



Townhall
September 26th 2018 // 6 – 8 pm

6:20pm

1. Land Acknowledgement
2. Intro

Why did this townhall happen?

Students in the summer petitioned because a lot of mandatory courses were all on waitlists. Although, some are now resolved, there are still other issues.

3. Elections

Representatives and Hired Positions.

Campaigning period is happening right now. Voting is October 3 & 4th.

4. Budget

UofT – 12163 / Shift – 1348 / Clubs – 6742

For this year, more events such as CBXP / Refuel / VP Student Life – Formal & Reading Week Trip / Wellness – YOGA w GALDSU & Studio Dinners

5. Submitted Inquiries

The need for desks in the main hall. Students think the lap desks do not seem appropriate.

- Dean: Administrative difficulty. We were going to have a deposit originally. I agree that for people who want to use them we shouldn't be charging extra.



We'll do it in the way that people can sign them out and have their deposit returned.

- Andrea: I talked to a couple students. Would people want to own it or rent it? Some students would rather have a brand new one for hygiene reasons. We are actually taking a loss on the lap desks. Now, we're seeing students want to rent it, so we can change that too. Students can use it everywhere, and keep it in the lockers, or use it in the residences.
- Dean: We want to do a trial and error basis and see how it works out.
- AVSSU: Email – “opportunity to purchase”. Ideally there should be an integrated desk. How much did Daniels donate?
- Dean: Why do you ask?
- AVSSU: That money is the opportunity. We should be using that money to give better opportunities for learning. Using lap desks have a health risk – because of heat, electricity and also radiation. This is not ideal. I spoke with colleagues at Ryerson – they have classes at movie theatres, and have lap desks for free. But they have that because it is a movie theatre first, lecture hall second. Main hall, is a lecture hall first, and then event venue second. It's week 4, this could have happened in week 1. The way that the faculty handled it was not respectful.
- Dean: The lap desks was for just this semester. It was a failure on our end. But whether we have desks or not, it was not an oversight. It was a long discussion to actually not have the desks there. We want the hall to host a variety of functions and have more flexibility in moving the chairs and stacking them. It was also by instruction that the faculty is focused to design and literacy, and we spent a lot of money on media. We would rather have people listen to lectures rather than be on their laptop. For other disciplines, they're not as visually orientated, so I can see why the laptops and notetaking was focused. But for main hall, we generally want more visual content in the lecture halls, and the instructors are actually trying to get slides out before classes to reduce the notetaking during class. It has to do with the character of instruction.



- AVSSU: We have chairs with desks. It's unusual that we tell people that this is a school, but yet we don't have a proper lecture hall that has tables.
- Dean: There are many places that do not have desks in lecture halls. This is not the matter of resources, but rather the timing of the staff. It takes time to move those chairs and to reconfigure the hall. I want to stress that incredible resources have been put into the program and building.
- AVSSU: In a month, how many presentations do we have?
- Dean: Starting in the next month or so, we'll be starting to have presentations and lectures to the public. On average, there's 10 to 12 presentations. I agree the email is not well written, I apologize. In the near term, we'll do the lap desks, and we'll see how we can address it better.
- AVSSU: Also, then why are these tables so embarrassing to hide? Everyone knows this is a school, so the public would understand that desks could be in the hall.
- Dean: Main thing is that we want to reconfigure the space easily.
- AVSSU: Speaking of which, we had lectures in the movie theatre last year.
- Dean: We can talk in terms of registration and classes. We had more demand than expected. We don't have enough control over the building to finish everything in the building. We do apologize for that.
- Student: It seems that it's now a trend in my year, and it's been 3 years. We're getting emails about one thing, and the faculty doing something else. Can the faculty be more apologetic. Also, I just assumed that I would need to take notes in class. Can the prof tell us in advance that we don't really need to take notes or something then?
- Dean: We can do a survey.
- Jeannie: I'm not entirely sure what class don't need to take notes. Either way, we want students to take notes by hand. There was a research study saying that was better. We can figure out the lighting though.
- Dean: We are still troubleshooting the audio/visual in the main hall. Contractors was supposed to finish in January. Either way, I figured we could try to have the classes in the main hall anyways and see how well that works.



- AVSSU: Can we make a suggestion that desks can be put in the back of the main hall, so people can actually use desks if they feel strongly about it?
- Dean: That's fair, we'll consider that.
- Student: Is there any way the deposit could be waved? Not every student can afford it, even if it is a deposit. That \$30 could be someone's grocery for the week.
- Dean: The initial idea was that we would have a box, and people could just take the lap desk and return it into the box. This does seem reasonable. We just want some accountability with it. I don't know why people want to drag them around anyways, and I guess it can be an honour system. I think this is reasonable, that's what we'll do.

