



# Academic Plan - Draft

University of Toronto Mississauga

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## **FOREWORD**

*Last piece to be written and some framing content will be placed here*

## **POSITIONING**

*Text to be added for final draft that includes:*

- *Brief discussion of current state of UTM*
- *UTM competition/competitiveness*

## **UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA VISION STATEMENT**

### **Mission**

The University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) is an exceptional academic institution, based in the western Greater Toronto Area, which champions the teaching, creation, dissemination, preservation and mobilization of knowledge. It is one of the three campuses of the University of Toronto system and a major contributor to its reputation as a premier international research university with undergraduate, graduate and professional programs that meet the highest standards of excellence. UTM combines the opportunities afforded by strong connections to a large urban university with the benefits of a naturally beautiful and more intimate location, and its exceptional range of creative academic and cultural programs.

### **Vision**

Through the combined efforts of its motivated and talented faculty, librarians and staff, the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) provides an outstanding educational environment for all students. UTM strives to develop thoughtful and empathetic global citizens capable of reflecting critically on the world and committed to the values of integrity, democracy, equity and diversity.

The principles that underlie this vision include:

1. Well-educated university graduates, with both wide-ranging and focused knowledge, and the ability to interpret, innovate and communicate, which are critical to all aspects of Canadian society. UTM seeks to create and maintain an exceptional educational experience for our students, one that promotes learning and accomplishment both inside and outside the classroom.
2. An internationally acclaimed research institution must bring together the best scholars from around the world to pursue path-breaking research in their disciplines and beyond. UTM is committed to diversity in scholarship and to supporting world-class research that both enriches and bridges disciplines. In the pursuit of this goal, establishing productive national and international partnerships plays a key role.
3. Knowledge and education are powerful forces in improving the wellbeing of communities, particularly those under-represented in the public

sphere. UTM will increase and strengthen its collaborations locally and internationally with government and non-governmental organizations to the betterment of society.

4. Equity and diversity are core values and we recognize that the cultivation of these values is vital to our increasingly connected global society. We interpret the meaning of equity and diversity broadly; UTM faculty, librarians, staff and students work to create an accessible and intellectually creative space for all members of the university community including, in particular, Canada's Indigenous peoples and recent immigrant populations.

## **Identity**

Implementing a vision for UTM also involves creating a shared identity built on a set of distinctive attributes of the campus. UTM's attributes include:

A campus that embraces its **Community**

- The history and growth of UTM, the City of Mississauga, and the Peel Region are intimately connected. The relationship is a wonderful example of the mutual benefit for cities and the universities they host. UTM is an intellectual community developed and sustained through the many and varied connections made by its dedicated employees, students and alumni.

An institution that values and encourages **Creativity**

- UTM aims to foster creative and critical thought through all its programs in the humanities, sciences and social sciences. It is at the forefront of developing exceptional models of academic programming, research, active and experiential education and artistic inquiry.

A scholarly community that prioritizes **Communication**

- UTM believes that the development of its students into more capable and confident communicators is of highest priority. We recognize that communication as a pedagogical focus offers rich opportunities for pioneering cross-disciplinary initiatives.

Faculty, librarians, staff and students who lead through **Innovation**

- UTM defines innovation as the process whereby complex challenges are met with novel ideas and concrete responses. Faculty contribute to innovation through myriad endeavors in their research and teaching, and staff engage in innovative practices as they work to enhance UTM's quality of life.

An institution that values and promotes **Sustainability**

- The natural beauty of our campus is much admired. We are mindful that environmental awareness should guide our physical planning and be reflected in our pedagogy and scholarship. UTM recognizes that the environmental challenges facing the planet cannot be solved in isolation but require collaborations across all areas of research. We are cognizant that global environmental change is not simply a technical challenge but includes scientific, political, cultural, economic and social aspects as well.

## OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS



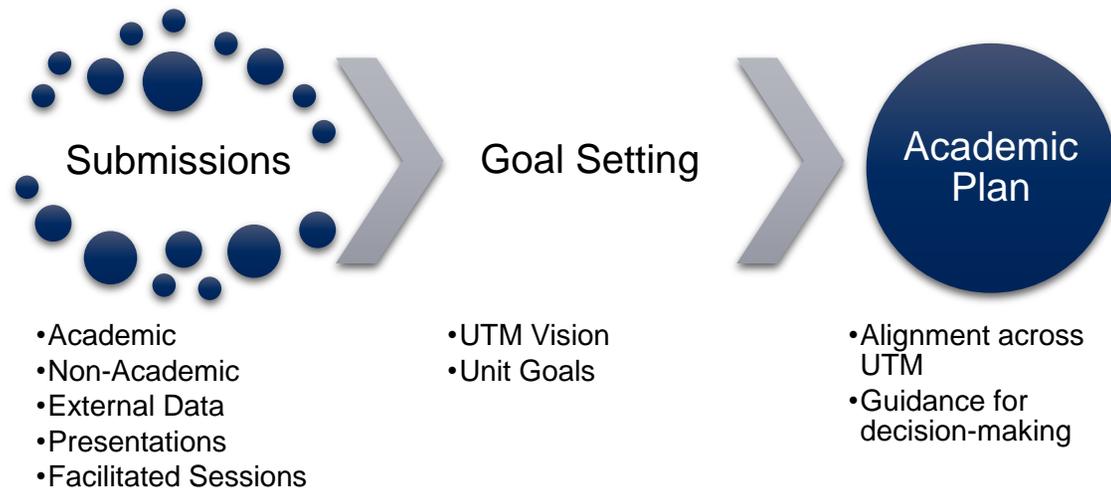
The Strategic Planning Task Force was convened in January 2017. The purpose of the Task Force has been to help develop the content of the UTM Academic Plan by establishing goals and objectives, setting priorities and creating a roadmap to implement the Vision via the Plan over the next five years. The Task Force is composed of faculty, staff, and a librarian, as well as student and community representatives who expressed a deep interest in academic issues pertaining to UTM and were active during the consultation process used in development of the UTM Vision. The planning process has been guided by a professional facilitator, Karyn Dumble, from The Monarch Park Group, and supported by the Senior Project Specialist, Anuar Rodrigues, from the UTM Office of the Dean.

Over the winter months, Karyn and Anuar conducted facilitated sessions with numerous departments, while the Task Force received submissions from academic and non-academic units, hosted an open forum to receive presentations, gathered additional internal and external data, and surveyed the staff, librarians, and faculty. This information, particularly the goals identified in the unit submissions, became the foundation for determining what would become the Academic Plan goals.

The Task Force designed the Academic Plan goals to be inclusive and overarching, with the hope that the many departments and offices across UTM will be able to see where their work fits in and supports the strategic directions.

An Implementation Plan will outline the specific objectives designed to attain the goals of the Academic Plan, and the tactics that will be used to achieve the objectives.

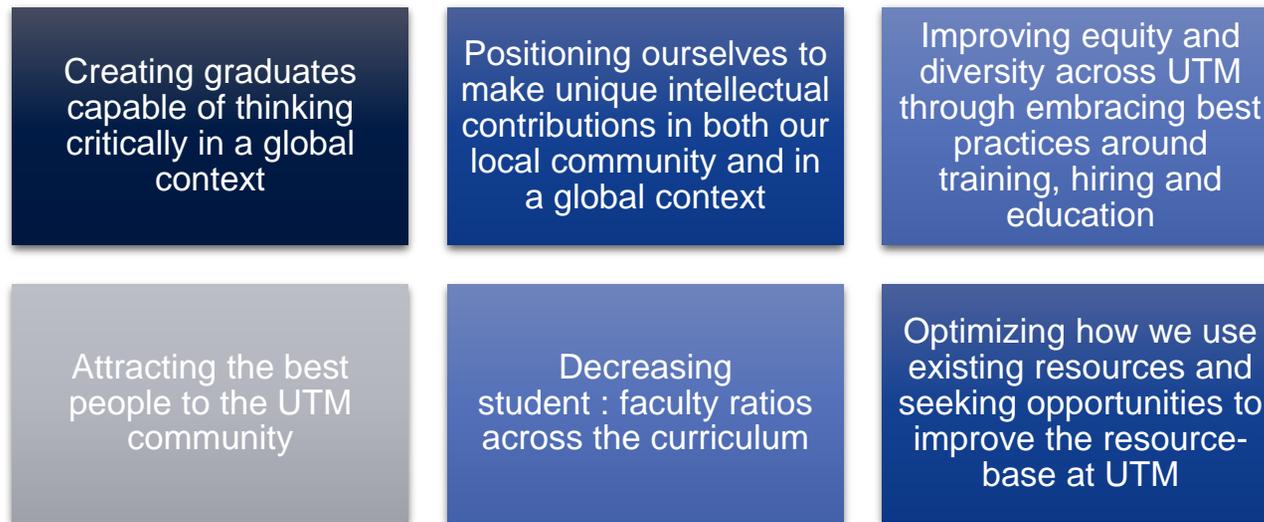
The Task Force has attempted to stay true to the plans submitted by UTM constituents, recognizing the impact this plan will have on current and future UTM students, staff, librarians, and faculty.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The UTM Academic Plan focuses on several key priorities that we believe will allow the campus to grow and evolve in concert with the UTM Vision, which was crafted through an inclusive process. These priorities are embedded in the academic goals that form the heart of the Plan. UTM is poised to continue strengthening our reputation as part of a world-class university that provides students with an exceptional global education as it exposes them to path-breaking research and experiential learning opportunities. The campus will be a hub of innovation that continues to work with our local community at the same time as we build worldwide partnerships. These priorities are very ambitious, but given the talents and abilities of every UTM student, staff, librarian and faculty, we believe that they are within reach.

