UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

FOR INFORMATION **PUBLIC** **OPEN SESSION**

TO: UTSC Campus Affairs Committee

SPONSOR: Linda Johnston, Vice-President & Principal, UTSC
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DATE: September 18, 2025 for October 15, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Annual Report: Community Partnerships and Engagement, 2025

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Sections 5.1 and 5.9 of the UTSC Campus Affairs Committee *Terms of Reference* states that
the Committee receives annually, from the appropriate administrators, reports on services within
its areas of responsibility, including relations with the campus's external community.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. UTSC Campus Affairs Committee [For Information] (October 15, 2025)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

No previous action in governance has been taken on this item.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Care is at the heart of every meaningful connection. It is the substance that molds the way we
listen, collaborate, and create spaces where all voices are valued.

The pages ahead explore the joy that care brings us as humans, the grounding it offers us as
learners, and the fire it ignites in us as global change-makers.

Through "With Care", we build on the groundwork laid by U of T Scarborough's Partnership & Engagement Framework, reflecting on its application in three core themes: Research as Resistance, Pathways to Access, and Engagement with Purpose.

"With Care" invites us to prioritize care, not just as a concept, but as a living practice—one that sustains us, grounds us, and inspires us to create a more just and connected world.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Not applicable

RECOMMENDATION:

Presented for information

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

Community Partnerships and Engagement Annual Report

UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

WITH CARE

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & ENGAGEMENT | 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

HONOURING GENERATIONS OF CARE AND COMMUNITY

As a team that's very passionate about the community we call home, we're deeply thankful to live and work within Turtle Island, and for the Indigenous peoples whose stewardship across generations have cultivated vibrant, nurturing relationships with each other and with the land. Their wisdom continues to guide us in remembering that community flourishes when tended with care. As we reflect on the unique season we are in today, we hold space for the journeys of those who continue to build rooted communities—often while navigating histories of trauma and injustice.

A NOTE FROM PRINCIPAL JOHNSTON

" I'm thrilled to share that we've embarked upon a new chapter for the Office of Community Partnerships & Engagement (CPE) at the University of Toronto Scarborough this year.

As of May 1, 2025, CPE reports directly into the Office of the Vice-President and Principal (OVPP) — a change that brings the incredible value of CPE closer to the heart of our campus leadership and strengthens the visibility of the work they do.

CPE embodies values that matter at U of T Scarborough—reciprocity, reconciliation and collaboration— while aligning with our strategic plan of Inspiring Inclusive Excellence. Through their programs and partnerships, they open doors, create opportunities and build connections that positively impact our community.

Under Kimberley Tull's leadership, I'm confident CPE will continue to grow its impact while keeping a Culture of Care at the heart of everything they do. I'm proud of the work they've accomplished and I look forward to seeing CPE deepen these meaningful partnerships in the years ahead. "

Linda Johnston

Principal, U of T Scarborough and Vice President, the University of Toronto

𝒜 CULTURE OF CARE

Care is at the heart of every meaningful connection. It is the substance that molds the way we listen, collaborate, and create spaces where all voices are valued.

Community Partnerships & Engagement (CPE) is pleased to present this year's annual report, "With Care". The pages ahead explore the joy that care brings us as humans, the grounding it offers us as learners, and the fire it ignites in us as global change-makers.

Through "With Care", we build on the groundwork laid by U of T Scarborough's Partnership & Engagement Framework, reflecting on its application in three core themes: Research as Resistance, Pathways to Access, and Engagement with Purpose.

Each theme is accompanied by a colouring page: an interactive moment of pause to reflect on how care can drive us towards a more vibrant community.

The stories in this report are windows into the collaborative spirit that animates our community. They showcase the work of our colleagues and collaborators' hands and hearts.

While CPE is proud to support, amplify, and sometimes contribute directly contribute to these initiatives, these projects belong to the communities who lead them. We are grateful to celebrate the leadership, vision, and relationships behind these initiatives.

"With Care" invites us to prioritize care, not just as a concept, but as a living practice—one that sustains us, grounds us, and inspires us to create a more just and connected world.

With Care,
Community Partnerships & Engagement

CONTENTS

RESEARCH AS RESISTANCE

*ANCHORING SCHOLARSHIP
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE*

Research As Resistance explores the powerful role of scholarship as a catalyst for social change. Research, when rooted in community, has the potential to challenge long-standing systems of inequity and amplify the voices of those who have been historically misrepresented. Through reciprocal, community-informed research, we uncover new narratives, diffuse power imbalances, and push the boundaries of what knowledge can achieve.

The KONA Project

An Initiative by The Black Health Equity Lab (BHEL)

Launched in 2022, the Kona Project—the first research initiative funded by the Connaught Foundation Major Research Challenge for Black Researchers Fund—is a groundbreaking initiative by The Black Health Equity Lab (BHEL) bringing together Black researchers, community health leaders, community members, and students to increase the research capacity that supports the development of effective and evidenced-based strategies to eliminate Black health disparities.

BHEL hosts Community-Researcher Conversations at TAIBU CHC and Blackhurst Cultural Centre

At its core, The Kona Project centres community voices. Ensuring the work remains rooted in lived experiences, 12 Black researchers from the University of Toronto, 12 Community Health Leaders from the GTA and over 40 students and from the University of Toronto have come together to identify and model best practices for structuring and managing equitable multi-sectoral community-led research partnerships between universities, health systems and Black communities for long-term impact. Utilizing U of T Scarborough's Partnership & Engagement Framework to shape dialogue and process, the initiative is refining best practices for equitable, multi-sectoral partnerships between universities, health systems, and Black communities.

