

FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: UTSC Academic Affairs Committee

SPONSOR: Alison Mountz, Vice Principal Research and Innovation, Office of the Vice
CONTACT INFO: Principal Research and Innovation
416-948-7298, alison.mountz@utoronto.ca

PRESENTER: See above
CONTACT INFO:

DATE: Jan 8 for Jan 26, 2026

AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Annual Report: Office of the Vice Principal Research and Innovation, 2024-2025

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under section 5.7 of the UTSC Academic Affairs Committee Terms of Reference, the *“Committee receives annually, from the appropriate administrators, reports on services within its areas of responsibility, including research.”*

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. **UTSC Academic Affairs Committee [For Information] (Jan 26, 2026)**
2. **UTSC Campus Council [For Information] (Feb 23, 2026)**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The previous Annual Report of the Office of the Vice Principal Research and Innovation, 2023-2024 was presented to the UTSC Academic Affairs for information on October 15, 2024.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Annual Presentation of the UTSC OVPRI Annual Report. This annual report demonstrates growth and a thriving research ecosystem.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

No financial impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

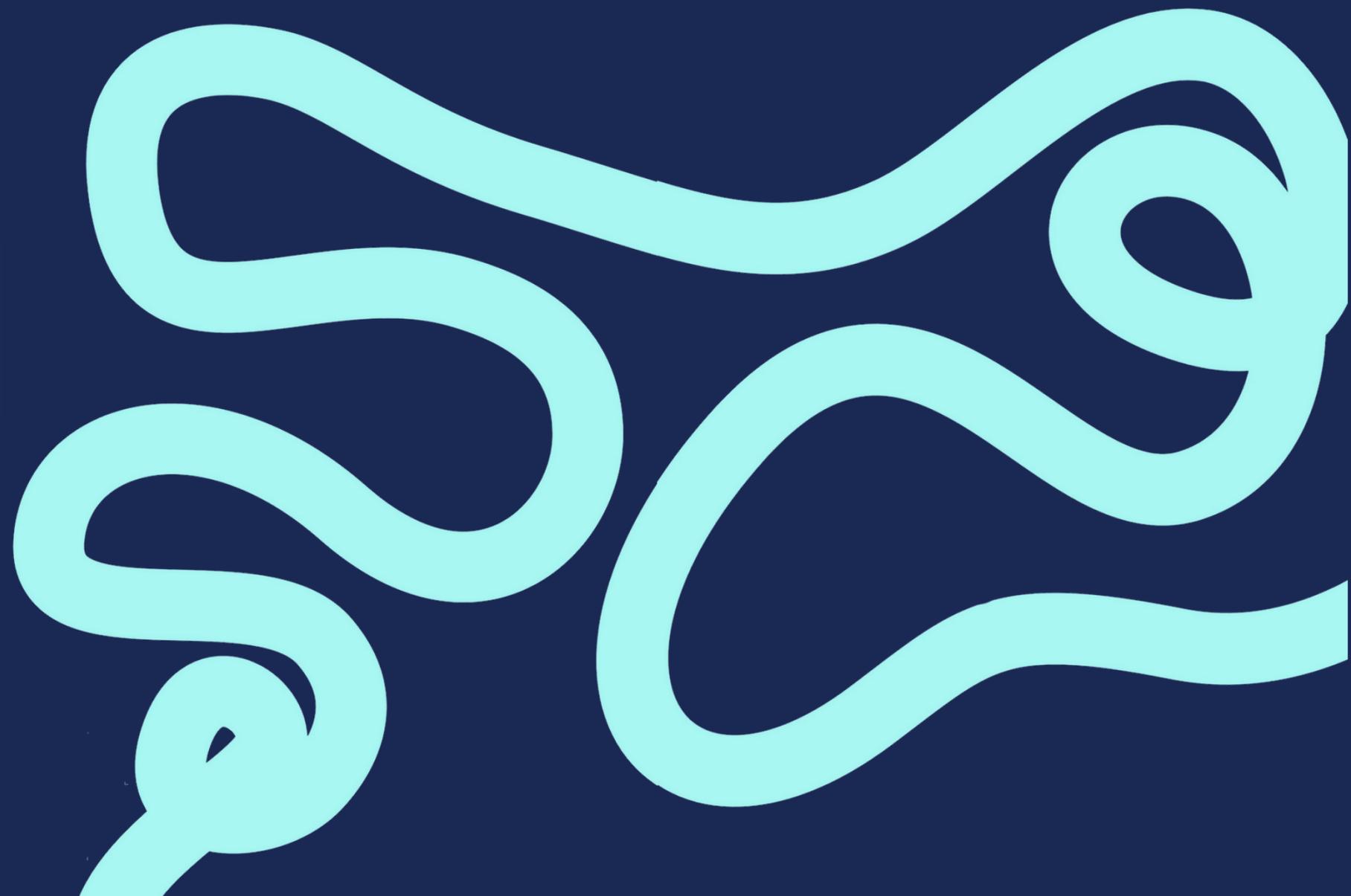
Office of the Vice Principal Research and Innovation Annual Report, 2024-2025

Presentation slidedeck.

