



Strategic Framework



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
MISSISSAUGA

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University of Toronto Mississauga Campus Priorities

Purpose

UTM developed this Strategic Framework between late 2020 and early 2022—amid waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. The public health crisis emphasized for our community the importance of a principled flexibility: a willingness to adapt as contexts change balanced with a commitment to clear priorities and values. This balance serves UTM and U of T especially well. From the discovery of insulin a hundred years ago to the present day, our university makes its greatest impact through a mode of learning that remains focused, not fixed, always ready to break new ground as new evidence emerges.

UTM’s Strategic Framework provides focus for our campus and partners. It expresses core priorities that will strengthen consensus, inspire action, and guide investment. But it also designs room for change, giving our community the flexibility to realize our priorities in many ways—including in ways we haven’t yet imagined. It accepts that the future holds challenges and chances for which we can’t always plan. But it also refuses to accept that uncertainty means inaction: it sets the priorities that will inform decisions, providing a tool to understand new opportunities even before they arise.

In balancing structure with agility, this Framework also signals its role in our institutional history. It represents the culmination of earlier exercises in long-term planning. We draw from campus-specific visions in UTM’s 2017 Academic Plan, 2020 Sustainability Plan, and 2021 Site Plan. And we benefit, too, from plans shared across U of T’s tri-campus, including the 2015 Presidential Priorities; the 2018 Four Corners Framework; the 2018 Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the 2018 Strategic Research Plan;

the 2019 Report on Student Mental Health; the 2019 Low Carbon Action Plan; and the 2021 Commitments against Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Semitism—and many more.

Most of these plans provide concrete recommendations: specific actions with specific deadlines. UTM’s Strategic Framework takes a different approach. It seizes the opportunity to unify existing goals into a common narrative. It provides a shared language to communicate our aspirations. And it makes transparent how we intend to reach decisions and identify areas for additional support. The Framework articulates our plans’ collective purpose, sharing a vision for what we value and believe. It also encourages ongoing reflection on our plans’ success and prepares our community for those times when plans need to change. The Framework isn’t itself a plan; it’s UTM’s guide for continuous planning.

As an expression of UTM’s vision and nimbleness, this Framework matters our librarians, faculty, and staff, who can use it to focus their efforts; inform departmental commitments; and make new connections—to see how individual contributions build toward collective goals.

The Framework matters for our students, too. It imagines students growing into a world better than the present: more truthful, more sustainable, more innovative, more just. It also articulates a responsibility to the next generation, of which our students comprise an essential part: that the linked aspects of a UTM education—teaching, research, connections, supports—will build toward a future that they’ll find worth fighting for.





We ground UTM’s global campus in our Mississauga location—and in the responsibility based in the land on which we work. UTM is situated on the traditional lands of the Wendat and the Seneca, on the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. It stands alongside the Missinnihe, the trusting creek. That’s what French and British colonists called the Credit River because, at its mouth, they traded goods on credit with Indigenous peoples, who have travelled and cared for this place from time immemorial. UTM seeks to earn a trust that lives up to this place’s name, through a commitment to truth and Indigenous reconciliation. So, we work to address the legacies of colonialism that have raised some histories over others and to dismantle barriers facing equity-deserving groups. It’s the right thing to do; it’s also the best, because diverse ways of knowing help the world better tell the truth.



UTM has a special responsibility to build truthful, right relations here in the Peel Region. As the only research university in a region of 1.45 million people, we connect students in Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon—and in nearby Oakville, Milton, Halton Hills, and Burlington, too—with unique opportunities for personal, intellectual, and professional development. The impact radiates here: our students thrive as North America’s most employable public university graduates, giving a special boost of talent to Canada’s largest life science, business, arts, and technology sectors across the GTA. Our UTM community creates more than \$1.3 billion annually in local economic growth, designing teaching, research, and engagement programs that give back to a region that gives so much to us.

UTM leverages this location to strengthen connections of national and international importance. As the heart of Canada’s supply chain, and a centre of Canadian industries in life sciences and advanced manufacturing, Peel links communities from coast to coast to coast. As the home of many Canadian newcomers, where 51% of residents speak a first language other than English, Peel shows the power of the world’s vibrant diversity. And so does UTM. We lean into initiatives—from robotics to health equity, new stories to urban sustainability—that support our region’s strengths and create outside impact here.