Students take a deep dive into participatory planning—consulting with Black community members across the province through focus groups to develop a critical community-based understanding of the health research priorities of the Black community to guide the group's work as Black researchers and service providers. With this input, the initiative seeks to develop best practices that will guide community-academic partnerships with and for Black communities.

The Kona Project hopes to evolve into a long-term initiative that supports research to address and eliminate health disparities that Black communities in Canada are experiencing. A key priority is building and leveraging resources to support students and the next generation of Black health researchers through mentorship from faculty and community leaders. With a focus on sustainable partnerships and student development, the project is laying the foundation for future Black health researchers and advancing long-term health equity solutions.

"This has been a wonderful experience. I appreciate bringing together community organizations and researchers into the same space together and sharing perspectives, challenges and learnings. We need more dialogue about community research practices and goals in the Black community in Canada. It was important to me as a researcher to understand the different values that are important to community partners—transparency, trust, accountability."

- Professor Notisha Massaquoi, Founder of the Black Health Equity Lab and Assistant Professor at The Department of Health and Society, U of T Scarborough

Notisha Massaquoi, Founder of the Black Health Equity Lab and Assistant Professor at The Department of Health and Society, U of T Scarborough

Captivate

UTSC's Digital Storytelling Competition

Storytelling has always been a powerful way to preserve culture, spark change, and inspire action. At UTSC, The Library and Indigenous Initiatives have come together to champion the power of storytelling through Captivate, a digital competition that empowers students to share personal narratives. Launched in 2022 by The BRIDGE—a collaboration between The Library and The Department of Management—the competition runs every Fall term and is open to students in all disciplines; providing mentorship and hands-on experience in research and digital media.

From left to right: Junyoung Moon, Professor Joanna Heathcote, Professor Emeritus Sandford Borins, Jennifer Moroz, Mariana Jardim, Carol Ducharme, Stephanie Perpick, Raquel Russell

"I am extremely grateful for the experience, as it has given me a deeper appreciation for storytelling. I also want to express my thanks to the judges and organizers for making this event possible. It has truly been a memorable highlight of my university journey."

- Tolulope Adegaye, 3rd year student, Human Biology and French Co-op, Captivate 2023, 3rd Place Winner

Participants engage in kick-off event with Shayla Ouelette Stonechild

Captivate equips students with the skills to create compelling content, navigate digital tools, and understand the storyteller's role in advancing inclusion. This past year, more than 55 students engaged in the program, with 29 submitting digital narratives. A Kick-Off event with Indigenous entrepreneur Shayla Ouellette Stonechild, made possible through PIE (Pedagogies of Inclusive Excellence) funding, set the stage for self-paced learning, culminating in an Awards Night and Live Viewing event.

Shayla, along with other external partners, inspired students while deepening their understanding of Indigenous storytelling practices. By embedding Indigenous principles, expanding outreach, and strengthening partnerships, Captivate continues to amplify diverse voices and create space for authentic storytelling at UTSC.
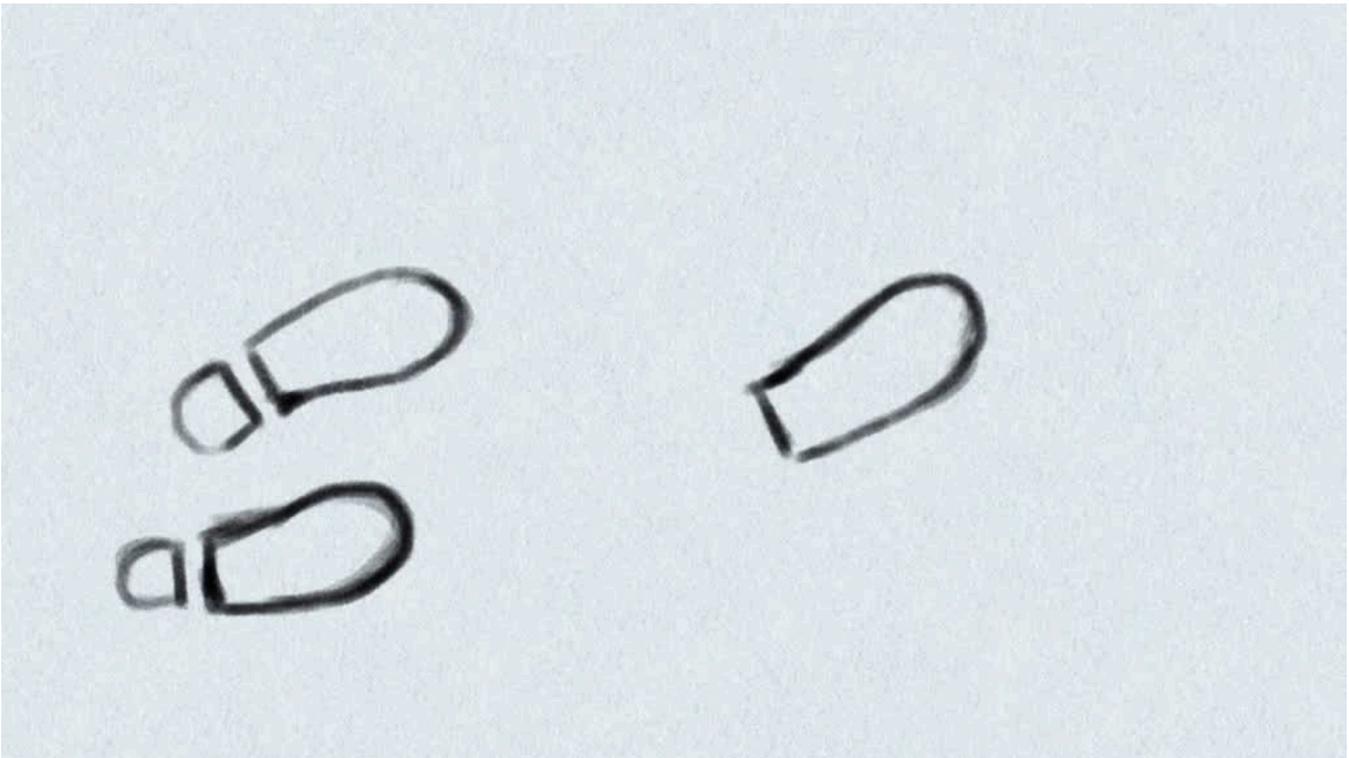
The first place winning submission of the Captivate Competition, by Eliyshia Binarto

