA should consider the possibility of jointly establishing a student ombudsperson, who would have a mandate to advise and advocate for students in relation to academic and non-academic matters involving students. The student ombuds could be associated with an existing organization on campus, such as the Community Legal Aid Services Program (CLASP), and would prepare an annual public report on his/her activities. The student ombuds would report to a unit or body with representation from the administration, the GSA, and YFS.	We believe that it would be best to build upon the resources already available as student advocates in both the GSA and YFS. The VP Students will approach YFS and GSA to clarify the role of their student advocate and other legal services for students and to determine how best to promote awareness within the student community. Clarification of the role of CLASP and the support for students will be undertaken.

Recommendation	Response
(e) More effective communication with and between students	
64. Students do not receive enough information about matters of interest to them at York in ways that are easily accessible. We recommend that the University make greater and more effective use of online media (YouTube, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, RSS feeds, podcasts) to communicate with students. There should be more celebration of student achievements and acknowledgement of successes of all York community members and attention should be paid to the location of such information on the web.	Agreed. A working group has been established consisting of Communications, UIT, Assoc. Deans, students to examine how we can best communicate with students using social networking utilities, e.g. YouTube, iPhone applications.
65. We recommend the installation of electronic bulletin boards at central locations on campus that can be used to provide information to students regarding University activities or other matters of interest. We also recommend the provision of additional space on campus where students can post flyers or posters in accordance with the University's Postering Policy. In particular, we support the creation of one or more community "marketplace" bulletin boards in strategic locations on campus that will allow students and other members of the community to post information, notices, posters or other matters of interest.	Agreed. 1. Electronic Bulletin Boards A series of 25 electronic bulletin boards are in the process of being installed at various locations across campus. They will be fully operational by no later than October 31, 2009. 2. Marketplace bulletin boards The University will establish at least one such bulletin board in a central location on campus, in a manner to be determined in consultation with student groups.
66. We recommend a more visible and enhanced information booth in or near Vari Hall, in place of the current operation in the Vari Hall/Ross Building link, to provide information of interest to members of the community as well as visitors.	Student Community Leadership & Development will develop a plan to enhance the programming associated with the existing information desk in the Vari/Ross link.
67. Although there has been an increase in the posting of campus maps in recent years, this should be reviewed in order to assess whether additional maps should be provided in high traffic locations on campus, including in Vari Hall.	Agreed. During fall 2009, locations of map display signs will be reviewed by VP Finance and Administration staff and augmented as appropriate.

Recommendation	Response
68. In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate to make greater use of email to communicate with students on matters of particular concern. However we recognize that any increase in the use of email must be carefully considered in order to avoid overburdening students with information. The University should consider whether more targeted use of email to specific groups of students who may be interested in particular subjects could be utilized.	Agreed. Discussion of this will be linked to the working group of students, faculty and staff all forms of electronic and social media to communicate effectively with students. See recommendation 64 above
(f) Vari Hall	
69. Given the concerns over lack of student social and study space noted earlier, we recommend that the President establish a process that will result in better use of Vari Hall as a student space, both the rotunda as well as the balcony areas. The kinds of possible uses could include a student lounge(s), food service(s), cultural displays, information services, or a forum for debate and dialogue. In the event that any of these uses generates revenue, this revenue should be used to fund student activities, either in Vari Hall itself or elsewhere on campus. An opportunity should be provided to members of the community to propose and debate designs for the better use of the Vari Hall rotunda as a student space. Students and other members of the community should be provided with a transparent and open means (i.e., through an online voting procedure) through which they could review and select the preferred design(s) for making better use of Vari Hall for students. Recognition for the creator(s) of the winning design(s) should be provided.	Agreed. The President accepts the Task Force recommendation to establish a consultative process to result in better use of Vari Hall as a student space. The President has asked the Vice-President Students to undertake a consultative process with student groups and the general York community to review potential options for enhanced use of the space for students. Discussion on alterations to Vari Hall will be initiated in October through a student workshop designed to develop proposed designs, e.g. student lounge, study space, food service, group or cultural displays, workshop space, etc. Members of the community and other interested parties will have an opportunity to comment on these designs with a decision on a preferred approach occurring by the end of November.
70. An outdoor venue should be developed in a central area of the campus for demonstrations and other major public events that are inappropriate for an indoor venue. Such a space would be bookable through the TUUS policy. The University should work with students and student organizations such as the YFS and the GSA on the development of such a venue to ensure that it meets the needs of students.	Agreed. The development of a plan for an outdoor venue will be undertaken concurrently with the Vari Hall changes described above.

