



# University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE FUND: 2008- 09 INITIATIVES

### Student Study Space and Facility Enhancement:

#### **Brennan Hall Enhancements, St. Michael's College**

Brennan Hall is a large room with significant capacity that is used relatively infrequently for large lectures at the current time. The Student Experience Fund will enable Brennan Hall to be renovated with upgraded lighting and seating. The improvements will enable the East Campus literature and language programs and St. Michael College programs to provide undergraduate students with needed large classroom spaces and meeting places.

#### **Classroom and Exam Technologies Improvement, University of Toronto at Mississauga**

The Student Experience Fund will support technology upgrades in UTM's instructional facilities. Audio upgrades to five 100+ seat classrooms and electronic/media upgrades in thirteen classrooms will make a significant impact on UTM's ability to keep up with faculty and student demand for such services. The Fund will be used to implement an automated student exam attendance tracker for term tests.

#### **Cognitive Science Program Laboratory Upgrade, University College**

The Cognitive Science Program established its laboratory in 2005. Two lab-centered courses were introduced to the program, resulting in increased student demand for laboratory facilities. It is critical for students of Cognitive Science to build simulations and robots that embody theoretical ideas, run psychological experiments and perform statistics to test hypotheses, and investigate the practical problems that arise in bringing theory to practice. The Student Experience Fund will enable upgrading of the laboratory such that it will meet current critical teaching needs for 200 students in the program and provide necessary infrastructure for inquiry-based learning and independent research in Artificial Intelligence programming, cognitive modeling, psychological experimentation, and robotics construction.

#### **Engineering Computer Facility Application Environment, Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering**

The Engineering Computer Facility was created to provide a computing environment for engineering students that allows them to access the many specialized, expensive and proprietary software packages they need to complete course requirements. Both the Faculty's Strategic Plan and a 2006 Task Force on Computing (including a student survey) highlighted a growing need for a higher level of accessibility to existing computer facilities both in and out of the labs. Student Experience Funds will support the acquisition of software and hardware so that students can connect remotely to do their course work from any internet site (home/residence/dorm) or from a wireless laptop connection.

#### **Engineering and Computer Science Library Space Renovation Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering with support from the Library and the Faculty of Arts and Science Computer Science Department**

The Engineering and Computer Science Library serves the engineering and computer science community of approximately 5,000 undergraduate students, 1,600 graduate students and 290 faculty members. Each day 1,300 people, mostly undergraduates, use the library. Student Experience Funds will be used for library renovations to address identified needs for increased quality study space and seating, flat panel monitors, book shelves and improved access to reference services. Four group study tables with seating and new lounge seats will be installed.

### **Human Biology Program: Updating Classrooms, Faculty of Arts and Science**

A significant number of students will benefit from the renovation of New College rooms W1523 and W1524 into electronic classrooms. Student Experience Funds will transform these existing spaces into usable, safe classrooms that accommodate different pedagogical teaching styles. The renovation will enable rooms currently unable to support AV usage into electronic classrooms appropriate for both small (25 student) and medium-sized classes (70 students), as well as seminars and panel discussions. The increased height in these rooms will enable the Office of Space Management to mount data projectors and install standard podiums which otherwise would not have been possible.

### **Multi-faith Space Increase, University of Toronto at Mississauga**

Student Experience Funds will assist in securing additional space for worship and related activity for four faith-based student communities at UTM over several years. Six student groups, working with UTM administration and Office of Student Affairs, have come up with a plan to support the needs of faith-based student communities for the next three to four years. Existing spaces such as classrooms, seminar rooms, lounge spaces, the multi faith centre, and Spigel Hall will be scheduled to provide maximum access for prayers and drop-in worship activities.