The second place winning submission of the Captivate Competition, by Afrin Azme

The third place winning submission of the Captivate Competition, by Clariebel Sutanto

"My Captivate storytelling project is about adapting. I talk about moving around different places and how that shapes me. I also talk about the effects of it and also the growth, opportunities and the resilience that comes with it. I use clips from my life to give viewers a sense of who I am."

- Afrin Azme, 2nd place winner of the Captivate Competition

Celebrating Tamil Storytelling at UTSC

The Sophia Hilton Storytelling Fellowship

The Sophia Hilton Storytelling Fellowship is showcasing the art of storytelling while preserving Tamil folk culture. Now in its third year, this unique opportunity allows up to three students each year to hone their storytelling skills through immersive projects, from podcasts to live performances, all while contributing to the UTSC Library's support of Tamil Studies.

The Premiere of Flavours in Fusion: Stories of Tamil Food in Toronto

Anthropologist Brenda Beck, Founder of the Sophia Hilton Foundation

To date, eight students have received a total of $32,000 in funding, creating impactful works that engage both the UTSC and GTA communities. The Fellowship also strengthens the Digital Tamil Studies Project, an international initiative dedicated to the digital preservation and publication of high-quality Tamil-language materials. Students, particularly those with Tamil language skills, gain hands-on experience in digital scholarship and collection development.

In March 2025, the UTSC Library Storytelling Fellows premiered Flavours in Fusion: Stories of Tamil Food in Toronto, a short documentary celebrating the rich tapestry of Tamil fusion cuisine. Through storytelling and firsthand insights from local chefs, the event offered a sensory journey into how Tamil culinary traditions continue to evolve and thrive in the city. The fellowship is ensuring that Tamil stories, voices, and histories are not only preserved, but shared in dynamic and engaging ways.

"Participating in the Sophia Hilton Storytelling Fellowship gave me the opportunity to share my identity as a Canadian with Sri Lankan roots and to share stories that reflect the beauty of its culture."

- Amari Sabeshan, 2nd year student, Neuroscience Co-op, 2024/2025 Sophia Hilton Storytelling Fellow

SDG Scholars Academy

Catalyzing Equitable Actions that Maximize the Societal Impact of SDGs Research and Inform Future Goals

From left to right: Elizabeth Buckner, Matt Ratto, Javeria Sajid, Simon Darnell, Abisha Pathmanathan, Erica Di Ruggiero, Kaja Jasinska, Nicoda Foster

Launched in May 2023, the SDGs@UofT initiative is a tri-campus network dedicated to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through transdisciplinary research, collaboration, and action. By uniting faculty, trainees, and staff, this initiative empowers collective change-making for a more equitable and sustainable future.

In its first two years, SDGs@UofT has already made a significant impact. SDGs@UofT generates research impact through its Scholars Academy, a think tank that brings together a diverse community of scholars, policy makers, and practitioners to advance transdisciplinary collaboration on the SDGs. The Academy includes 12 Fellows and 202 Affiliates who contribute to research, training, and knowledge mobilization that informs policy and practice. It also provided $370,809 in Catalyst and Synthesis Grants, supporting groundbreaking projects across disciplines.

A renewed SDGs Student Advisory Committee comprised of nine members, representing eight faculties across all three campuses, ensures that student voices remain central to the initiative. Additionally, $40,500 in student awards was granted to 22 graduate students and five undergraduate students from 9 faculties and across 17 departments to advance their research. Beyond funding and academic engagement, SDGs@UofT also co-sponsored the sustainability theme of "Hack the Valley," offering a $1,500 prize to students who successfully tackled the SDGs food security challenge.

Learn more about Conversations that Matter

Looking ahead, the initiative is set to expand its impact through strategic partnerships with local and global institutions, fostering cross-sector collaborations that drive meaningful action. A dedicated area of scholarship focused on knowledge co-production will promote transformative, participatory research methods. Student leadership opportunities will be further enhanced through advisory and trainee programs, ensuring the next generation of scholars is empowered to lead.

Additionally, Conversations that Matter, the initiative's deliberative dialogue series, will bring together academics, civil society, and decision-makers to discuss innovations that advance the SDGs, creating a dynamic space for dialogue and action. Through these efforts, SDGs@UofT continues to shape a university-wide movement dedicated to knowledge, collaboration, and real-world solutions for a better future.

A design thinking workshop in collaboration with SICIEEIL

The Global Classroom for Democracy Innovation

Cross-Cultural Learning in Globally-Connected Classrooms

The Global Classroom for Democracy Innovation (GCDI) brings together students from U of T Scarborough, Stellenbosch University (South Africa), and University West (Sweden) to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. Through a dynamic cross-cultural, experiential learning format, students collaborate in globally-connected classrooms, using design thinking to develop and implement innovative solutions to local and global issues like climate change, food security, and democracy.