Thrive

Growing Research, Leadership,
and Sustainability at UTSC

Presented by Alison Mountz
December 2025





This has been an incredible year of growth in research at U of T Scarborough. Our researchers, the OVPRI, and the many communities we are part of are thriving together. We are grateful to have grown as a research community in so many ways and in new directions.

Alison Mountz

Vice-Principal, Research & Innovation





**Impact by
numbers**

Summary of 2024 -25

411

Research Grants

260

Funding Applications

90

Funding Programs

42

Funding Organizations

9

Private Sector Partners

Grant Success

Success rates in competitions for the federal government's flagship Tri-Agency programs.

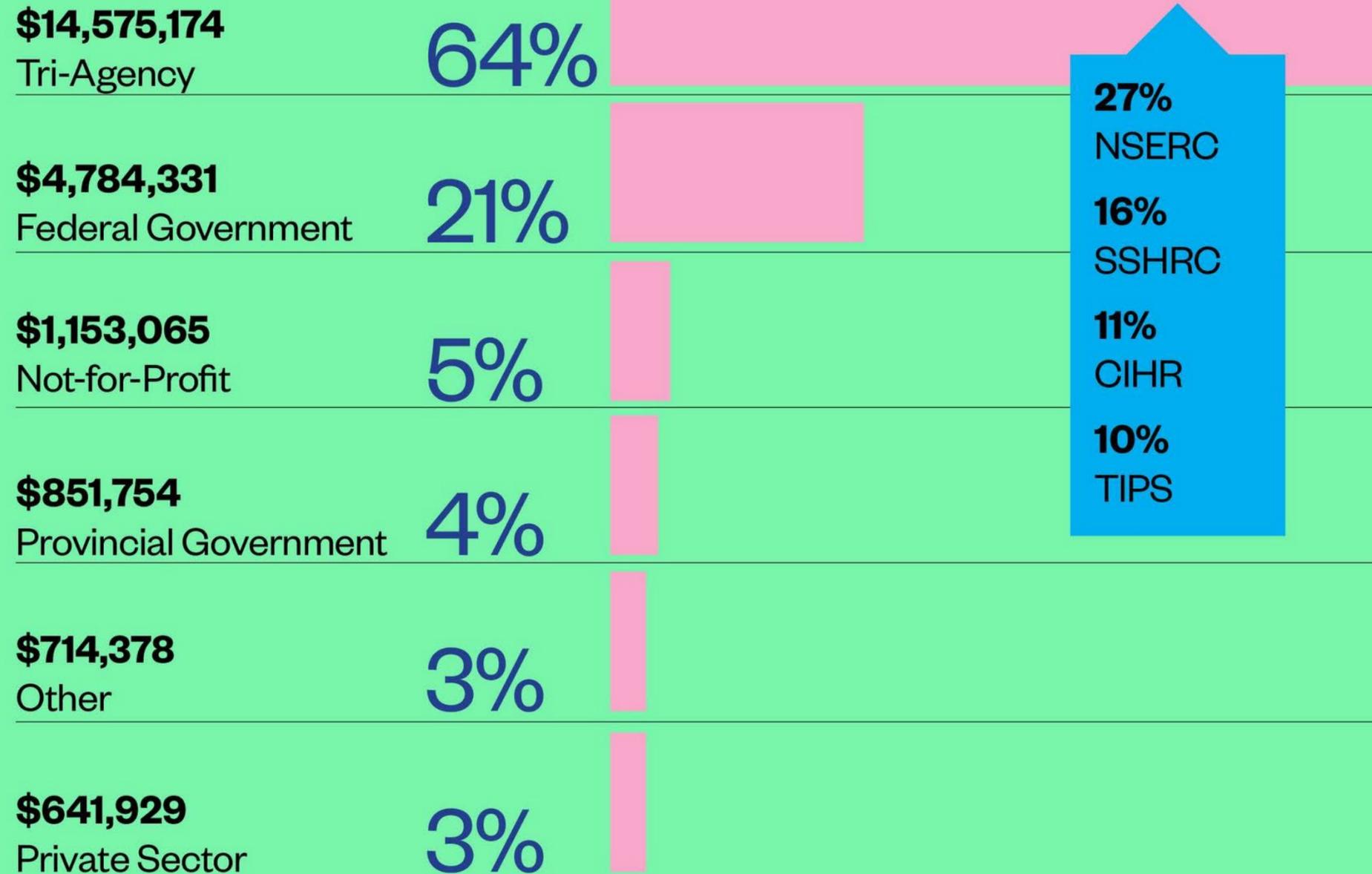
2024-25	National Success Rate	University of Toronto	University of Toronto Scarborough
SSHRC Insight Development Grant	53%	55%	67%
SSHRC Insight Grant	40%	50%	60%
CIHR Project Grant	19%	19%	27%
NSERC Discovery Grant	62%	66%	78%

**Supervisions by U of T
Scarborough Faculty Totals**

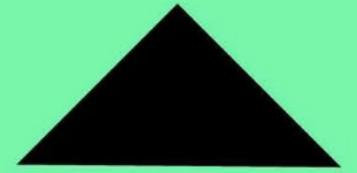
187 Master's Students
657 PhD Students
170 Postdoctoral Fellows

