

FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: Academic Board

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DATE: May 21, 2020 for May 28, 2020

AGENDA ITEM: 11

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Faculty of Arts & Science's *Academic Plan 2020-2025: Leveraging Our Strengths*

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Divisional academic plans are considered by the Committee and the Academic Board for information and feedback. Prior to approval by the Provost and presentation to the Committee, it is expected that the relevant divisional Council would endorse the academic plan in principle. (*Planning & Budget Committee, Terms of Reference, Section 4.1*)

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. Planning and Budget Committee [for information and feedback] May 7, 2020
2. **Academic Board [for information] May 28, 2020**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The Academic Plan was endorsed in principle by the Faculty of Arts & Science's Faculty Council on April 15, 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The development of *Academic Plan 2020-2025: Leveraging Our Strengths* began with an A&S Priorities Discussion Paper in 2018, developed in consultation with academic leaders, student organizations, staff, and Faculty Council. Following the Provostial (non-UTQAP) review of the Faculty in 2018, eight working groups (with members including faculty, staff, students, and College Principals) discussed areas of emphasis identified during the Provostial review and in the 2018 A&S Priorities Discussion Paper; each working group submitted a report containing recommendations in these areas to the Dean in the spring of 2019. In August 2019, the Dean struck an Academic Plan Advisory Committee, composed of academic leaders from all sectors of A&S, to provide feedback on the development of the Plan and each draft chapter. The Decanal Advisory Committee on Indigenous Teaching & Learning was consulted in February 2020 and provided significant input into the content of the Academic Plan. At the beginning of 2020, the Dean engaged the A&S community by inviting every student, postdoctoral fellow, faculty, and staff member to participate in a series of in-person strategy sessions, as well as an online survey. Finally, a draft Plan was posted online at the end of February along with an online form for feedback.

The academic plan identifies six high-level priorities for 2020-2025:

1. Pushing the Boundaries of our Research Excellence
2. Enhancing Academic Programming and the Student Experience
3. Indigenous Research, Teaching, and Learning
4. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
5. Building Partnerships with our Local and Global Communities
6. A&S Operations

The plan identifies objectives, key stakeholders, and internal/external partnerships to be involved in the Faculty's work toward each of the six priorities.

The plan was considered by the Provost's Advisory Group on March 25, 2020.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The resource implications of the Divisional Academic Plan are as detailed in the plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for information only.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

- Faculty of Arts & Science's: *Academic Plan 2020-2025: Leveraging Our Strengths*



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

ACADEMIC PLAN

2020-2025

LEVERAGING OUR STRENGTHS

April 6, 2020

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Statement of Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

In the past five years, the University, in response to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, has committed to a long-term process of acknowledging and repairing the devastating legacies for Indigenous peoples of the residential school system and the wider project of Canadian colonialism. Universities, including U of T, helped to enable the residential school system by training the teachers, principals, and government officials who ran the system. As several TRC Calls to Action point out, it is the responsibility of institutions of higher education to undertake meaningful change that enables reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and fosters Indigenous empowerment; one important step in this process is to acknowledge the historical and ongoing Indigenous presence on the land on which we work. In that spirit, we begin this Academic Plan by acknowledging the land on which the Faculty of Arts & Science at the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years this land has been the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



The extraordinary breadth of the Faculty makes us distinct within U of T and beyond.

In my role as Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science (A&S) I am privileged to meet so many engaged and inspiring students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and I am excited by the conversations that are shaping our vision for what we can achieve together.

Throughout our planning process, a central theme emerged: the extraordinary breadth of the Faculty makes us distinct within U of T and beyond. Capitalizing on our breadth resonated deeply as a way to anchor our goals and priorities and is the foundation of “Leveraging our Strengths,” the Faculty of Arts & Science Academic Plan 2020-2025.

“Leveraging our Strengths” outlines six overarching priorities for the next five years. These priorities emphasize our role as a leader in the University’s mission of excellence in research and teaching, our ongoing efforts to improve the student experience, and our dedication to further infuse our community and our work with Indigenous learning and knowledge. To facilitate our success, we must also develop and sustain meaningful relationships with key partners and supporters, locally and globally, and continue to nurture our shared commitment to an equitable, diverse, and inclusive community. Paramount to achievements in these areas is placing priority on the operational supports and fiscal sustainability needed to carry out our goals.

As Dean, I am committed to ensuring that our success and excellence are not prioritized over the health and well-being of our community, and that we continue to develop a culture of caring and implement the recommendations of the Presidential and Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health. I am also committed to incorporating the principles of sustainability in all that we do, in part through the Faculty’s role in achieving the U of T Low Carbon Action Plan, and consistent with the University’s important role as a founding member of the University Climate Change Coalition.

Success in carrying out this plan will involve the skills, wisdom, and creativity of everyone in our community. I am grateful for the dedication of our faculty and staff, and for the students, alumni, and supporters who continue to bring meaning to our mission. Your voices have informed these priorities for A&S and will be instrumental in implementing “Leveraging our Strengths.”

Professor Melanie Woodin
Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science



INTRODUCTION

Arts & Science is a vibrant and diverse intellectual community, home to over 27,000 undergraduate students, 4,500 graduate students, 900 faculty members, and 600 administrative and technical staff.

We are the largest academic division at U of T, and Arts & Science alone is comparable in size to most major Canadian universities. With over 300 undergraduate and 100 graduate programs, and more than 2,400 undergraduate courses, the Faculty provides a wealth of educational opportunities across a wide range of disciplines. Our academic units are consistently ranked top in Canada and are among the most highly ranked worldwide. We bring together extraordinary expertise that spans the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences.

In our 2020-2025 Academic Plan, we focus on how we can leverage this remarkable breadth, capitalizing on our strengths as a Faculty of Arts *and* Science to provide exceptional student experiences, foster innovation in teaching and research, and nurture and promote the achievements of our world-renowned faculty.

Developing “Leveraging our Strengths”

Our Plan has taken shape through a series of consultative exercises in which we have engaged with the full range of our faculty, staff, and students. We first developed an A&S Priorities Discussion Paper (2018), refined through a series of consultations with our academic leadership, student organizations, staff, and Faculty Council. The Discussion Paper identified five strategic priorities: capitalizing on our strengths as

a Faculty of Arts *and* Science; improving the student experience inside and outside the classroom; pushing the boundaries of our research excellence; promoting diversity and accessibility; and building partnerships with our communities. These strategic priorities are supported by a crucial operational priority: the need to expand and improve Faculty capital and infrastructure.

The A&S Priorities Discussion Paper provided a framework for the Provostial review of the Faculty in 2018, which involved a detailed self-study process and site visit by three expert reviewers from peer institutions. Their report, and our administrative response to it, identified key areas of strength on which we can build, as well as potential new directions for our research and teaching mission. Following the review, a set of working groups composed of faculty, staff, students, and College Principals developed a set of recommendations responding to issues raised in the reviewers’ report, guided by the themes outlined in the A&S Priorities. Finally, the Dean engaged the A&S community by inviting every student, postdoctoral fellow, faculty, and staff member to participate in a series of in-person strategy sessions, as well as an online survey, to help us identify the best ways to leverage our strengths.

Throughout our consultations, we discerned consistent themes. A&S students, postdoctoral fellows, staff, and faculty highlighted the extraordinary opportunities for innovative learning, teaching, and research across the Faculty. Our

discussions also underscored areas where we can streamline processes, build new strengths, and provide a more supportive environment for teaching, learning, and research. We heard from our undergraduate students that they need access to more on-campus community space and would appreciate more interdisciplinary opportunities in their programs of study. We heard from graduate students that they value both academic and non-academic career pathways and would benefit from more professional development opportunities. We heard from Assistant Professors that we need to better support teaching innovation and provide more opportunities to build community. We heard from University Professors that we need to build on our interdisciplinary research strengths and develop strategies to recruit top international graduate students to our programs. We heard from staff and academic administrators that we need to do away with outdated policies and practices that result in unnecessary work and barriers to innovative teaching and research. We are grateful to the many individuals who have contributed to this Plan, whose voices and perspectives have enriched our vision for future possibilities and directions for the Faculty of Arts & Science.

In drafting this document, we have worked with an Academic Plan Advisory Committee made up of academic leaders from across A&S. We drew from our 2018 A&S Priorities Discussion Paper, the 2018 external review and our response to it, the 2019 Working Group Reports, and our Faculty-wide consultations. We have developed an Academic Plan, “Leveraging our Strengths,” that identifies our key directions and sets us on a path to achieve our goal of an exceptional intellectual community with a culture of caring, enriched by diversity, that capitalizes on our strengths as a Faculty of Arts & Science. “Leveraging our Strengths” positions the Faculty as one of the top centres of innovative research and teaching excellence worldwide.

