



Meric S. Gertler, CM, FRSC, FBA, FAcSS  
*President*

**To:** Staff in University of Toronto Communications  
Governing Council  
Academic Board  
Business Board  
University Affairs Board  
UTM Campus Council  
UTSC Campus Council  
Principals, Deans, Academic Directors, and Chairs  
Professionals and Managerial Staff  
Confidential Staff  
President of UTFA  
Presidents of Employee Unions  
Presidents of APUS, GSU, SCSU, UTMSU and UTSU  
President, University of Toronto Alumni Association (UTAA)

**From:** Professor Meric Gertler, President

**Date:** July 21, 2022

**Re:** **Retirement of Mr. David Estok as Vice-President, Communications**

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I am writing with very mixed emotions to let you know that David Estok has decided to retire from his position as Vice-President, Communications effective September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

David was appointed to the inaugural position of Vice-President, Communications in 2015 following a comprehensive review of institutional communications and reappointed in 2020. The mandate of the Vice-President was to transform the University's communications function into a strategic asset that supported the University's goals related to funding, reputation, and ranking.

Over the course of the past seven and a half years, David has successfully built a comprehensive, institutional communications operation and an award-winning team. Among their many successes are the growth in the University's channels to 'tell our story' with the objective of demonstrating the University's accomplishments and its relevance and impact. This has included pioneering the adoption of a consistent 'brand journalism' approach, creating a Content Hub (a consolidation of the University's communication channels) forming an innovative, new Brand Hub (integrated institutional marketing and brand strategy, with shared reporting to Advancement). Many of these innovations have now been adopted as best practices by peer institutions.

Under David's leadership, the communications teams on each of our three campuses have come together under an innovative model to forge a more unified approach to story-telling, issues management, internal communications, and marketing. Among the many accomplishments, David and his team have also led the creation of new communications vehicles, including 'The Provost's Weekly Digest', 'In The Media', 'Published Today', a completely revamped 'The Bulletin', and a rethinking and redesign of the award-winning 'University of Toronto Magazine'. As we all know, the past two years have been challenging ones for our community, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. The unprecedented demands on communications have been particularly acute. Yet, David and his team responded nimbly by creating the popular UTogether website, developing important innovations such as the "What's Next" podcast, bringing the University's expertise to the wider public at a time when it was so badly needed and working closely with communications colleagues across the University to provide timely information on the pandemic.

During this same time, David and his team, along with colleagues from DUA, launched a new brand campaign – *Defy Gravity*. The new brand position of inclusive excellence, and the three pillars – excellence, access and a caring community – will form key themes in our marketing and communications work moving forward.

Having played a major role in helping the University navigate its way through the pandemic, David has decided to step down so that he can spend more time with his family and pursue other interests.

I am very grateful to David for his many contributions during this time. I will share further information shortly about the transition in leadership of the portfolio, as well as plans to recognize David's achievements appropriately, so that everyone will have an opportunity to thank him for his service to the University.

In the meantime, please join me in wishing David well in his future endeavours.