Total Research Funding Breakdown

\$22,720,631



Increase over 5 years



Tri-Agency Funding



Total Research Funding



Tenure-stream Faculty

271 in 2019-20

326 in 2024-25

20% Increase in # of tenure stream faculty over 5 years

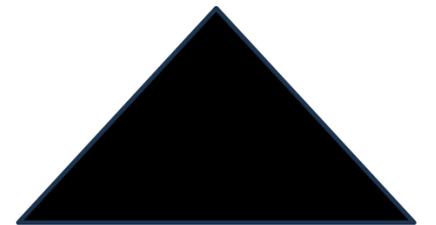
- + research capacity
- + research leadership

Total Research Funding

\$14,283,138 2019-20

\$22,720,631 2024-25

59% Increase in total research funding over the last 5 years



- + increased marketshare
- + increased CRCs and CFI funding envelope



Initiatives and Partnerships

Connecting the future

The **Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships** team advances UofT Scarborough's **research leadership** by fostering an innovative ecosystem, driving cross departmental collaborations, and managing large scale and high-impact strategic projects.

The team partners with industry leaders and community experts from the rich and diverse regions of Scarborough and the Eastern Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to create meaningful and tangible benefits and respond to complex societal challenge.

Key highlights include:

- Launch of the Community of Practice for Research Leaders
- Arrival of the Harvest Walls
- Recognition of three more clusters in the Clusters of Scholarly Prominence Program (CSPP)
- Design Thinking
- Digital Research Storytelling
- Arrival of the knowledge mobilization RV
- The Sam Ibrahim Centre for Inclusive Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Leadership (SICIEEIL) moves into the new Sam Ibrahim building
- Speaker Series with Earth District
- Partnerships with Ontario Shores and the University of Lincoln

Clusters of Scholarly Prominence Program

Established in 2020, the Clusters of Scholarly Prominence Program (CSPP) is UTSC's flagship program for fostering interdisciplinary and collaborative research.

The "Creative Labour and Critical Futures (CLOF)" Cluster aims to enhance our understanding of how to imagine and design more inclusive creative futures for workers and society, both in Canada and globally.



Led by Professor **Mary Elizabeth (M.E.) Luka** and Co-PI Professor **Rafael Grohmann** at the Department of Arts, Culture & Media

The "Exposomics of Persistent Organic Synthetic Envirottoxins (ExPOSE)" Cluster develops a scalable platform that integrates genetics, genomics, immunology and proteomics techniques to screen for toxic persistent organic pollutants that threaten ecological and human health.



Led by Professor **Bebhinn Treanor** and Co-PI Professor **Satyaki Rajavasireddy** at the Department of Biological Sciences

The "Communities for Adaptation, Resilience, Equity, and Sustainability (CARES)" Cluster develops innovative knowledge and practical strategies for inclusive societies by investigating community-led solutions to public health crises.



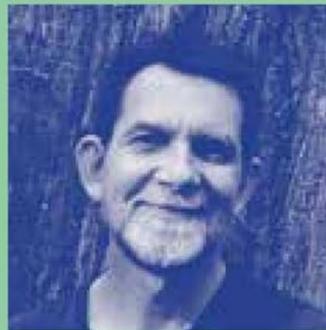
Led by Professor **Nicholas Spence** at the Department of Sociology and Co-PI Professor **Leonard Tsuji** at the Department of Health & Society

Sustainable Development Goals (ISI:SDGs@UofT)

Three UTSC-based scholars play a key role in the Academy's network

SDGs Scholars Academy

The SDGs Scholars Academy is a think tank that catalyzes research collaboration at U of T on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve impact. Through the involvement of faculty scholars, the Academy seeks to accelerate research that is epistemologically and methodologically diverse, empower trainees to engage in SDGs research, build sustainable collaborations through public engagement, and mobilize knowledge to inform policy and practice in ways that address the challenges of the SDGs.



Imre Szeman, Full Professor in the Department of Human Geography, is the inaugural Director of the Institute for Environment, Conservation and Sustainability. His work focuses on social and political transformation in response to energy transition. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and previously held research chairs at the University of Waterloo, University of Alberta, and McMaster University.



Sergio Montero, Associate Professor in the Department of Human Geography and Director of the Institute for Inclusive Economies and Sustainable Livelihoods, specializes in inclusive economic development, planning politics, and knowledge exchange, especially in Latin America. He holds a PhD in City and Regional Planning from UC Berkeley.



Laura Tozer, Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences, studies urban climate governance and the politics of equitable energy transitions. Her work explores how cities can accelerate sustainability while ensuring justice and resilience.

UTSC Engage

Resourcing and innovating knowledge mobilization and community engaged research to democratize university knowledge for equity and impact



Research Meets Innovation

The Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships team advanced U of T Scarborough's mission to deepen global collaborations through showcasing U of T Scarborough scholars and their collaborations with international partners to address complex challenges.

Digital Research Storytelling Workshops

UTSC Engage and the Critical Digital Humanities Initiative offered two six-session Digital Research Storytelling Workshops that were tailored for tri-campus researchers and research teams interested in research creation and knowledge mobilization via a creative short video format.

