

# Towards 2030: A Long-term Planning Framework for the University of Toronto

## Introduction

Approaching its second centennial, the University of Toronto is respected as one of the foremost research-intensive universities in the world. The University has educated hundreds of thousands of outstanding individuals who have gone on to leadership roles around the world and in every walk of life. Their success speaks both to the quality of the students who choose to attend the University of Toronto, and the rigour of our varied educational offerings. As well, the University of Toronto enjoys a global reputation in multiple fields of scholarship. This in turn is a credit to the excellence of past and present faculty and staff across all three campuses and in partner institutions, not least the great academic hospitals affiliated with the University.

While the University's strengths are remarkable, our institution is confronted with serious financial stresses, along with rapid changes in the landscape of higher education and advanced research, regionally, nationally, and globally. In response, during 2007-08, the University engaged in a long-term planning process termed '*Towards 2030*'. The goal of the process was to determine how the University might build on its past achievements and continue to excel in the varied dimensions of its mission.

This *Framework* summarizes broad strategic directions arising from the *Towards 2030* process. Given the uncertainties inherent in a long-term planning horizon, these strategic directions are necessarily general in nature, without specific milestones or delineation of tactics. Further, the adoption of strategic directions at any point in time cannot pre-empt the prerogatives of successor administrations or, *a fortiori*, future Governing Councils, to move in directions more suited to future circumstances as they arise. This *Framework* will therefore guide the University's upcoming academic planning cycle, and be reviewed thereafter as regards its continued applicability.

## The University's Distinctive Role

- The University of Toronto will continue to be distinguished by a research-intensive culture, the academic rigour of its educational offerings at all levels, and the excellence of its faculty, staff and students across three distinctive campuses and in many partner institutions.
- The University will enhance its global reputation for the generation of new ideas and transformative discoveries. At the same time, the University will engage all categories of faculty with its teaching mission, and maintain a pedagogic emphasis on nurturing inquiring minds and building the creative and analytical capacity of its students at all levels.
- The University benefits greatly from the dynamism inherent in the differing disciplinary orientations of our faculty and students. The University accordingly re-affirms the commitment of the 1993 *Statement of Institutional Purpose* to maintenance of a breadth of disciplines.

- The University contributes meaningfully to the prosperity of the Toronto region, Ontario and Canada. In addition, the University's students, faculty and staff engage in a range of activities that help build successful communities locally, nationally and globally. In making its case for public and private support, the University will profile and celebrate these social and economic impacts in the years ahead.

## **Tri-Campus Issues**

- The University of Toronto has evolved into a *de facto* tri-campus system. Both the University of Toronto at Mississauga [UTM] and the University of Toronto at Scarborough [UTSC] are now larger than many independently-chartered universities in Canada and the USA, and have developed unique programs and identities. The University accordingly affirms the importance of campus-specific planning.
- Rapid evolution to three independently-chartered universities is neither feasible nor desirable. The University will support the development of three differentiated campuses under the Governing Council and a single University-wide administration with a strong overall identity and overarching academic standards.
- Over the next two decades, the University will sustain inter-campus collaboration while enabling strategic tri-campus differentiation of academic programs. Campus-specific autonomy will be supported insofar as it does not compromise efficiency or academic quality.
- The University's global reputation and ability to recruit outstanding faculty and students owes much to its tri-campus graduate departments. The University affirms the importance of tri-campus graduate collaboration and university-wide oversight of any campus-specific graduate offerings. Any doctoral-stream program wherever headquartered will be open to qualified colleagues from other campuses.
- The University specifically acknowledges the aspirations of colleagues at UTM and UTSC for expansion of the numbers of on-site graduate students as well as campus-specific programs and specializations.