### **New College Student Centre, Wilson Hall**

New College is home to various course unions and student associations connected with its wide range of academic programs. It hosts a number of campus wide student organizations. These groups are located across the college's three buildings and, in many cases, share office space. The Student Experience Fund will support the refurbishment of a centrally-located section of Wilson Hall in order to create an integrated Student Centre where course unions, associations, and service groups can come together as a community. Six existing student offices will be refurbished, four new ones will be created, and a meeting room within a contiguous space will be built in the subterranean level of Wilson Hall. An existing classroom, now used as a Math Aid Centre, will be improved so that it can function as a multi-use facility.

### **Strength Conditioning Centre, Faculty of Physical Education and Health**

The Faculty of Physical Education and Health provides a variety of strength conditioning programs. The Strength Conditioning Centre (SCC) is open daily for approximately 85 hours per week. In 2006-07, 79,431 individual visits were made to the SCC by students, staff and community members. SCC is also an academic lab for the undergraduate Physical Education and Health program, and many students are employed there to conduct personal training sessions for other students. During peak periods, many students are unable to access the SCC as it frequently reaches capacity. Student Experience Funds will enable the SCC to more fully accommodate students by expanding the space and supporting acquisition of new equipment. The SCC will also focus on accommodating a greater diversity of users and encouraging more women to work on their strength fitness.

### **Student Life Services, St. George Campus**

The Student Life portfolio is in the process of implementing its reorganization recommendations. The Student Experience Fund allocation will provide an impetus to encourage units to work collectively towards the primary goal of enhancing the student experience. Projects will be developed during the 2008/09 year that involve new and creative spaces for student activity in the areas within the interprofessional cluster (Health cluster) and the Career Centre.

### **Study Space, University of Toronto at Mississauga**

UTM students have identified the shortage of study space as their principal concern. With support from the Student Experience Fund, six sites located in four buildings (South, North, Communication Culture Technology, Kaneff and the Student Centre) will be modified to accommodate more students engaged in private study, group study and conversation. Programming in these spaces will be addressed with a view to considering them as extensions of the Hazel McCallion Academic Learning Centre and to aid in student transition and retention.

## **Student Services and Co-curricular Support:**

### **A-MAZE: Active Mapping of A-Z Engagement, University of Toronto at Scarborough**

The Student Experience Fund will support Student Affairs and the Academic Advising and Career Centre to conduct a two-year pilot e-portfolio and co-curricular record-keeping system for all students at UTSC. The project, entitled A-MAZE: Active Mapping of A-Z Engagement, will enable students to navigate, manage, track and communicate their university experience. A-MAZE will serve as: an e-portfolio to house artifacts of students' learning and engagement on and off campus; a co-curricular record to capture students' engagement in extra- and co-curricular activities on campus throughout their university program; and a source of on-line learning tools for academic, co-curricular and career/employment purposes. This project will be scalable and will be primarily developed using Blackboard.

### **Get Started, University of Toronto at Scarborough**

Get Started is a pilot project that was started in 2006 by Student Affairs to promote student engagement, retention and success from the earliest stage of the student experience. Get Started is open to all incoming first year students to help them begin to take responsibility for their own academic and career opportunities. It has attracted over 50% of the incoming first year class to a series of one-day events beginning in the early summer following acceptances to the university. In surveys conducted following participation, students reported that they feel engaged and welcomed into the campus community by faculty and staff and by senior students who guided them through the program. The Student Experience Fund will extend the pilot for one more year, at the end of which Student Affairs will conduct a full assessment and submit a proposal for the future plans.

### **Social Justice Education - Co-curricular opportunities to complement academic programming, Student Life, St. George Campus**

One of the recommendations of the 2007 Review of Hart House was that: "The Warden should develop, maintain and strengthen active, ongoing connections with divisions, services and programs whose interests and focus parallel those of Hart House". Through the Student Experience Fund, a dynamic partnership between the New College's Equity Studies Program and Hart House will be established to promote social justice education and social justice co-curricular opportunities across the St. George Campus. New College's Equity Studies program will be the academic home of this collaboration, and Hart House will provide the co-curricular laboratory for four initiatives: an equity film project; disability studies internships; HIV/AIDS education projects; and food security internships. The fund will be used to purchase equipment, develop educational materials and establish and nurture community connections.

