More than 200 people attended the U of T tsunami memorial service in the Hart House Great Hall on January 10. The sombre service was underscored by the Leslieville Public School Gamelan Ensemble, which performed traditional Indonesian music. Outside the Hall, attendees were able to sign a condolence book for the Kwans, a family of a U of T student still missing following the tsunami.

One of the speakers at the service, interim U of T president Frank Iacobucci, praised the university community for its quick response to natural disaster situations recently, including the earthquake in Iranian city of Bam, which killed tens of thousands in late 2003.

Geoff Wichert, coordinator of the Campus Chaplains’ Association, spoke about the impact of the disaster on the Canadian conscience.

“Pain and suffering are mysteries, things of awe that cannot be fully understood,” says Wichert. “Things can be learned from this disaster though. To a remarkable degree, we have isolated ourselves from our own mortality through our dependence on our sophisticated medicine and technology... we can learn humility from this and recall how vulnerable we are.”

Wichert encourages people to take this as an opportunity for introspection, “Even if you are not a member of a faith community, I encourage you to look in your own spirituality... allow the tragedy to deepen your compassion,” he says. “May we be open to the spiritual dimension of our world.”

Both Provost Vivek Goel and Professor Michael Connely encourage the university community to tap its intellectual resources. “This is a time to think of future action, of what we can do to try to prevent this sort of thing from happening again,” says Connely.

Most of the time the phrase ‘global community’ is used it is reference to trade; I think this ever will help to expand our understanding of the world,” says Goel. “In the long term, the university is contemplating further academic exchange to increase our ties to this region.”

“This university should use its expertise to develop an efficient and cost-effective early warning system for the Indian Ocean, perhaps one at least as sophisticated as the Pacific system,” he says.

The lack of seismic sensors in the

Students active in tsunami fundraising

by Nick Kozak

The tsunami disaster of Southeast Asia has seen a wave of reaction from around the world.

Many U of T clubs organized fundraisers during the first week of this semester with bake sales, lunches and other activities to encourage students to donate to the relief effort.

The “Metropolis: Global Cities Anthropology” class held a bake sale in the Sidney Smith lobby, raising nearly $1000. Third-year student Joshua Barker, who participated in this fundraiser, said that the Anthropology Student Union will raise this total to about $1350.

Adam Romanov, a first-year Trinity student is organizing a large-scale fundraiser in the form of a raffle. Prizes range from dinners for two at Le Papillon and Flow restaurants to a night of free drinks for the winner and five friends.

The event, called the Students’ Tsunami Disaster Fundraiser (soon online at: www.tsunamidisasterfundraiser.com), Romanov hopes will raise $10,000.

Indian Ocean meant that people in the affected countries had no forewarning of the tsunami.

An early warning system for the Pacific Ocean was developed in the late 1960s. Columbia seismologist John G. Armburst said a warning system could have provided, “up to two hours warning in Sri Lanka and hours warning for the east coast of Africa.”

Several diplomatic guests were also at the event, including C. S. Pooloorasingham, the consul general of Sri Lanka, Soehars Boedi Joewono, the consul general of Indonesia, and Richard C. Meech, honorary consul general of the Royal Thai Consultate. Several representatives of the Toronto District School Board were also present.