



FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: Business Board

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PRESENTER: Same as above.
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DATE: November 19, 2025 for November 26, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Annual Impact Report: University of Toronto Communications (UTC) FY 2024-2025

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Pursuant to Section 5.7 of the Business Board Terms of Reference, the Board is responsible for reviewing the University's institutional communications activities.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. **Business Board [For information] (November 26, 2025)**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The previous report was presented to the Business Board at its November 27, 2024, meeting.

HIGHLIGHTS:

This status report provides Business Board with an update on UTC's activities during the FY2024-2025 period.

It highlights the phenomenal work UTC does in showcasing the achievements of our research-intensive university globally, which in turn helps fuel bottom-line outcomes such as recruitment and retention of talent, to attracting investments and partnerships, and increasing people's pride of association with the university.

Our team created brand content that resulted in 39+ million targeted impressions, more than 108,000 global news media mentions with 78% of the coverage being favorable, and our work

propelled the university to first in Canada and 4th place among 1,000 universities globally in terms of visibility.

In year two of our five-year vision, we have strengthened relationships with institutional stakeholders to develop digital-first communications that balance brand, reputation and character, and keep two-way communication or engagement, front and centre.

We share what we did to leverage two key institutional milestones – the Nobel win for University Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Hinton and a Presidential transition – to elevate U of T's international profile, affirm U of T's enduring values, create pride amongst our community, and reinforce the university's leadership in research, teaching and innovation. We demonstrate how we promote key campaigns to raise our global brand awareness in partnership with outlets such as the *Guardian* and *Nature*, as well as land news headlines around the world, capturing the largest share of coverage in external news media of any Canadian university and greatly expanding our global footprint with media coverage in top international publications such as *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *BBC* and *The Economist*.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

- *Annual Report 2025 Vice-President, Communications*

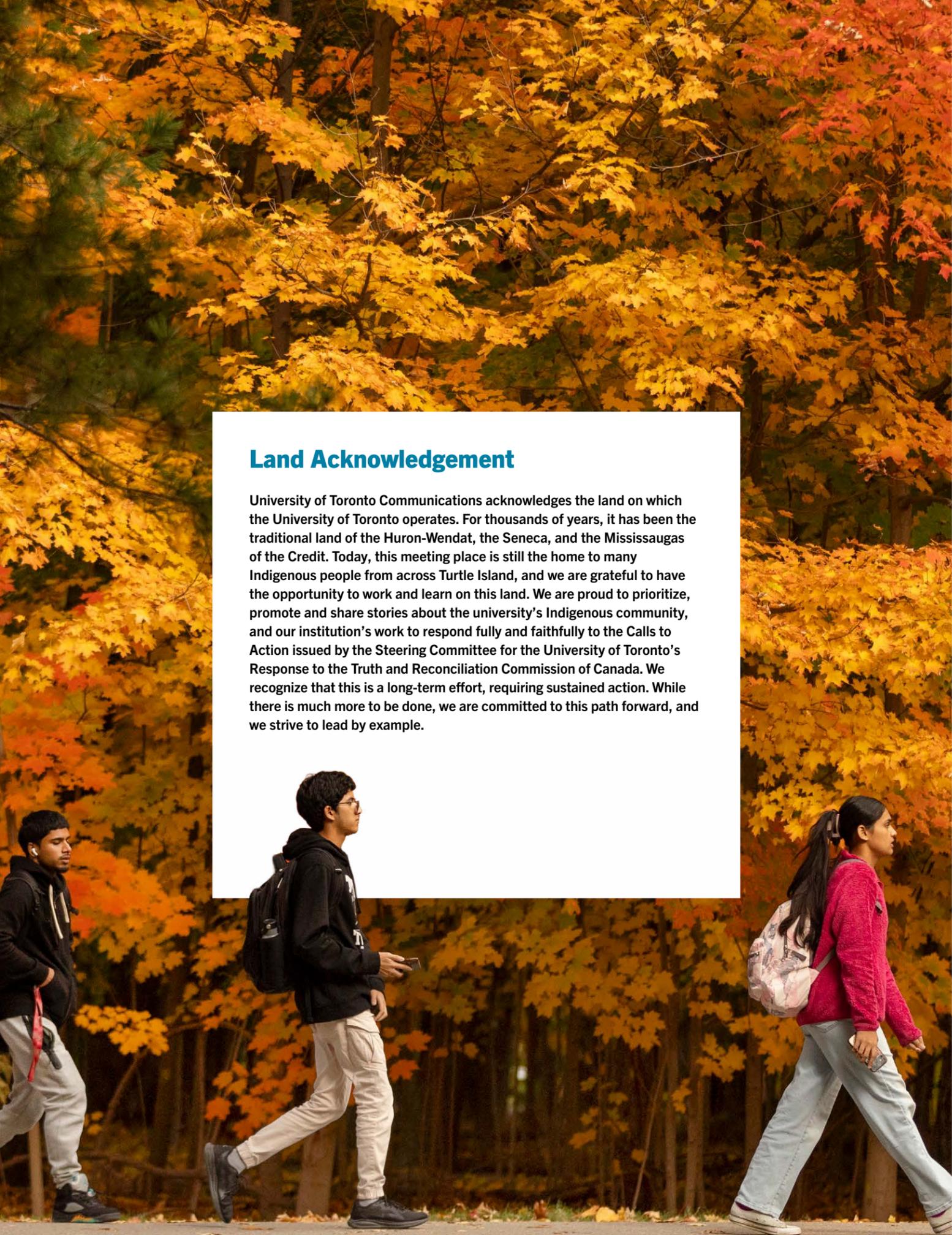
**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
COMMUNICATIONS**

IMPACT REPORT 2024-25



**UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO**

**DEFY
GRAVITY**



Land Acknowledgement

University of Toronto Communications acknowledges the land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. 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 and learn on this land. We are proud to prioritize, promote and share stories about the university's Indigenous community, and our institution's work to respond fully and faithfully to the Calls to Action issued by the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto's Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. We recognize that this is a long-term effort, requiring sustained action. While there is much more to be done, we are committed to this path forward, and we strive to lead by example.