Since its launch in 2020, GCDI has:

- Engaged over 400 students across 10+ universities worldwide, connecting young leaders in Canada, South Africa, and Sweden.
- Published five academic and non-academic articles on global learning and innovation.
- Fundraised over $120,000 in teaching and experiential learning grants to sustain its work.

As GCDI continues to evolve, it is deepening its impact through new partnerships and research initiatives. In Winter 2025, the program collaborated with UTSC's International Student Centre on a PIE (Pedagogies of Inclusive Excellence) grant, using the Intercultural Development Inventory to assess and enhance students' cultural competencies across different global contexts. This initiative further strengthened the program's ability to foster meaningful cross-cultural dialogue and engagement.

"Great program for fostering the next generation of climate leaders, while offering fresh perspectives to veteran climate activists."

- Krissan Veerasingam, Climate Reality Canada, Scarborough Environmental Association (SEA)
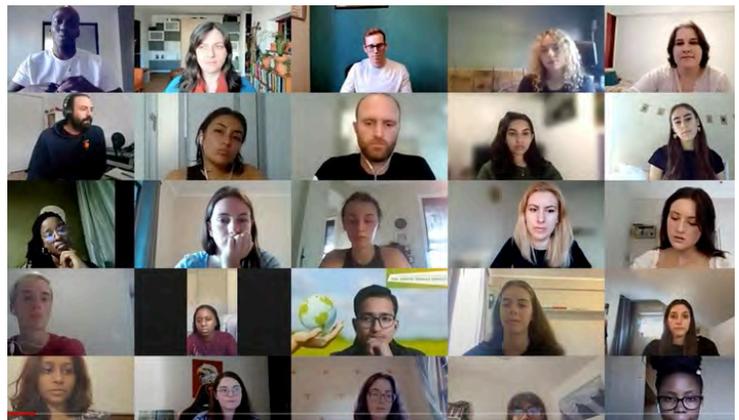
GCDI students from around the world meet over Zoom

Learn more about the GCDI by visiting inclusiveglobalclassrooms.org

In Fall 2025, GCDI hosted its Design Jam, bringing together students, educators, and researchers to explore new approaches in curriculum, teaching, and learning. This effort was led by GCDI co-founder Marco Adamovic (OISE PhD Student/Hart House staff member), whose research at OISE continues to shape the future of global experiential learning.

"I can clearly see the value of multi-continental collaboration and engagement, particularly in terms of a crisis that is so global."

- Stellenbosch University Student, South Africa

Looking ahead to Winter 2026, the program will expand its academic offerings with the launch of a new Global Classroom on 'Humanitarian Aid and Development' within the Department of Global Development Studies at UTSC. This course will provide students with a deeper understanding of humanitarian efforts worldwide while equipping them with practical skills to contribute meaningfully to global justice initiatives. The initiative is supported by interaction design non-profits Vancouver Design Nerds and Cape Town Design Nerds, fostering an environment where students engage with global non-profits and apply their learning in real-world contexts.

GCDI continues to position UTSC as a leader in global learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and experiential education, shaping the next generation of students to address complex global challenges. To ensure the long-term sustainability of GCDI, the team is preparing to apply for a larger SSHRC grant, which will provide critical funding to scale the program's reach and deepen its research impact.

"This workshop has given me a new perspective on what people can do in their everyday lives to help the climate. Designing an inclusive and democratized idea is difficult, but if you collaborate, it is more achievable."

- U of T Scarborough Student

CARES Cluster

Centring Community in Public Health

The Clusters of Scholarly Prominence Program (CSPP) is UTSC's flagship initiative for fostering strategic research collaborations. One of its latest projects, the Communities for Adaptation, Resilience, Equity, and Sustainability (CARES) Cluster, brings together the Department of Sociology and the Department of Health & Society to develop community-driven solutions to public health challenges.

Rooted in equity and sustainability, CARES focuses on innovative knowledge creation and practical strategies that support inclusive societies. The initiative aligns with the UN Research Roadmap for COVID-19 Recovery and contributes to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In Fall 2024, the CARES team began laying the groundwork for international partnerships in Australia, with plans to secure a SSHRC Partnership Grant valued at $2.5 million. This grant, set for submission in February 2026, will support research on cultural sustainability in Australia and Canada, particularly in relation to Indigenous communities.

As CARES grows, it aims to strengthen global collaborations, elevate community voices, and shape policies that lead to more resilient and equitable societies.

RESEARCH AS RESISTANCE

Fill out this colouring page and reflect on what "Research as Reflection" means to you.

PATHWAYS TO ACCESS

OPENING DOORS TO POST SECONDARY

Education is the key that unlocks doors, but too often, those doors remain closed to many. Pathways to Access highlights initiatives that are paving the way for historically marginalized communities to feel a sense of belonging and empowerment to thrive. By breaking down barriers and embracing diverse perspectives, access initiatives create spaces where the dreams of those who have long been excluded can take root.

Day in the Life

Immersive Campus Visits to UTSC

For many youth, university can feel out of reach—an intimidating world filled with unfamiliar expectations. Day in the Life (DITL) is an access program dedicated to changing this perception. An initiative championed by Community Partnerships & Engagement (CPE), Day in the Life invites prospective students to U of T Scarborough for an interactive day of learning, creating and connecting.

Offered every school semester during Reading Week and throughout the spring and summer months, DITL introduces participants to our diverse campus and showcases all UTSC has to offer. Day in the Life offers curated programming for students in STEM and other High School Specialist Major programs to explore a variety of interests. From discovering biodiversity on a sustainability scavenger hunt, to participating in Wikipedia Edit-A-Thons at The BRIDGE, CPE works with campus and community partners to create unforgettable, hands-on learning opportunities.