Alignment with Institutional Context

Throughout our planning process, we have been mindful of the strategic vision of the larger institution in which the Faculty resides. Our Plan is aligned with the goals set out in the “Three Priorities: A Discussion” document issued by University of Toronto President, Meric Gertler: “leverage our urban location(s) more fully, for the mutual benefit of University and City;” “strengthen and deepen key international partnerships by means of a well-defined strategic focus;” and “re-imagine and re-invent undergraduate education.” We have also been attentive to the Report of the University of Toronto’s Truth and Reconciliation Steering Committee. In developing our Plan, we have considered the President and Provost’s joint response to this report which included calls to action regarding Indigenous spaces, Indigenous curriculum, and Indigenous leadership. We have engaged with the Faculty of Arts & Science Dean’s Advisory Committee on Indigenous Teaching & Learning and have incorporated their input into this Plan. We have also considered how best to address the recommendations set out in the Provostial tri-campus review, “One University, Three Campuses,” which has provided an opportunity for us to evaluate and enhance the relationship between the Faculty of Arts & Science and the arts and science divisions at University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) and University of Toronto Scarborough

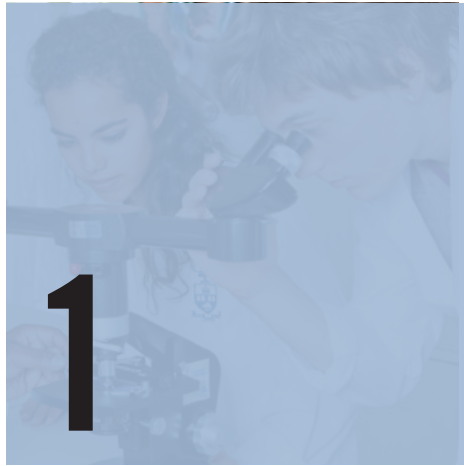
(UTSC); through meetings of the Tri-Campus Deans, we have identified new opportunities for coordination and cooperation in our tri-campus graduate programs. Finally, as we implement “Leveraging our Strengths,” we will work closely with our partners across the institution to address the recommendations of the Report of the Presidential and Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health.

Looking to the Future

Our current planning process and the Faculty’s fiscal health are interdependent. To achieve our academic goals, resources must be available. Conversely, our resources depend on our academic success. In the recent past, A&S experienced a severe structural and accumulated deficit that constrained our academic aspirations throughout the 2008-2013 period. As the Faculty emerged from that period of austerity, our priorities focused again on expanding faculty complement and addressing longer-term financial stability. Since 2013, Arts & Science has hired new faculty across the sectors. We have also experienced a pronounced graduate program expansion and some growth in our undergraduate enrolment, particularly among international students. Looking to the future, we anticipate a period of relative stability in our graduate and undergraduate enrolment and faculty complement. However, changes in our undergraduate student complement may occur in response to demand and demographic change, and in accordance with agreements with the Provincial government. We focus our attention for 2020-2025 on a new set of priorities articulated in “Leveraging our Strengths,” mindful that a necessary condition for academic success is continued financial stability.

Over the next five years, we will push the boundaries of our research success by building new collaborations locally and internationally, and supporting innovation within and across disciplines. We will re-envision undergraduate and graduate education to include experiential and international learning opportunities; we will provide an enriched and exciting environment for students, inside and outside the classroom. We will celebrate a multiplicity of new perspectives and foster a culture that embraces the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. We will engage with our communities — local, national, Indigenous, and international — and draw from the experiences of our extraordinary alumni base to forge new and valuable partnerships and outreach opportunities. We will tackle our infrastructure challenges, ensuring that our faculty and students have the space and facilities they need to achieve excellence. As we start this new decade, in which we will celebrate the University’s bicentennial in 2027, A&S has charted a course in “Leveraging our Strengths” that will transform the teaching, learning, and research ambitions of our Faculty.

PRIORITIES



1

Pushing the Boundaries of our Research Excellence

U of T is the top-ranked research institution in the country and, as the largest division within the University, A&S is a major driver of this research excellence. We will pursue strategies aimed at affirming our position as a global leader in cutting-edge research, and seek new ways to push beyond the curve.



2

Enhancing Academic Programming and the Student Experience

An A&S education builds critical thinking, research, and communication skills, and provides students with opportunities to work with and learn from internationally recognized scholars. Our goal is to ensure that all students experience a supportive environment and have equitable access to the opportunities available, so they can make the most of their education and prepare for success beyond their degree.



3

Indigenous Research, Teaching, and Learning

A&S is committed to fostering a vibrant and welcoming culture of research, teaching, and learning for Indigenous faculty and students that respects Indigenous ways of knowing and that includes significant engagement with Indigenous communities and nations.



4

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

A&S is committed to a community in which we recognize and celebrate the multiplicity of voices in the Faculty. By promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion, we can provide an enriched environment for our faculty, staff, and students.



5

Building Partnerships with our Local and Global Communities

With a network spanning the global community, the Faculty has a crucial role to play in building connections within and beyond the University. A&S will derive new strengths through its partnerships – local, national, Indigenous, and international. We will raise our social profile by supporting research and teaching initiatives that engage with issues facing our local and broader communities.



6

A&S Operations

In order to achieve our ambitious goals, A&S must have strong infrastructure and operational supports in place. We aim to provide the best possible environment to ensure that students, faculty, and staff are set up for success in their work, learning, teaching, and research.

PRIORITY

1

Pushing the Boundaries of our Research Excellence

Excellence in research is a cornerstone of A&S. The University of Toronto is the top-ranked research institution in the country and, as the largest division within the University, A&S is a major driver of this research excellence.

When compared to our Canadian peer institutions, we rank first in most fields in terms of publications and citations. QS rankings indicate that many of our subject areas are ranked among the highest in the world and our impressive international standing serves to attract outstanding students to our programs. At the core of our success is the active engagement of postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and undergraduate students in our research enterprise. Our researchers hold some of the most prestigious international honours worldwide, including Guggenheim Fellowships, Sloan Fellowships, and Nobel Prizes, as well as domestic honours that include Steacie Prizes, Orders of Canada, and an impressive number of Fellowships of the Royal Society of Canada. Arts & Science faculty serve as editors and associate editors to many of the world's most influential academic journals in areas spanning the Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences.

In addition to making outstanding theoretical and empirical contributions to their fields, A&S researchers are actively engaged in partnerships with Indigenous communities, industry, governments, and non-governmental organizations to meet social, economic, and environmental challenges and opportunities. Our researchers translate their discovery-based research and innovations into technology transfers through disclosures, licenses, patents, and start-ups. A&S will work with the Dean's Advisory Committee on Indigenous Teaching & Learning to develop a strategy for supporting Indigenous research and partnerships with Indigenous nations and organizations.

As we move into our new planning phase, we will pursue strategies aimed not only at consolidating our position as a centre for cutting-edge research, but also at seeking new ways to push beyond the curve.

Identifying our Strategic Research Initiatives

Starting in the fall of 2020, the Faculty will commence consultations on the development of a Strategic Research Plan that both encompasses our existing strengths and identifies new directions. We recognize and will continue to support the value of research that provides disciplinary depth and advances domain-specific knowledge. In addition, we aim to facilitate the development of new and transformative collaborative partnerships, both within and across disciplines, and to enhance our ability to take advantage of emerging funding opportunities, from within the institution to the international stage. This Strategic Research Plan will be developed with the leadership of scholars from across the sectors, through a consultative, iterative process that deeply engages researchers across Arts & Science. The Research Plan will identify existing research excellence as well as emerging priorities that leverage the breadth and depth of expertise from across A&S.

Creating an A&S Institute for Advanced Study

A&S will engage in consultation regarding the possibility of a new Institute for Advanced Study that will bring outstanding A&S faculty from across the Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences together with other leading scholars from around the world. The Institute would provide a community in which scholars



Priorities

and students can take advantage of the breadth and depth of A&S to engage in curiosity-driven research that bridges traditional boundaries of individual disciplines.

Supporting A&S Research Funding Success

To facilitate interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral research, the Faculty will pilot a funding program, with a straightforward application and adjudication process, to support new collaborations across units within A&S, aligned with our identified Strategic Research Initiatives. Priority will be given to collaborations across sectors that incorporate undergraduate and graduate students, as well as postdoctoral fellows. Ultimately, this initiative should foster participation and success in Institutional Strategic Initiatives funding and collaborative tri-agency grants.