### **Statistics Exam Preparation Tutorials, Faculty of Arts and Science**

The undergraduate actuarial science program in the Department of Statistics had over 280 program students in 2006. The program is designed, in part, to provide training for students who plan to pursue a career in the actuarial profession. The Department of Statistics has coordinated with the actuarial student club to arrange for graduate students in the Department to provide intensive tutoring to small groups of students to assist in preparation for some of the professional exams. The accreditation requirements set by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries include a series of professional examinations that must be successfully completed in order to attain the designation Fellow of the Canadian Institute of Actuaries. Both the graduate and undergraduate students are enthusiastic about such a program of intensive tutoring. The Student Experience Fund will provide the financial support to enhance this initiative.

## **Academic Programs and Research:**

### **Academic Skills Developmental Tutorials, Classical Civilization Program, University of Toronto at Mississauga**

The reduction of the Ontario secondary school program from five to four years has resulted in students entering university programs less well-trained both in basic academic skills (such as note taking, reading comprehension, writing, organization of material, etc.) and in the more specialized skills required for serious study of a classical civilizations. In co-operation with UTM's Academic Skills Centre and the Library, the Student Experience Fund will support the development of an organized tutorials program led by well-trained graduate students in each selected classical civilization courses. The tutorials will be designed to focus specifically on the development of academic skills (both generic and more specific to the needs of this discipline). These foundational skills will have a significant positive effect on the student academic experience throughout all levels of this program and beyond.

### **Archeological Field and Laboratory Equipment, Faculty of Arts and Science**

Field training is an essential aspect of studying archaeology. The Archaeological Centre is a newly established unit with the mandate of integrating and enhancing archaeological research and training across the University. The Student Experience Fund will enable the Archeological Centre to expand programs and develop a local field school with field equipment that will be available for all U of T field schools. Students participating in the first year of the field school will be involved in the initial stages of considering the campus from an archaeological perspective. This will include a variety of methods of archaeological survey and testing for the presence of archaeological deposits. Students will train in critical aspects of archaeological practice including surveying, soil analysis and description, and photography.

### **Cell and Systems Biology: Modern Experimental Approaches to Animal Physiology, Faculty of Arts and Science**

An important priority for Cell and Systems Biology is to provide undergraduate students with opportunities to develop strong laboratory skills. BIO252Y is required for 18 degree programs and serves as a prerequisite for 13 courses and currently serves approximately 500 students. The Student Experience Fund will support the purchase of computers, new equipment for electrophysiological and blood oxygenation experiment systems that will have an immediate impact on the learning experience of the students.

### **Classics Intro Course Enhancements, Faculty of Arts and Science**

In order to strengthen the student academic experience in its two foundational courses, the Student Experience Fund will provide seed funding for additional tutorial support in the Department of Classics. Over 200 students partake of two fundamental classics courses, and the benefits of small class tutorials would be immediate.

### **Curriculum Innovation Initiatives, University of Toronto at Scarborough**

As part of its Strategic Plan and the development of its degree level expectations, UTSC will be engaged in a campus-wide review of its curricula during 2008-09. The Student Experience Fund will enable the establishment of a Curriculum Innovation Initiatives Fund to support curricular renewal. UTSC will support pilot projects and studies, and proposals for new courses that are well-aligned with the campus strategic goals and principles articulated in degree level expectations.

### **Digital Imaging and Sound Lab for Theatre Design and Computer Assisted Drafting and Lighting Design, University College Drama Program**

University College Drama Program's Production Course and Design Course teach fundamentals in theatre production and stage design using standard methodologies. The Student Experience Fund will enable the program to purchase modern computer related design programs that are now industry standards. Four digital audio and imaging computer stations - three for the Design Studio and one for the Playhouse booth - will be purchased in order to provide students with current professional tools. Hardware and software will be purchased as will a new high definition digital camcorder for live performance playback. Additional computer equipment will enable students to present their work in locations other than the Playhouse.