We also confront our region’s challenges. The pressure of economic injustice—like historic underinvestment in the region’s social services and infrastructure—hits Peel’s residents unequally. It shapes the social determinants of health where our region suffers a disproportionate burden of diabetes and chronic illness. It also informs our collaborations with other anchor institutions, including Trillium Health Partners, Canada’s largest community hospital system, with whom U of T runs the Temerty Faculty

Contexts

Founded in 1967 as a small college in a small town, UTM has grown into a powerhouse campus for Canada’s largest cities and U of T’s world-leading tri-campus system. We became a fully-fledged campus distinct from U of T’s Faculty of Arts and Science in 2003—and then blossomed quickly as U of T’s second largest division. Now, in 2022, we provide a home to over 16,100 students and 1,250 continuing faculty, librarians, and staff and contribute to U of T fifteen departments, three academic institutes, and more than 180 undergraduate and graduate program options. We also strengthen Ontario’s reputation as a national and global hub for inclusive post-secondary education: our 11,500 domestic students are drawn to this community from neighborhoods across the country; our 4,500 international students come together from more than 130 countries around the world.

University of Toronto Mississauga

of Medicine Mississauga. We bring world-class doctors and allied health professionals to train here—and they stay to serve this community after graduation.

Our commitment to healthcare locally matches our focus on environmental care globally. UTM takes up climate change, biodiversity and species loss, and urban resilience as our responsibility for action. We're proud to be part of a university that has divested from fossil fuels—the first university in the world to join the UN's Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance. And we're dedicated to taking similarly bold steps going forward, including by decreasing our GHG emissions by 37% before 2030 and extending our leadership as one of the most sustainable universities on earth.

In all this work, we seek to make good on the responsibilities of our Latin motto: *tantum nobis creditum*, so much has been entrusted to us. On our beautiful campus, by the Missinnihe, UTM has been entrusted with caring for our natural environments and breaking new ground in research; with educating courageous thinkers and creating space for connection; and with walking the path towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. We work to fulfill the trust that our students and communities have placed in us by honouring the better futures that they will help create.



Priorities, Commitments, Accountabilities

UTM's Strategic Framework aims to strengthen this trust with work in five priority areas. Arranged in a circle to suggest their non-hierarchical unity, these priorities name our intention to foster student success and empower research discovery and impact; to encourage collaboration and belonging, and build efficient and sustainable operations; and to embrace our place, locally, globally, and institutionally across U of T.

These actions revolve around a central focus on truth, openness, and reciprocity. It applies, first, to UTM's relations with Indigenous peoples and communities as we strive to answer calls for truth and reconciliation and to become a more deserving home for Indigenous students, faculty, librarians, staff, and partners. That means we need to seek and speak the truth; to remain transparent and accountable; and to be good kin to each other, especially as we earn the privilege of working and learning on the traditional lands of the Wendat, Seneca, and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Like these central values, each of our five priorities has three orienting commitments. They range from enacting initiatives in equity and anti-racism to recruiting and retaining outstanding and promising students, from advancing interdisciplinary collaboration to designing green buildings and spaces. Each commitment opens onto five questions, designed to focus our accountability and inspire continuous planning.

These questions will inform an annual review, led by UTM's Principal, which will celebrate successes, identify areas for change, and show our commitment to openness in action. It will also highlight our impact as a division and campus of Canada's best university, and show UTM's role as a champion for inclusive excellence that helps our people, communities, and environments flourish.



Truth, Openness & Reciprocity



At a discussion forum in February 2021, organized to address the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, a UTM student stated plainly the reason for his participation: “the truth matters.” This principle informs every aspect of UTM’s work, but it applies most acutely in realizing our commitment to the truth that comes before Indigenous reconciliation. We must confront the legacies of Canadian settler colonialism; understand the intergenerational trauma inflicted on Indigenous peoples; and recognize the power of Indigenous accomplishment and resilience.

The truth comes with a responsibility to action. UTM is committed to our roadmap for change, guided by U of T’s response to Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: *Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin*. We work to centre Indigeneity in campus life and to build genuine reciprocity with all people and the natural world. And we cultivate right relations with Indigenous peoples, both as an end in itself and as the foundation for right relations with everyone and everything.

Our culture of reciprocity needs openness. So, we aim to ground our everyday actions—from research and teaching to communications and student support—in a transparent generosity that calls people in to UTM’s communities. We encourage respectful dialogue and deep, deliberate, unrushed understanding. And we come together to explain decisions and own and learn from our failures.