Comprehensive Studios

- Jeannie: First I want to say that we did work hard on this curriculum. The 4 streams are communicated clearly. We feel strongly about the liberal arts environment, and there actually are a lot of people in the Comprehensive Stream who deliberately chose it. We wanted people in that stream to go more broad into different areas of study. There is still design or tech content in the comprehensive stream. All of these are portfolio worthy for graduate studies. At the same time, I've heard from several people that the comprehensive stream seems to be restricting them from going into graduate studies. However, grad schools usually only have about 30% of people coming into graduate studies with a design degree.
- Dean: I want to emphasize that, I've received applications from this school and Harvard and only 1/3 of the students have a design background. There are people who can get into graduate school without studios. They look at your academic performance, and then separately look at your portfolio. Not necessarily just good building/design studios can get you into graduate school. The point of the comprehensive stream is to expand the paths that people can take. In our experience, this is a conscience decision.



- Comprehensive Rep: My two concerns, the studio culture should still be in a comprehensive stream. I was told the Design stream would be taking an additional studio.
- Jeannie: The studios are 361,362,364,380,381. We have the 4th year courses, those are both very much model and case study based. These are not the only courses, we have other courses that are very much worthy of putting into a portfolio.
- AVSSU: The strength of studios is that the TA to student ratio is low. But how would the pinups work in these other classes (like 365/465 etc.) if these classes don't have TA's?
- Dean: The one on one method makes it really hard to do above a certain size. It's also a luxury to have a TA in studios. However, you do learn from other students, and how they approach their projects in these larger classes.
- Student: Where would you go for advice and everything then, if we don't have TA's?
- Jeannie: You would go to the professor at office hours. I haven't heard any issues from students. The profs even appreciate it, because they can now know the students in the class. As well, what's great is that we have an entire floor of grad students. They can always give advice to you, and some of those grad students were probably your TA's in past courses.
- Student: I think you've underestimated how much people want to take certain classes. For the past years, I've been waitlisted for everything.
- Jeannie: We always monitor the waitlists. We go with the model and demand we have from previous years. If waitlists got excessive, then yes we would add classes if that was how it worked better.
- Dean: From our side, the students can register fairly late into the summer. We actually doubled the enrolment already. We don't want to be just grabbing people off the street to teach you. We also didn't get that much time to adjust. When we got the petition, even though we thought we modelled the demand properly, we tried to adjust to it. It's a complex structure.
- Student: Why was 383 switched after registration?



- Jeannie: We needed to find the right instructor for the course. The instructor couldn't accommodate 3 courses in a semester.
- Student: 383 tutorial is at the same time as our 381 studio, and they're both mandatory courses for the tech stream.
- Jeannie: I thought we had been careful about that, but we will adjust that.
- Student: Why is that 384/385/386/387 are all at the same time?
- Jeannie: Those courses are more advanced. We also don't want those courses to be too large. It also isn't mandatory to take one or the other.
- Dean: We wanted a system of more flexibility. And yes, there will be conflicts, but that's the nature.
- Andrea: I also want to add that, you have third and fourth year to complete your requirements for your program. You may find courses in conflict with one another, but you have 2 years to finish it all. You have the chance to explore other courses, and even courses outside our faculty. Now, we see that students want arch courses. But what we're seeing is that students want to take everything all in one year, but we do have more than enough space for everyone to take courses.
- AVSSU: Back to a couple points made before... I think we should look at communication aspects, especially on the academic website and everything.
- Andrea: We had a lot of workshops last year for program of studies. I think people had the hope they would get into one of the specialized streams, which was not the case. We want to get through to everyone in different ways. We have advising sessions. If there is another way for transparency between us and the students, we will consider that.
- Jeannie: Design/Build studios are also open to everyone. These have been very successful. We are looking into summer abroad studios that will be coming up online soon. This is also another opportunity for students to take some design studios.
- Student: How we're seeing it is that arch is like going into med school. It's like having studios/design skills as a pre-req to get us into grad school.
- Dean: We actually looked at UC Berkeley, their structure and program worked really well, so we want to work towards that.



- Student: Visual Studies classes. Will there be more open for the winter time? There's a long waitlist for some classes.
- Sue: We have added many more classes for Painting, Colour, Drawing etc. If people write specifically about their situation and what they're looking for, maybe it would be better.
- Student: We're looking at 200 series courses. Like digital photography, etc. these courses have 25 people
- Sue: These courses need to be this size. That's how it works. But we have constraints for adding more classes as well. But what are you looking for, just at your situation? Truthfully, we can only add so many more sections.
- Dean: I'm very happy people want to take VIS courses, but their program is actually much smaller. There is a faculty constraint. If more people overtime want to take these courses, this will give us the chance to grow our faculty. We want out instruction to be of good quality.
- Jeannie: One on one can be accommodated in VIS, but for arch it is definitely not possible because numbers are so much higher.
- Dean: We did expand VIS though. Students all over wanted to take courses there and we just had to say no. So we're trying to grow it, but in a quality and sustainable way.
- Student: Just to go back to studio courses. Comprehensive students would get the extra, more broad courses. But there are the options of summer studios. As an international student, it is a lot of money. As a student in comprehensive, is there something we can do to be in par with design and tech students?
- Dean: "On par" that's the issue. What do you think you're missing by taking a broader curriculum than other students?
- Student: People in design are learning more skills, and drawing techniques. For tech, they're using cnc machines. What I knew was when I came to Daniels there was a huge learning opportunity, but for someone who just started learning it seems like it's coming to a full stop. I don't feel like I'm learning anything new.