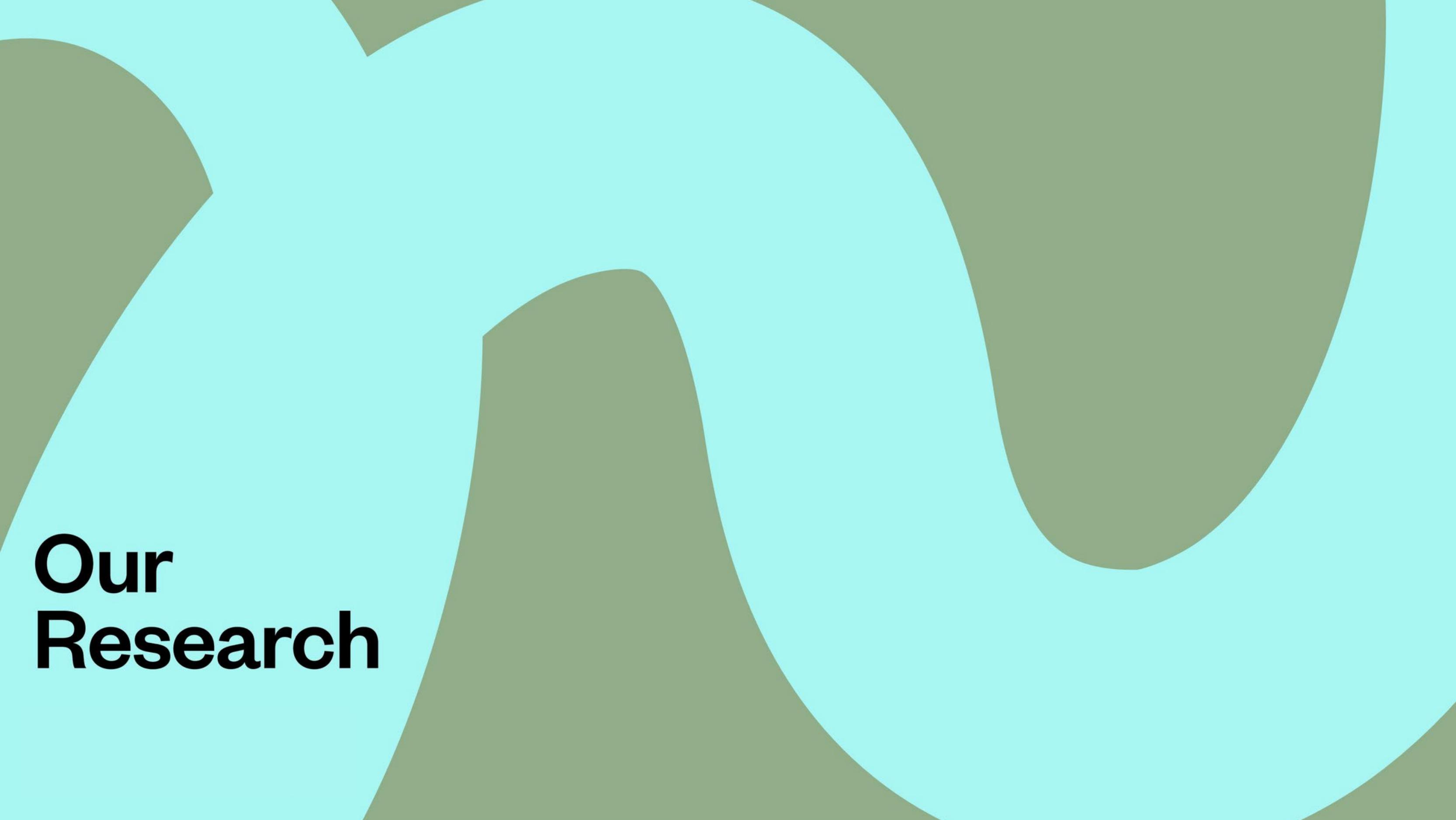
Innovation as a Service – Design Thinking Series

Innovation as a Service by the Sam Ibrahim Centre is a scalable, on-demand service that helps organizations and teams tackle complex challenges and accelerate value creation. The Sam Ibrahim Centre delivers tailored Design Thinking workshops that meet the unique needs of research teams and collaborative partners to build innovation capacity, foster collaboration, and drive meaningful change.