Arts & Science faculty are successful at acquiring independent investigator-led funding. We can increase our overall research funding, however, by taking advantage of numerous additional funding opportunities, including those from tri-council partnership and training grants, international research collaborations, foundations, and industry. Many of these funding opportunities have complex application and management processes, as they often involve multiple PIs, have international components, and include non-academic partnerships. To optimize researcher success in identifying and acquiring new funding, the Faculty will build supports to: facilitate preparation and submission of applications; identify new industry partners through the hiring of business development staff (for both grant opportunities and industry-sponsored research contracts); facilitate internal grant review; and provide matching funds when necessary, based on availability. These new initiatives will enhance the supports already provided within many of our academic units.

Supporting A&S Researchers

Faculty. A&S is committed to ensuring that every faculty member has the best possible opportunities to achieve and maintain research success. The 2018 external review of A&S highlighted a need for “administrative initiatives to address work-life balance policies for child-bearing leave, or eldercare, which are reported elsewhere as barriers to timely progression toward tenure and beyond for female faculty.” To ensure that all faculty members have the opportunity to progress to Full Professor in a reasonable timeframe, the Faculty will design and implement initiatives aimed at supporting research continuity for faculty members taking leave for the birth or adoption of a child, and Associate Professors who may require additional support in preparing for promotion to Full Professor status. In consultation with the Vice-President, Faculty & Academic Life and relevant stakeholders, we will develop a plan for eligibility criteria, funding amounts, and roll-out of these initiatives. Together, these two initiatives will provide important career development support and promote greater gender equity in distribution of faculty across the ranks.

Postdoctoral Fellowships. Since its inception in 2015, the A&S Postdoctoral Program has been a success in recruiting an extraordinarily talented group of researchers, but new investment is needed to keep pace with the market and attract the best possible applicants, particularly given the increasing cost of living in Toronto. The Faculty will therefore increase the stipend for post-doctoral fellows who are successful applicants to the A&S Postdoctoral Program, and increase the top-up for those who win Tri-Agency postdoctoral scholarships. The Faculty will also consult on a proposal for an internal postdoctoral program, which would require that students complete their PhD studies within a specified, reasonable timeframe. Internal postdoctoral fellowships would provide a subset of recent A&S PhD graduates with valuable time for additional training or preparation before applying for jobs, without having to relocate. Successful applicants would have a one-year opportunity to conduct research and teach within the Faculty or to participate in an internship with an external partner (e.g., NGO, government, industry). Academic units, or external employers, and the Faculty would contribute matching funds to comprise the salary for these fellowships. The intent of such a program is to support graduate students in the timely completion of their studies and provide a pathway to further training and credential-building, smoothing the transition to the job market.

Recognizing and Communicating Research Achievements

Awards and honours are an important metric for evaluating researchers’ success, and we will ensure that our stellar faculty are recognized locally and internationally by identifying new award opportunities and assisting with the nomination process. We will support our units, particularly those without a robust internal structure for award nominations, in the development or expansion of Awards Committees to identify nominees, drawing on best practices with regard to equity and diversity in award and honour recognition. In addition, the Faculty will establish A&S Research Awards associated with different career levels, to boost recognition of our innovative and accomplished researchers. A&S Communications will develop new tools to showcase the leading-edge research of our faculty and students.

Attracting Agents of Transformational Change

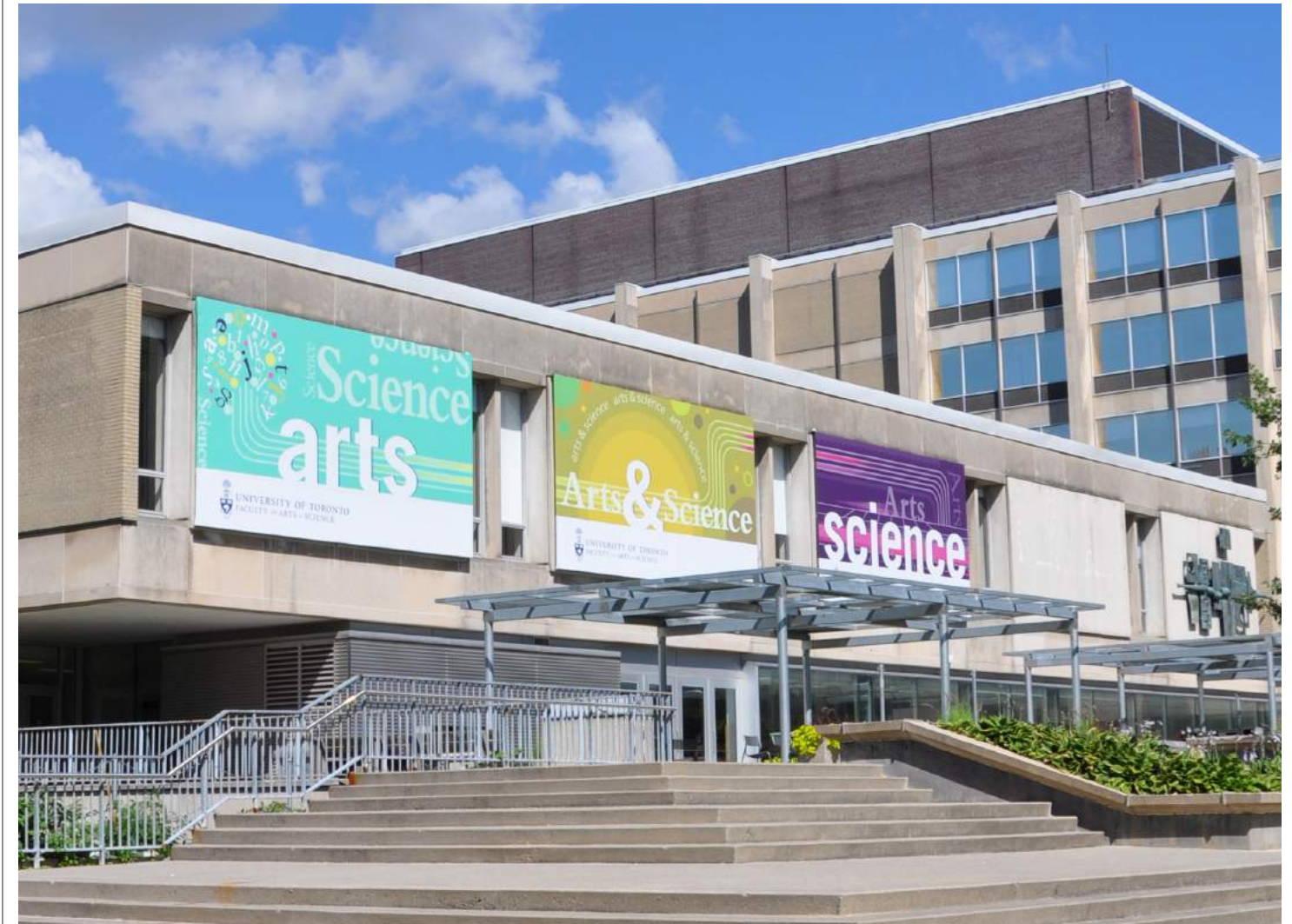
We will look for new opportunities to attract individuals with the potential to raise our research excellence to new heights. We will promote opportunities to bring the best of our undergraduate students into our research, seek ways to increase our complement of highly qualified international graduate students, and continue to grow our thriving community of postdoctoral fellows. In recent years, we have been able to replenish our faculty complement following a period of budgetary restraint. Moving forward, we will seek to hire additional faculty who have the potential to promote transformational change within the Faculty.

Summary

We will leverage our strengths to provide the best possible environment for both new and established scholars. We will support researchers in seeking funding, and seed research that enables faculty to build partnerships across disciplines. We will ensure that A&S postdoctoral fellows have resources needed to succeed in their fields. We will promote undergraduate research activity throughout the Faculty. We will work to ensure that our scholars are recognized for their accomplishments within the Faculty and beyond. A new Institute for Advanced Study would provide opportunities for outstanding scholars to come together to solve problems and explore new fields of inquiry. We will ensure that A&S researchers are poised to take advantage of the best possible opportunities to pursue their work and communicate their findings.

COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Climate change is one of the most significant issues facing the world today. Only by bringing together scholars from across a wide range of disciplines can we hope to achieve solutions to this pressing concern. Many A&S faculty have already developed research programs dedicated to understanding various facets of climate change, ranging from exploring physical changes in the environment, to understanding the psychological barriers that hinder the adoption of sustainable behaviours. With our extraordinary breadth and depth of research, A&S is uniquely situated to continue this research, as well as to develop new partnerships that will leverage our strengths to investigate sustainability, within and across disciplines.



