



Anna Kennedy, FCPA, FCA  
*Chair of the Governing Council*

**Memorandum to:** Governing Council  
Academic Board  
Business Board  
University Affairs Board  
UTM Campus Council  
UTSC Campus Council  
College of Electors  
Principals, Deans, Academic Directors, and Chairs  
Professionals and Managerial Staff  
Advancement Professional Staff  
Confidential Staff  
President, UTFA  
Presidents of Employee Unions  
Presidents of APUS, GSU, SCSU, UTMSU and UTSU  
President, University of Toronto Alumni Association

**From:** Anna Kennedy  
Chair of the Governing Council

**Date:** March 26, 2025

**Re:** **Appointment of the 17<sup>th</sup> President of the University of Toronto**

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At a special meeting this morning, the Governing Council approved the appointment of Melanie Woodin as the 17<sup>th</sup> President of the University of Toronto for a five-year term, effective July 1, 2025. Her appointment follows an extensive international search initiated in March of last year. Professor Woodin will succeed Professor Meric S. Gertler, who has served as President since November 2013.

Professor Woodin has been Dean of the University's Faculty of Arts and Science, Canada's largest and most comprehensive Faculty, since 2019. A Professor in the Department of Cell & Systems Biology, she has authored or co-authored over 50 academic papers and book chapters. Her research focuses on understanding how the brain functions by studying neuronal circuits and the mechanisms underlying learning and memory.

She joined the University of Toronto in 2004 as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Zoology following postdoctoral study at the University of California, Berkeley. In 2017 she was promoted to full professor in the Department of Cell & Systems Biology. She holds a BSc in Biology and a MSc in Zoology from the University of Toronto and a PhD in Neuroscience from the University of Calgary. Prior to becoming Dean in 2019, Professor Woodin served

as the Vice-Dean, Interdivisional Partnerships and the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Issues and Academic Planning. From 2014-15 she was the Associate Chair, Undergraduate in the Department of Cell and Systems Biology and from 2015-17 she was the Director, Human Biology Program.

A highly accomplished scientist, she has received research funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Society of Canada, among others. In 2019 she was named as one of five researchers at U of T and its affiliated hospitals to receive a New Ideas Award for her work using gene therapy to delay the onset of symptoms in neurodegenerative disease. She serves as a director at the Vector Institute and served as the president of the Canadian Association for Neuroscience.

Professor Woodin is a highly respected, experienced academic administrator. She combines a deep understanding of the complexity of the University of Toronto and its partnerships with a passionate commitment to its world-class research and teaching mission. She brings an unwavering belief in the transformative impacts of universities, in general, and the University of Toronto in particular. With her extensive experience and proven track-record of success, Professor Woodin is exceptionally well-suited to lead the University into its third century.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the [Presidential Search Committee](#) for the substantial investment of their time and for the invaluable knowledge and judgement they brought to this critical process. In addition, I would also like to thank all members of the University community and beyond for your thoughtful input that guided the work of the Committee.

Please see the U of T News story at [https://www.utoronto.ca/news/university-toronto-names-its-17<sup>th</sup>-president](https://www.utoronto.ca/news/university-toronto-names-its-17th-president)