

**University of Toronto Mississauga Chapter
Terms of Reference
2020-2022**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 **Mandate:** Connections and Conversations University of Toronto Mississauga Chapter (“Connections and Conversation UTM”) is an affinity group for self-identified Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour (BIPOC) staff to provide a community of support and opportunities for mentorship and professional development.
- 1.2 **Rationale:** Connections and Conversations UTM aims to create a safe and brave space that fosters cross-portfolio, cross-divisional and cross-campus collaboration around the lived experience of self-identified BIPOC staff at the University of Toronto Mississauga. In addressing these challenges and opportunities, Connections and Conversations UTM aims to create an open and empowering environment for BIPOC staff to celebrate their accomplishments and contribute their unique ideas and talents to the University through networking, mentoring and other activities.
- 1.3 **Clarification of Jurisdiction:** Connections and Conversations UTM complements other University departments and resources aimed at addressing matters related to racial equity, diversity and inclusion by informing policies, advocating for improvements and collaborating with various stakeholders at UTM to enhance the experiences of BIPOC staff. Connections and Conversations UTM is not an alternate forum to address issues over which other areas of the University policy and governance framework have specific jurisdiction and mandates, but rather complement and assist such departments in areas aligned with its mandate.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1. **To Build Community:** Providing moral support to BIPOC members of the UTM community in their pursuit of a satisfying career experience in an inclusive environment;
- 2.2. **To Support Professional Development:** Offering networking and mentoring opportunities and advice to members to contribute their unique experiences and skills to the growth and development of UTM;
- 2.3. **To Develop Innovative Strategies and Plans:** Increasing awareness of systemic barriers and experiences encountered by self-identified BIPOC members and co-creating equitable and inclusive solutions among the UTM community; and
- 2.4. **To Advocate for Effective Change:** Expanding and improving the institutional commitment of the University of Toronto and UTM campus’ principles of equity, diversity and inclusion by championing and supporting the advancement of strategic antiracism initiatives and continuing to work towards the elimination of systemic racial discrimination with stakeholders within and outside of UTM.

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3. MEMBERSHIP, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1. **Membership Criteria:** Connections and Conversations UTM is open to all staff currently employed at UTM who self-identify as Black, Indigenous or a Person of Colour (BIPOC).
- 3.2. **Supporters and Ex- Officio Members:** In working towards expanding and improving the institutional commitment of UTM to the principles of racial equity, diversity and inclusion, Connections and Conversations UTM will engage and collaborate with various Supporters and Ex-Officio members. **Supporter members** aim to develop an understanding of the personal and institutional experiences of BIPOC members and proactively choose to engage in meaningful action or build meaningful relationships towards supporting the mandate of Connections and Conversations UTM. Ex-Officio members advance Connections and Conversations UTM's work by the office(s) they represent. **Ex-Officio members** on Connections and Conversations UTM may include, but are not limited to, the following offices and departments; [Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office](#), [Equity and Diversity Office](#) and [Human Resources](#). Supporters and Ex-Officio members may partake in meetings and events at the Executive Committee of Connections and Conversations UTM discretion.
- 3.3. **Voting:** The preferred model for decision-making is through consensus, when required, and only by BIPOC members. If consensus is not reached among BIPOC members, the Executive Committee will review all considerations and determine the necessary next steps.
- 3.4. **Member Registration Process:** UTM staff interested in joining Connections and Conversations UTM must submit a webform application via the Connections and Conversations UTM website indicating status as either a self-identified BIPOC staff, Supporter or Ex-Officio member. The indication of status by members is needed to determine eligibility on the Executive Committee (Section 4) and participation in/at meetings, sub-committees and Events (Section 5). All members are encouraged to join on an ongoing basis to ensure the committee has the broadest representation from UTM.
- 3.5. **New Members' orientation:** New members are directed to resources that include but are not limited to: Connections and Conversations UTM Terms of Reference, reports and other orientation materials that shed light on the history, accomplishments and objectives of Connections and Conversations UTM.
- 3.6. **Responsibilities:** Connections and Conversations UTM members shall be responsible for the following:
 - (a) Ensuring the fulfillment of Connections and Conversations UTM mandate;
 - (b) Demonstrating respect and professionalism towards all Connections and Conversations UTM members including Co-Chairs, invited contributors, fellow UTM colleagues and the broader UTM community;
 - (c) Contributing resources, insight and their voice in developing solution-oriented initiatives;
 - (d) Respecting and providing fair consideration to diverse and opposing viewpoints; and

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- (e) Striving to attend meetings and events, communicating their absence when scheduling conflicts arise.