### **Forensic Science Professional Practice and Research Enhancement, University of Toronto at Mississauga**

The Forensic Science Program (FSC) at UTM has been the top-ranked Forensic Program in Canada since its inception in 1996. The program is interdisciplinary, servicing its own students, as well as interested students in related fields. The demand for admission to the program and to its courses far exceeds the capacity. The Student Experience Fund will support increased course offerings and research opportunities in courses grounded in geospatial data acquisition and analysis. A laboratory preparation and storage area, in addition to the purchase of new equipment stands and a total instructional station will increase the productivity and professional practice of students in the use of industry standard equipment.

### **Managed Ecosystems: Field-Based Student Research on the University of Toronto at Mississauga Campus**

To enhance students' involvement in field-based environmental research on campus, the Student Experience Fund will enable UTM to upgrade equipment for fieldwork and laboratory follow-up studies across the UTM campus. Student reporting, presentation, outreach, and database management structures will be set up so that Geography, Environment, and Biology students can carry out independent and course-based research on natural and engineered environments, emerging environmental technologies, and new environmental management approaches. Students will be able to share their research results with other UTM students through conference-style research presentations. Student researchers will design evaluation and monitoring protocols in the thematic areas of Green Roofs, Stormwater Management, and Grassland Management. Student Experience Funds will enhance opportunities for student involvement in the Ecological Footprint, and Weather and Air Quality Monitoring projects. At least 200 students per year will be directly involved in projects and assignments, while more than 1500 students will benefit from presentations, outreach, and greater awareness of the campus environment. All of the initiatives represent a valuable opportunity for students to become involved in real-world, practical research projects that will enhance their skills and knowledge, contribute to progress in environmental technology research, and enable students to provide valuable input regarding campus management decisions.

### **Research Design and Statistics - Computerized Instructional Modules in Psychology, University of Toronto at Mississauga**

Statistical understanding is a critical skill for reading any journal article in the field, and is a necessary requirement for every student involved in the collection and analysis of data. With the support of the Student Experience Fund, new computerized instructional modules will be developed for Research Design and Statistics in Psychology. The modules are critical in enabling students to better understand the basic principles of statistics by providing hands-on experience with the application of statistical techniques to problems and research in psychology. The modules will be completed by over 400 students each year, providing benefit during their learning while enrolled in the specific courses, and will carry through to the research component of all subsequent psychology courses.

### **Research Opportunities for Undergraduate Students, University of Toronto at Scarborough**

The Student Experience Fund will support the establishment of an Undergraduate Research Opportunities Fund so that students can fully engage in research activities at UTSC and consider graduate studies and research careers in their field. Two types of research support will be available. *Research Opportunities in Courses* will provide funds to students in senior research courses to cover research costs. The decision to award these funds will be based on student proposals and research needs that are supported by their faculty supervisors. *Summer Research Awards* will be granted to students in the Social Sciences and Humanities through a competitive process based on a student applicant's grades, letters of recommendation and career plans. Students will be required to submit a report at the end of the session and present their findings orally to peers.

### **Sociology First Year Course Survey, Faculty of Arts and Science**

The Department of Sociology will make use of the Student Experience Fund to study its first year curriculum in order to allow students greater flexibility to pursue topics of interest and provide greater control over their university experience. Two twenty-minute specialized online surveys will be designed to collect data from the entire cohort of first year students enrolled in SOC101Y in fall and in December 2008. The Department's aims are to determine how first year students will be distributed over different curricular pathways if permitted the option of taking multiple half courses, the topics likely to attract most

interest, and how students' performance in the SOC101H course, along with their intended majors, are likely to affect enrollments. Data from these surveys will provide vital information for a successful redesign of the first year curriculum.