## **Enrolment Plans and Institutional Balance**

- No enrolment decisions will be taken without careful consideration of the long-term implications for the University's self-defined role and aspirations. Enrolment planning will also consider all relevant financial implications and potential impacts on both the quality of the student experience and the quality of working life for faculty and staff.
- The University will continue to work closely with the Government of Ontario and a range of other post-secondary institutions, both universities and colleges of applied arts and technology, to meet anticipated changes in demand for university places in the Toronto region, across Ontario, and elsewhere in Canada
- The University's enrolment strategies will reinforce its unique strengths in research and scholarship, as well as our acknowledged leadership position in graduate and second-entry professional education provincially and nationally. The University will also

intensify its efforts to translate existing and future research advantages into initiatives that enrich undergraduate education. In this regard, as per the *Statement of Institutional Purpose*, the University affirms its commitment “to ensuring that the teaching and counselling of undergraduates is a normal obligation of every member of faculty.”

- The University acknowledges that UTM and UTSC envisage growth in a range of professional masters programs, along with doctoral-stream expansion in selected disciplines. A presumptive goal is that, by 2030, on-site graduate enrolment will grow to comprise 10-15% of the total campus population at each site. For undergraduate enrolment, the presumptive expansion across the two campuses combined is approximately 5000 places for students. Approval of these enrolment plans for the east and west campuses will depend not only on available capital and operating funds, but on campus-specific academic plans and the numbers of appropriately-qualified students.
- The University acknowledges the goal of modest reductions in undergraduate enrolment on the St. George campus, along with continued growth in graduate enrolments. A presumptive goal is that, by 2030, on-site graduate enrolments will comprise at least 35% of the student head-count on the St. George campus, through a blend of modest reductions in undergraduate enrolment and growth in graduate numbers. Approval of these enrolment plans for the St. George campus will again depend on available capital and operating funds, as well as campus-specific academic plans and the numbers of appropriately-qualified students.
- The University will continue to serve a growing population of mature learners who participate in a wide range of programs. Future enrolment planning will extend beyond traditional student constituencies to embrace this diverse group.

## Capital Plans

- The University of Toronto will focus on the re-development and enhancement of its three primary campuses and will not develop a fourth campus or major satellite operations.
- The University’s capital investments over the last decade have transformed the interior and exterior environments on all three campuses – an important factor in a positive experience for students, staff and faculty. Future capital plans will continue to focus on how changes in the built and natural environment of the University can enhance our students’ academic and co-curricular experiences.
- Past capital developments have led to increased levels of debt and associated debt servicing costs. The University will advocate for more complete coverage of the capital costs of academic facilities by the Province of Ontario, and pursue federal and provincial funding, philanthropic support, and private partnerships as needed to enhance its built environment.
- Notwithstanding extensive capital investments, all three campuses of the University are currently below the space standards established by the Council on Ontario Universities. The University will not undertake enrolment expansion without appropriate capital support from the Province of Ontario.

## Student Recruitment and Experience

- The University will continue to admit students on the basis of merit, broadly defined. The University will persist in its efforts to enhance student financial aid and improve institutional supports for students with learning challenges, with the goal of ensuring that accessibility is maintained for all meritorious students. Consistent with its institutional commitment to equity, the University will also continuously review the accessibility of the University to individuals from diverse backgrounds, and remain alert to opportunities for pro-active recruitment of students from under-represented groups.
- The University will develop and implement strategies for student recruitment that cut across all campuses and divisions, including the St. George Colleges<sup>1</sup>. Recruitment will be linked to housing and residence strategies as well as enrolment plans. The goal of this effort will be to strengthen the pool of applicants and align applications more fully with the comparative advantages of the relevant degree programs and character of the applicable divisions and the University at large.
- The University affirms the importance of increasing its national and global presence by recruiting, respectively, more Canadian students from outside the Toronto region and more students from abroad. These general goals will be pursued within the context of a defined recruitment strategy and balanced against our regional and provincial responsibilities. The University will also ensure that, as it draws students from a wider range of jurisdictions, it is able to assess fairly and fully the level of applicants' academic preparation.
- The University of Toronto will focus on the experiences of students, inside and outside the institution's classrooms. To that end, the University will acquire and analyze data on students' experiences and perceptions of diverse aspects of the institution, aiming where possible at the identification of internal best practices that may be generalizable.
- The University applauds and affirms efforts by faculty and staff on all three campuses who have helped students learn together in small groups with the direct support of teachers and mentors. Over time, the University will endeavour to make participatory learning opportunities available to all first-year students and eventually extend these opportunities to more undergraduates in their upper years. As resources permit, learning communities will also be extended to selected groups of graduate and professional students.
- The University affirms the importance of co-curricular initiatives for students on its three campuses, including experiential learning for credit in diverse forms, clubs and other student-led activities, intra-mural and inter-collegiate athletics, opportunities to participate in residence life for students at all levels, and international experiences. The University will strive to create additional opportunities for students to learn and undergo personal growth outside the classroom.
- On the St. George campus, the federated universities (St. Michael's, Trinity and Victoria) and constituent colleges (Innis, New, University, and Woodsworth) have played a leading role in fostering a positive experience for generations of undergraduate Arts & Science

