

University of Toronto - Mississauga Campus Designated Canada's 18th Fair Trade Campus!

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“Fair Trade”, declares Vicky Jezierski, Director of Hospitality & Retail Services at UTM, “is not just about providing products but about educating students about the social and economic issues from around the globe.” Andrea De Vito, Assistant Director of Hospitality & Retail Services states that “as a post-secondary institution, we feel a responsibility to the students to make sustainability an everyday focus of their lives so that, when they enter into their careers, they can act with environmental integrity and make ethical decisions that promote community and benefit society as a whole.”

Thus began UTM’s journey to becoming a Fair Trade Campus.

In 2014, when UTM decided to consistently offer Fair Trade products on our campus, we received a groundswell of positive reaction. Comments like “I am very passionate about Fair Trade, and I’m so happy that the university will be focusing on Fair Trade too“, and “Fair Trade at the UTM has been a long time coming” made us realize that the UTM community shared our passion – we just needed to start the conversation.

So, we approached various stakeholders about our desire to become a Fair Trade Campus, and everyone was on board. Paul Donoghue, UTM’s Chief Administrative Officer, wrote in his letter of support for our initiative: “A Fair Trade Campus would encourage thought-provoking discussion amongst community members when addressing the evolution and implementation of UTM’s Food Service Master Plan”, placing Fair Trade atop the priority list when discussing the growth of food services on campus.

Our food service contractor, Chartwells, has been extremely supportive as well. “Fair Trade,” admits Michael Jeronimo, Chartwells’ General Manager at UTM, “specifically, ethical sourcing that gives back to the growers, means a lot to us as a food service provider for university students.”

And people have started talking and wanting to learn more about what Fair Trade actually was, what it represented to our campus, and what it meant for the future of our planet.

We are so pleased that we are working towards a Fair Trade Campus Designation, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because Fair Trade has successfully allowed us to open the conversation up about sustainability and working towards a better world. We hope that this conversation will lead to innovative ideas and passion towards making and celebrating more positive changes on our campus.

“Buying Fair Trade products sometimes seems like a small thing that each of us can do each day, but in reality it is an important decision and one that can make a world of difference for those producing. It means stable pricing, technical support and training, and community and economic development, to name just a few things. When an entire university therefore commits to offering Fair Trade products, the impact can be huge. Congratulations UTM on such a wonderful achievement” Sean McHugh, Executive Director, Canadian Fair Trade Network.

“The UTM team showed a lot of hard work and passion in working towards the Fair Trade Campus designation. It’s amazing to see the commitment towards fairness in trade and the demand to put human values first. UTM supports fair opportunities for Fairtrade farmers and workers of the Global South, congratulations!” - Mélissa Dubé, Outreach Manager, Fairtrade Canada