COMMITMENTS

- Listen and act with kindness, transparency, and evidence-based honesty.
- Answer calls for truth and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in every aspect of campus life.
- Deepen reciprocal relationships with Indigenous nations and communities.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Have we sought and spoken the truth—in our communications, events, operations, teaching, research and interpersonal interactions?
- Have we championed inclusive excellence achieved through the flourishing of others and of the world around us?
- Have we implemented actions promised in U of T’s Response to the TRC: *Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin*?
- Have we sought new opportunities to embed anti-colonial and Indigenizing initiatives across campus, including in UTM’s relations with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation?
- Have we cultivated relevant, respectful, and reciprocal Indigenous partnerships in our research initiatives, teaching, campus development, and student and civic engagements?





Foster Student Success

At a meeting in April 2021, a member of UTM's academic leadership team echoed the ambition of U of T's Three Priorities: "we can reimagine the experience of university student education." The goal complements the success of our 2017 Academic Plan, which helped guide UTM's work as we strengthened every aspect of our educational mission.

UTM has supported student retention and extended experiential education; prioritized effective learning outcomes and invested in caring pedagogies; and sought to make this place a more worthy home for Indigenous teachers and students. We also founded the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy, which offers first-in-Canada foundations courses in writing and numeracy, and makes space for new students to connect as a cohort and community. These achievements reflect the Academic Plan's commitment to teamwork: we embrace opportunities for staff, instructors, librarians, alumni, and donors to work together to help our students thrive.

The Academic Plan's positive impact provides a foundation for continued creativity. UTM is developing integrated approaches to student recruitment, advising, and co-curricular support. We're promoting anti-racist pedagogies, and offering students unique opportunities to work with researchers, local industry leaders and entrepreneurs, and community partners. And we continue to celebrate signature undergraduate and professional master's programs in a wide range of fields: from forensic science to sustainability management, urban innovation to art and art history, theatre and drama to biomedical communications. It all comes together to create an environment that sets us apart—that combines research, learning, engagement, and support into a holistic student experience.



COMMITMENTS

- Recruit and retain outstanding and promising students and graduate engaged global citizens.
- Lead effective innovations in undergraduate, graduate, and professional teaching and learning.
- Promote student flourishing through curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular supports.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Have we attracted talented and diverse students to UTM?
- Have we supported our students' learning, wellbeing, and belonging, ensuring that they progress successfully to program completion?
- Have we developed—and improved—new programs and pedagogical practices that adapt to new research and to social, environmental, and economic change?
- Have we opened opportunities—in the classroom, Library, Student Services, with external partners—for experiential learning and student engagement on campus and beyond?
- Have we encouraged collaboration across U of T as we enhance our models for program and course design; student recruitment and advising; and international experience and career development?



Empower Research Discovery & Impact

At a workshop in June 2021, when asked what UTM researchers should aim to achieve in the next ten years, one of our Departmental Chairs responded: “a cure for cancer.” The goal exemplifies a level of ambition prominent at UTM—and for good reason. Our researchers develop new treatments for rare diseases and chronic illnesses. Power socially responsible innovation and equitable criminal justice reform. Design robotic technologies and economic models for human flourishing. Promote Indigenous ways of knowing and lift up new voices. Create new arts and tell new stories about the global past.

UTM shares this knowledge openly, collaborating with local communities even as we extend U of T’s international research reach. Today, leveraging tri-campus partnerships and donor investments, UTM is improving diabetes care in Mississauga as a model for health equity globally. We’re supporting youth mental health with partners in Peel to share the same practices to help children thrive everywhere. And we’re promoting biodiversity and sustainability in Canada’s largest cities to do the same for other cities around the world.

This research also energizes the distinctiveness of our teaching. Students learn new knowledge directly from the researchers who discover it. And they participate in research inquiry themselves, carrying their discoveries from the classroom, Library, and lab into the workplace and world—including into global research and entrepreneurship networks across U of T and beyond. In it all, our students, staff, and faculty come together around a shared vision for this community: to provide a home where the best researchers in the world help make the world a better place.

