

FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: University Affairs Board

SPONSOR: Anne Macdonald, Assistant Vice-President
CONTACT INFO: Spaces & Experiences

PRESENTER: Angie Law, Integrated Marketing and Communications
Spaces & Experiences

CONTACT INFO: 647-309-8194 angie.law@utoronto.ca

DATE: May 12, 2026 for May 27, 2026

AGENDA ITEM: 7

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Annual Report: *Code of Conduct for Trademark Licensees*

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The University Affairs Board's areas of responsibility include use of the University of Toronto name. The Board is responsible for policy of a non-academic nature for matters within its areas of responsibility. The *University of Toronto Trademark Licensing Policy* charges the Board with receiving annual reports on the operation of and issues connected with the trademark licensing program.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. University Affairs Board [for information] (May 27, 2026)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The Annual Report on Trademark Licensing 2024-25 was received by the Board at its May 21, 2025 meeting.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The 2025–26 Trademark Licensing Annual Report reflects a year of program maturity, operational refinement and strengthened governance, with particular emphasis on special collections and campus activations that reinforced brand stewardship and student engagement.

Highlights include the relaunch of the Roots x U of T collaboration; cultural and values-based collections, such as Lunar New Year (Year of the Horse) and Pride; and event-driven merchandise supporting Spaces & Experiences initiatives. The University of Toronto Bookstore refresh was further enhanced through the introduction of premium graduation frame departments and continued support of Convocation-related merchandise, elevating the student and family experience at a key institutional milestone. Campus activations also included support for the Bookstore's Cherry Blossom collection and the Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology's Trash Team collection, showcasing sustainable, underrepresented and women-owned businesses. Collectively, these efforts strengthened partnerships with the Bookstore, increased campus participation and upheld the university's leadership in ethical collegiate licensing. The year also emphasized renewed outreach and education efforts to strengthen compliance with the Trademark Licensing Policy, reinforcing ethical supply-chain practices for university-branded merchandise in response to expectations demanded by students more than 20 years ago.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None

RECOMMENDATION:

The documentation is presented for information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

2025-26 Annual Report on the Code of Conduct for Trademark Licensees

Trademark Licensing **Annual Report** **2025 - 26**

May 20, 2026



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

Trademark Licensing
Spaces & Experiences

U OF T
SPACES &
EXPERIENCES



Branded with Purpose

Officially U of T: **Merchandise that** **Represents.**

Support your community, show your pride, and do it right —
with officially approved, ethically made merchandise.

Table of Contents

Introduction **4**

Trademark Licensing Overview **5**

What is Trademark Licensing	6
Daily Work	7
Bookstore Partnership	8
Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC)	9
Industry Context	10

Collaborations & Special Collections **11**

Graduation Frames & Convocation Merchandise	12
Roots x U of T	13
Lunar New Year - Year of the Horse	14
Pride Merchandise	15
U of T Trash Team & Cherry Blossom Collection	16

Special Projects + Activations **17**

Pop-up Shops and Website Refresh	18
Campus Outreach	19
Social Media Strategy	20

Forward Thinking **21**

Forward Thinking	22
------------------	----



Introduction

Trademark Licensing (TML) continues to serve as a powerful connector between the University of Toronto and its community — expressing identity, pride, and belonging through thoughtfully designed merchandise. In 2025–26, broader economic conditions and rising cost-of-living pressures continued to shape consumer behaviour, influencing how students and the campus community engaged with general and branded merchandise. During the year, Trademark Licensing also undertook a review of how it serves the University community and upgraded its website to articulate policies, procedures and guidance more clearly for all stakeholders, including students, faculty and staff, vendors and those inquiring about trademark matters.

Shifts in spending patterns were evident across campus retail. While general merchandise sales at the University of Toronto Bookstore declined, licensed branded merchandise and apparel showed measurable improvement. Students increasingly demonstrated a preference for fewer, but higher-quality purchases — opting to invest in well-designed, durable, and special-occasion merchandise over lower-quality bargain assortments. This trend reinforced the importance of intentional curation, brand clarity and perceived value within the licensed merchandise program.

Strategic brand partnerships continued to respond to these evolving preferences. Following the successful launch of the U of T x lululemon shop-in-shop concept in 2024, Roots sought to strengthen its relationship with the university by establishing the first collegiate Roots concept shop at the U of T Bookstore. These premium partnerships elevated the in-store experience and aligned strongly with student demand for quality-driven, lifestyle-oriented apparel.