About UTC

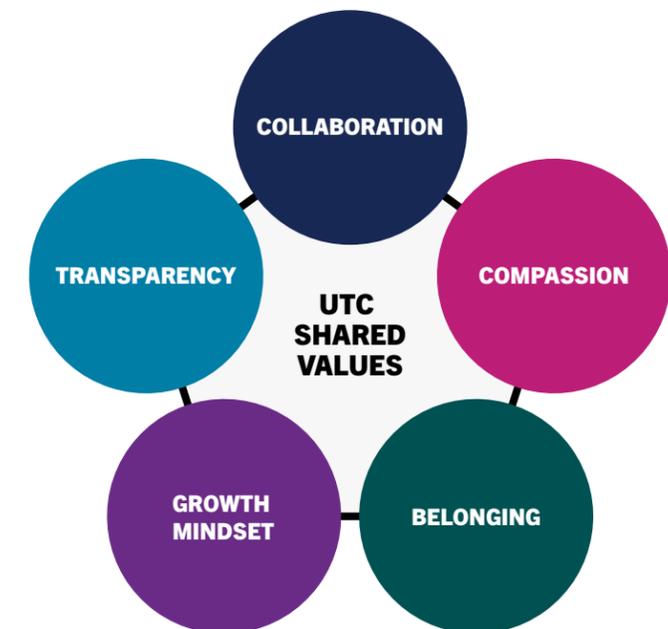
University of Toronto Communications (UTC) proudly builds and promotes U of T's brand and reputation by sharing with the world the university's strengths, achievements and impact. We recognize that a strong brand and reputation help U of T attract top talent, encourage investment and partnership, deepen alumni engagement and increase the value of a U of T degree. They also help us sustain relationships with our existing stakeholders and invite others to tell our story. Our award-winning team of marketing and communications professionals provides strategic communications counsel, brand strategy and marketing communications expertise to the university's three campuses.

UTC strengthens U of T's brand and reputation through compelling marketing and communications campaigns, award-winning publications, expert media pitching, proactive issues management and best-in-class social media. We take a digital-first approach, producing videos, podcasts, social media and web content that inspire and resonate with our audiences.

The UTC team includes award-winning public relations, communications and marketing professionals. Our tri-campus team brings deep experience in brand building and reputation management from a wide range of industries, including higher education, newspaper and magazine publishing, government, high tech, and marketing and PR agencies.

Our Values

UTC strives to uphold five key values across our three campuses and in our day-to-day work. These values are in line with U of T's mission and statement of institutional purpose.



Building Brand, Reputation, Character and Community

For nearly 200 years, U of T has been a catalyst for discovery, innovation and progress. Our diverse and inclusive community of faculty, staff, librarians, students, alumni, and industry and civic partners collaborate on the world's toughest challenges to build a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous future.

University of Toronto Communications (UTC) takes great pride in sharing these achievements and showcasing U of T's role as a place that inspires a new generation of thinkers to pursue their passions and realize their potential. Our work helps to build U of T's brand, advance its enviable reputation for global relevance and excellence, and shed light on its character and community. It fuels bottom-line outcomes from recruitment and retention of talent to attracting investment and partnerships and increasing people's pride of association with the university.

Our Year in Review infographic highlights our success across paid, earned, owned and social media channels to elevate our visibility, drive awareness and recall, create an emotional connection to U of T's identity and promise, and positively shape audience perception and sentiment. This work contributed to a successful year two of our five-year vision to strengthen relationships with stakeholders through two-way communication and reinforce professionalism, inclusivity and trust.

In the pages that follow, we spotlight key campaigns to raise our global brand awareness in partnership with outlets such as the *Guardian* and *Nature* and share the many ways we made news headlines around the world. We also provide a deep dive into how we leveraged two institutional milestones — a Nobel Prize win and a Presidential transition — to elevate U of T's international profile, affirm U of T's enduring values and collective ambition, and reinforce the university's standing as a global leader in research, teaching and innovation.



Importantly, we always pair our work with a commitment to measurement, as outlined toward the end of this report. By routinely gathering, interpreting and considering the views of our stakeholders, we gain insight into how we're being received and pinpoint where we need to share additional context and rationale for U of T's actions. These efforts help manage institutional risk, generate goodwill, sustain people's support and demonstrate U of T's authentic character.

Finally, by strengthening communications infrastructure and building capacity across divisions, we enable units across the university to contribute to a broader institutional narrative, advance strategic goals, and work to build a strong, unified institutional brand.

We're excited to carry this momentum forward for another year and immensely grateful for the people who trust us to tell their stories at a promising time in our history.

I remain humbled by the excellence shown by our team in executing our mission-critical mandate for the university and the work we do to communicate U of T's global impact.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Szustaczek', written in a cursive style.

Christine Szustaczek, MCM, APR, SCMP, FCPRS
Vice-President, Communications

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Year in Review

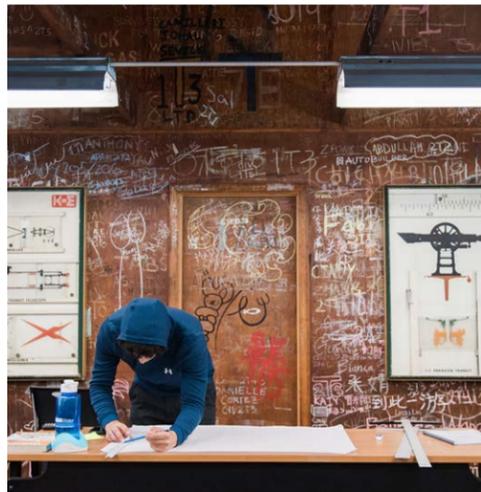


U of T ranked **1st in Canada and 4th among 1,000 universities globally**, in the [American Caldwell Global University Visibility Ranking](#), an achievement fueled by our efforts to promote U of T's research and teaching expertise through increased earned media mentions, generating public interest and expanding our digital footprint.



Top 25

Landed features in **more than 20 prominent, international news media outlets**, including the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, BBC, CNN and the *Financial Times*. UTC's efforts contributed to U of T ranking **top 25 internationally for share of voice in earned media**.



10K+ original content

Pieces of original content produced in-house.