DEMOLISH *or* **REIMAGINE?**

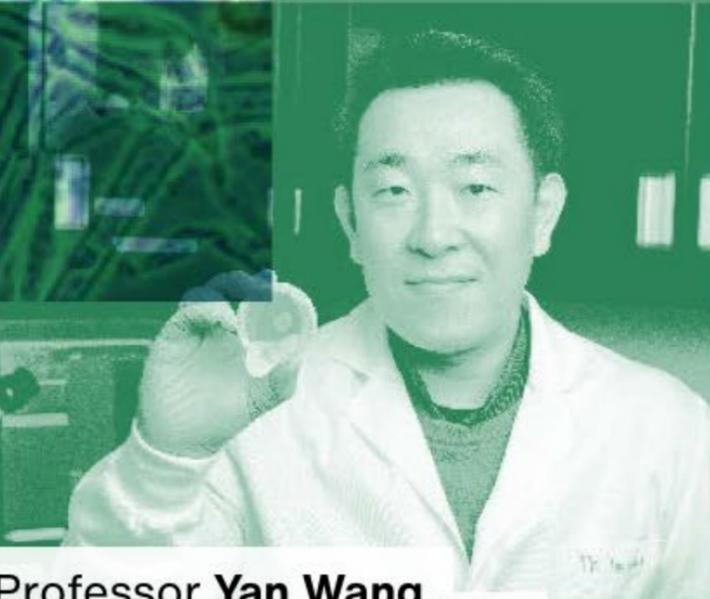
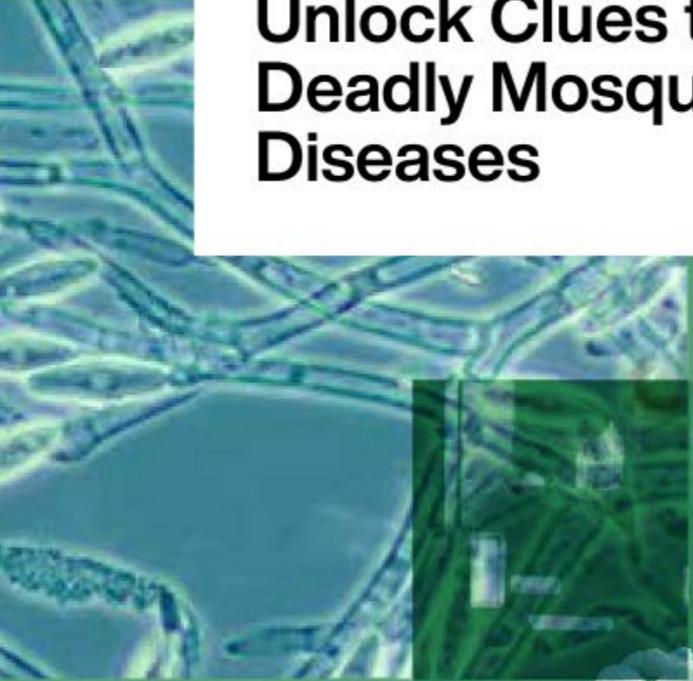


Our Research

Our Research

Highlights in Health, Science, Technology, Culture, Social Science and Humanities, and more.

Gut-Dwelling Fungi Might Unlock Clues to Fighting Deadly Mosquito-Borne Diseases



Assistant Professor **Yan Wang**,
Department of Biological Sciences

Professor Andrew Westoll Writes In Memoriam for Five Animals from the Toronto Zoo



Department of English



Creative Labour and Critical Futures, Clusters of Scholarly Prominence



Professor **Mary Elizabeth (M.E.) Luka**,
Department of Arts, Culture & Media

Brain Health in Honey Bees



Assistant Professor **Ina Anreiter**,
Department of Biological Sciences

“Stealing Credit” and the Impacts of Knowledge Theft



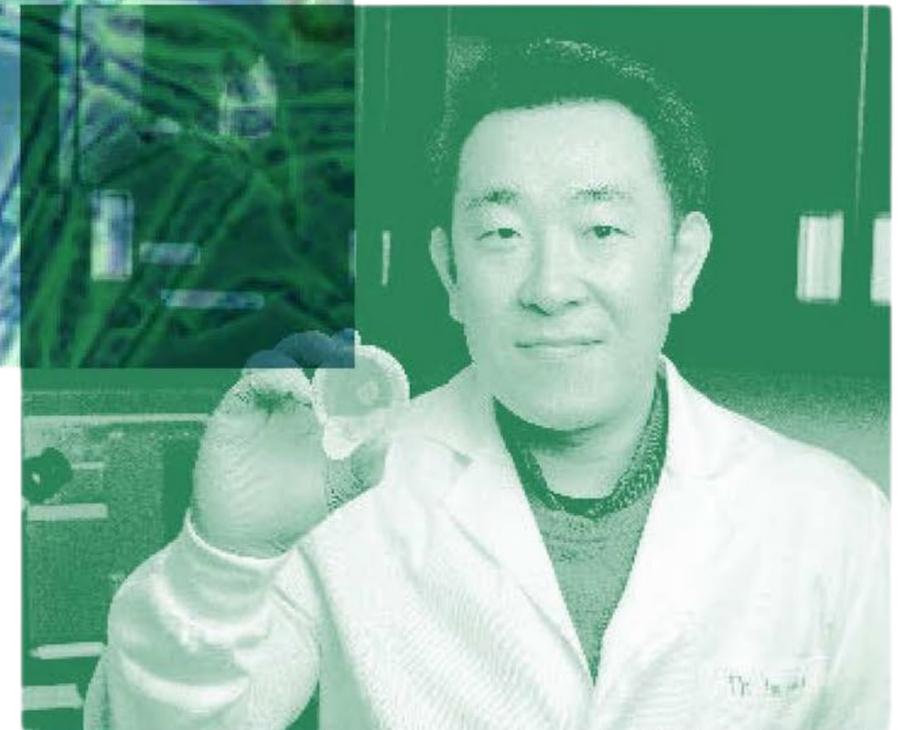
Professor **David Zweig**,
Department of Management

Gut-Dwelling Fungi Might Unlock Clues to Fighting Deadly Mosquito -Borne Diseases

U of T Scarborough researchers successfully sequenced the genome of a microscopic fungus that lives inside the gut of mosquitoes. They hope by decoding fungi genomes, like *Smittium minutisporum*, they can find tools to control mosquito-borne diseases like malaria, Zika and pediatric encephalitis.



