

Graduate House Residence Advisory Committee

Monday December 6, 2021, 3:00pm – 4:00pm
Zoom

1. Introductions

- a. Kamadchi Karunanandan, Assistant Dean, Residence Life & Communication (Committee Chair)
- b. David Kim, Dean, Residence & Director of Student Life
- c. Kevin Dancy, Director, Residence Operations
- d. Elizabeth Urbanowski, Manager of Finance, Administration, & Operations
- e. Adoni Jeyandran, Service Coordinator (Minutes)
- f. Matthew Metcalfe, Residence Advisory
- g. Muffazzal Mahmud, Graduate House Council Representative
- h. Boran Kumral, Graduate House Resident
- i. Shae-Linn Davies, Graduate House Resident
- j. Victoria Chiu, Graduate House Resident
- k. Joseph Kawalec, Graduate House Resident
- l. Fute Wong, Graduate House Resident
- m. Charlie Buck, Graduate House Resident

Absent:

- Guanglei Zhou
- Keturah Gray
- Bowen Chan

2. Kamadchi: Introductory Remarks by Chair

- a. Brief introductions by all members in attendance

3. Kamadchi: Terms of Reference & Purpose of Committee

- a. Bidirectional communication between residents and staff

4. Kamadchi: Graduate House

- a. Governance
 - i. Res Life Assistant Dean's role: oversee RAs
 - ii. Ancillary Services
 - David, the Dean of Residence and Director of Student Life, and Kevin, the Director of Residence Operations are involved at both Graduate House, Chelsea and Chestnut Residence
- b. Structure
- c. Elizabeth: Finance – Budget Presentation
 - i. Background to Occupancy Fees and Budget
 - Fiscal Year 2023; fiscal year ends in April/May

- Graduate House is self-funded – does not receive funds from the university. Occupancy Fees cover all costs of the operation
- Graduate House is a Non-Profit – Any surpluses are placed in a reserve that is used for upcoming projects (i.e., don't generate a profit)
- Graduate House is Accountable – Occupancy fee increases go through an approval process, which includes:
 - 1) GH Residence Advisory Committee
 - 2) GH Governing Body
 - 3) Service Ancillary Review Group
 - 4) University Affairs Board and Governing Council
 - Occupancy Fee Approval Timeline → planning in September, submit in November, approval in March
- More than a place to stay:
 - Programming/ Events
 - Award-winning facility

ii.

Budget FY2023

- Revenue
 - Majority of revenue is determined through occupancy fees
 - Typical year Fall/Winter fees are mid 90s in terms of occupancy fees, and summer is lower because we are underoccupied
- Other sources of revenue include:
 - Laundry facilities
 - Guest rooms
 - Other investments, commissions and other incomes (i.e., renting space in the building)
- Budget trends: Occupancy Revenue, year-over-year
 - Slowly recovering from COVID-19 impacts
- Expenses
 - Mortgage (largest budget item)
 - Couple years away from retiring mortgage which means you invest the money back into the building (i.e., upgrading kitchen and washrooms)
 - Mortgage cost remains consistent
 - Salaries rise over time
 - Utilities fluctuate (small saving from last year due to lower occupancy)
 - Now back to typical spending
 - Maintenance take-up the bulk of the expenses
 - Massive spike due to our building turning 20 years old which results in invests for major systems
 - Cleaning cost goes up over time

iii. Planning: Capital Expenses & Capital Renewal

- Laundry Room

- Maintenance needed for small protruding of about 5 inches with the new machines
 - Elevator Maintenance
 - Replacing the elevator ropes
 - Harbord Residence
 - Expected to open around 2024
 - Roof Replacement
 - Ongoing project; slight delay due to COVID
 - Last summer completed the south westside side
 - Next year: West side
 - Year after: remaining areas
 - Kitchen Renovation
 - Design and other related pushed to next fiscal year due to capacity of property management
 - Suite Refresh and Bathroom Renovation
 - Ongoing basis
 - 11 suites completed per year
 - 10-year cycle in which the whole building to be refreshed → consistent schedule
 - Last year only bathrooms were completed due to massive high in the construction industry
 - Industry standard in construction which has increased 20%
 - CCR Reno
 - Expected timeline of completion parallels with the new building renovation completion
 - Passageway between Grad House and neighboring building
 - Residence Furniture & Appliances
 - Upgrade suite chairs and lamps each year with suite renovation
 - Looking to replace all vacuums
 - Upgrading common areas for better seating
- iv. Funded and Unfunded Projects
 - Over 7 million dollars worth of projects
 - Funded projects (With budgeted cost):
 - Roof replacement
 - CCR renovation
 - Courtyard renovation
 - Annual suite refresh & bathroom renovation
 - Annual kitchen renovation
 - Residence furniture
 - Building door replacement
 - Bulletin Boards
 - Unfunded projects (With estimated cost):
 - Expanded suite renewal (2-piece bath, and shower)