Completed the university's first-ever global brand health research to assess global and local awareness, reputation and perception, as well as loyalty and engagement – to help inform future business, and marketing and communications planning for the university.



480 media requests

Managed **480 inbound institutional media requests**, a 62 per cent increase over last year.

163K+ pageviews 20K visitors

The brand portal is an online resource that supports brand consistency.

99% positive sentiment

Announcement of the university's new president generated **173 earned and social media mentions with a reach of 61.3M within 24 hours of Professor Melanie Woodin's appointment**, with 99 per cent of user-generated content showing positive sentiment. Digital banner in the *Globe and Mail* received **100K impressions**.

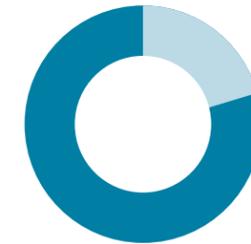


Institutional Reputation Score



Earned a strong institutional score in an external assessment of our core reputational drivers.

79% reader satisfaction rate



Reached an average of **325K people per issue of U of T Magazine**, with a **79 per cent reader satisfaction rate**, according to post-issue surveys. The magazine's website registered **334K views** in FY2024-25.

Led and partnered on initiatives to elevate brand awareness of U of T's impact and excellence in research, teaching and innovation, **gathering 39M+ targeted impressions and 161K+ digital engagements** across campaigns in the *Guardian*, the *Globe and Mail*, *Nature* and for events like Entrepreneurship Week and more.

39M+ impressions 161K+ digital engagements

75K new followers



Grew U of T's social media following by **75K net new followers, a 6 per cent year-over-year increase** – above the sector average. Brought U of T to Bluesky.

100M views



Ran a tri-campus integrated campaign to promote the Nobel Prize win of University Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Hinton. **The co-ordinated effort, including media events, content creation and watch parties generated nearly 100M views and an estimated 56B opportunities for people to learn of the win**, dramatically extending U of T's global visibility and positioning the university at the forefront of breakthrough research in AI.

UTC's Five-Year Vision

Year 2 Progress

UTC has completed the second year of its Five-Year Vision, the first multi-year strategy for our team. The vision sets a clear framework to strengthen relationships with institutional stakeholders through communications that balance brand, reputation and character, with outcomes and two-way engagement at the core.

This year, we advanced on multiple fronts. A Governance Charter with U of T clarified our operating model and streams of activity. We prepared for an AI-enabled future by piloting a staff skills self-assessment, providing training, issuing adoption guidelines and establishing an AI community of practice. A comprehensive audit of institutional social media accounts produced updated platform guidance, reinforcing professionalism, inclusivity and trust. We also adopted the global standard for measuring communications impact, ensuring clear benchmarks and alignment between outputs, outcomes and institutional goals.

Through annual roadshows with deans, principals and divisional communicators, we gained new insights and consulted on planned strategic priorities. UTC is now building momentum as an integrated, outcomes-driven partner that evaluates and contributes initiatives institution-wide, strengthens divisional capacity, and advances U of T's brand and reputation globally.



Elevating U of T's Global Visibility

1st in Canada

4th globally

In FY2024-25, UTC's work propelled the university to 1st in Canada, and 4th place among 1,000 universities globally (behind Harvard, MIT and Stanford), in [the American Caldwell Global University Visibility Rankings](#).

The ranking tracks media mentions, search visibility, website traffic, institutional references, social media reach and YouTube views. Together, these measures reflect the reach of a university's brand – a vital precursor to awareness, credibility and trust.

UTC played a pivotal role in this success, communicating about defining moments such as the Nobel Prize win and fostering collaboration across the tri-campus community. By aligning strategy, storytelling and brand management, UTC strengthened global awareness, deepened engagement and reinforced trust in U of T as Canada's leading university.

Sharing U of T's Impact as a Global Leader in Discovery and Innovation

UTC's collaborative approach to integrated marketing and communications identifies shared institutional priorities and flagship initiatives that reinforce U of T's brand locally, nationally and globally.

Our tri-campus team created high-quality content across owned channels – including institutional and campus news sites, internal and external newsletters, *U of T Magazine* and social media – while the media relations team leveraged this content in earned media pitches and timely issues response. The brand team advanced a dual strategy: externally, elevating visibility and relevance; internally, ensuring consistency and adoption of brand standards across the university's decentralized network.

Strategic paid campaigns in the *Guardian*, *Nature* and the *Globe and Mail*, timed to coincide with global reputation surveys, spotlighted U of T's excellence in research, innovation and teaching. These efforts not only reinforced U of T's global rankings but also deepened audience connection to the university. Integrated campaigns generated 39M targeted impressions and 161K digital engagements, demonstrating stronger affinity through website visits, event registrations and newsletter sign-ups.

Our earned media presence expanded significantly, with an 18 per cent increase in expert mentions and a 60 per cent rise in international coverage. U of T appeared in more than 20 top-tier global outlets, including the *New York Times*, BBC, CNN, the *Financial Times*, the *Guardian*, *National Geographic*, the *Economist* and the *Washington Post*. UTM earned media attention for Ontario's first endowed chair in Sikh Studies and for a course on emojis that positioned Professor Jordana Garbati as a media expert, while UTSC's research on vampire bats appeared in global media and American late-night television, and the opening of the Sam Ibrahim Centre was covered by CBC.

U of T News saw a 15 per cent increase in visits to the site compared to the previous year, thanks to a focus on impactful storytelling – and the Nobel win. Content on rankings, convocation and leadership transitions drove particularly strong engagement.