“We know so little about these types of fungi, yet their role in the mosquito ecosystem could be pivotal for understanding disease transmission,” says Assistant Professor **Yan Wang** from the Department of Biological Sciences and co-author of the study .



Study Finds AI Judged to be More Compassionate Than Crisis Reponders

Research finds artificial intelligence (AI) can create empathetic responses more reliably and consistently than humans, even when compared to professionals whose jobs rely on empathizing with those in need.



“AI doesn’t get tired,” says **Dariya Ovsyannikova** (HBSoc 2023 UTSC), lab manager in Professor **Michael Inzlicht’s** lab and lead author of the study. “It can offer consistent, high-quality empathetic responses without the emotional strain that humans experience.” The research, published in the journal *Communications Psychology*, looked at how people evaluated empathetic responses generated by ChatGPT compared to human responses.

New Book on Respect and Social Life in the Amazon Riverside

Assistant Professor **Vinicius Aguiar Furuie** from the Department of Anthropology was awarded a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation to complete a book exploring how the concept of respect drives social relations in the riverside communities along the Amazon.



Brain Health in Honey Bees

Assistant Professor **Ina Anreiter** from the Department of Biological Sciences was part of an interdisciplinary team that received a prestigious grant from the Research Corporation for Science Advancement's Scialog initiative to study the brain development and cognitive health of honey bees.



Current Canada Research Chairs

The Canadian government created the Canada Research Chairs Program to recognize research excellence, to support impactful work and knowledge development, and to increase Canada's international competitiveness.

In 2024-2025, U of T Scarborough had 10 chairholders.



Daniel Bender
Physical & Environmental Sciences, CRC in Food and Culture, 2014-2028



Kagan Kerman
Physical & Environmental Sciences, CRC in the Bio-electrochemistry of Proteins, 2016-2026



Bebhinn Treanor
Biological Sciences, CRC in Spatially Resolved Biochemistry, 2016-2026



Cendri Hutcherson
Psychology, CRC in Decision Neuroscience, 2018-2028



Myrna Simpson
Physical & Environmental Sciences, CRC in Integrative Molecular Biogeochemistry, 2019-2026



Brian Connelly
Management, CRC in Integrative Perspectives on Personality, 2016-2026



Hilary Brown
Health and Society, CRC in Disability and Reproductive Health, 2019-2026



Caroline Hossein
Global Development Studies, CRC in Africana Development and Feminist Political Economy, 2022-2027



Christina Guzzo
Biological Sciences, CRC in Single Virus Particle Analyses, 2024-2029