Recommendation	Response
(g) Better Enforcement	
71. There are significant safety and security concerns amongst many members of the York community, particularly students. As is indicated by a survey conducted by METRAC pursuant to the safety audit currently underway (the survey results having been shared with the Task Force), these concerns relate both to personal safety as well as community safety. A safe and secure learning environment is very important for our students, as well as other members of the community. We believe that these safety and security concerns need to be addressed through an enhanced role for York Security Services and, generally, more effective enforcement of University policies relevant to personal and community safety on campus.	Agreed. See recommendations 72-74 below.
72. As noted above, respect for the procedures around booking of space on campus is essential. Where violations of the TUUS policy occur, York University Security Services should inform those involved of the requirements of the policy, request that the activity cease and, if it continues, serve a notice of violation. These notices and a report should be filed with and followed up by the appropriate office.	Agreed. The President agrees that respect for the procedures around booking of space on campus is essential. Where violations of the TUUS occur, York University Security Services will inform those involved of the requirements of the policy, request that the activities cease and, if it continued, serve a notice of violation. These notices and a report will be filed with and followed up by the appropriate office. The President has asked the Vice-President Finance and Administration to work with Security Services as well as with the Vice-President Students to develop the appropriate procedures for this activity and to have this new process in place by no later than November 15, 2009.
73. The Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities needs to be enforced in a fair and transparent manner. York Security Services need to take a proactive approach in enforcing the SCRR. Where they observe an apparent violation of the SCRR they should request that the activity cease, serve a notice of violation (if appropriate or feasible) and, in any event, file a	Agreed. The President agrees that York Security Services should take a proactive approach in supporting the enforcement of the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. In cases where Security Services observe an apparent violation of the Code, the personnel will file the regular security reports on the incident and notify the Office of Student Community & Leadership Development. This office will review these reports in order to

Recommendation	Response
report on the incident with the appropriate office. These reports should serve as a sufficient basis to initiate enforcement proceedings under the SCRR.	determine whether to initiate further enforcement proceedings under the Code.
74. Consideration should be given to reducing the time required to adjudicate complaints under the SCRR, e.g. the hiring of trained, third party, external adjudicators to assist in complex, difficult cases where a timely response is important, or where concerns over impartiality and independence are particularly important. A communication/awareness plan needs to be developed to ensure that students are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the SCRR. Orientation programming in the Colleges could assist with the awareness campaign.	Agreed.
75. In the event that these changes do not adequately address the concerns regarding the proper enforcement of University policies, the possibility of seeking the appointment of York Security Services as Special Constables under the Police Services Act should be considered. Special Constables have the authority of a police officer, and can enforce federal and/or provincial laws, within a defined territory (such as a university campus). The benefit of conferring enhanced policing powers on a university security service is that it may reduce the need for municipal police officers on the University campus. The security services at a number of other Ontario universities, including the University of Toronto, the University of Western Ontario, and University of Waterloo, have been appointed as Special Constables.	The establishment and implementation of a university security model is a significant and complex matter. The University has over the past 10 years reaffirmed and focused considerable effort in its community-based approach to security, which works in a cooperative and complementary manner with Toronto Police Services. The University is not giving consideration to a security service based on appointment of Special Constables at this time
76. Consideration should be given to creating a student emergency response team on the York campus. The mandate of such a team would be to provide first-aid response on	The President will request that the appropriate areas of the University, led by the VPFA Division, review the feasibility of establishing such a team at York.