Promoting our Global Brand Awareness, Perception and Engagement

24K
unique readers

181 per cent above target — exceptional engagement across audiences worldwide.
— *The Guardian*

28
countries reached

Extending U of T's visibility across key global markets.
— *The Guardian*

55.8%
average read rate

Surpassed Nature's benchmark — deep, sustained reader engagement.
— *Nature Index Feature*

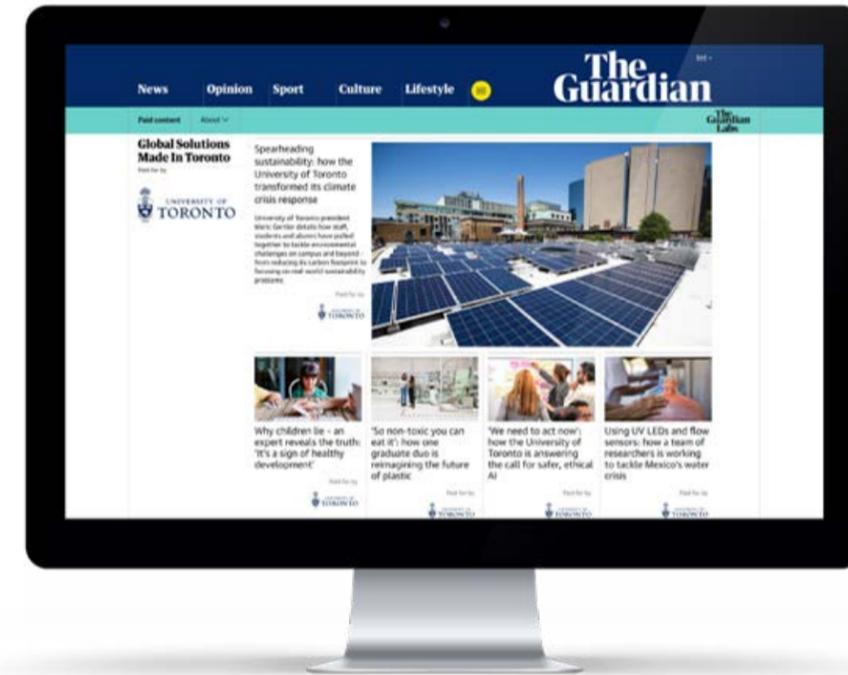
1.3M
Facebook impressions

Amplifying U of T's leadership in responsible AI worldwide.
— *Nature Index Feature*

This year marked our fourth annual partnership with the *Guardian* on a sponsored content series showcasing U of T's global leadership in research, teaching and innovation. This year's five stories reached audiences in 28 countries, including priority markets across North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The series drew more than 24K unique readers – 181 per cent above target – with an average engagement time of three minutes and 43 seconds. Overall, the campaign delivered a 3.5 per cent brand lift across awareness, consideration, preference and action intent, confirming its effectiveness in building recognition and trust.

We elevated U of T's leadership in AI through a *Nature Index* feature that profiled the world's most research-intensive institutions. Faculty experts David Lie and Roger Grosse highlighted the university's commitment to advancing AI responsibly, generating 1.3M Facebook impressions and nearly 28K LinkedIn impressions in just four weeks.

We also collaborated with the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, and Government Relations team for sponsored content in the *Globe and Mail* Content Studio section. Two feature series highlighted U of T's strengths in innovation, entrepreneurship and research. Published in the *Globe's* Innovation Excellence (May) and Research & Innovation (November) special reports, the articles reached policymakers, investors and industry leaders. Insights from the May feature informed a more concise listicle-style approach in November, increasing engagement and broadening impact.



Spotlight On:
NOBEL PRIZE



The 2024 Nobel Prize in Physics, awarded to University Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Hinton, was a landmark achievement for U of T and Canada. Known as the “Godfather of AI,” Hinton’s pioneering work in deep learning has transformed fields from health care to climate science and education. His Nobel win validated U of T’s global leadership in AI and computer science, while sparking worldwide dialogue about technology, ethics and society.

UTC recognized the magnitude of the moment and mobilized a global campaign in two phases: the October announcement, and December’s Nobel Week ceremonies in Stockholm and at our three campuses. Within minutes of the announcement, *U of T News* published the story – now our most-read of the year with nearly 88K views and more than 500 shares. A live news conference with Professor Hinton and then-President Meric Gertler, paired with extensive earned and owned media coverage, ensured U of T’s leadership was visible worldwide.

During Nobel Week, UTC hosted live campus watch parties, developed a dedicated landing page, videos, social content, signage, collateral, and interactive celebrations across the three campuses. The campaign generated 96M views, 56B online impressions and more than 25K social interactions. Our press conference video surpassed 90K YouTube views, Nobel posts earned 805K impressions with a 3.4 per cent engagement rate, and utoronto.ca traffic spiked 400 per cent. Coverage appeared in the *New York Times*, BBC, the *Wall Street Journal*, Bloomberg, the *Economist*, the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian*.

UTC’s strategic response elevated U of T’s global profile, fostered institutional pride and reinforced the university’s standing as a global leader in research and innovation.



96M
views

56B
online
impressions

25K
social
interactions

Known as the
“Godfather of AI,”
Hinton’s pioneering
work in deep
learning has
transformed fields
from health care to
climate science and
education.



Spotlight On:

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

Transition messaging framed the change in leadership as an affirmation of U of T's enduring values, collective ambition and global standing.



173
media
mentions

99%
positive
reaction

61M
social media
highlights



In 2025, U of T announced a new president – an institutional milestone that required care, clarity and vision. UTC played a central role in shaping the communications strategy and execution, ensuring the announcement honoured the leadership of outgoing President Meric Gertler while introducing President-designate Melanie Woodin as a forward-looking leader for U of T's next chapter.

Our approach balanced reflection and anticipation. Messaging framed the transition not only as a change in leadership but also an affirmation of U of T's enduring values, collective ambition and global standing. The rollout was designed to inspire confidence and pride among internal and external audiences, while projecting continuity and momentum for the future.

UTC led a coordinated, multi-channel campaign. Within 24 hours of the announcement, U of T earned 173 media mentions and a reach of more than 61M. Social media highlights featuring the

President-designate's reflections and community reception generated 271K views, with public sentiment overwhelmingly positive – 99 per cent of user comments expressing enthusiasm and affirmation. Coverage appeared across top outlets, including the *Globe and Mail*, *Times Higher Education*, *Canadian Press*, *CP24* and *CTV*.

Behind the scenes, UTC worked closely with divisional communicators, developed briefing materials for leadership, and created a comprehensive messaging framework to ensure consistency across all channels.