PRIORITY

2

Enhancing Academic Programming and the Student Experience

A&S offers an exceptional educational experience. Among our alumni, we boast Nobel Prize laureates, Prime Ministers and Governors General, as well as winners of the premier international awards in virtually every discipline across the Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences.

Our students go on to become leaders in academia, industry, politics, and the arts, providing much of the intellectual, economic, and creative direction for Canada today. We offer an education that builds critical thinking, research and communication skills, and provides students with opportunities to work with and learn from outstanding, internationally recognized researchers. Looking forward, we need to ensure that we offer undergraduate and graduate programming at the forefront of the most exciting developments in human endeavour, including areas such as new digital methodologies for studying history and culture, rapid advances in artificial intelligence, ground-breaking innovations in the study of neuroscience, and new analytic techniques for studying human behaviour and the impacts of climate change. In support of student success and well-being, we need to revitalize and create new space for students to relax and connect with friends as well as to study. As we innovate in pedagogy and research, we need to ensure that our vision respects and draws vitality from our international student body and from the cultural diversity of the city and of Canada.

The Faculty derives strength from our diverse student body. Many A&S students are the first in their family to attend university, commute long distances daily, travel vast distances to study with us, or are non-native English speakers. In “Leveraging our Strengths,” we strive to ensure that all our students experience a supportive environment and have equitable opportunities to take full advantage of their education.

Like many students across North America, our students are concerned about their future prospects, including post-graduation employment. We can do more to ensure that, in parallel with the excellence of our education, we offer

opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to develop and practice skills that more directly support their future success in the workplace and in their lives more generally.

Undergraduate Students

Over the next five years, the Faculty will enhance the undergraduate student experience by supporting mental health and well-being, developing new academic and co-curricular opportunities, expanding innovation in teaching methods, and ensuring students are prepared to succeed beyond graduation.

BACHELOR OF ARTS & SCIENCE

A primary strength of the Faculty of Arts & Science is our extraordinary breadth across the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences. In “Leveraging our Strengths,” we capitalize on this breadth by proposing the development of a Bachelor of Arts & Science degree. This new degree will not only better recognize and support students who choose to study majors in multiple sectors, but will also stimulate the enhancement or creation of interdisciplinary academic programming that draws on our interdisciplinary research excellence. This newly integrated Arts & Science education will include research opportunities and capstone courses tied to the proposed A&S Institute for Advanced Study. The Bachelor of Arts & Science will reflect the distinctive nature of the Faculty, and stand as the signature degree of A&S in the future.

INNOVATIONS IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

In 2017, an A&S Working Group on First-Year Academic offerings produced a report outlining four core principles: the classroom



Priorities

is the primary site for first-year students to develop strong foundations to academic success; A&S, working with the Colleges and our academic units, has the overarching responsibility for communicating clear guidance to students about first-year academic offerings and policies and for coordinating appropriate resources for first-year classrooms; excellence and equity must shape any large-scale changes to first-year academic offerings; and designing and implementing meaningful changes to first-year academic offerings must be based on the ongoing collective and collaborative work of faculty, staff, and students throughout A&S and the Colleges. The Faculty will continue to be guided by these core principles as it strives to provide first-year students with a clear and coherent set of academic offerings to prepare them for their programs of study. In recent years, the Faculty focused its efforts on the recommendation to establish the A&S First-Year Foundations (FYF) seminars. Building on the College One and “199” programs, A&S has successfully increased the number of small-class experiences available to students new to the Faculty, helping them to connect with faculty members and other students early on in their A&S education. We recognize the value of these experiences and will continue to develop them, working together with our academic units and the Colleges. Moving forward, we will also turn our attention to the Working Group’s recommendation to provide supports to large classes, ensuring that we are using pedagogical innovations in teaching to enhance both student learning and the student experience in our numerous large first-year courses.

In addition, the Faculty will develop new programs in cutting-edge fields of study. A new major in Quantitative Biology will provide students with an opportunity to focus on building skills in state-of-the-art analytics relevant to the life sciences. New programming in the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources will offer students an option to learn about labour and organizations in the context of their other programs of study. In response to the growing interest in computation and data analytics, the Faculty will create teaching supports for instructors to include computational components in existing courses that fall outside the Departments of Computer Science and Statistical Sciences. We will also increase the Faculty’s offering of introductory-level data-intensive courses for students within each sector; such courses could provide Humanities students, for example, with the computational background they need to pursue more advanced digital studies in their respective programs, and would strengthen our Digital Humanities minor. By combining traditional areas of study with new programs that help students apply their skills more directly to career options, A&S will prepare undergraduates to be at the forefront of their fields as they enter the workforce in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors.

Degree requirements have not been reviewed in over a decade, and with the possibility of a new degree and of new degree requirements, such as a First-Year Foundations seminar, we will conduct a comprehensive review of our degree requirements and program admissions.

IMPROVING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COLLEGES

The Faculty derives strength from a strong partnership with the seven St. George campus Colleges. The College system is among

U of T’s most distinctive features, and we look to strengthen our unique and historic relationship over the next five years with the shared vision of improving the student experience. The Provost is currently undertaking “A Review of the Role of the Colleges on the St. George Campus” addressing five key areas: reviews, academic planning, and academic change; student experience; recruitment, admissions, and enrolment planning; residences; and resources. The Faculty will work closely with the Colleges and the Provost to implement any forthcoming recommendations to enhance both our partnership with the Colleges and the student experience.

The Colleges are the physical home for many students during their studies; however, demand for residence space outstrips availability. Our international students, in particular, are looking for more opportunities to live on campus. A&S will work with the Colleges and the Provost to implement recommendations arising from the Colleges Review that focus on building residence capacity. At the same time, A&S recognizes that most students commute to campus, many from a significant distance, and sometimes miss out on the opportunities that are more readily available to those who live nearby. Building on the successes of the commuter student centres at the Colleges, the Sidney Smith Commons, and unit-level initiatives, A&S will work in collaboration with the Colleges to ensure that all students have access to spaces that give them the opportunity to build communities and connect with the services they need. In addition, the Faculty will strengthen the partnership with the Colleges on academic advising and support. Registrarial staff at the Colleges play a vital role in assisting students directly and connecting them with additional resources within the College or elsewhere on campus. We recognize this crucial function and will work with the Colleges to support and guide our undergraduates throughout their studies, and ensure complementarity in the delivery of services that will enrich the student experience.

PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION AND THE EXPANSION OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Many A&S instructors enhance their courses by adopting innovative, high-impact pedagogical approaches, including the integration of digital pedagogies into their teaching, experiential and community-based learning, and writing-integrated teaching. Supports for new teaching technologies and innovations will increase opportunities for instructors to enrich the delivery of existing courses and complement the range of experiential, international, and traditional classroom experiences open to students. We will support faculty interested in the development of online teaching, either within more traditional lecture-based courses or through fully online courses, with a focus on ensuring high quality in online offerings. We heard clearly from students that online courses and/or course components increase the accessibility of an A&S education by offering commuting students a broader range of options to pursue their studies; we will create more flexible opportunities for those students managing their studies alongside part-time jobs and/or family responsibilities.

The Faculty will embark on an ambitious experiential learning initiative through our new Experiential Learning and Outreach Support (ELOS) office. Experiential learning (EL) is a successful teaching practice that allows students to create more deliberate

and explicit connections between their educational experiences in- and outside of the classroom. In A&S, EL opportunities range from small-scale course-based integration with local community organizations, to larger-scale international excursions to explore other cultures, environments, or historical sites. Our goal is for every A&S student to have the opportunity to participate in at least one high-quality, academically linked EL opportunity prior to graduation. To achieve this goal, the A&S EL expansion will focus on three key areas: First, we will support faculty in expanding course-based organization-partnered opportunities; international-, Indigenous-, and research-based opportunities; and co-curricular opportunities. Second, we will launch an A&S Co-op/Internship program that will provide 12-16 months of meaningful, paid, full-time work opportunities for Arts & Science students across a wide range of disciplines. A&S will partner with the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, and their successful Professional Experience Year (PEY) program, in the design and delivery of this program. We are also engaged in conversations with other divisions regarding future collaborations on experiential learning. Finally, alongside these two initiatives, we will introduce supports and programming to help prepare students for meaningful engagement in EL opportunities and address barriers to participation.