At the same time, Trademark Licensing continued to expand established merchandise initiatives supporting Spaces & Experiences (S&E) portfolio brands. Event-based pop-up shops and limited-edition assortments gained a dedicated following, with merchandise increasingly viewed as a sought-after collectible and a positive enhancement to the overall event experience. These initiatives reinforced the role of branded merchandise as both a cultural touchpoint and a meaningful contributor to campus engagement and brand awareness.



1 | Trademark Licensing Overview

What is Trademark Licensing?

Trademark licensing enables a trademark owner to authorize the use of registered marks on merchandise through formal license agreements. At the University of Toronto, this framework ensures that all branded products — retail and non-retail — meet institutional standards for quality, ethics and brand integrity.

Trademark Licensing enables a trademark owner to authorize the use of registered marks on merchandise through formal license agreements. At the University of Toronto, this framework ensures that all branded products — retail and non-retail — meet institutional standards for quality, ethics and brand integrity.

TML operates as a self-funded unit within the Marketing & Communications department under Spaces & Experiences. The office oversees artwork approvals, vendor licensing and compliance with the university's Trademark Licensing Policy and Code of Conduct. Through its partnership with Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC), TML manages licensee contracts, royalty administration, and manufacturing disclosures, aligned with best practices across the post-secondary licensing sector.

Ethical procurement remains a defining pillar of the program. Apparel licensees are monitored through the Workers Rights Consortium (WRC) and the Fair Labor Association (FLA), reinforcing transparency and labour accountability across global supply chains. This oversight continues to position the University of Toronto as a national leader in responsible collegiate licensing.



Strategic Goals

- 1. Increase desirability, relevance and visibility of U of T branded merchandise**
- 2. Sustain financial and operational capacity to support reinvestment in campus life**
- 3. Deliver clear, efficient and value-drive service to academic units, students and partners**



The daily work of the department includes:

Operational Focus

- Continued integration of non-retail vendors into the CLC platform
- Standardization of signatures marks and approval workflows
- Processing requests and inquiries through the newly launched ServiceNow ticketing platform in matters of visual identity, merch design, vendor information and trademark policy.

Retail & Merchandising

- Limited-edition and seasonal launches aligned with academic and campus cycles
- Ongoing collaboration with the University of Toronto Bookstore to optimize product mix

Campus Engagement

- Merchandise integration into S&E programming and Food Services campaigns
- Event-based activations supporting participation and institutional storytelling

Trademark Services

- Trademark registration
- Cease and desist enforcement
- Trademark usage agreements



Bookstore Partnership

The University of Toronto Bookstore is a division of University of Toronto Press (UTP). Founded in 1901, UTP is Canada's leading academic publisher and one of the largest university presses in North America. The Bookstore, originally named the Students' Book Department, was established by Miss McMicking, a staff member of the university library.

Today, the Bookstore is the primary retailer for University of Toronto merchandise and serves tens of thousands of customers each year. The Canadian Booksellers Association has named the Bookstore its Campus Bookseller of the Year five times, reflecting its longstanding commitment to excellence in campus retail.

The University of Toronto Bookstore continues to be the university's largest retail partner for branded merchandise. TML works closely with the Bookstore to ensure that merchandise offerings both uphold the university's brand standards and respond to student demand for products that are current, relevant and reflective of school pride.

The Bookstore also operates an in-house garment printing and embroidery shop, providing on-demand custom merchandise for staff, faculty and student groups. This capability enables Trademark Licensing to meet campus needs for customized apparel at lower price points and smaller minimum quantities, while reinforcing the Bookstore's role as a primary supplier of U of T merchandise to the internal university community.



Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC)

For more than ten years the University of Toronto has partnered with a third party licensing agency, Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC) to provide a range of disclosures that support brand protection, financial transparency, and ethical oversight across the licensed merchandise portfolio.

Manufacturing and Supply-Chain Disclosures

CLC requires licensed vendors to disclose detailed manufacturing information for all branded products. This includes the identification of production facilities, factory locations, and country of origin. These disclosures enable the University to maintain visibility into global supply chains and ensure that licensed merchandise is produced in facilities that meet required labour and compliance standards.

Ethical Compliance and Social Responsibility Reporting

In support of the University's commitment to responsible sourcing, CLC coordinates disclosures aligned with recognized monitoring bodies such as the Workers Rights Consortium (WRC) and the Fair Labor Association (FLA). Licensees are required to disclose factory participation in these monitoring programs and to respond to compliance findings, corrective action plans, or remediation efforts where applicable. This reporting supports ongoing oversight of labour conditions and ethical production practices.