- Jeannie: In first and second year, you do take 4 studios. The first 2 years, you do learn a lot. In other courses, we don't teach skills. We don't do that. It's a great idea to enter competitions. You can use these skills to go into grad school, because you learn from them too. You can always reach out to an instructor to get advice or anything.
- Student: I feel like we weren't too prepared to take those at first. Even if we didn't have the same studios as design or tech, I would want a studio to learn more skills.
- Dean: The first 2 years of studios teaches you the skills and teaches you the language of architecture. I understand for some students this may be the case that they take very little from architecture studio, and then in the last year they'll take an intense studio. That's not our case, we don't do that here.
- Student: Would it be at all possible to have an open portfolio review for third and fourth years? Like maybe a workshop or something? Would you be able to organize that?
- Jeannie: This is organized by AVSSU usually, this has happened before. Jay Pooley has done it and so have I. We are willing to do that, or even reaching out to a past instructor would be great.
- Dean: We can talk about the best way to accommodate that.
- Student: We also can't see syllabuses before the start of the term. Would there be a way to have a more detailed description of the course?
- Jeannie: We did consider this, when issues came up and students did not feel that it was equal in all the streams. One thing we could do is that the professor can write a paragraph or so about what their class is about. The timing is hard though, because even I don't have any syllabuses or course descriptions in my hand right now for the winter term. Maybe even reach out to the specific course instructor when it comes up.
- Dean: Last Spring, that was a great session. There were more students, and we also got into the discussion about having their feelings about the classes they were in. There were students that were saying that design studios were taking way too much time. So I would very much like to find time to get as



many students as possible to take a temperature of how students are feeling. And not just the problems, but also the experiences that students are feeling in their course of study. It is helpful for me. So let's find a time to do that. I've heard some great comments last time, and we can do something about that.

- Jeannie: Sometimes people wait until course evaluations and sometimes it's already too late. We do want to hear things mid-way through to be able to correct things. We definitely can't keep track of everyone, so if students do come to us that is great. I did miss the 383 scheduling, and it's great that was brought up.

- Student: Or even in 4th year, could we get a course that would give an introduction to technologies, or like design concepts and such? Or even a workshop?
- Jeannie: We have classes like that already. Like 280, or 385 which is physical computing. These are electives.
- Student: I was restricted to hand modelling and hand drawings last year. I felt like that was restricting to me.
- Jeannie: I would disagree to that. It was a mistake that people were allowed to use laser cutters for 201 last year. It was supposed to be all hand modelling.
- Andrea: I think it's fair to say you're not disadvantaged to have hand drawings for grad school.
- Dean: Generationally, you all came up in a digital environment. Traditions are built into the software you're using now. There's not thing wrong with hand drawings.
- Student: In terms of the stream portfolios, how was it assessed?
- Jeannie: I'll be very honest, we reviewed them together, and the laser cut models were weaker. This can be agreed upon the committee. It was the student's evaluation that got students into the streams. We asked previous professors/instructors about their students, and their works. We saw which students would have more of an aptitude for the streams.



- Student: For me, my only option was to go overseas for University. I chose UofT because I saw the work that was posted, and I saw myself enjoying university here.
- Dean: And that's changed?
- Student: There's only so much I've learned in first/second year. It seems learning has stopped now, because of the lack of studio, and some courses seem very restricted.
- Dean: I think that is something you should get advice for, from Jeannie.
- Jeannie: Academic mentoring is definitely something we can do better.
- Student: I wanted to add, there was a lot of frustration coming from students going into tech/design streams. Coming into first year, we didn't see any rules. I think all the stress came in after first year, when we felt that not getting into the streams was like not getting the education that we chose.
- Dean: It's the same all over UofT. In Artsci, people don't necessarily get into their majors/discipline they choose in second year. It may even be worse for them, because their programs are so much smaller.
- Jeannie: Things that you're raising, maybe communication could have been better. This was clearly outlined in the academic calendar, and decisions were made for how we would evaluate students for the streams, and I believe these were communicated. This shouldn't have come as a surprise.
- Student: I just wish that we got to choose which stream we wanted.
- Dean: The selection process showed that if you had the aptitude for the stream.
- Andrea: We meet regularly with AVSSU, and we try to have transparency and openness. Do speak to AVSSU, or speak to me personally. AVSSU is there to keep it general or anonymous. We do speak on a regular basis though. If you don't speak, we don't know. We will work together with AVSSU, and maybe have a conversation about what we enjoyed and what we're doing wrong. Nothing is ever static, but not everything can evolve every year. This is only the third year of the program running. What I'm hearing is that students are doing incredible work, and students are getting accepted to tremendous



graduate programs all over the world. We also do have students going out of architecture for grad school, so you are open to many choices.

8:04pm