Recommendation	Response
campus, as well as to increase first-aid awareness within the York University community. The role and function of such a team should be explored with interested students and student organizations, the York University Security Services (where students already play an important role in campus security as Student Safety and Parking Officers) and draw on the experience with such response teams on other Canadian university campuses.	
77. As noted in an earlier section of this report, the free and open exchange of ideas is the lifeblood of the University. This requires protection for the expression of controversial, critical or unpopular ideas. It is inappropriate and unacceptable in a university to attempt to disrupt, shut down or prevent the free exchange of ideas deemed unpopular or unacceptable by some members of the community. Where disruptions involve members of the community, they should be dealt with through the applicable dispute-resolution processes in a fair manner, with a view to ensuring that such activities do not occur in the future. Where disruptions arise from activities of non-members of the community, the University should utilize the legal means at its disposal, including the Trespass to Property Act, to ensure that such individuals are not permitted on campus in the future.	Agreed. This recommendation is accepted and guidelines for implementing it will be created by the University Counsel.
(h) Organizational Change	
78. There is a perception that the University is not paying adequate attention to issues of relationships between ethic/cultural groups on campus. Creating an officer that is charged with issues around cultural awareness and anti-racism training would address this perception. The person should take a proactive approach and reach out to groups before conflicts	Agreed. The President accepts the recommendation that there needs to be a more proactive approach in fostering positive relationships between different groups on campus. The Centre for Human Rights has recently hired two Senior Advisors with a mandate to help anticipate and identify potential campus issues and trends as they arise through their education and outreach activities, as well as providing culture awareness and anti-racism training.

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arise. It would also provide us with an opportunity to continue to examine issues of cultural relationships on campus and to provide services to groups that require assistance (e.g., training for York Security Services). This officer could also support and initiate dialogue that promotes the sharing of ideas around challenging and sensitive issues.	In addition, these staff members are to promote a collaborative learning and team-based culture through role modeling and encouraging others. In this regard, the Centre is working on furthering its Diversity Peer Educational Team whereby students will be trained to deliver short educational sessions about diversity and inclusion to their peers in classrooms and other student settings.
79. Better horizontal coordination and communication needs to be established between the York University Security Services, the Centre for Human Rights, and the office of Student Conduct and Dispute Resolution (SCDR) especially when a member of the York community files a complaint. Consideration should be given to locating these offices in closer physical proximity to each other. The Centre for Human Rights needs to work more closely with Security Services to identify and/or prevent violations, as well as address those that may occur under the Ontario Human Rights Code.	Agreed. Steps have already been initiated to ensure that there is greater sharing and exchange of information between the groups. A Critical Event Support Group consisting of representatives of Security, Counselling, Critical Incident services, Residence Life and Student Community. Meetings with all interested parties will be undertaken to review the current level of communication and access to information
(i) External Groups	
80. Non-community members must more assertively be restricted from access to campus when they violate University regulations through first a written warning and, if there is a failure to comply, restrictions on access to on-campus events through the use of the Trespass to Property Act. We note that demonstrations by non-York community members should not be permitted on the York campus. These expectations and requirements with respect to non-York community members should be widely communicated and consistently enforced.	Agreed. Protocols will be developed by the University Counsel for implementing this recommendation.
(j) Education and Training	
81. The University has an obligation to foster an environment open to free inquiry and diversity of viewpoints amongst students and faculty. The University should undertake to provide greater awareness within the classroom of the	Agreed.

Recommendation	Response
importance of creating and maintaining "an environment where ideas are challenged, not attacked; an environment where every member of this community feels welcome and respected" (President's statement to Senate, June 18/09). This commitment to the free exchange of ideas in the classroom should be incorporated in TA training programs as well as new faculty day.	
82. We support anti-oppression training for all members of the community including students, faculty and staff to create greater awareness of issues of racism, gender and human rights issues generally on campus, and see the proposed human rights tutorial, as well as the Respect and Inclusivity training for Residence Dons and Orientation leaders, as important first steps. The Centre for Human Rights should work closely with other groups on campus, e.g. YFS, GSA, SC&LD, Colleges, Centre of Support of Teaching, Human Resources, and clubs to create greater awareness of the significance of these issues on campus.	Agreed.

The Centre for Human Rights has already partnered with the YFS last year and again earlier this September to deliver "Inclusivity Training" that included anti-oppression and diversity content and materials to Frosh leaders. The Centre is currently considering ways to include such themes in its proposed series of ongoing educational sessions that will be made available in the coming months. The Centre has been working on establishing these links during the past year with each of the named entities and already a number of additional and new educational activities have been/are being planned for the upcoming months and years.

Respect and inclusivity workshops were provided to all orientation leaders and residence dons in September. The Respect and Inclusivity Tutorial will be launched on October 5 to coincide with the Inclusion Day conference. First year students will be encouraged to take the tutorial this year and provide feedback. Discussions will also be undertaken to extend awareness to faculty and staff, e.g. new faculty day orientation. |