Royalty and Financial Reporting

CLC collects standardized royalty reports from licensees, detailing units sold, wholesale revenues, and royalty amounts owed to the University. Through the Direct Licensing Hub (DLH), all financial disclosures are now reported and paid in Canadian dollars, improving accuracy, transparency, and administrative efficiency. These disclosures provide granular insight into product performance and support reliable financial reconciliation and forecasting.

Artwork Approval and Product Attribution

As part of the artwork approval process, CLC captures disclosures that link approved designs to specific licensees, production categories, and intended use (retail or non-retail, i.e., branded goods produced for sale to the public vs items intended for internal university use where no resale occurs). This ensures that all products bearing university trademarks are properly authorized, attributed, and traceable, reducing risk and reinforcing brand governance.

Licensee Status and Portfolio Data

CLC maintains disclosures related to licensee standing, including license status, insurance documentation, category approvals, and compliance history. This centralized information allows Trademark Licensing to monitor the overall health of the licensee portfolio and to make informed decisions regarding onboarding, renewal, or corrective action.

Together, these disclosures provide the University of Toronto with a comprehensive view of how its trademarks are used in market—supporting strong brand stewardship, ethical accountability, and data-informed decision-making across the Trademark Licensing program.



Industry Context

The collegiate licensing sector, working through the Fair Labor Association (FLA), has increasingly shifted its approach to address labour-rights risks that exist beyond first-tier manufacturing and deeper within global supply chains. This includes a focus on supply-chain mapping to identify higher-risk regions and production stages where issues, such as child labour, forced labour and unauthorized subcontracting are more likely to occur. This expanded approach supports U of T ethical obligations, strengthening oversight and mitigating reputational and compliance risks associated with licensed merchandise production.

While recent tariff measures predominantly applied to U.S. import orders and did not directly impact the Canadian market, they nonetheless affected U of T shared suppliers within the global collegiate apparel supply chain. WRC findings indicate that tariff-related costs were frequently absorbed by manufacturers supplying the U.S. market and subsequently passed down to workers through reduced margins, wages, or job stability, rather than to consumers on the U.S. demand side.

Throughout 2025-26, the market continued to face inflationary pressure, value-driven consumer behaviour and growing competition from ultra-low-cost global retailers. In response, TML prioritized differentiation through quality, relevance and cultural significance — favouring disciplined growth over volume-based expansion.



2 | Collaborations & Special Collections

Graduation Frames & Convocation Merchandise Experience

As a concluding phase of the University of Toronto Bookstore refresh, Trademark Licensing invested in the installation of diploma frame fixtures enhanced with large-scale Convocation Hall graphics. This installation was designed to complete the visual and narrative journey of a student's academic experience at U of T, culminating in Convocation as the final institutional milestone.

Trademark Licensing continued to support Bookstore operations at Convocation Plaza, elevating both the quality and breadth of graduation merchandise and apparel, including premium frames, plush gifts and updated grad apparel. Graduates and their families were offered a curated assortment to reflect the significance of the occasion and the stature of the institution.

To ensure a seamless and welcoming experience during ceremonies, Trademark Licensing worked closely with the Office of Convocation on strategic communications, helping students and guests easily navigate merchandise offerings and services during Convocation events.



Roots x U of T

Following the successful launch of the U of T x lululemon concept in 2024, long-time partner Roots Canada sought to refresh its collaboration with the university through an experimental hybrid Roots x U of T branding approach. The concept was piloted during the 2025 Toronto Blue Jays season at the Jays Shop, where it emerged as one of the top-performing collegiate assortments at the Rogers Centre that season. The Roots x U of T hybrid mark has defined the collegiate collection setting it apart from similar collections across Canadian institutions.

Building on this success, Roots Canada made a significant investment in developing its first-ever collegiate in-store concept shop at the University of Toronto Bookstore. Designed to complement the lululemon shop-in-shop experience, the Roots x U of T concept launched in Fall 2026 and further elevated the premium retail environment for campus apparel.



Lunar New Year — Year of the Horse

The Year of the Horse launch marked the program's third and most successful Lunar New Year collection to date. The 2026 assortment celebrated Spring Festival traditions, including Tết, Seollal, and Losar, featuring limited-edition designs available both in-store and online. The collection emphasized themes of strength, energy, and good fortune, resonating strongly with the campus community.

The Year of the Horse merchandise collection formed part of a holistically planned, cross-divisional campaign that centred equity and cultural recognition, featuring a ceremonial lion dance tour delivered in partnership with Food Services, Residences and Family Housing programs, and expanding student engagement across multiple campus environments.