A&S has become a leading centre for international education, home to a large body of international students and to academic and co-curricular programming that highlights the value of international experiences for all our students. International students bring immense value to the classroom and to our research projects, and we aim to ensure they have the best possible supports, including enhancements in classroom supports for English language learners. Internationalization across our range of activities promotes diversity that benefits all our students and creates important breadth in our academic offerings. The ELOS office will work with academic units and Colleges to build new partnerships that will strengthen and expand the roster of international opportunities available to undergraduate students throughout the Faculty. We will also explore the possibility of a summer Global Language Institute, capitalizing on the wealth of language teaching that occurs across A&S.

Graduate Students

Our graduate programs are recognized internationally for the excellence of their teaching and research. We offer 39 PhD programs, 40 doctoral-stream master’s programs, and 8 professional master’s programs, which provide training to students in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences. The majority of our PhD and doctoral-stream master’s programs are offered as tri-campus graduate programs with faculty from the St. George, UTM, and UTSC campuses teaching courses and supervising graduate students.

The tri-campus structure is a source of enormous strength, providing unparalleled opportunities to leverage the excellence of faculty across the three campuses and offer an outstanding breadth of research opportunities to our students. At the

COMMITMENT TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The Faculty is committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of all our students throughout their time in A&S. We accept the recommendations of the 2020 Report of the Presidential and Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health and are committed to building a culture of caring. Many resources for student mental health are administered centrally, and A&S is partnering with Accessibility Services, Health & Wellness, the Colleges, and the Vice-Provost, Students, to ensure that we meaningfully implement these recommendations. To that end, we have already struck a standing committee on Mental Health with representation from students, staff, and faculty to address challenges particular to Arts & Science and, in 2019, hired a new Mental Health Programs Officer to spearhead these efforts via training, workshops, and awareness-raising events.

Undergraduate Students. The Faculty is also making progress toward meaningful implementation of the Mental Health Task Force Report’s recommendation to “review bureaucratic and academic policies that act as stressors or barriers to students,” through the creation of a “Special Committee of A&S Council on Academic Policy.” The Special Committee will review policies with an eye to their impact on student mental health and well-being and will recommend policy changes to avoid unnecessarily exacerbating student stress. We will also simplify our numerous administrative processes and communications to make it easier for students to navigate admissions, program registration, petitions, and grading policies as they progress through their degrees. Our goal for 2025 is to have a clearly communicated set of streamlined policies, processes, and procedures, which will dramatically improve the student experience.

Graduate Supports. Graduate students’ mental health and well-being are affected by a variety of stressors associated with work-life balance, and the quality of mentorship and supervision. Our commitment to graduate student mental health requires a reorientation of the way in which we perceive and discuss graduate education. While excellence in research and scholarly activities remains the centerpiece of our mission, we must also recognize the role of mental health in graduate student outcomes and experiences. Our success as a premier research institution relies upon the success of our graduate students. Improvements in funding, time to degree, and support for alternative pathways will improve graduate student outcomes and alleviate stressors that can adversely affect students’ mental health and well-being.



➤ COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Around the world, scientists and policymakers are responding to the need to take significant steps to address the dangers posed by climate change. A&S will play a crucial role in developing pedagogy related to these issues, including the integration of sustainability in our academic programming through new curricular pathways. The School of the Environment within A&S offers popular undergraduate programs in Environmental Science and Environmental Studies, as well as a new Master's of Environment & Sustainability program. The School has the potential to serve as a more robust hub linking together pedagogy and research expertise related to sustainability from across the Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities. The School currently provides teaching through a set of cross-appointed faculty, but may better serve A&S with a stronger and more focused mandate to connect with units across the Faculty, as well as the Colleges, to coordinate and advance teaching and research on environment and sustainability.

same time, the geographic and administrative separation of the campuses can pose challenges. A&S will explore options for investing in videoconferencing technology, and virtual meeting spaces that are easy to use; we can take a leadership role within the institution in developing options, not only to facilitate tri-campus interactions, but also in recognition of the likelihood that, as academic bodies recognize the environmental damage associated with air travel, virtual scholarly meetings and conferences may play an increasingly important role in the future dissemination of knowledge. In addition, the 2018-2019 Provostial review of the tri-campus structure yielded recommendations relevant to graduate program structure and change. We look forward to working with UTM and UTSC, along with the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs to address these recommendations and find the best possible ways to provide an enriching experience for master's and doctoral students enrolled in our programs.

As part of its planning process, A&S has reflected on the kind of graduate student experience that we, as a Faculty, strive to achieve. After a period of graduate expansion, we are now closer to a steady state with respect to enrolment and can reflect on how best to deliver innovative and effective graduate education. We want our students to become experts in their respective disciplines, and to be competitive for their chosen careers. We want to support research and scholarly excellence, and while these can be defined in disciplinary ways, we should design programs and provide support with universal goals in mind. In "Leveraging our Strengths," we focus on three factors that are of critical importance for students' success and experience in their graduate studies: graduate funding, time to degree (TTD), and support for non-academic career pathways.

IMPROVING GRADUATE FUNDING

The critical importance of graduate student funding cannot be overemphasized. The Faculty understands that finances are a major contributor to graduate student stress and a constraint on our ability to attract top students to our programs. Although the Faculty has made continuous improvements to base funding since 2016, we need to do more. We will work to improve base funding packages beyond our previous commitments. We will also develop best practices with sectors to support graduate student funding, for example through having faculty apply for tri-council grants with the inclusion of support for master's and doctoral students in their budgets. The current A&S Bridging Program provides funds for those faculty who apply for tri-council grants, but whose applications are unsuccessful; this ensures that faculty support for graduate students will be forthcoming regardless of year-to-year grant application outcomes.

Innovations in graduate student support frequently develop at the discipline-specific or unit level; however, there is no base funding to directly support innovations in graduate education. The Faculty will develop a model to provide funds for unit-level graduate initiatives, for example to establish a graduate student research fund or facilitate conference travel.

Funding for international graduate students represents a major allocation of Faculty resources to units, but is constrained by provincial funding policy. Many units express frustration with the resulting "quota" system that at times constrains units' ambitions to recruit the best possible graduate cohorts. Recognizing the shifting pressures on unit aspirations to admit international students, the Faculty will introduce a more flexible system of reviewing and allocating units' quota. In addition, we will continue to explore options for increasing international graduate enrolments. The Faculty will also examine new options for supporting international graduate students through their programs to address retention and time to completion.

DECREASE TIME TO DEGREE

The Faculty's recent external review highlighted the need to decrease TTD. Increased TTD represents rising resource costs for graduate education and may be detrimental to graduate student mental health. While TTD is impacted by external forces, such as rising expectations for PhD graduates in some disciplines, increased TTD also results from structural problems within programs, including increased program requirements, ill-defined expectations for what constitutes a dissertation, and challenges with faculty supervision. The Faculty will address TTD by working with units in two primary areas: curriculum review and student supervision.

Curriculum Review. The Faculty will commence a rolling curriculum review, aligned with our new unit-level planning process. We will work with each graduate unit to evaluate program structure and requirements. Units will reflect on whether their current program design serves the needs of students and the discipline, and whether the program offers students opportunities for professional development. Students' workload should be achievable within the funded program length, and the program structure must be compatible with clear milestones. Now that we are no longer in a period of graduate expansion, we will work with units to scale their programs appropriately, ensuring that we are recruiting the best possible students to programs that support student success both in their studies and future careers. We will coordinate with UTM and UTSC to implement mechanisms for planning and accountability in tri-campus graduate programs.

Student supervision. High-quality supervision is critical, not only to scholarly performance, but also to graduate student well-being, retention, and TTD. Indeed, diligent supervision is one key mechanism through which students learn about program expectations and requirements. Accordingly, in coordination with SGS, UTM and UTSC, and in consultation with our graduate units, the Faculty will develop a significant initiative to engage with faculty and graduate students on graduate supervision. We will consider ways to support supervision, and to foster a culture of learning for faculty, including workshops focused on supervision and mentorship. Ultimately, improving supervisory skills will positively impact the next generation of faculty, given that students learn supervisory skills from their own supervisors.

SUPPORT FOR NON-ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

Concerns about future employment are a significant source of stress for many students entering the tight labour market for academic employment, or who have career aspirations outside academia. Although academic positions are the goal of many, they are certainly not the only desirable career option for graduates, and do not define a successful graduate degree. Students and supervisors are not always aware of the spectrum of non-academic career opportunities, and units can explore new ways to discuss and frame these pathways, including consideration of how professional outcomes intersect with program design. A&S will work with units and with SGS to coordinate professional development offerings, with an enhanced focus on experiential learning opportunities for graduate students.