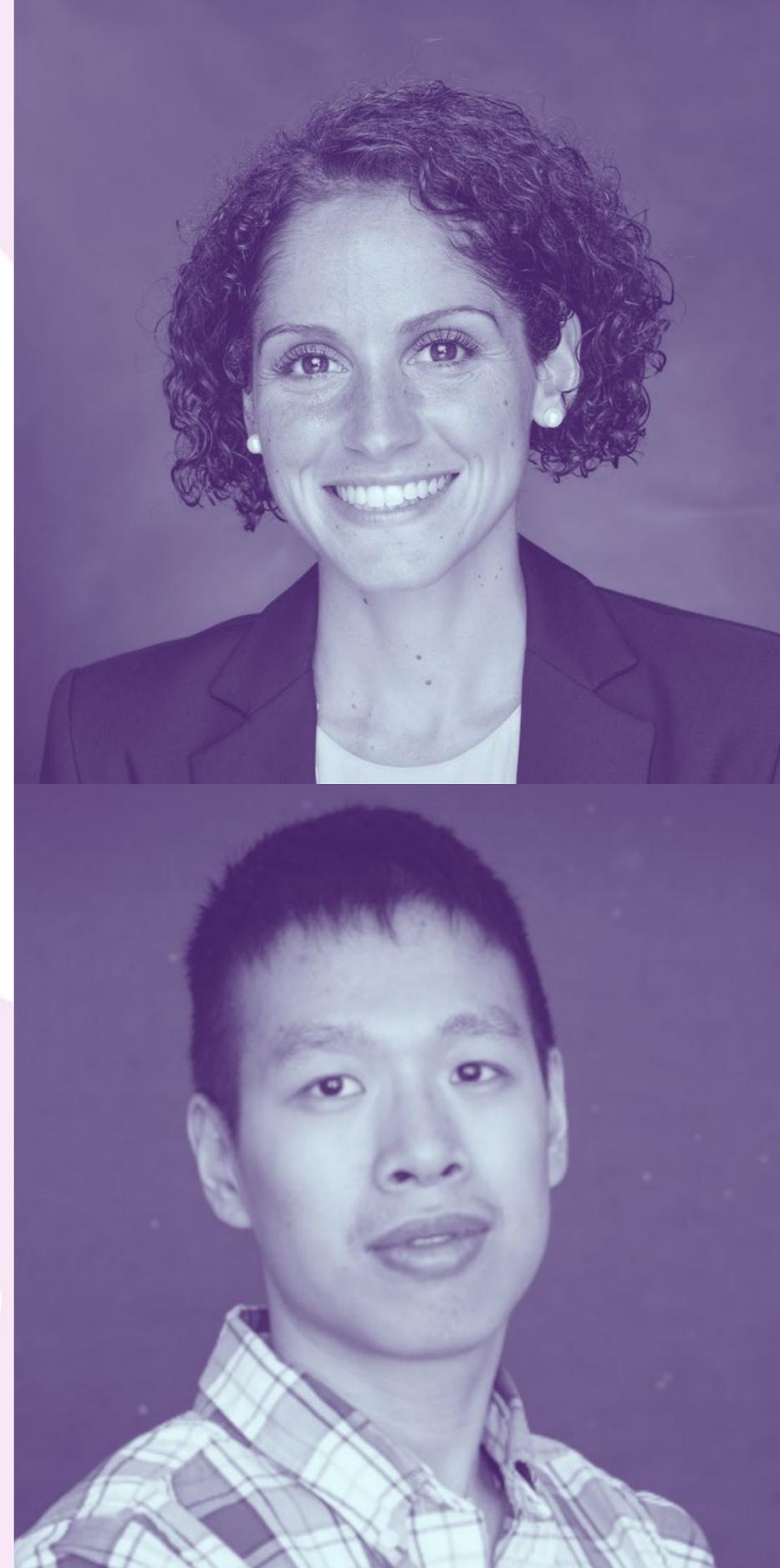


Linbo Wang
Computer & Mathematical Sciences, CRC in Causal Machine Learning, 2024-2029

New Canada Research Chairs awarded to U of T Scarborough

“These two researchers are advancing knowledge through their innovative work in two very important fields—targeting viruses and developing ethical AI. They exemplify a commitment to harnessing innovative ideas in making the world a better place that is a hallmark of research at U of T Scarborough”

Alison Mountz, U of T Scarborough's Vice-Principal,
Research and Innovation





Faculty and Student Awards

Walter Tavares awarded King Charles III's Coronation Medal

Assistant Professor **Walter Tavares** from the Department of Health and Society was awarded King Charles III's Coronation Medal in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the field of paramedicine. He contributed to establishing Canada's first undergraduate degree program in paramedicine and spearheaded the country's first international paramedic exchange program.

Prof. Tavares is an academic leader and active mentor through the Paramedicine Collaborative at the Department of Family and Community Medicine (U of T), and his work pushes the boundaries of the profession through innovative educational models and novel care systems that are reshaping paramedicine.



U of T Scarborough professors join Canada's prestigious national academy

Professors **Myrna Simpson** and **Karina Vernon** were recognized with election to the Royal Society of Canada, whose distinguished Fellows and innovative College Members represent Canada's scholars, artists and scientists.

Prof. Simpson leads comprehensive research investigations on how anthropogenic activities and associated climate change are fundamentally altering the environment.

Prof. Vernon is a literary scholar and public intellectual whose research makes visible hidden Black and Black Indigenous cultures and contexts in Canada. Her book, *The Black Prairie Archives: An Anthology* (2020).



Karina Vernon,
Associate Professor,
Department of English,
Member of the RSC
College of New Scholars,
Artists and Scientists



Myrna Simpson,
Professor, Department of
Physical & Environmental
Sciences, Fellow of the
Royal Society of Canada

U of T Scarborough Faculty Awards

Research awards recognize and celebrate members of the U of T Scarborough scholarly community who have highly distinguished research accomplishments and display exceptional research promise.



Hilary Brown

Associate Professor,
Department of Health &
Society
Principal's Impact Award



Laura Cirelli

Associate Professor,
Department of
Psychology
*New Scholar Award -
Sciences*



Brian Connelly

Associate Professor,
Department of
Management
*Distinguished Scholar
Award - Social
Sciences*



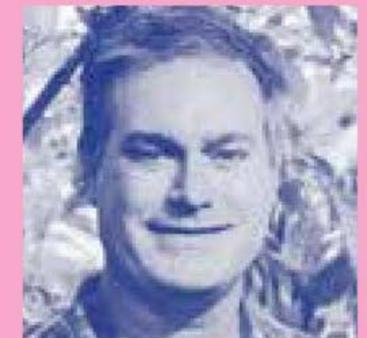
Christopher Higgins

Associate Professor,
Department of Human
Geography
*New Scholar Award -
Social Sciences*



Notisha Massaquoi

Associate Professor,
Department of Health
& Society
*New Scholar Award -
Social Sciences*



Ken Welch Jr.

Professor, Department
of Biological Sciences
*Distinguished Scholar
Award - Sciences*

Connaught Fund Awards

The Connaught Fund New Researcher Awards recognize early-career faculty members at U of T, which includes six awards to U of T Scarborough.