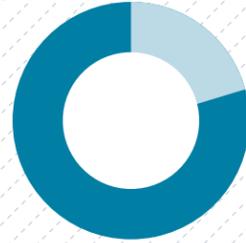
The successful communications around this presidential transition underscored UTC's ability to manage complex, high-profile institutional moments with precision, tact and strategic alignment. More importantly, it reinforced U of T's reputation as a globally respected, forward-looking institution, well positioned to thrive under new leadership.

GLOBAL MEDIA REACH

The University of Toronto was featured prominently in global news media coverage between May 2024 and April 2025.

Most Mentions (by Region)

- **Canada** (86,198)
- **United States** (14,603)
- **China** (3,932)
- **United Kingdom** (1,672)
- **Spain** (1,645)



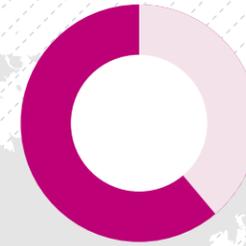
78%
favourable media mentions

78 per cent of media mentions about U of T were favourable. Focusing on international alone, the number rises to 99 per cent.*

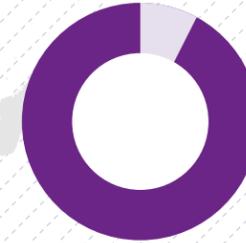
* Favourable includes content tagged as positive or neutral.

Source: Cision

60%
international increase



18 per cent year-over-year increase in the number of earned media hits featuring U of T experts commenting on current affairs, including a 60 per cent increase in international outlets.



90%
content-quality score

Content-quality score of 90 per cent or higher in conveying the university's key messages through earned coverage in outlets that influence target audiences.

Featured In

Among the top-tier global media organizations that reported on the University of Toronto in FY2024-25 were:



Notable Favourable Themes in Global Media:

- Geoffrey Hinton's Nobel Prize win in physics
- Three professors leave Yale to join U of T Munk School
- Ranked most sustainable university globally for second year running
- Growth in interdisciplinary innovation and funding

Notable Unfavourable Themes:

- On-campus protests / encampment
- Housing pressures and backlash on immigration
- UTSC security incident involving suspicious object

Making Headlines Around the World

These articles were selected for their appearance in notable, international news media outlets and provide a representative sample of the types of global media coverage that featured the University of Toronto in FY2024-25:



The Fascism Expert at Yale Who's Fleeing America / Why this Yale professor is fleeing America

UTC managed the media strategy surrounding high-profile global faculty recruitment, such as the appointment of three prominent Yale professors to the Munk School, which garnered coverage from CNN, NPR, *Vanity Fair*, CBC, *Times of India* and others.



"Working on Fast-Track Approval Process for Study Permits," says University of Toronto VP

In an exclusive interview, U of T Vice-President, International, Joseph Wong, shared that the university is advocating for a fast-track study permit system in collaboration with the federal government. Aimed at protecting international students – particularly from India amid diplomatic and housing pressures – this proposal targets institutions that avoid predatory agents and ensure student housing, promising a more efficient and secure pathway for permit approvals.



Nobel Prize: Hopfield, Hinton Honored with Physics Award

In Germany, Deutsche Welle reports that U of T Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Hinton and Princeton Professor John Hopfield have been awarded the 2024 Nobel Prize Award for Physics thanks to their pioneering work in developing AI technologies. This story is featured heavily in global media.



Malaysian Varsities Move Up QS Rankings in Sustainability

In the 2025 QS Sustainability Rankings, U of T ranked significantly higher than Malaysian universities, placing 18th in the world and standing out as the top Canadian institution featured. The rankings assess Environmental Impact, Social Impact, and Governance, with U of T scoring strongly across all categories.



Scientists Identify 'Degrees of Kevin Bacon' Gene

A University of Toronto-led research team has identified a fruit fly gene – named 'Degrees of Kevin Bacon' or DOKB – that influences how individuals occupy pivotal positions in their social networks. By swapping versions of this gene (CG14109) between fly strains, researchers demonstrated that it directly modulates *betweenness* centrality, a key metric of social connectedness. Though DOKB is unique to fruit flies, the findings open the door to exploring analogous genetic mechanisms underlying social dynamics across species, including humans.

Enabling Brand Building Across U of T

191K
pageviews on the brand portal

As the Defy Gravity brand continued to gain momentum, UTC's marketing and communications teams partnered with Simcoe Hall portfolios and divisions to foster a culture of collaborative brand building across the university. Our aim was to maximize effectiveness and efficiency while reinforcing consistency and alignment in how U of T presents itself to stakeholders worldwide.

A key priority was strengthening support for student recruitment and enrolment. Working closely with vice-presidential portfolios, UTC applied strategic communications advising, brand strategy and marketing expertise to enable divisions to meet their business objectives. In partnership with Undergraduate Admissions and U of T's events team, UTC organized a virtual event for admitted students from 87 countries featuring Nobel laureate Geoffrey Hinton. Rather than discuss AI, Hinton spoke about intellectual curiosity, resilience and academic passion – helping students feel inspired to accept their offer to U of T. More than 1,370 students tuned in live or watched the recording, with post-event surveys confirming the session boosted their excitement and confidence in U of T.