Creating a Culture of Entrepreneurship and Innovation

A&S has an impressive history of supporting student innovation through the Impact Centre, primarily in the physical sciences. The Faculty is re-imagining this Centre and how we deliver entrepreneurship education for undergraduate and graduate students in A&S, including supporting student-led start-ups through an incubation/acceleration program. The Centre will be re-named and, under new leadership, will move into the Schwartz Reisman Innovation Centre; in partnership with academic units, the Centre will provide a base for fostering and promoting student talent and creativity.

Summary

Our proposed investments in undergraduate and graduate student support are ambitious but will yield significant benefits in the long term. Undergraduates will have access to a new Bachelor of Arts & Science degree, as well as pedagogical initiatives aimed at providing new skills in innovative areas of study. Graduate students will benefit from enhanced funding, as well as improvements in program design and supervision. Enriched support for students, with consideration paid not only to their intellectual development but also to their happiness and mental health, will have positive impacts on the quality of undergraduate and graduate education. A renewed focus on enhancing student experience will support our mission as an internationally recognized centre of excellence for teaching and research.

PRIORITY

3

Indigenous Research, Teaching, and Learning

The Faculty of Arts & Science is committed to Indigenous-related research, teaching, and learning in two primary ways.

First, A&S is committed to fostering a vibrant and welcoming culture of research, teaching, and learning for Indigenous faculty and students that respects Indigenous ways of knowing and that includes significant engagement with Indigenous communities and nations both in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. Second, A&S is committed to encouraging positive change stemming from awareness of the role the University and the Faculty have played in destructive colonial practices.

Across many departments, centres, and Colleges of A&S, faculty, students, and staff are working systematically to ensure that research and research ethics, curricula, space and wayfinding, and student experience are meaningfully informed by the acknowledgement and understanding that we all work on traditional Indigenous lands.

As we plan for the next five years, the Faculty must take a leading role in asking and answering the following questions: What would it take to make Arts & Science a more attractive place for Indigenous faculty, students, and staff to research, study, and work? How do our cultures and infrastructures of research and teaching need to change in order to support all faculty, students, and staff to understand how they can positively transform their disciplines by actively engaging with Indigenous research, teaching, and learning?

Since the establishment of the Indigenous Teaching and Learning Working Group in 2016, and the subsequent formation of the Dean's Advisory Committee on Indigenous Teaching and Learning in 2018, the Faculty has taken many steps to realize these commitments. In the Dean's Office, the A&S Indigenous Teaching and Learning Liaison was hired in a joint appointment with the Centre for Indigenous Studies in 2018. The Special Advisor to the Dean on Indigenous Issues was appointed in 2019. A staff position focused on Indigenous partnerships and community outreach will be in place by spring 2020. In addition, all seven Colleges and a number of departments have been actively working on transforming research and teaching cultures as well as student experience, by developing new courses, experiential learning and research initiatives, hiring Indigenous staff and faculty, and actively recruiting and supporting Indigenous students.

In the next five years, A&S will focus on further realizing its commitments to transform itself to better support Indigenous research, teaching, and learning across the arts and sciences in four primary areas:

- Supporting the Centre for Indigenous Studies to more fully realize its research and teaching mission through initiating a graduate program, enhancing language instruction, and becoming an EDU-A.
- Beginning the process of building dedicated space for an Indigenous "hub" or "college" in partnership with the Provost's Office. The Centre for Indigenous Studies and First Nations House will play a leading role in determining the vision for this space.
- Instituting a strategy for cultivating opportunities and structural support for Indigenous-related research partnerships, language instruction, and experiential and land-based learning, in part through supporting more intentional partnerships and community outreach with Indigenous nations and organizations.
- Developing and implementing a multi-year strategy for the hiring of Indigenous faculty and staff, and for the active recruitment of Indigenous undergraduate and graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. This strategy must also include transformations in the A&S research and teaching culture to support and retain these members of our community (e.g., community-based courses, research protocols).



PRIORITY

4

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

In his statement on Diversity and Inclusion, the President of the University of Toronto observes, “Diversity, inclusion, respect, and civility are among the University of Toronto’s fundamental values.

Outstanding scholarship, teaching, and learning can thrive only in an environment that embraces the broadest range of people and encourages the free expression of their diverse perspectives. Indeed, these values speak to the very mission of the University. They spark education, discovery, and understanding and so take their place among humanity’s greatest forces for good.” The Faculty of Arts & Science is committed to this emphasis on diversity and inclusion: our academic and research missions are enriched when we treat all people fairly, while recognizing and respecting their differences; when we hear all voices at the table; and when we recognize and celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of everyone in the Faculty.

Promoting EDI through Leadership

As of July 1, 2019, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is included within the portfolio of the Vice-Dean, Faculty, Academic Life & Equity (formerly the Vice-Dean, Faculty & Academic Life), who will Chair a new A&S EDI Committee. EDI will also be enhanced by ensuring that A&S leaders are responsive to policies and procedures aimed at promoting diversity and inclusivity. Chairs and Directors already take part in training that promotes awareness of unconscious bias, primarily focused on the hiring process. In 2019, the Faculty partnered with TIDE (the Toronto Initiative for Diversity & Excellence) to offer customized programming for A&S academic administrators, and we are members of the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity.

Enhancing EDI in our Faculty Complement & Staff

In recent years, the faculty complement in A&S has become increasingly diverse. Women now make up over 40 per cent of professors at the Assistant level. Nevertheless, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) faculty are underrepresented across the Faculty, and women continue to be underrepresented in science and quantitative fields, and at the rank of Full Professor. A&S is committed to upholding principles of diversity and promoting equity in recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of faculty. The Dean has commissioned a new A&S EDI Committee with a mandate to facilitate modifications to the Faculty’s policies and procedures, and develop recommendations for best practices, to enhance EDI. The Committee will be tasked with identifying barriers faced by members of disadvantaged and marginalized groups (while recognizing that many individuals will belong to several intersecting groups), and proposing initiatives aimed at promoting diversity and fostering a truly inclusive environment.

The Faculty is committed to diversity in our faculty complement, which we will achieve through focused initiatives on hiring and retention, including: being proactive in our use of Provostial funding programs targeted to increase diversity by coordinating and communicating to our units these programs’ timelines and processes; developing improved EDI guidelines for academic units to use in their requests for academic appointments; enhancing training programs for Dean’s representatives on search committees to provide optimal consistency in meeting the Faculty’s goals in relation to searches; and increasing



Priorities

retention of diverse candidates by working closely with academic administrators to build healthy workplace environments that proactively promote retention.

We will facilitate career progression through the ranks for underrepresented faculty by reviewing and revising processes that may unintentionally limit progress. We will also re-establish the Women in Arts & Science network, and we will seek guidance from the institutional Black Faculty Working Group in the development of similar A&S networks for Black faculty, as well as faculty from other underrepresented groups. We will ensure all academic administrators understand the importance of being attentive to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in their actions and decision-making, and we will continue to work toward increased representation of women and BIPOC faculty as leaders throughout A&S. For example, the A&S EDI Committee will recommend how principles of EDI should be meaningfully incorporated into unit-level appointments of leadership roles (e.g., Associate Chairs).

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for staff at the University of Toronto fall within the portfolio of the Vice-President, Human Resources and Equity (VPHRE). We will continue to work in collaboration with the VPHRE to promote a diverse and inclusive environment in which our staff can thrive.

Enhancing EDI in our Student Body

While our student body is diverse, some groups are underrepresented. High school students from various backgrounds may not “see themselves” in the Faculty, and consequently may not view A&S as a desirable postsecondary destination. Moreover, some students who do enroll may experience barriers to academic opportunities. It is important not only that we have a diverse student body, but also that those students can participate fully in all that the Faculty offers.

Undergraduate Students. Our urban location provides an abundance of opportunities to engage in community-based outreach programs. We want to ensure that students across our city see themselves as potential members of A&S. A variety of highly successful outreach programs are already in place, largely led by units and student organizations. We will support, expand, and coordinate with these existing efforts so we can be more effective in reaching members of diverse groups, with a particular focus on those from socioeconomic or racialized groups currently underrepresented at U of T. We will also reduce any barriers to participation in the Faculty so that our diverse student body has access to a truly inclusive student experience. For example, we will explore the possibility of broad-based admissions as a means of increasing diversity within the student population. We will continue to partner with the Colleges on promoting accessibility to the Faculty through programs such as Academic Bridging at Woodsworth College, which provides an avenue through which individuals who have been out of school for years can gain entry into A&S. We are also committed to accessibility and equity in our co-curricular opportunities, as well as our international and experiential learning opportunities.