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the term St. George Colleges here includes the federated universities ( St. Michael's, Trinity and Victoria) and the constituent Colleges (Innis, New, University, and Woodsworth)

students. These and all other divisional initiatives to create learning communities will be valued, supported, and reinforced.

- The University affirms the role of the St. George Colleges as incubators for student-centred innovations as well as new multi-disciplinary programming and related academic units. As resources permit, the St. George Colleges will engage greater numbers of faculty members and graduate students, and serve a wider range of undergraduate students.
- The University of Toronto will advance its use of information technology and seek to become a leader in digital education.

## **Internal Resource Allocation**

- The University has allocated resources over many decades on the basis of the revenues generated by specific programs, departments or divisions, and the academic priority assigned to these plans and aspirations. The University affirms the continuing value of this approach.
- The University's current budget model is based on determination of net divisional revenues alongside mechanisms for University-wide resource-sharing. The University acknowledges the continued necessity of University-wide resource-sharing for purposes of academic planning and to offset variations across programs in revenue-generating capacity. At the same time, the University affirms the principle that flow-through of new revenues will be differentiated to assist divisions that are net contributors to the broad fiscal balance of the institution.

## **Advancement**

- The University in all its parts has been lifted by levels of philanthropy that are unprecedented in Canada. Our ongoing success is therefore shared with countless alumni and friends whose gifts to the University have enabled us to raise our aspirations. The University affirms both its gratitude to its supporters and its commitment to responsible stewardship of all benefactions.
- The University will continue to seek benefactions that are aligned with its academic priorities. In this regard, the University will raise funds for, variously, immediate capital needs and for long-term commitments supported by endowments, while also enhancing the levels of annual giving and the numbers of expendable gifts that can directly supplement operating funds.
- Over \$750M in the University's capital endowment is already dedicated to scholarships, bursaries, and related student supports. The University will place a high priority for fund-raising to generate bursary and scholarship funds that can support recruitment of outstanding students from the widest possible range of backgrounds.