COMMITMENTS

- Attract and support leading faculty, postdoctoral, and graduate student researchers.
- Enable disciplinary insight, interdisciplinary collaboration, and artistic creativity, curiosity, and critique.
- Champion research inquiry and partnerships that strengthen U of T’s commitment to inclusive excellence and deliver benefits regionally and globally.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Have we fostered a dynamic research environment, with administrative and infrastructural supports, that encourage our researchers’ diverse pursuits?
- Have we built rewarding collaborations among faculty, students, librarians, and research and core facilities staff at UTM and elsewhere at U of T?
- Have our research discoveries shaped academic inquiry, student teaching and learning, innovations in industry and entrepreneurship, and public discourse?
- Have we cultivated research partnerships that leverage the strengths of UTM’s unique location and of U of T’s tri-campus system?
- Does research at UTM address challenges of immediate and enduring relevance and help translate knowledge effectively for internal and external communities?



Encourage Collaboration & Belonging

Our staff raised one theme repeatedly in reviewing this Framework's first draft: UTM has tremendous capacity for collaboration that transforms the way we work. This capacity already enriches our success in teaching and research, student engagement, and community partnership. And it can do even more to promote a safe, healthy, inclusive environment for all our people. Like our tri-campus collaborators, UTM recognizes that systemic inequities demand system-wide action. So, we ground our work in a partnership approach to problem solving, asking questions that turn individuals into community. What can I do to help? From whom can I learn? With whom can I share and work to make things better?

These questions have special resonance as UTM works with tricampus colleagues to implement commitments of U of T's Anti-Black Racism Task Force, Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia Working Groups, and Task Force on Student Mental Health. This moment demands new connections between teams with diverse expertise and between complementary kinds of work: programs in personalized counselling that connect with services in campus safety; trauma-informed pedagogies that benefit from listening forums in our EDI office; funding for anti-racist research from advancement campaigns that celebrate our campus's diversity. To operate sustainably, justly, and equitably, all of us—from student leaders and food services and procurement specialists to governance committees and grounds and custodial staff—need to feel empowered to work together.

UTM builds this culture of collaboration through a people-first strategy that designs equitable employment plans; nurtures our employees' development; and leads positive change in working environments. That means we hold each other accountable, both in realizing our personal responsibilities and in making UTM a better community, one that welcomes equity-deserving groups, lifts barriers to belonging, and fosters everyone's wellbeing.



COMMITMENTS

- Connect diverse teams to share diverse expertise across UTM and U of T.
- Enact anti-racism and anti-oppression work as collective responsibilities and shared actions.
- Align approaches to campus safety, accessibility, and physical, mental, and social health.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Have we created supports and structures that promote collaboration as our default mode of operations, including collaborations with donors, alumni, and tricampus and external partners?
- Have we implemented positive change in the policies and processes that affect people who work, learn, and connect at UTM?
- Have we fulfilled the commitments to anti-discrimination—for staff, faculty, librarians, and students—expressed by U of T Working Groups and leadership?
- Have we taken a wide range of opportunities to advance justice and enhance belonging across our campus and beyond?
- Have we embedded wellbeing as a focus in all aspects of campus life, guided by better practices for the promotion of health, connection, and resilience?



Build Efficient & Sustainable Operations

At a department meeting in November 2020, during a discussion about the future of campus research space, a faculty member evoked the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations. “Have always in view,” the Constitution advises, “not only the present but also the coming generations.” UTM embraces this vision as a basis for action. We foster a culture of sustainability and professional competence that lifts up communities in the present and cares for our environments and resources for the future.

UTM invests in teaching and research that measures, models, and mitigates climate crisis, and connects students with pathways in sustainability learning and entrepreneurship. We promote sustainability in our civic engagements, collaborating on ecological and food sovereignty projects with Credit Valley Conservation, the City of Mississauga, and Indigenous partners. And we ensure the sustainability of our physical plant and operations, developing green buildings and spaces, and finding new methods to manage our resources and business processes effectively.

This work relies on the skill of operational teams who, alongside instructors, researchers, students, and partners, promote UTM’s resilience in lots of ways. These teams design IT solutions, build world-class facilities, and care for this campus’s land. They share nutritious food sourced fairly and host campus events for social connection. And they create budget and advancement plans that secure our long-term financial strength. Together, this expertise nurtures a campus in which present and future generations can take pride—a home for responsible development, ecological flourishing, and sustainable practice.



COMMITMENTS

- Design green buildings and spaces that enhance belonging, biodiversity, and operational resilience.
- Foster sustainability across our teaching and research programs and our external engagements.
- Identify and implement evidence-based approaches to take care of our environmental, infrastructural, and financial resources.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Have we practiced the principles of UTM’s Site Plan, opening buildings and spaces that enhance our campus’s beauty and ecological health and promote community vitality and connection?
- Have we met targets set in UTM’s Sustainability Strategic Plan?
- Have we sought other opportunities and paradigms to adapt to planetary challenges, including food insecurity and climate crisis?
- Have we implemented systems—budget processes, IT infrastructure, and space and building management practices—that use resources responsibly, according to our values and priorities?
- Have we identified areas in which we can grow and what we must relinquish to grow sustainably?