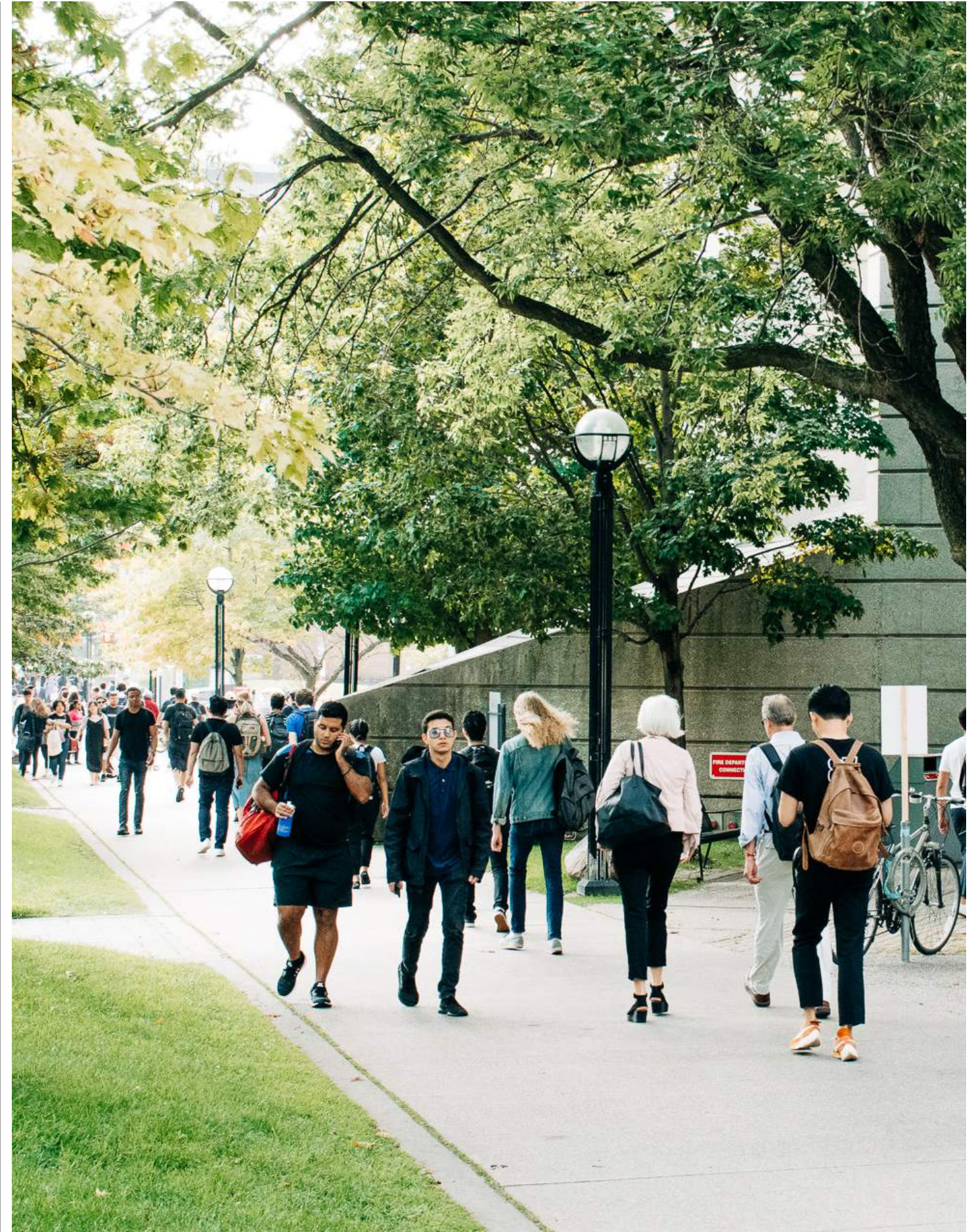
Graduate Students. A&S will provide continued support for doctoral recruitment awards including diversity-focused awards such as the Recognition of Excellence award, which assists units in recruiting high-calibre doctoral students whose admission aligns with diversity objectives. A key goal of this initiative, beyond redressing existing imbalances, is to encourage units to think more holistically about graduate student recruitment, and to bring to the forefront strategies and methods for recruiting, enrolling, and retaining a diverse graduate student body for the benefit of the University as a whole. We will explore mechanisms to facilitate the engagement of undergraduate students from underrepresented groups, from U of T and elsewhere, in thinking about graduate school as an option. In addition, the Faculty will work with SGS and individual units to develop in-program initiatives so that students from diverse groups feel welcome and have access to academic support.

Summary

A&S is committed to a community in which we recognize and celebrate the multiplicity of voices in the Faculty. By promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion, we can provide an enriched environment for our faculty, staff, and students. We support the development of a more diverse faculty complement, and will work to reduce any barriers to leadership roles. It is important to ensure that students from diverse groups can find role models among our faculty and academic leadership. At the same time, we recognize that recruitment of a diverse student body is essential if we are to train individuals who will themselves become leaders in our own ranks, as well as in our community more broadly.

➤ COMMITMENT TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

An increasing number of our students are registered with Accessibility Services and require a range of accommodations to ensure that they can effectively pursue their studies. Ongoing efforts to remove barriers arising from mental or physical health issues have had encouraging results. Nevertheless, we can do more to explore options for enhancing accessibility for incoming students, and to support the efforts of instructors who are delivering course content, ensuring that appropriate provisions are in place to create an inclusive experience from first year through to graduation. Many of our locations still pose challenges due to historical designs that do not include ramps or other basic accessibility features; full access to our classrooms, administrative offices, and services is essential if we are to promote the well-being of our students. We will continue to work with the office of the Vice-President, Operations and Real Estate Partnerships, to improve the accessibility of our buildings.



PRIORITY

5

Building Partnerships with our Local and Global Communities

Arts & Science has a crucial role to play in connecting the University with our local urban community, as well as our broader international community.

In his Three Priorities document, the President of the University of Toronto highlights the importance of the University engaging with our community for our mutual benefit. Throughout 2020-2025, Arts & Science will derive new strengths through partnerships: local, national, Indigenous, and international. We will raise our social profile by supporting research and teaching initiatives that deal with issues facing our local and broader communities, ranging from supporting refugees in the city to addressing climate change globally. These are issues that our faculty, staff, and students care about, and that make the Faculty more relevant and prominent within our immediate and larger communities.

The A&S Strategic Partnerships Office, established in July 2019, will support our goals for enhanced outreach, community engagement, internationalization, student experience, and research by creating new partnerships and supporting existing connections. Strategic partnerships with local and international organizations in the public and private sector, NGOs, and governments can bring significant value to our research and teaching mission. Our interdisciplinary expertise positions us to develop a range of strategic partnerships that can advance the research profile of A&S, U of T, and indeed, of Canada. Such partnerships can facilitate research discoveries by connecting scholars from around the world to explore questions of global significance, and enable integrated pedagogical initiatives where students learn while solving problems with local organizations.

Moving forward, we will promote projects that encourage community engagement with our academic mission. Many units have set up events, ranging from speaker series to summer camps, that are open to the community; we will provide better centralized communication of this multitude of events that

connect us to our community. We can draw on the successes of individual unit-level partnerships to develop strategies and “toolkits” for supporting such outreach activities more broadly within A&S. To strengthen our connections with Toronto’s large school boards, we will engage in collaborations that include staff in the A&S Registrar’s Office and the University’s Office of Student Recruitment. We will consider the development of centrally delivered public intellectual forums that are visible and accessible to our alumni, to the University, and to our broader city community.

Although partnerships outside the institution have the potential to provide enormous value to our teaching and research, our connections within the University are also crucial. We offer a variety of academic programming in collaboration with other divisions and will continue to work with our partners across the institution to ensure that these programs offer students the best possible education and experience. In addition, we will continue to support our researchers in developing projects that span divisions. For example, we can build on the success of the XSEED grants, that support research undertaken by researchers in A&S and the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, recognizing the importance of initiatives that bring together scholars with different perspectives and methodological expertise.

Arts & Science has more than 260,000 alumni living in at least 190 countries around the globe. Our alumni occupy significant roles in government, education, business, and the arts in Canada and around the world. These individuals contribute enormously to our mission, and we can build additional partnerships with them to the benefit of our faculty and students. We capitalize on alumni mentorship through initiatives such as the various



Priorities

long-standing College-based mentorship programs and A&S's highly successful "Backpack to Briefcase" (b2B) program, which brings together students with alumni who can provide guidance relevant to their career interests. We will promote new alumni engagement opportunities in the future, including those for graduate students interested in exploring non-academic career paths.