Donald Butler, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology



Yue Yu, Assistant Professor, Department of Management



Shreyas Sekar, Assistant Professor, Department of Management



Xue Pan, Assistant Professor, Department of Biological Sciences



Andrew Lee, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy



Laura Tozer, Assistant Professor, Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences

Connaught Community Partnership Research Program awarded to three U of T Scarborough researchers

The Connaught Community Research Partnership Program awards collaborative research with non-academic community partners.

For the 2024-25 funding cycle, the Connaught Committee decided to exceed its \$300,000 allocation to award a total of \$820,000 to nine research initiatives, which includes three awards to U of T Scarborough.



Élyse Caron-Beaudoin,
Department of Health
and Society



Matthew Hoffman,
Department of Political
Science



Laura Risk, Department
of Arts, Culture & Media

Undergraduate Research & Creative Prize

Distinctions and prizes are awarded to U of T Scarborough students excelling in research, scholarship, and creative activities.

The Undergraduate Research & Creative Prize is sponsored by the U of T Scarborough Library and the OVPRI. This \$1,000 award celebrates and recognizes students and their engagement with the library during their work for categories in Humanities, Social Sciences, Sciences, and Creative streams.





Sam Ibrahim Centre

Sam Ibrahim Centre

Sam Ibrahim Centre for Inclusive Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Leadership (SICIEEIL)

The Sam Ibrahim Centre for Inclusive Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Leadership (SICIEEIL) is a University of Toronto accelerator at U of T Scarborough campus dedicated to empowering entrepreneurs across every stage of their journey. From idea conception to business scaling and groundbreaking research, the centre welcomes students, alumni, startups, staff, researchers, community and more.

Scarborough entrepreneur, Sam Ibrahim, gifted \$25 million to create the SamIbrahim Centre. Ibrahim is an impactful business leader with strong community ties and investments. He is the President and General Manager of the Arrow Group of Companies, which provides strategic consulting and talent solutions. He is also known as the cofounder of the Scarborough Shooting Stars, an elite Canadian basketball league.



Level Up series

The Level Up series is an entrepreneurial program focused on providing skills development, mentorship, entrepreneurship-based literacy, and activity for the U of T Scarborough innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The Level Up series, generously supported by U of T Scarborough Alumna **Elina Chow**, provides the opportunity for startups to participate in the program at any stage and learn the skills to progress:

- Level 1: Ideation & Design
- Level 2: Formation & Solidify
- Level 3: Grow and Scale
- Level 4: Getting Seed Funding Ready



Startup Spotlight

Farname-Diagnosis

Soha Ahmadi is the co-founder of Farname-Diagnosis, an advanced point-of-care testing device with a focus on early-stage ovarian cancer detection. They received \$520,000 for proof of concept from three major awards from the Faculty of Arts & Science Postdoctoral Fellowship, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Project Grant, and the Connaught Innovation Award.



Soha Ahmadi is a Postdoctoral Researcher from the Department of Chemistry at U of T, standing with **Elina Chow**, U of T Scarborough Alumna, and generous supporter of the Level Up program.

SAVI Finance

Ralph Maamari is the co-founder of SAVI Finance, a financial services and software, including AI and Generative AI applications for personal finance. They recently reached 1,700 users, including paid users, and were invited to the FinTech Awards 2025.



Ralph Maamari is a U of T alumni from the Department of Computer Science.

SICIEEIL Impact Numbers

150+

Startups supported by SICIEEIL in its inaugural year of operations.

This growing portfolio includes startups located across the Eastern GTA and spans a range of high-impact sectors. The top 3 sectors were:

Health & Wellness
25%

Information, Communication,
Technology & Digital Media

22%

Education Technology

10%

Closing Message

To U of T Scarborough,
with love, care and hope
for our collective futures:

As we advance a culture of care at U of T Scarborough, we would like to express our gratitude to the large, dynamic and evolving research community. We are very proud of the collective, collaborative, multidisciplinary work that is thriving on our campus.

Thank you to our phenomenal staff, faculty, students and administrative colleagues. Thank you to our partners, and to those who served on the consultative committees that supported our growth and success in research. We anticipate another wonderful year of flourishing and growth to come.



Contributor's Notes

Thank you to the Office of the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation staff for their dedication and work on the OVPRI Annual Report 2024-2025.

The theme of success, growth and leadership is represented in our team, as individuals and collectives to create a thriving research and innovation community.

Thank you to OVPRI staff members: Bahar Barkhordarian, Meredith Best, Hayley Brooks, Ailen Cruz, Feihan Dai, Jason Darby, Donovan Dill, Joel Faber, Kimberly Hannon-Kovacs, Janet James, Areej Khalid, Anika Mifsud, Nida Mustafa, Seymone Mohammed, Jennifer Moles, Kristine Peruzzi, Brice Rousseau, Jenefer Savoeung, Carmen Siu, Komal Tariq, Michelle Wodzak, Nicoda Foster and Julia Gruson-Wood.

Thank you to OVPRI leadership: Andrea Charise, Francesco Leri, Sean Lockwood and Alison Mountz. Additional thank yous to contributions and support from Sarah Forbes, Imre Szeman and Sergio Montero.

Thank you to U of T and U of T Scarborough Marketing & Communications for use of images and stories, including Don Campbell, and writers Ken McGuffin and Megan Easton.



Design: Hambly & Woolley Inc.