DITL Participants listen to a presentation from AA&CC at UTSC

Day in the Life is thoughtfully designed to build access pathways for equity-deserving individuals who are exploring post-secondary education.

Many young people—particularly racialized, immigrant, Black, and Indigenous students—may feel excluded or self-select out of higher education opportunities. By creating an inclusive and culturally-affirming environment rooted in the principles of Nguzo Saba, DITL supports youth in envisioning their place in higher education and beyond.

Representation is central, ensuring staff, students, faculty, and community facilitators reflect the diverse identities and experiences of participants.

Looking ahead, Community Partnerships & Engagement is committed to deepening our collaborations with local community partners in hosting community-centric workshops, expanding our student volunteer network, and enhancing our understanding of prospective students and their journeys to post-secondary.

These efforts will further solidify U of T Scarborough as an inclusive and welcoming place to embark on the journey of higher education, strengthening pathways to post-secondary success and fostering long-term connections with future learners.

"I really enjoyed our trip to UTSC, it was our best trip by far, very engaging activities. I learned how to do CPR and it was my favourite activity."

- Day in the Life Participant from Visions of Science

Highlights of Day in the Life include:

- DITL hosts 200+ students on campus every year
- 70% of students said they feel confident about their post-secondary pathways after attending Day in the Life
- 91% of students said they feel their identity was represented on campus at Day in the Life

Health Professionals Career Week

March Break Career Exploration Program

Health Professionals Career Week (HPCW) is opening doors for high school students in Scarborough to explore diverse healthcare careers. A joint collaboration by Temerty Faculty of Medicine, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, and The University of Toronto Scarborough, HPCW takes participants on an immersive dive into healthcare during March Break, bringing life to textbook theories.

Designed to showcase a variety of careers in healthcare beyond being a physician or nurse, this program provides hands-on experiences, mentorship, and direct exposure to hospital settings in partnership with Scarborough Health Network and Michael Garron Hospital. Through case studies and interactive learning, students explore various healthcare pathways while gaining insights from professionals who reflect their communities' diversity.
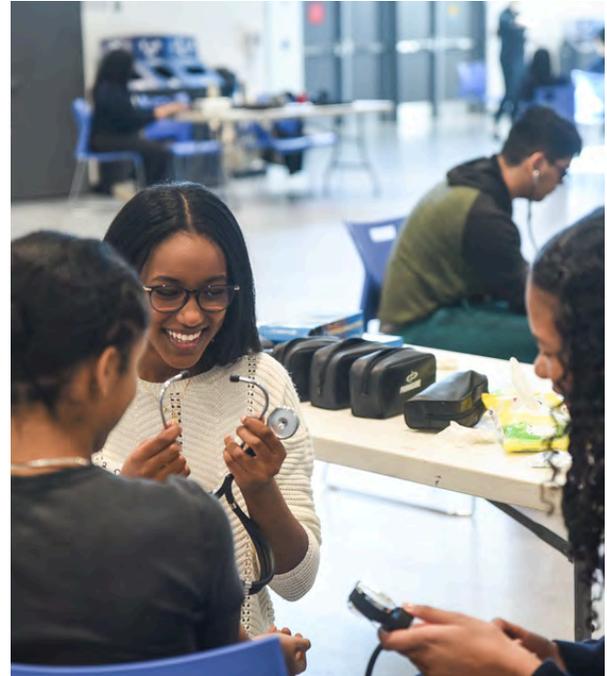
Participants learn how to check for sound in the heart and lungs with a stethoscope

Each year, 50 students in Grades 10-12—predominantly from Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities—participate in the program, gaining volunteer hours, career insights, and a completion incentive of up to $100. Since its launch in 2022, Health Professionals Career Week has impacted over 150 high school students from underserved communities in Scarborough.

HPCW's mission aligns with the incoming launch of The Myron and Berna Garron Health Sciences Complex—previously known as The Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health (SAMIH)—ensuring that local students have early access to the future opportunities and advancements shaping healthcare in their own backyard.

In 2025, HPCW continued to deepen its impact by providing students with more information on admissions processes at the University of Toronto and the newest programs at UTSC. Additionally, the program integrated participants from MedLinx, a groundbreaking initiative run by Temerty Faculty of Medicine, which supports high school students from underrepresented communities who are exploring careers in healthcare.

By strengthening these pathways, HPCW is not just exposing students to careers in healthcare—it is actively shaping the next generation of healthcare professionals from Scarborough and beyond.

"The program was absolutely phenomenal, exceeding my expectations in every way. I was surprised to discover a wealth of new knowledge that I was previously unaware of…I had the chance to meet some amazing individuals and learn about their unique experiences and journeys. I was able to ask them questions, gain insight into their viewpoints, and hear about their insights and expertise."

- Health Professionals Career Week Student Participant

SEE U of T Scarborough

A Deep Dive into University for High School Students

SEE U of T students at end-of-term celebration event

SEE U of T Scarborough (SEE UTSC)—short for Support, Engage, Experience U of T Scarborough— guides students from local Toronto District School Board high schools on their journey to post-secondary education. Designed to engage Black and Indigenous high school students who are historically underrepresented in post-secondary education, SEE U of T Scarborough creates a welcoming space where students can experience university life firsthand, explore academic pathways, and gain the confidence to pursue higher education.

The journey begins in Grade 11, when students complete their high school co-op placement at UTSC, working alongside campus partners and getting a taste of life as a university student. By Grade 12, they take both a university level course and two high school courses on campus, earning four Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) credits and a 0.5 University of Toronto credit, which may be transferable to another institution.