In 2020, we have started an ambitious new Advancement initiative, beginning with wide-reaching consultations for a priority-setting exercise. Our Advancement team is preparing for the next campaign to celebrate the University's bicentennial in 2027. With a transparent and streamlined set of priorities, the Faculty will be well poised to build the supports we need to achieve our goals for the immediate and longer term.

Summary

Outreach and partnerships enrich opportunities for faculty and students and open new and creative areas of research and scholarship. We will do more to recognize and support the efforts of faculty, staff, students, and alumni who build connections that bring value to the A&S community and elevate the profile of the Faculty within the University and beyond. A new communication strategy for highlighting and celebrating our community engagements, as well as the development of high-profile Faculty-wide activities, will help bring a greater sense of pride and identity to the Faculty.



PRIORITY

6

A&S Operations

A&S faculty, staff, and students are supported by infrastructure and operational services that aim to provide the best possible environment for teaching and research.

Space & Infrastructure

Four significant space and infrastructure challenges currently limit the aspirations of our academic units. First, as a result of A&S investments in faculty complement, increases in our postdoctoral fellow complement, years of provincially driven graduate expansion, and changes in pedagogy, almost all of our units have now reached the limits of their physical space. This constrains their current operations and limits their abilities to take advantage of new opportunities in research and teaching. Second, as a result of space limitations, several of our units are spread across multiple buildings, leading to problems for morale, sense of community, research collaborations, and administrative coordination. Third, many of our units are in buildings that were not designed for their current purposes, and consequently operate in spaces that lack appropriate facilities for their disciplines. Finally, many of our older buildings need major infrastructure upgrades if they are to continue to function effectively.

A robust capital fund is critical if we are to create much-needed new spaces and undertake major renovations on existing spaces. This will include base allocations from the operating budget to replenish and expand the capital account. The Faculty will work with our partners across the downtown campus, including the Vice-President, Operations and Real Estate Partnerships, the other St. George-based divisions, and the Colleges, to renovate existing and develop new spaces. New buildings and major renovations should, where appropriate, promote interdisciplinary academic activities with research, teaching, and informal spaces that leverage our strengths as a Faculty of Arts and Science. This may involve placing units in buildings according to academic themes and exploring a variety of connections to link units across and within buildings. We will develop best practices and guidelines for A&S unit leaders regarding how to undertake improvements and renovations to their spaces, including information about timelines, governance, and funding.

📍 COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

New buildings and major renovations will meet U of T standards of environmental sustainability (which often exceed provincial and national standards). Our buildings will be designed to promote respect for the environment and foster sustainable practices within the communities that live and work in them. We will also explore opportunities to reduce environmental impacts throughout all A&S operations, for example, by reducing our use of single-use plastics, and supporting the use of digital technologies, such as virtual meeting spaces as an alternative to carbon-intensive travel.



Priorities

Considering our critical space needs, we are adding leadership and staff capacity; the Dean recently created a new Associate Dean, Space & Infrastructure position, and new additional staff members have been approved for the Faculty's Infrastructure Planning office.

Communications & Public Affairs

Communications plays a key role in leveraging our strengths by telling the stories that promote the achievements of the A&S community and enhance our profile locally and internationally. Communications is also critical to the sound functioning of the Faculty by ensuring that our internal messaging builds community and supports the work of faculty, staff, and students.

In "Leveraging our Strengths," our thinking and planning is guided by two overarching goals around communications. We aim to build reputation by developing and investing in content strategies that promote the Faculty's relevance and impact. We are also focused on supporting internal community, by building collaborative relationships and engagement strategies that help create pride of place and a stronger, more connected A&S.

Throughout the next five years, we will focus on building a strong foundation that empowers communicators to identify, create, and plan meaningful communications across our community, and to convey that Arts & Science is a place of excellence, innovation, and global significance.

Information & Instructional Technology

The Faculty is committed to the continued modernization and investment in information technology services that facilitate the teaching and research mission of the University. Over the next five to ten years, a continued focus on the provision of coordinated, transformative, state-of-the-art IT services will enable us to leverage our strengths. The IT mandate is broad, with Information & Instructional Technology (IIT) providing support to more than 45 units for public web solutions,

collaborative technology, custom application development, and IT infrastructure modernization. In addition, we are committed to building the infrastructure needed to support emerging digital pedagogies. We recognize the importance of departmental IT, present in many of the science and social science departments, which provides much-needed IT support for both teaching and research activities.

In 2019, the University's Chief Information Officer (CIO) led the development of a University IT strategic plan related to the transformation of information technology. A&S is positioned as an institutional partner in this transformation. Divisional IT will continue to work with institutional Information Technology Services (ITS) on the rollout and support for institutional technology initiatives. We will collaborate with the Director of Institutional Research and Data Governance, and the IRDG team, on the new Data Governance Program that will drive the creation of high-quality data and sound institutional data practices. In addition, we will collaborate with ITS on institutional security and risk programs, with the aim of better protecting IT infrastructure in an increasingly threatening security landscape.

Summary

In order to achieve our ambitious research and teaching goals, A&S must have strong operational supports in place. We will build capital funds with the aim of investing in new and improved spaces for faculty, staff, and students. Our communications strategy will allow us to more effectively leverage our strengths by promoting our achievements locally and globally. Our IT resources will ensure that our students and researchers have access to leading-edge technology in their work. The Faculty aims to provide space, infrastructure, and operational supports that will achieve the best possible experience for faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows, and students in their work and learning environments.

📍 COMMITMENT TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

In addition to achieving academic goals, new builds and major renovations should promote the health and well-being of everyone using these spaces. It is important to consider not only office and research spaces, but also classrooms, meeting rooms, event spaces, informal and non-assignable spaces (especially for graduate and undergraduate students), flexible spaces, food service and eating spaces, and green and outside spaces, including the public realm between buildings. It is essential for the well-being of students, faculty, and staff to ensure that spaces are available to build community and connections on campus, with locations for social events and informal gatherings, as well as areas for quiet reflection. Our goal is to create space that is welcoming, accessible, and safe, thereby promoting well-being for all.



BY THE NUMBERS



The Faculty of Arts & Science is the heart of Canada's leading research and teaching university. With an unparalleled breadth of programs in the Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences, Arts & Science is one of the most comprehensive and diverse academic divisions in the world.

Facts and figures don't tell the full story, but here are a few to help illustrate the breadth and depth of the Faculty.



2,400+

undergraduate courses

330

undergraduate programs

27,000+

undergraduate students



260,000+

alumni in more than 190 countries worldwide

4,500+

graduate students

100+

graduate programs

RANKED 1ST

(Canadian universities)

in Times Higher Education World University Rankings

QS World University Rankings

Shanghai Jiao Tong University's Academic Ranking of World Universities

National Taiwan University Ranking

16

A&S departmental units in the **top 20 worldwide** (QS World University Rankings)



2,864

appointed faculty and staff



IMPLEMENTING OUR PLAN

By leveraging our strengths as a Faculty of Arts *and* Science, we will maximize our potential as an international leader in research and teaching.

As we carry out “Leveraging our Strengths,” we will create an Implementation Plan that identifies a timeline for, and decanal leadership role associated with, each goal. At the end of each academic year, the Dean will provide an update on progress made toward implementing this academic plan. Our new unit-level planning process will, in addition, provide a means for us to evaluate progress toward our goals within units, as well as across the Faculty more broadly. “A&S Updates,” a new weekly communication from the Dean’s office, will provide up-to-date information about key initiatives and achievements related to this Plan.

Over the next five years, we have the opportunity to advance our mission – excellence in research and excellence in teaching – while providing the best possible supports to our faculty, students, and staff. We will work to enhance research in A&S through the identification and development of new funding and partnership opportunities, and through promoting recognition of our outstanding scholars, providing an environment in which our researchers can push beyond the curve. We will create new educational opportunities for our students, enriching their experiences inside and outside the classroom. We will work to provide additional funding and supports for our graduate students, collaborating with our units and with UTM and UTSC to ensure high-quality supervision and research opportunities. We will work with our partners across the institution to support mental health and well-being for all our students, staff, and faculty. We are mindful of the need to support Indigenous research and teaching across the Faculty. We recognize the value of our partnerships, within and beyond the institution, and our role within our communities – local, national, and international – as we work toward our goals. As we implement this plan, we will be attentive to the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion in all that we do. By leveraging our strengths as a Faculty of Arts *and* Science, we will maximize our potential as an international leader in research and teaching.

“Leveraging our Strengths” positions the Faculty as one of the top centres of innovative research and teaching excellence worldwide.



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

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