Embrace our Place

Among the many lessons we learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, two resonated particularly strongly with the students, faculty, librarians, and staff who attended UTM's reflection forums in May 2021. First, our physical place creates sincere attachments and connections irreplicable elsewhere. Second, our location and expertise provide a path to help this region flourish.

We put these lessons in practice—to cite two pandemic examples—in deepening relationships with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and in hosting the region's first mass vaccine clinic for COVID-19. The first created new opportunities for learning and reciprocity, continuing to build trust and friendship with the people on whose home territory UTM works. The second helped decrease a burden from the public health and hospital system, administering more than 335,000 vaccine doses for a community that lost more days to lockdown than any other in Canada.

UTM will apply the same lessons over the longer term. Working alongside local partners, including immigrant and Indigenous communities and alumni, UTM will realize our outstanding capacity for regional leadership—and our duty to run a public institution for the public good. We discover, play, and learn in Peel because we want to power Peel's success. And we celebrate our place within U of T's tri-campus system, including our bonds with Toronto and Scarborough. They continue to expand our impact and support connections in research, teaching, and student, alumni, and civic engagement.

This local engagement helps extend a virtuous circle. Lots of our students live in Peel, Toronto, or Halton. Many faculty, staff, and librarians choose Mississauga as their home. Our international students enrol at UTM to join a leading international community—and they often remain in Peel after graduation, starting careers that benefit this region's economy and society. So, we make this place—in Mississauga, Brampton, the Western GTA—a core our identity because we belong to communities we serve. And we celebrate our regional connections as the basis for a larger reach, proud that our international diversity and networks help lift up our ambition: to make a difference locally that drives change globally.

COMMITMENTS

- Incorporate Mississauga's history, culture, and priorities into campus identity and planning.
- Support community-engaged learning, research, and service in our City and Peel Region.
- Ground UTM's contribution to U of T's global reputation in positive local impact.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Have we connected the campus's past and future to those of Mississauga, Brampton, Peel and the western part of the Greater Toronto Area?
- Do members of the UTM community feel a sense of place-based belonging?
- Have we built partnerships between U of T and local communities—including other anchor institutions in Peel—to support health and wellbeing, social justice and Indigenous reconciliation, and entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability?
- Have we contributed to sustainable economic development and meaningful employment in our region, both for employees at UTM and beyond?
- Do our local initiatives and successes resonate across U of T's tri-campus, in Canada, and globally?

Continuous Planning



UTM's Strategic Framework is open-ended rather than time-bound.

This open-endedness reflects, first, the strength of our position. UTM already benefits from lots of plans structured on concrete timelines. Our Sustainability Plan and Campaign Plan each have a ten-year horizon; our Site Plan extends over fifteen years; a new Academic Plan will soon set objectives for the next five years; and we have other plans for research, external relations, and student support underway. This foundation helps our Framework take a different approach, one focused on the enduring values that these other plans will continue to share.

The open timeline also reflects the process of creating the Framework itself, which involved hundreds of conversations and taught UTM a lesson to carry forward: we need pre-determined plans, but we also need something more. We need a way to evaluate—and adapt and re-shape and improve—our plans as new contexts emerge. That's the Framework: it provides UTM's guide to continuous

planning, setting the priorities around which new projects will evolve, on an ongoing basis in any year.

The Framework's openness matches, too, the scope of this campus' ambition. To practice pedagogies of kindness and lead impactful research discoveries; to care for this land and champion anti-racism; to form reciprocal partnerships and effect reconciliation with Indigenous peoples—these goals will outlast any one-, three-, and five-year deliverables. And they'll be realized in ways we haven't yet imagined, through new collaborations and new plans. The Framework makes room for these new opportunities to emerge, rooted in priorities that matter most to our community.

These priorities matter because they represent responsibilities entrusted by our place: in the Peel Region, in the University of Toronto system, next to the trusting creek. And they matter because they imagine a better future for the students, colleagues, and communities to whom that future belongs. So, the Framework remains unbound, finally, because our pursuit of this future won't end.

Statement on Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

We wish to acknowledge this 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 on this land.



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