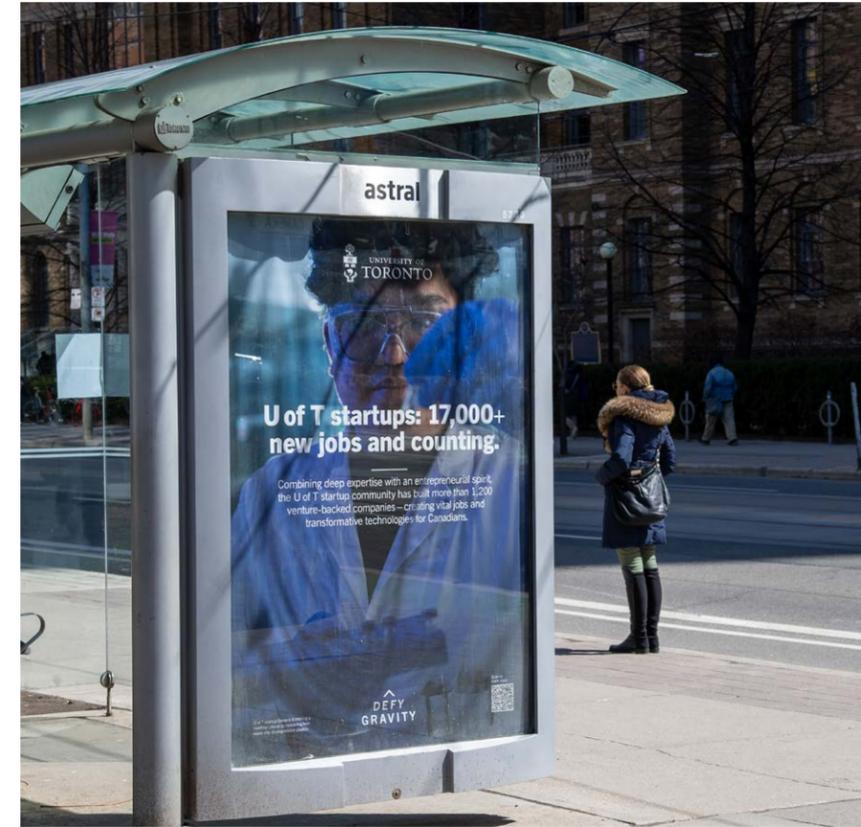
At UTM and UTSC, marketing and communications teams deepened collaboration with recruitment and student affairs colleagues, deploying new assets and tactics to support yield and community building. This included market research, updated viewbooks, refreshed web presence, a modular

brand installation, and a new animated brand collage and targeted enrolment marketing. UTSC's health sciences campaign contributed to a 58 per cent increase in applications, while UTM's summer enrolment campaign led to more students registering in summer 2024 than in any summer semester previously.

UTC also supported student experience and promoted student engagement through integrated campaigns for convocations and back to school. These efforts combined project management, creative production, activation design and earned media coverage. Our campaigns highlighted U of T's role in empowering student success, including the base funding increase for PhD students, which became the second-most read story of the year with more than 37K views. Stories of resilience and achievement among students also drove strong engagement.

Sustainability, another Defy Gravity priority, was showcased through nearly 40 pieces of content. Highlights included UTC's News Now videos on the U of T Free Store and the cutting-edge geoexchange system beneath King's College Circle. UTSC also advanced inclusive cities-focused storytelling with a new Black Excellence website, amplifying the voices and achievements of Black-identifying students, faculty, staff and alumni.

Maintaining brand consistency remained a central focus. The U of T brand portal expanded significantly, generating 191K pageviews from 23K unique visitors and supporting nearly 6K downloads. New templates, assets and guidance were added, alongside updates to pole banners, new retail apparel, photography, aerial campus footage, and popular workshops in brand storytelling and visual identity. Together, these initiatives strengthened alignment while giving communicators and designers across U of T the tools to bring the brand to life.



Celebrating Back to School and Convocation

Each year, UTC collaborates with campus partners to deliver multi-channel campaigns for signature milestones. In 2024, highlights included digital storytelling about U of T's official organist retiring after 45 years, large-format campus signage, and enhanced digital strategies for convocation.

While the spring convocation coincided with an encampment-focused communications strategy, the fall convocation campaign rebounded with 117 social posts (a 67 per cent increase year-over-year), nine earned media hits in outlets including CBC Here & Now and the *Toronto Star*, and top-performing *U of T News* stories, such as a convocation profile of a hyperpolyglot graduate that reached 17K views.

Back-to-school campaigns focused on welcoming more than 90K students across all campuses. Highlights included campus signage, social storytelling, and Breakfast Television coverage of UTSC's move-in day for the second consecutive year.



Promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship

11.7M
impressions

52K
website sessions

To position U of T as a hub for innovation, UTC led a targeted campaign featuring U of T Entrepreneurship. A paid campaign showcasing Nobel laureate Geoffrey Hinton's keynote at Entrepreneurship Week 2025 generated 3,360 livestream registrations, with organic promotion adding 3K more. The campaign drove 11.7M impressions, 52K website visits, and 721 new subscribers to Deep Tech Download, drawing subscribers from global firms such as Google, Lockheed Martin, Siemens Energy and Goldman Sachs.

At the Collision tech conference, UTC's campaign delivered 9.4M impressions, 46K website sessions, and 419 new newsletter subscribers, while transit ads reached an estimated 381K viewers. Additional activations included refreshed branding for ONRamp and the UTE booth at the Schwartz Reisman Innovation Campus.

UTC also supported U of T's presence at the 2024 Elevate Festival, attended by 9,618 people. U of T achieved top brand recall among investors (76 per cent) and third place among startups, trailing only Google and TD Bank. A visit to the U of T booth by Canada's Minister of Innovation underscored the university's stature in the innovation ecosystem.

Strengthening Social Media Alignment

A comprehensive audit of institutional social media channels confirmed the value of consolidating institutional social media efforts. Findings showed that retiring *U of T Magazine's* social channels and shifting its award-winning content to UTC-managed institutional channels would maximize engagement. This transition is underway, alongside the development of new strategies to expand reach and ensure the magazine's stories continue to inspire broad audiences.



Building and Managing U of T's Brand and Reputation

In FY2024-25, UTC advanced U of T's brand and reputation locally, nationally and globally by pairing strategic storytelling with rigorous measurement of brand health and audience sentiment. At a time of heightened competition, these efforts ensure that U of T continues to stand out as a university defined by excellence, innovation, inclusion and global impact.

A global brand health study offered in-depth insights into awareness, loyalty and engagement, as well as perceptions of U of T's academic strength and societal relevance. This research now informs institutional messaging and decision-making, helping the university articulate a cohesive narrative that resonates with stakeholders at home and abroad.

Reputation was also measured across dimensions such as program quality, innovation, workplace culture, ethics, leadership and financial performance. U of T's reputation was assessed to be in the strong category – an impressive achievement. Importantly, stakeholders affirmed that U of T reflects their values, benefits society, delivers on its commitments and leads with integrity.

Equally critical was UTC's monitoring of real-time audience sentiment to identify gaps between expectations and institutional actions. Left unaddressed, such gaps risk controversy, reputational damage or loss of trust. UTC's role in institutional issues management ensured that potential challenges were met with rapid, transparent communications – ranging from timely updates to in-depth stories that built understanding among internal and external audiences.