- Currently carpet, paint and few other things have been replaced
 - Window replacement
 - EIFS; exterior sign of the building (accessible through the 8th floor)
 - Solar panel installation
 - Possibility of borrowing funding and pay over a period of 10 years (awaiting confirmation)
 - Lighting upgrades
 - Common spaces updating
- Occupancy Fees
 - Occupancy Fee Increase
 - 6% Increase last year (2020-21)
 - 3% Increase this year (2021-22)
 - 4.5% Increase next year (2022-23)
 - Small moderate increase over time

Q & A

- Chat Q: If Harbord Residence will look similar to Grad House and will it also be for grad students?
 - <https://urbantoronto.ca/database/projects/university-toronto-new-harbord-residence>
 - Architecture of the building will be influenced by factors such as sustainability, design committees continuity and consultation of the neighborhood association,
 - Students have been involved in consultation and committee meetings
 - Overall style of Harbord Residence will be different
 - Grad House: suite style plan
 - Harbord residence provides two types
 - 1) Nomads (micro apartments): single living space with bed, bath and kitchen
 - 2) Standard: two bedrooms with one shared bathroom
 - a. Own living space (i.e., bed, desk) and separate door entries for one shared washroom
 - Harbord Residence and Grad House will be connected by a bridge and underground tunnel will lead to a marketplace or dining hall
 - Available for residents, staff and UofT community members
 - Meal plan options
 - Residence will be for grad students only
 - Generally, 4 applications per bed so expanded residence will us meet the needs

5. Kamadchi: Residence COVID-19 Procedures

- Overview of current procedures at Grad House
 - Capacity limits: elevator, common room area, and service desk
 - Food drop off delivery system
 - Guest policy
 - Step 1. UofT students from other residents
 - Step 2. UofT community members (i.e., students, staff and faculty)

- Sanitizing materials
- Resident Advisors: online programming and abiding by safety measures for in-person events
- Dave: discuss decision making and how these policies come into place
 - Distancing, capacity, guests, and structural elements of the building (i.e., pixel glass or masks) → take directions from these various bodies: EHS, public health, ministry, occupational health
 - Waste water monitoring: <https://ehs.utoronto.ca/covid-19-wastewater-program-at-large-u-of-t-residences/>
 - Response mechanisms if they exposed, test positive and other related items
- Kamadchi: Is there any feedback, thoughts, feelings about the COVID-19 policies at Grad House
 - Resident: Happy with our Covid-19 policies in the building and waste water collection; makes them feel safe
 - Dave: Rapid screening test kit available at the Athletic Center
 - Kamadchi: Illness reporting form available on our website:
 - The appropriate parties will check with students and consult with EHS and occupational health
 - Resident: Winter semester reopening updates (i.e., what to expect)
 - Dave's response: Wait and see approach with the new variant with student travel and ability to come to campus. Not much, update on the delivery model for classes.
 - Kevin's response: take cue from Toronto public health to decide further updates
 - Resident: Feedback
 - how easy the move-in process (i.e. the contactless process, timeslots, and arrive with my own schedule)
 - Resident: Feedback
 - Move-in process was easy and food table is useful
 - Recommendation: helpers can come in multiple times a day to help with move-in

6. Residence Curriculum and Programming

- Kamadchi: GH Curriculum includes pillars that help identify what students attempt to learn when living at Grad House through programming or services → In total 7 pillars
 - Professional Development
 - Equity & Inclusion
 - Toronto Community
 - International and Global Perspectives
 - Health and Wellness
 - Academics
 - Gradhouse Community
 - *Use lens of loneliness to navigate the program
- Kamadchi: Has anyone engaged in programming, what has your experience been, any feedback for the team?
 - Resident: general comments is that grad students want to meet more people, having more activities with people interaction

- suggestions such as café crawl
 - to meet people physically and add more social aspect in programming
- Resident: build off resident's feedback
 - One of the reason's they applied for the job post
 - Many residents feel we can have more events per term
 - Examples: having an annual picture, documenting events through pictures, putting life into our social media account
- Kamadchi: RAs run 7 programs/month and SDAs run 1 program/month
- Resident:
 - #1 feedback from residents is people want to meet people
 - RAs try to combat loneliness but encounter difficulties in virtual setting
 - RAs trying to find a balance with what is safe and fun
 - RAs trying to implement programming with educational and social aspects

7. Kamadchi: Student Wellness

- Some of the initiatives that the residence life team has prioritized
 - All RAs have completed safe talk training; suicidal alertness that supports mental health
 - Training in mediation and conflict resolution
 - Kamadchi and Dave available for escalated issues and support
 - Our team works with multiple campus partners
 - On call support structure as well
- Resident: Feedback
 - de-stress kit was a good idea
 - limited number of kits available
 - Happy with the follow up resources shared
 - Kamadchi's response: Over 130 residents signed up for the de-stress kit
- Resident: Feedback
 - Flu shots email was beneficial

8. Next Meeting – January

- a. Doodle Poll to be sent out after meeting

9. Other Business

- a. Include Microsoft Teams link for questions

10. Kamadchi: Closing remarks