"There are a lot of things I'm grateful for this program: the connections, the people I've met so far, all the opportunities I've gotten from this program…I've met a lot of new friends I'm grateful to have in my life. I learned new skills, I got better at things I wasn't good at before—I'm just really grateful I had the opportunity to be a part of this program."

- Michelle Ebhonu, SEE UTSC Participant, 2024

But beyond the credits, the real impact of SEE U of T Scarborough is in the transformation it sparks. Students learn how to navigate university expectations, advocate for themselves, and build independence—all while forming friendships and connections that make the journey feel more empowering. Bridging access to the University through hands-on participation, SEE U of T Scarborough helps students see themselves as belonging to our community and opens up a viable pathway to higher education.

Michelle Ebhonu, SEE UTSC Participant, 2024

LinC STEM

Linking Laboratories to Curriculum in STEM

Linking Laboratories to Curriculum in STEM (LinC STEM) is transforming the landscape of science education in Scarborough. In a region where access to advanced STEM learning opportunities has historically been limited, LinC STEM is creating tangible pathways for high school students from underserved communities to explore, engage with, and imagine futures in science, technology, engineering, and math.

Launched in February 2024, LinC STEM is a collaborative effort between UTSC scientists—faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students—and local Grade 9 STEM teachers. Together, they co-developed a series of bi-weekly workshops and hands-on laboratory sessions designed to directly support and enrich the school curriculum. Beyond academics, LinC STEM is about representation and relationships. By connecting students with scientist-mentors from diverse backgrounds, the program fosters a sense of belonging, encouraging students to see themselves in science careers and challenge limiting stereotypes.

The team at LinC STEM, led by Luciana Baruffaldi Yanez, Founder & Director at LinC STEM, and Research Associate, Department of Biological Sciences at UTSC

"We want to inspire high school students to see themselves in STEM careers by fostering a sense of belonging in the classroom. We need them, we need their ideas and their experiences, and we need to increase diversity in the sciences to build innovative teams and counteract harmful biases within science and society."

- Luciana Baruffaldi Yanez, LinC STEM Founder and Director

What began as a pilot in a single school has now grown into a thriving initiative across three schools, engaging 140+ students through 60+ sessions embedded into six STEM classes. Eight mentors—including two graduate students and six undergraduates—were hired to guide students through this journey, supported by the energy and expertise of multiple UTSC departments, including Biological Sciences, Computer and Mathematical Sciences, and Community Partnerships & Engagement. The program also received critical funding from the Access Programs University Fund (APUF), A.B.S. Outreach Grant, EDI BioSci, and the UTSC 60th Legacy Award, reflecting strong institutional belief in its impact.

Looking ahead, LinC STEM has plans to expand programming into Grade 10, co-develop new materials, and create stronger links to UTSC's co-op placements and access pathways. The team also hopes to formalize a partnership with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and conduct a program assessment to guide future growth and funding opportunities.

LinC STEM's programming is opening the doors to future possibilities. In a community as richly diverse as Scarborough, LinC STEM is ensuring that the next generation of change-makers are empowered to build innovative, community-oriented solutions through STEM.

PATHWAYS TO ACCESS

Fill out this colouring page and reflect on what "Pathways to Access" means to you.

ENGAGEMENT WITH PURPOSE

COMMUNITY-CENTRED ENGAGEMENT

Care is not passive—it is active, intentional, and deeply rooted in action. Engagement With Purpose goes beyond surface-level interactions. It's about moving in sync with the community in a way that is authentic, meaningful, and impactful. Engagement With Purpose exemplifies collaborations that uplift one another and honours the larger, collective vision.

East Midnight Basketball

Where Collaboration Meets the Court

As Saturday night settles in, the rhythmic bounce of basketballs at the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre signals more than just game time. It's the start of East Midnight Basketball (MNB), a space where community meets the court. Every Saturday night, young men aged 14-18 from across Toronto's East End come together for a well-rounded evening of food, skill-building workshops, and organized basketball.

Participants build teamwork both on and off the court

Through a partnership between Toronto Community Housing, University of Toronto Scarborough, and Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment, this regional pilot program is proving that the lessons learned on the court—teamwork, discipline, harmony—are just as powerful off the court.

First launched in 2013—Midnight Basketball builds on a legacy of uniting young men through sport, mentorship, and community. This new regional pilot in Scarborough brings together up to 75 youth across Toronto's East region. Hosted on campus at the Sam Ibrahim Building, Highland Hall, and the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre, East Midnight Basketball offers more than a safe space on a weekend night, it creates a blueprint for belonging.

Participants are encouraged to see beyond the scoreboards: to understand the value of education in sport, the role of teamwork beyond the court, and the skills that transfer into every area of life. The true growth lies not only in athletic performance, but in the holistic development of the young men who take part—finding mentorship, discipline, and community with every pass, pivot, and play.

Looking ahead, the program continues to evolve. It has welcomed 70 new youth into the fold, weaving them into a broader citywide network of support and mentorship.

The launch of East Midnight Basketball signals a commitment to deepening the program's regional roots, supported by longstanding partners like the Toronto Raptors, and new and growing partnerships, including corporate sponsors like Adidas. East MNB continues to conduct research to fuel its expansion, strengthen its partnerships, and ensure that every young person who steps onto the court walks away with a win in more ways than one.

"For me, Midnight Basketball represents inter-community youth dynamics through the game of basketball. The program is a representation of how I would like to see the young men in our communities conduct themselves in their own communities, neighboring communities, and in all facets of society."