Pride Merchandise

Trademark Licensing celebrated Pride Month with the 2025 Pride capsule collection, launched at the St. George campus flag-raising ceremony on June 4, 2025, at Varsity Stadium. Available across all three campus Bookstore locations and online, the collection featured a circular mark incorporating a progress spectrum design across hoodies, t-shirts, tank tops, mugs, totes and plush items.

TML supported the launch with elevated in-store displays at the St. George flagship location. In support of community engagement, a donation was made to the U of T Drag Club in recognition of its participation in modelling and promoting the collection at the Spaces & Experiences launch event.



U of T Trash Team Collection

Trademark Licensing continued its commitment to reinvesting in the student experience through a collaboration with the U of T Trash Team — a science-driven, community-powered organization addressing plastic pollution in Toronto. The limited collection included a t-shirt, cap and crewneck, each featuring the Trash Team logo as a visible symbol of purpose.

Royalty proceeds from the collection support the organization's solutions-based research, education, and community outreach programming, reinforcing how everyday merchandise choices can drive meaningful environmental impact.



Cherry Blossom Collection

Recognizing the growing popularity of cherry blossom season on campus each spring — coinciding with the period between final exams and convocation — Trademark Licensing supported the Bookstore's inaugural Cherry Blossom collection in 2026 Inventory of hoodies and lanyards sold out within two weeks of launch. A pop-up shop activation at Robarts Commons Plaza, engaged students and visitors during a high-traffic seasonal moment. In addition, this initiative paved the way to activate the Robarts Commons Plaza for future cross-departmental opportunities.

3 | Special Projects + Activations

S&E Pop-Up Shops

For the third consecutive year, Trademark Licensing offered limited edition, event focused merchandise in support of a series of highly successful and widely attended Food Services lunch hour activations at Hart House. Building on a taco themed activation introduced in 2024, TML pivoted to a Street Food night market theme in fall 2025 and continued to support the popular Mac 'n' Cheese Smackdown in spring 2026.

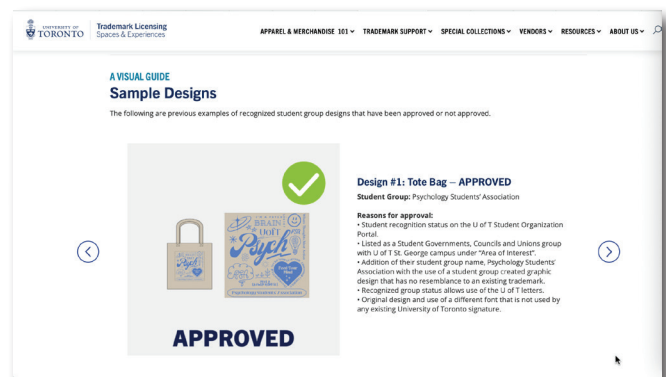
Across both events, enamel character pins designed to capture the spirit and visual identity of each activation proved especially popular, quickly becoming sought after collectible items among students and staff. The success of these merchandise offerings demonstrated how merchandise can meaningfully reinforce the Spaces & Experiences portfolio brands — delivering moments that are fun, appealing and engaging for the campus community.



Website Refresh and Email Migration

During 2025-26, Trademark Licensing undertook a comprehensive review and refresh of its website to better serve students, faculty and staff, vendors and external parties seeking guidance on trademark matters. The updated site provides clearer articulation of branding standards related to merchandise custom orders, streamlined vendor information and more robust guidance on trademark services and related support.

As part of broader service improvements, inquiries sent to trademarks@utoronto.ca are now migrating to the university's ServiceNow ticketing platform. This transition enables more effective tracking and management of the high volume of requests received daily, improving response times, accountability and overall service delivery across the Trademark Licensing portfolio.



Campus Outreach Initiatives

Recognizing the need to re-engage the campus community with Trademark Licensing policies and best practices, Trademark Licensing implemented a renewed outreach and education strategy. Staff turnover following the pandemic, combined with the natural annual transition of student leadership, created a clear need for refreshed and consistent engagement.

The Trademark Licensing Officer developed and delivered in-person workshops beginning with orientation programming, educating students on the foundations of the trademark licensing program, ethical sourcing principles and the rationale and benefits of using licensed vendors. Prior to this outreach initiative, no orientation divisions were operating in compliance with Trademark Licensing policies. As a direct result of this engagement, six divisions achieved compliance, collectively working with five approved licensed vendors. As a further outcome of this initiative, approximately 3,500 students received t-shirts, lanyards, and related item procured in full compliance with Trademark Licensing policies, demonstrating the effectiveness of early, in-person education in driving adoption, compliance, and ethical sourcing practices across campus.