This year, UTC handled 480 inbound media inquiries, a 62 per cent increase over the previous year, reflecting the university's visibility in high-profile developments such as the two-month encampment. Working closely with the President's Office, the Provost's Office and other senior leaders, UTC coordinated rapid, fact-

based responses that supported U of T's peaceful resolution of the conflict. National outlets including the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post* cited the university as a model of de-escalation, underscoring the reputational value of a measured approach. For its internal community, UTC published 23 updates to its Utogether website, generating 251,000 pageviews keeping our community constantly informed and updated.

Beyond this high profile matter, UTC positioned U of T as part of the solution on complex issues such as housing affordability and labour negotiations. Stories in the *Toronto Star* and *InSauga* highlighted new residence buildings, housing guarantees and financial support initiatives, while consistent updates during a busy bargaining year built trust with faculty, staff and students.

Together, these efforts contributed to U of T's reputation as a values-driven institution that listens, responds and leads with integrity.

480

inbound media inquiries



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Delivering Value to Our Internal Community

Aligning and Strengthening Internal Communications

One of UTC's core commitments is to act as a collaborative partner for communicators, administrators and leaders across U of T. In FY2024-25, we advanced this commitment by fostering alignment, strengthening infrastructure and building capacity across divisions.

UTC developed a project charter for the UTAlert mass notification system to clarify roles and responsibilities and enable seamless collaboration among the Office of Safety and High Risk, Enterprise Applications and Solutions Integration, and UTC. This framework ensures more effective decision-making and the rapid dissemination of information during critical incidents.

We also co-sponsored and rolled out a new framework for institutional statements, enhancing clarity, tone and coordination. Supporting the Provost's Office, UTC helped launch *From the Provost's Desk* – a regular newsletter to over

14,000 faculty members, librarians, clinicians and senior staff. With an open rate of 41.7 per cent and a click-through rate of 5.4 per cent, the digest has quickly become a trusted channel for communicating institutional priorities.

In partnership with Student Life, the Provost's Office, and the School of Graduate Studies, UTC co-led a Student Communications Study to better understand student-facing mass email practices and preferences. Findings are now shaping recommendations to improve clarity, frequency and effectiveness of student communications.

UTC also revitalized the *Bulletin Brief*, the internal employee newsletter. Following a community survey, Phase 1 launched in January 2025 with a refreshed design for easier reading. Phase 2 will introduce new content streams in FY2025-26 to further strengthen engagement and community-building.

Supporting Divisions and Acting as a Resource for Communicators

UTC continued to provide on-demand consultation to divisions and central portfolios, advising on digital strategy, social media, content development, UX design, SEO and email best practices.

Recognizing the growing importance of generative AI, we launched a tri-campus community of practice for communicators to explore responsible and strategic use of emerging tools. We also piloted AI-driven sentiment analysis during high-profile campaigns to guide strategy and measure audience response.

The Lead Communicators' Network was established this year to connect divisional leaders through structured biannual meetings. Feedback from communicators has underscored its value in fostering collaboration and ensuring alignment on institutional updates.

UTC developed its first integrated, multi-channel content strategy and shared it widely with colleagues. To strengthen social media practices, it commissioned an audit of its primary channels and added guidelines to the brand portal on best practices for engagement, managing community, and launching or retiring accounts.



Professional development remained a priority. UTC hosted two virtual sessions of its peer-to-peer learning offering called Communications College, which is now open to divisional leaders, and facilitated six targeted media training workshops for faculties and institutes, equipping senior leaders to speak confidently on sensitive or high-profile topics.

We also benchmarked our work through global award competitions, earning recognition from the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC Global), the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education (CCAEE). Internally, UTC promoted the True Blue recognition platform, strengthening brand culture and celebrating staff contributions.

Finally, in collaboration with the President's Office and campus principals, UTC helped select and brand a new digital platform to support hybrid and virtual events across the university.

Through customized support, shared infrastructure and meaningful engagement, UTC reinforced its role as a trusted partner to divisions. Our efforts continue to enable units across U of T to tell their stories more effectively, advance strategic goals and contribute to a strong, unified institutional brand.

Our brand marketing team supported divisions and Simcoe Hall portfolios through a range of initiatives: developing logos for new centres, designing ceremonial merchandise, refreshing the Chancellor's Office website, and producing specialty print and signage for major milestones. These projects reinforced U of T's identity, celebrated institutional achievements, and highlighted leadership in sustainability and innovation.



Award-Winning Excellence in Communications

UTC earned **24 awards** this year, including 4 Gold, 4 Silver and 5 Bronze honours from the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education (CCA), the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the National Magazine Awards, the International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC), and the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS). In the spring, our team also received 8 Ovation and Gold Quill Awards from the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). At the Ovation Awards, UTC was named Not-for-Profit Communications Department of the Year—a distinction that highlights our team's creativity, professionalism and commitment to excellence.

Together, these awards recognize outstanding achievements in writing, design, photography, video, website development, publication and best practices in brand marketing and strategic communications.



CASE CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2025

Design & Publications

● **GOLD** – University of Toronto's Institutional Strategic Research Plan 2024-2029+

CASE BEST OF DISTRICT II AWARDS

Writing: News/Feature 1,000+ words

University of Toronto Magazine, "Will the U.S. Resist a Slide into Authoritarianism" – by Kurt Kleiner, Autumn 2024

Design/ Publications

University of Toronto's Institutional Strategic Research Plan 2024 - 2029

NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARDS

Art Direction of a Single Article

● **GOLD** – University of Toronto Magazine, Spring 2024: AI Everywhere

Art Direction Grand Prix

● **SILVER** – University of Toronto Magazine, Spring 2024: AI Everywhere

NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARDS B2B

Best Editorial Package

● **GOLD** – University of Toronto Magazine, Spring 2024: AI Everywhere



Art direction of a Complete issue

● **SILVER** – University of Toronto Magazine, Spring 2024: AI Everywhere

CCA PRIX D'EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2025

MARKETING/COMMUNICATION

Best Feature Writing – English

● **SILVER** – University of Toronto Magazine, "His Course about the Body Is a Workout for the Mind" – by Bruce Grierson, January 2024

Best Feature Writing – English

● **BRONZE** – University of Toronto Magazine, "Will the U.S. Resist a Slide into Authoritarianism?" – by Kurt Kleiner, Autumn 2024

Best Indigenous/Reconciliation Event

● **BRONZE** – University of Toronto Mississauga, UTM All Nations Powwow 2024

Best Photograph

● **GOLD** – University of Toronto Brand Hub, Innovation in Action: Dr. Kamran Kahn, a scientist at Unity Health Toronto and founder of University of Toronto startup BlueDot.