#### **Teaching Lab: Dissecting and Compound Microscopes, University of Toronto at Mississauga**

The training of students in the use of modern microscopes is fundamental to the Biology Program at UTM. The use of modern dissecting and compound microscopes greatly enhances the students' learning as most courses with laboratory components require the study of structure and process with these instruments. The Student Experience Fund will support upgrading of the labs with new dissecting and compound microscopes allowing more than 700 first-year biology students (and more than 100 summer students) to take advantage of the training opportunities of a modern laboratory.

#### **Teaching and Learning Initiatives, University of Toronto at Scarborough**

The Student Experience Fund will allow expansion of the UTSC English language development through the expansion of its Communication Café into summer sessions, increasing support for English as second language students, increasing the hours of the Writing Centre, and enhancing mathematics tutoring through expansion of the Math and Statistics Aid Centre. Through innovative mechanisms such as the Virtual Tutor Service and Supplemental Instruction sessions, UTSC will provide peer facilitated academic support to students in challenging courses. Undergraduate students will be selected and trained as facilitators to get students attending the study group actively engaged with course materials.

#### **Women and Gender Studies Practicum: Amplifying the Experience, University of Toronto at Mississauga**

The Women and Gender Studies practicum provides the opportunity for advanced students to engage directly in, study, and critically reflect on feminist activism (or work for the betterment of women) outside of the university classroom. While the experience gained by the practicum students is documented through core course evaluations and an end-of-term report-back session, the Student Experience Fund will enable the enhancement of the student learning experience through an organized integrated program that facilitates the dissemination of the practicum experience through other program core courses. The Student Experience Fund will increase the awareness of the learning experience of the practicum among UTM students and the broader community; enhance the pedagogical and theoretical contribution of students by providing an opportunity to present their experience in other courses; and increase the awareness of the professional possibilities open to graduates of the program.

#### **Writing for Research Initiative: Third Year Classes, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts and Science**

Philosophical research involves individual investigators working through their ideas in written form. Eliciting feedback from one's target audience is an essential component of the process. In professional philosophy, this feedback often takes the form of referees' reports from journals and book publishers. But even before this stage, philosophers will share their work with trusted readers for feedback. Rewriting an essay or longer work in light of such comment is one of the main sources of progress and development in philosophical thinking. The Student Experience Fund will enable students to partake of this iterative process of writing-feedback-rewriting that is essential to philosophical research through The Writing for Research Initiative. The *W4R* Initiative will increase the writing activities for over 520 students. Students will be required to submit draft papers and then rewrite their drafts in light of detailed feedback from teaching assistants. The Department will work the Woodsworth Academic Writing Centre to help instructors include increased research-writing activities in their courses and to train TAs in giving useful feedback to students.

## **Student Community Engagement / Outreach and Research:**

### **Student Events, University of Toronto at Scarborough**

The Student Experience Fund will enable three events on Scarborough campus that will enrich the undergraduate student experience. The *Music Performance/Lecture Series* will provide undergraduate students with the opportunity to engage with some of the finest professional musicians from the Greater Toronto Area, in the form of a monthly noontime performance or lecture. The series will have immediate relevance to both academic and performance-oriented Visual and Performing Arts courses at UTSC. Students will be able to interact with performers through questions, dialogue and discussion as an integral part of each event. *Food for Thought* will be an open, public program that invites students, faculty, staff and members of the community for monthly dinners in the heart of UTSC campus. A collegial and convivial atmosphere will be created in which students, faculty, staff and community can meet outside the classroom to cement ties between the university and the surrounding community while introducing some major themes in humanities scholarship, including identity, community and migration. *Fusion Night* will offer the UTSC community an opportunity to showcase its multi-faceted diversity. This year-opening show will include performances, exposés, information, discussions and interaction at all major locations on campus. Content will include research as well as student achievements and initiatives. It will provide opportunity for residents, alumni, first-year and prospective students and members of UTSC to explore this diversity.