- Daniel Yu, Program Coordinator (Tenant and Community Services), Active Living & Centralized Programs from Toronto Community Housing Initiative

KODAK PORTRA 400

43

A *Mensah Memories* Production

UTSC at Howard University

Experiential Learning Trip

What happens when you bring Black brilliance to a campus built to celebrate it? Magic. In partnership with Global Mobility Programs, UTSC Black Student Engagement brought over two dozen students on an unforgettable journey to Washington, D.C. to visit Howard University—one of the top HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) in the world—in 2024 and again in 2025.

Stepping off the bus, students were greeted by a cold February breeze, but the warmth of Howard University students made them feel instantly at home. It was a trip for the soul: enriching, affirming, and deeply connective. Students immersed themselves in the energy of Howard, learned step routines, and experienced Black artistry that moves. More than a trip, the experience was a milestone moment—one that nurtured Black brilliance, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

UTSC Students arrive at Howard University and are all smiles

This initiative, spearheaded by Andria Lewis-Alexander, Alyssa Graham, and Nadia Rosemond, takes place during February Reading Week and brings Black-identifying students to Howard University, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, and other significant sites.

Looking ahead, the initiative seeks to strengthen collaborations between UTSC's Black Student Engagement Programs and Global Learning Programs, using this trip as a launchpad for Black and other underrepresented students to explore global learning opportunities, including exchange programs and Summer Abroad initiatives. Black students remain underrepresented in university spaces, making transformative experiences like the Howard University trip all the more valuable.
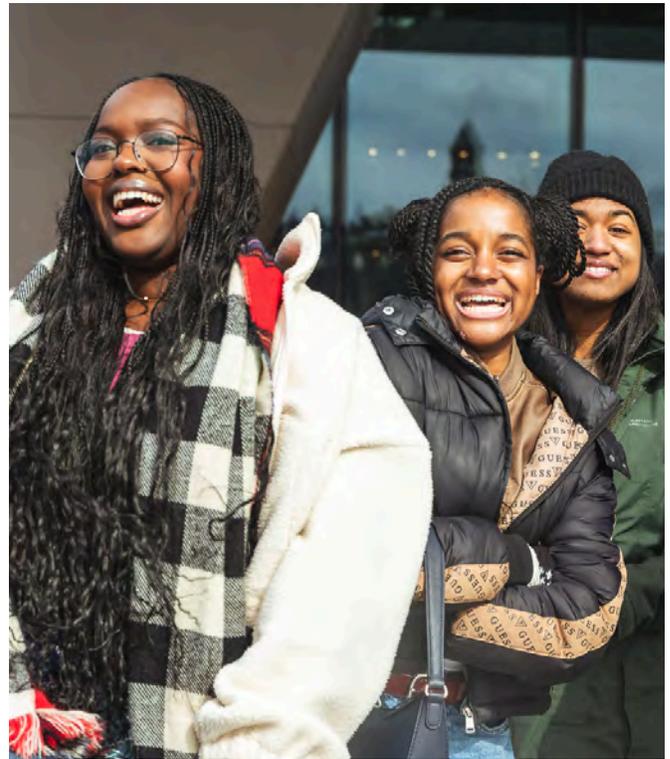
"This definitely lifts my spirits. It's very powerful being on campus. I'm seeing beautiful Black people all around me. I felt very empowered, I felt immediately safe, comfortable, at home. The one thing that resonated with me the most was the pride, the excellence all around."

- Malika Derrell, Program Director, Black Student Engagement at UTSC, Political Science and Public Policy

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Building the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs at SICIEEIL

Train the Trainer & Level Up

The Sam Ibrahim Centre for Inclusive Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Leadership (SICIEEIL) is where U of T Scarborough is empowering entrepreneurs across every stage of their journey—from idea conception to business scaling and groundbreaking research—fostering an inclusive ecosystem that celebrates diverse perspectives and fuels innovation across industries.

Located inside of the new state-of-the-art Sam Ibrahim Building, SICIEEIL is a hub for Scarborough-bred talent that supports aspiring entrepreneurs looking to launch bold ideas. Open to all—from students and alumni to faculty, researchers, staff, and community members with a passion for solving inequities— SICIEEIL serves as an inclusive launchpad for innovation in the East End.

Level Up Graduation at SICIEEIL

By providing training, mentorship, and access to resources, SICIEEIL helps ventures start, scale, and thrive. Entrepreneurs ready to take the next step with their business idea can participate in The Level Up series, generously supported by UTSC Management Alumna, Elina Chow. The program provides open-access services focused on skills development, mentorship, entrepreneurship-based literacy, and activity. SICIEEIL's 150+ startups across sustainability, tech, health and education sectors have engaged in training, events, and networking.

Since September 2024, SICIEEIL has hosted dozens of workshops and group coaching sessions from industry experts with a total of 263 entrepreneurs. On May 29th, 2025, SICIEEIL hosted the SICIEEIL Pitch Competition, Level Up Graduation, where 14 startups participated in an opportunity to win awards worth $20,000.

Another service provided by SICIEEIL is the Innovation-as-a-Service (IaaS) model. This model is a scalable, on-demand framework that helps organizations and departments solve complex problems, unlock new opportunities, and accelerate value creation. Two customized Design Thinking workshops were held this past fiscal year, kicking off with a Tri-Campus "Train the Trainer" workshop where participants learned how to practically integrate design thinking into their work with creative-problem-solving tools, upskilling their capacity to lead innovation-based projects within their work.

at this momentous occasion

"The training would be beneficial for any campus department. It provides many tools for reframing problems and issues, and it is process-based so the solutions that come out may be completely surprising. It is a refreshing way to think about problem-solving in general"

- Design Thinking and Train the Trainers Participant

A design thinking workshop in collaboration with SDG Scholars Academy

Additionally, SICIEEIL collaborated with SDGs@UofT to explore design thinking applications in research and UN's Sustainable Development Goals related work.