## Long-term Institutional Resources

- The University faces serious financial pressures in the short- and longer-term. These pressures could lead to further increases in student-faculty and student-staff ratios with adverse effects on the University's educational and research capacity as well as the experience of its students. In particular, the University's per-student revenues are less than one-tenth the average level of resources available to private research-intensive US institutions and well under one-half the average level available to publicly-assisted research-intensive US universities. The University will strive to reduce these disparities to ensure that it can compete effectively in the decades ahead.
- The University acknowledges with gratitude the Ontario Government's commendable 'Reaching Higher' plan in response to the 2005 Rae Review of Post-Secondary Education. However, per-student funding of Ontario universities remains more than 25% below the average of the other nine provinces. Closing this gap will remain the first and most important priority for the University in advocacy with the Government of Ontario.
- The University also acknowledges with gratitude that a succession of federal governments has supported a national system of student aid and increased the availability of graduate scholarships and fellowships, while initiating many new programs to support research infrastructure, personnel, projects, and commercialization. The University will advocate for further federal investments in research, as well as growth in federally-derived student aid and scholarships. A particular priority for federal advocacy will be the promotion of support for fundamental research and basic scholarship, along with the reduction of the ongoing shortfall in federal reimbursement for the institutional costs of research.
- Cost escalation in the post-secondary sector continues to outstrip the Consumer Price Index. In addition to focusing on expense containment, the University will seek ways to grow its total revenues at a pace more closely aligned with sector-specific inflation.
- The University will continue to negotiate responsible collective agreements with its employees, having regard for both the intense competition for talent and the severe financial pressures on the institution. At the same time, the University will pay close attention to staffing levels, both to enhance the student experience and promote a better quality of working life for staff, and to ensure that faculty are optimally supported for their core commitments to education and research.
- The University acknowledges that, under almost every financial scenario that is remotely feasible or that sustains an acceptable level of academic quality, tuition fees will remain an important source of revenue. In its ongoing consideration of tuition fee schedules, the Governing Council will make reference to University policy, extant Government regulations, the revenues required to support the University's educational offerings, and the level of resources that supports our institutional commitment to accessibility.
- The University will increase its efforts to ensure that incoming and current students understand the available offsets to tuition fees that lead to *de facto* reductions in those fees. The University will also draw aside funds from tuition increases to ensure that accessibility is maintained as and when tuitions increase.

- Compared to its peers, the University's proportion of funding derived from industry-sponsored research is low. In responding to this opportunity, and more generally in relationships with investor-owned and non-profit partners, the University will follow its extant policies and consider all partnerships in the light of implications for academic freedom, reputational risk and social responsibility, and respect for existing collective agreements.
- The University will enhance its institutional processes for knowledge translation and commercialization of university discoveries with a view to ensuring that societal, academic and economic benefits are more consistently realized from the University's excellence in research.

## **Administration**

- The University acknowledges the inevitability of substantial changes in its administrative arrangements over the next two decades, as enrolment patterns change and the three campuses evolve. Any new organizational structures and processes must serve the broad aspirations of the University as a whole, enhance effectiveness and efficiency in academic and administrative decision-making, and consider the interests of the University's varied internal constituencies.
- The University will continue to seek an appropriate balance between divisional or campus-level autonomy and University-wide oversight and leadership in all administrative spheres. This balance will vary across portfolios and zones of activity. Subject to efficiency constraints, the University will explore ways to separate St. George-specific administrative mandates from University-wide responsibilities.
- The University-wide administration will continue to lead in the development of broad institutional policy and strategy, while meeting core responsibilities arising from the reality that, notwithstanding decentralization, the University will remain a single corporate entity.
- The University's Provost will continue to function as chief academic officer institution-wide, with a particular emphasis on academic program quality. Looking ahead, the University will ask that, within any division, all programs be excellent and that most be nationally pre-eminent and internationally competitive. New programs will not be launched without a careful assessment of their prospects for national prominence at minimum.
- Moving towards 2030, campuses, divisions, or groups of divisions on the St. George campus will have increased autonomy. However, any decentralization or devolution of administrative activities will not be allowed to compromise the University's unified and powerful voice in external relations.
- Over the next two decades, the St. George campus (as distinct from its many dynamic divisions) will develop a more powerful identity for student recruitment and a more unified voice for participation in tri-campus discussions and negotiations. In the shorter-term, the University will promote sharing of administrative capacity among divisions on the St. George campus to mitigate the effects of asymmetry in divisional size.

- Changes to the organizational structure for the St. George campus will be respectful of the unique College system and principles of federation involving St Michael's, Trinity and Victoria.

## Conclusion

These strategic directions, as noted, constitute a framework for shorter and longer-term institutional planning. Their salience may well diminish as time passes and the University's context changes. On the other hand, the importance of the University of Toronto as a Canadian and global institution is overwhelmingly likely to increase over the next two decades as the University approaches its bicentennial. For that reason, among others, the *Framework* must be seen as a living document – subject to intermittent review, with various of the strategic directions modified as circumstances require.