Best Print Brochure, Newsletter, or Flyer

● **BRONZE** – University of Toronto Scarborough Viewbook Refresh

Best Publication (print or online)

● **SILVER** – University of Toronto Magazine, Autumn 2024 issue

24 awards



AMEC GLOBAL COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS AWARDS 2025

Best Use of Measurement for a Single-Event or Campaign

● **BRONZE** – University of Toronto for the virtual student recruitment event featuring Nobel laureate, Geoffrey Hinton

CPRS AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE 2025

COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS

Best Integrated Communications

● **BRONZE** – U of T Communications for celebrating Geoffrey Hinton's Nobel Prize in Physics



COMMUNICATIONS PROJECTS

Best Publication

● **BRONZE** – University of Toronto Magazine, Autumn 2024 issue

IABC OVATION AWARDS 2025

COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

Marketing, Advertising and Brand Communications

Award of Merit – UTM 2024 Summer enrolment campaign

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Publications

Award of Merit – University of Toronto Magazine, Autumn 2024 issue



Special & Experiential Events

Award of Excellence – UTM Inaugural All-Nations Powwow

IABC GOLD QUILL AWARDS 2025

COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

Media Relations

Award of Merit – Nobel Prize awards ceremony

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Audio/ Visual

Award of Merit – UTM La Cloche video

Digital Communication

Award of Merit – UTSC future students' site

Publications

Award of Merit – University of Toronto Magazine, Autumn 2024 issue

Special & Experiential Events

Award of Merit – UTM All-Nations Powwow



Areas of Specialization

Communications

- Communications strategy and planning
- Internal and institutional communications
- Media relations and issues management
- Managing institutional and campus social media accounts
- Content production
- Videography and photography
- Graphic design
- Supporting divisional communicators
- Magazine publishing
- Web development

Brand Marketing

- Brand strategy and brand architecture
- Brand awareness campaigns
- Positioning and messaging framework
- Marketing content strategy, art direction, design and production
- Web strategy, design and development (divisional support)
- Experiential marketing
- Paid media planning, buying and reporting
- Market research, analysis, insights generation
- Marketing tools, resources and templates
- Brand strategy and marketing consulting and training



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PHOTO CREDITS

Images selected for this report were drawn from the U of T Digital Media Bank and Defy Gravity curated collection — photography that reflects the brand themes and is used to tell compelling stories and connect with audiences. Both resources are available to divisional and campus communicators to help bring consistency to decentralized brand storytelling.

Cover: Alumni Plaza (2024) — CRAFT Worldwide
Land Acknowledgement: UTM campus (2024) — Nick Iwanyshyn
p.3: Christine Szustaczek, Vice-President, Communications (2025) — Polina Teif
p.4-5: Hart House on St. George campus (2024) — Matthew Volpe
p.6 (Clockwise from top left): University College on St. George campus (2024) — Matthew Volpe / UTM Farm (2024) — Matthew Volpe / Gull Lake Survey Camp (2024) — Matthew Volpe
p.7 (Clockwise from top right): University of Toronto President Woodin (2025) — Polina Teif / Nobel prize winner Dr. Geoffrey Hinton (2024) — Johnny Guatto
p.8: Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design (2025) — Matthew Volpe
p.9: St. George front campus aerial (2025) — Matthew Volpe
p.10: Students in the New Science Building at UTM (2024) — Nick Iwanyshyn
p.12: Nobel prize winner Dr. Geoffrey Hinton (2024) — Johnny Guatto / Nobel prize winner Dr. Hinton speaking to students (2024) — David Lee
p.13: Nobel prize winner Dr. Geoffrey Hinton at Hart House (2025) — Polina Teif
p.14: University of Toronto President Melanie Woodin (2025) — Johnny Guatto
p.15: Melanie Woodin visits the University of Toronto Scarborough campus on her first full day as President (2025) — Polina Teif
p.18: Welcome back signage on St. George campus (2025) — Matthew Volpe
p.19 (Clockwise from top left): Transit Shelter Ad (2025) — Matthew Volpe / UTM students celebrate convocation (2025) — Nick Iwanyshyn
p.21: Ma Moosh Ka Win Valley Trail (2022) — Matthew Dochstader
p.22: Featuring students and faculty from the English Department (2025) — Matthew Volpe
p.23: Bottom left: Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, Undergrad Studio (2025) — Matthew Volpe / Top right: Cloud classroom (2025) — Alice Xue
p.24 (Clockwise from bottom left): Cover of University of Toronto's Institutional Strategic Research Plan 2024-2029 / Cover of UTE's Annual Report featuring Dr. Kamran Kahn on the cover, a scientist at Unity Health Toronto and founder of University of Toronto startup BlueDot (2025) — Matthew Volpe / Cover of *University of Toronto Magazine*, Spring 2024: AI Everywhere
p.25 (Clockwise from left): All-Nations Powwow on the UTM campus (2024) — Nick Iwanyshyn / Nobel prize winner Dr. Geoffrey Hinton (2024) — Johnny Guatto / Cover of University of Toronto Scarborough Viewbook 2024 / Cover of *University of Toronto Magazine*, Autumn 2024 issue
p.26: Music Faculty Performance Rehearsal (2022) — Matthew Volpe
p.27 (From top): Ziibiing Indigenous Landscape project at Hart House (2024) — David Lee / UTM campus aerial (2024) — Nick Iwanyshyn / UTSC campus aerial (2024) — Don Campbell
Back cover: Alumni Plaza (2024) — CRAFT Worldwide



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