4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1. **Responsibility:** Given the University of Toronto's size and diversity, local Connections and Conversations groups are guided by Executive Committees, which provide leadership and operational management of activities such as organizing and running bi-monthly meetings, events, and other strategic initiatives.
- 4.2. **Membership:** Executive Committee members must consist of a maximum of ten (10) members, eighty per cent (80%) of whom must be self-identified BIPOC staff and twenty per cent (20%) Supporter members.
- 4.3. **Membership Process:** Executive Committee members must meet the requirements outlined in Section 3. Interested candidates must be self-identified BIPOC staff or Supporter members and submit an 'Expression of Interest' webform application via the Connections and Conversations website. Submissions will be reviewed and vetted to ensure the fulfillment of Section 4.2.
- 4.4. **Executive Members' Term of Office:** Each Executive Committee member shall serve for two (2) years, starting in July until the first of the following occurs:
- a) the individual(s) no longer holds a position at UTM as noted in Section 3.1;
 - b) the appointment is rescinded by an inability to uphold the group's mandate;
or
 - c) the individual(s) resigns from Connections and Conversations UTM in writing.
- 4.5. **Transition of Executive Committee Members:** To retain members to sustain and grow previous members' initiatives, the Executive Committee will retain fifty per cent (50%) of the Executive Committee each term. The terms served by Executive Committee members prior to these Terms of Reference being developed will be factored in when calculating an individual's eligibility. Members who have completed their first year with the Executive Committee will complete their second term under these new Terms of Reference, should they choose to continue.
- 4.6. **Executive Committee Administrative Support:** The Executive Committee shall receive administrative support from the Equity and Diversity Office (EDO) at UTM, which includes but is not limited to the following:
- a) Managing financial records and procurement of resources.
 - b) Providing institutional guidance and insight from University of Toronto departments to guide Connections and Conversations UTM work.
- 4.7. **Determining Roles of the Executive Committee:** Executive Committee members will select the following roles for the Term of Office and inform the broader membership:
- a) Chair and Co-Chairs to facilitate and call meetings to order; and
 - b) Sub-Committee Leads to manage the Group's operational activities with members.

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5. MEETINGS and SUB-COMMITTEES

- 5.1. Connections and Conversations UTM membership meetings are held on the last Thursday of every month, alternating between “BIPOC” and “BIPOC and Supporter” meetings. Meeting schedules will be communicated by the Executive Committee monthly. Length of meetings shall vary depending on the agenda.
- 5.2. Before creating sub-committees, Connections and Conversations UTM shall clearly outline their scope and purpose.
- 5.3. All sub-committees are time-bound in their formation and shall cease after the assigned project(s).
- 5.4. Connections and Conversations UTM members may form sub-committees as necessary to address specific issues. These sub-committees shall draw upon members as outlined in Section 3 and 4 and outside resources if required.

6. BUDGET AND REMUNERATION

- 6.1. The EDO shall oversee the Connections and Conversations UTM budget. In consultation with the Executive Committee members, the EDO will prepare and present a draft budget on an annual basis to the Executive Committee for activities and expenses related to its mandate.
- 6.2. The participation of Connections and Conversations UTM members and the Executive Committee is strictly voluntary, and remuneration will not be provided.

7. AMENDMENTS TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 7.1. These Terms of Reference are a living document that will undergo evaluation and revision by the Executive Committee with a feedback process involving chapter members.
- 7.2. The Connections and Conversations UTM membership may propose amendments to these Terms of Reference to the Executive Committee for approval; otherwise, these terms shall be in effect until 2022.