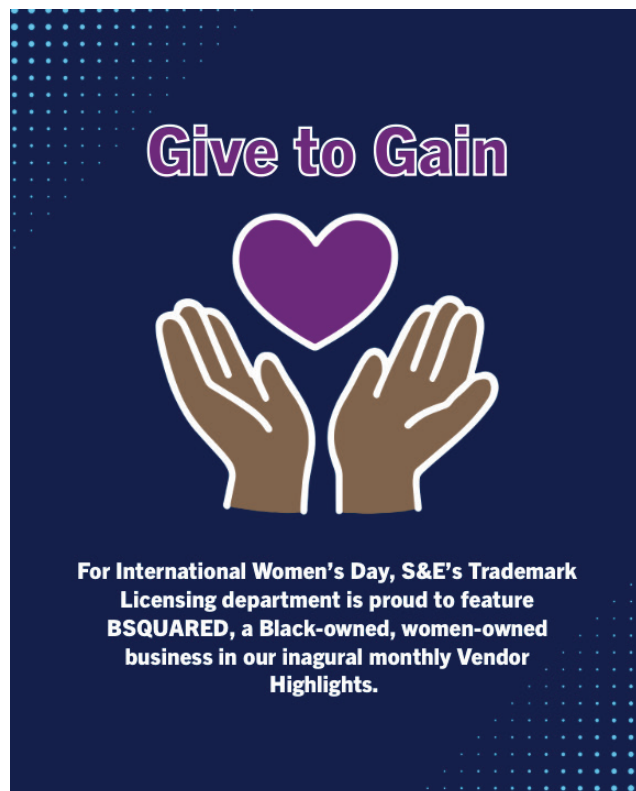
In parallel, the Trademark Licensing Manager facilitated lunch and learn sessions for communications directors, focusing on trademark policy, best practices and guidance for staff and faculty custom merchandise orders. Together, these initiatives strengthened policy awareness, encouraged compliance and reinforced responsible brand stewardship across campus.



Social Media Strategy

Recognizing the need to re-engage the campus To supplement campus outreach efforts, Trademark Licensing, with the support of the Spaces & Experiences social media officer, developed a targeted social media strategy to better engage the broader campus community. In early 2026, TML launched its first Vendor Highlight Series, beginning with BSquared, a women- and minority-owned, Canadian-owned business. The series was developed to further connect the campus community with licensed vendors whose operations and values align with the university's commitments to equity, inclusion, Indigenous partnership, queer representation and sustainability.

Social media channels were also used to amplify collection launches and special initiatives in collaboration with the University of Toronto Bookstore, University of Toronto Communications (UTC), and external partner brands. In addition, to further strengthen brand recognition, Trademark Licensing made a concerted effort to integrate University of Toronto licensed product placement into other Spaces & Experiences social media channels. This coordinated approach expanded reach, reinforced key messaging and supported awareness of licensed merchandise across campus.



4 | Forward Thinking

Forward Thinking

As the Trademark Licensing program looks ahead, priorities are centred on modernization, education and strategic alignment. Building on more than 25 years of leadership in ethical collegiate licensing, the program is positioned to evolve with changing consumer expectations and campus needs.

Key priorities include:

- Exploring new revenue opportunities within service areas currently supported by Trademark Licensing, including trademark services and related non-retail activities (i.e. Parents at Move-in Day and the Bookstore Dorm collaboration)
- Expanding support for student led brands and entrepreneurial initiatives
- Exploring flexible licensing models, including local and short run production
- Expanding major brand collaborations to grow apparel and hard-goods assortments that excite and engage students and the broader campus community
- Increasing outreach to student clubs and staff stakeholders to strengthen awareness, compliance and participation in licensed merchandise programs
- Developing a University of Toronto bicentennial merchandise program to support institutional milestone celebrations

At its core, Trademark Licensing continues to balance stewardship and opportunity — protecting the University of Toronto's reputation while enabling creativity, participation and pride. Through thoughtful governance and collaborative partnerships, the program will continue to strengthen the university brand and enrich campus life in responsible, measurable ways.



Annual Report 2025- 26

Anne Macdonald

Assistant Vice President, Spaces & Experiences

Angie Law

Director, Integrated Marketing & Communications, Spaces & Experiences

Ivan Canete

Manager, Trademarks & Licensing, Spaces & Experiences

Ron Castro

Officer, Trademarks & Licensing, Spaces & Experiences