When SICIEEIL isn't hosting events and training, it opens its doors up to the local neighbourhood, providing exposure to entrepreneurship for all—from students to community members. SICIEEIL regularly collaborates with the Department of Community Partnerships & Engagement and U of T's tri-campus initiatives to foster an innovation culture and entrepreneurial mindset on campus and beyond.

AA&CC and BlackNorth Initiative Career Fair

Bridging New Career Pathways

Many talented students have the potential to excel in a wide range of fields, yet opportunities remain out of reach simply because they haven't had access to the right networks, mentors, and industry connections. For Black students in particular, the challenge isn't a lack of talent—it's a lack of representation in key industries and support throughout the hiring process. AA&CC (Academic Advising & Career Centre) and BlackNorth Initiative have teamed up to change that narrative.

By providing access to scholarships, internships, mentorships, and job placements, this collaboration paves the way for students to envision themselves in industries where they have often been underrepresented. A key element of this partnership is the BNI Career Fair, a space where students can see themselves represented, build meaningful connections, and take tangible steps toward their future.

By bridging the gap between students and employers, the BNI Career Fair provides an opportunity for students to see themselves reflected in different fields and to connect with employers committed to fostering inclusion, equity, and long-term career growth. The fair engaged 29 employers and nearly 200 participants from both the university and the wider community, featuring valuable networking opportunities and panel discussions led by industry leaders.

"The collaborative efforts between the BlackNorth Initiative and the University of Toronto Scarborough have been instrumental in creating a platform that fosters connections between employers and diverse talent within the Black community."

- BlackNorth Initiative Team

This initiative built on a partnership with the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) and BlackNorth Initiative, where six new scholarships at UTSC, totaling $130,000, were launched in 2022 to support Black-identifying students entering Computer Science or Environmental Chemistry.

The BNI Career Fair also led to the creation of job placements for UTSC students, highlighting its tangible impact. The Academic Advising & Career Centre sponsored three summer internships with BlackNorth Initiative over the past two years, further strengthening pathways to professional success.

Looking ahead, this initiative aims to build on its momentum by expanding employer participation to expose Black students to a wider range of career opportunities. It will also promote entrepreneurship as a key avenue for economic empowerment and industry leadership. Efforts to increase scholarships and mentorship programs will ensure that Black students are not only recruited, but supported throughout their careers. Deepening engagement with industry partners will help drive systemic change in hiring practices and workforce development, fostering a more inclusive and equitable professional landscape.

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation On the Lands Visit

Land-Based Learning Trip

Understanding is found in the relationships we cultivate with each other. In October 2024, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from UTSC traveled to Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) for an on-the-land learning experience—one that deepened their connections to community, culture, and history. Led by Indigenous Initiatives at UTSC and the Department of Student Life, this immersive trip brought land-based learning to life through ancestral ways of knowing.

Students engaged in meaningful conversations with Band Councillors, community members, and youth, gaining firsthand insight into MCFN's rich traditions, governance, and lived experiences. For Indigenous students, it was an opportunity to see U of T as a university that values their knowledge and perspectives, while non-Indigenous students developed a greater appreciation for the traditions and teachings that have long sustained these lands.

U of T Students learn from Indigenous holders of knowledge

Participants witnessed the power of intergenerational knowledge sharing, learning about Indigenous storytelling, land-based skills, and traditional food preparation. They left with both newfound knowledge and a deeper appreciation of Indigenous communities to integrate back into their studies.

Looking ahead, Indigenous Initiatives and The Department of Student Life plan to establish this Fall Harvest experience as an annual tradition, strengthening relationships and ensuring that Indigenous knowledge is not just acknowledged—but actively valued and integrated into students' learning.

"I was taught their creation story, depicted in a beautiful mural and narrated by Kim, an Indigenous former professor and holder of knowledge. It was their Fall Festival, so the people kindly shared their harvest—delicacies like smoked venison, caribou, moose, corn soup, jams, fried fish, bannock, and more!"

- MCFN Student Participant

Fill out this colouring page and reflect on what "Engagement with Purpose" means to you.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

When care leads, we listen more deeply, approach learning with a spirit of humility, and build relationships that endure. It is through care that we unlock the transformative potential within ourselves and our communities to strengthen relationships, transform the status quo, and create lasting impact for generations to come.

As we reflect on this year's report, it becomes clear that care is not just an ideal, but a transformative force capable of reshaping the world around us. It is through leading with care that we challenge systems, invest in communities, and foster relationships that stand the test of time. By embracing care as both a practice and a philosophy, we create room for healing, joy, and meaningful connection in all that we do.

Stay in touch with us at www.utsc.utoronto.ca/partnerships

KEEP CALM AND COLOUR ON

EXPLORING A CULTURE OF CARE WITH CONNECTIONS & CONVERSATIONS

Enjoyed the colouring pages? The journey continues.

Connections and Conversations (C&C), a supportive network for racialized staff at U of T Scarborough, recently explored what a Culture of Care looks like in practice, using colouring as a tool for reflection and dialogue.

Rooted in creativity and community, this colouring exercise highlighted the value of making space for care in both work and personal journeys. We invite you to explore these pages to dive deeper into what a "Culture of Care" can look like for you.

To explore the colouring pages, visit the link below.

Connections and Conversations (C&C) organizes campus-specific and tri-campus events to encourage cross-portfolio, cross-divisional and cross-campus collaboration to provide a community of support and opportunities for mentorship and professional development.

Many of these engagements also draw on community partners who generously share their knowledge, insights, time, and skills with the group.

Enjoy more colouring pages from Connections & Conversations

WITH CARE

CHALLENGE

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