

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM45.13	ACTION			Ward:All
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Closure of the Cities Centre at the University of Toronto - by Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Mike Layton

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Mike Layton, recommends that:

1. Recognizing the importance of academic research on urban issues and the interplay between the community sector, academia, and public policy, City Council formally express its desire to see strong, funded and interdisciplinary research centre in urban studies, such as the Cities Centre, continue at the University of Toronto.
2. City Council forward this Motion to the President of the University of Toronto, its Governing Council, as well as the Faculty of Arts and Science Council.

Summary

On December 2, 2013, a public announcement was made regarding the closure of the Cities Centre at the University of Toronto.

In the news bulletin, senior advisors of the Cities Centre stated that the University administration decided to close the Centre as it now exists, which is a stand-alone centre at 455 Spadina Avenue. The Cities Centre consists of a director, administrative staff, offices for university researchers, work spaces for visiting scholars and students, a library, and meeting rooms. The Centre also has an explicit mandate to link scholars and institutional partners both on and off campus.

Although efforts are underway to preserve some of the Centre's considerable urban research heritage, the loss of valuable services and crucial networks linking academic researchers and the broader community of professionals and policy-makers both in Toronto and globally, is a devastating one.

The Cities Centre, and similar research centres, provide critically important research that supports good public policy at Toronto City Hall. The Cities Centre's work highlighted the growing importance of urban centres, and provided critical academic research on urban issues.

Numerous reports, including the groundbreaking "Three Cities within Toronto" by Professor David Hulchanski came out of the Cities Centre, and drove much good work within the City.

This Motion expresses Council's regret at this decision by the University of Toronto, and its desire to see a strong urban studies program and research on cities continue at the University. The closure of the Centre is a step in the wrong direction.

(Submitted to City Council on December 16 and 17, 2013 as MM45.13)

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM45.13