As you read through the academic goals, note that the Plan encompasses the following strategic priorities:



## ACADEMIC PLANNING GOALS

The Academic Planning process identified five goal areas. They have been pictured below in a circle to demonstrate their interconnectedness. In some ways, UTM needs to address all of the goals in order to be successful at any of the goals. Each goal is contextualized and explained with more detail in the following pages.



We will...

Inspire student success by supporting a rigorous and innovative academic environment

To achieve this goal, we will focus on:

- Supporting excellence in teaching and learning
- Developing foundational competencies (literacy, numeracy, English Language Skills)
- Hiring intellectually innovative and creative faculty
- Evidence-based program and curriculum development
- Expanding opportunities for student-faculty interaction
- Preparation for graduate programs and the global workforce

## Goal 1: Inspire student success by supporting a rigorous and innovative academic environment

Maintaining high standards is essential for students' future success. We will challenge and inspire students at the same time as our faculty remain dynamic and supportive. Our instructors must also ensure that students progress toward excellence.

To support the student academic experience, UTM will continue to create imaginative and new interdisciplinary undergraduate educational experiences designed to challenge student thinking, performance and growth to levels they were not at previously. One approach worth investigating is sponsoring opportunities for engaged learning that incentivize multi-disciplinary collaborations at UTM that link across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. For example, providing students with the option to include a 'Sustainability Pathway' in their degree would allow our students to leave UTM with a deeper appreciation and understanding of the complexity surrounding sustainability in all that it encompasses.

We will embrace evolutions in curriculum and pedagogy that push education forward in new and innovative ways. We are working towards establishing a curriculum which includes opportunities for the development of deep knowledge and fosters application of knowledge to real-world problems. Our courses and programs must be designed to align with program learning outcomes, have value for the students and provide opportunities for them to actively interact with the content knowledge and each other.

As faculty and instructors become more familiar with digital technologies for teaching and learning, new pedagogical challenges and strategies are emerging. We will continue to embrace and support the progress being made and allow for a spectrum of pedagogical approaches, so that instructors can do more to engage learners, enable learning and ensure the achievement of learning outcomes for our students.

UTM will carry on pursuing a post-secondary experience that keeps academic excellence at heart. In many ways, the most important area that merits investment is in providing students

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Student Student, Class of 2017

with support and structure to improve their foundational competencies. We will commit to ensuring that all students learn and demonstrate excellent communication skills, in terms of their written proficiency, information literacy and presentation skills as well as in their numeracy before they graduate from UTM. Students who communicate well and possess strong analytical skills and literacy are more able to participate effectively in university life and will have fundamental expertise that will serve them well in their careers beyond university.

We will...

Establish and demonstrate that UTM is a home for world-class research

To achieve this goal, we will focus on:

- Attracting world-class scholars
- Strengthening UTM research culture
- Investing in research infrastructure across all disciplines
- Supporting research through funding, mentorship, and administration
- Introducing new UTM graduate programs
- Leveraging the strengths of both the tri-campus model and the uniqueness of UTM
- Enhancing support for teaching and learning pedagogy
- Communicating UTM research excellence

## Goal 2: Establish and demonstrate that UTM is a home for world-class research

UTM faculty members are international leaders in terms of the creativity and quality of their research accomplishments. Additionally, all of UTM's departments and institutes are committed to engaging in research that furthers UTM's reputation as a campus that inspires world-class research. UTM plans to build on these strengths by encouraging multi-disciplinary research initiatives and assisting our scholars to engage fully in both applied and fundamental research.

UTM is home to a diverse and innovative research community, located within an excellent research-intensive university. Our faculty are very successful at garnering research funding through international, tri-council, provincial and third-party grants and participate in a number of significant academic and non-academic, national and international research partnerships and collaborations. UTM encourages and provides support to our faculty to conduct research work with undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, technicians and colleagues based in their own as well as other departments and units in the university and beyond.

We will pursue, encourage and promote investment in infrastructure to attract highly motivated, creative, and world-class scholars in areas that are congruent with UTM's vision and strategic plans for future research endeavours. Beyond supporting research projects, the university can assist scholars through increased attention to mentorship and training. We will embark on several new training projects that include research mentoring of junior faculty by senior faculty or faculty working in different disciplines as well as research mentoring of graduate students and undergraduates (across all units at UTM).

A concomitant focus of UTM is to invest in research-based graduate programs. Many of the affiliated graduate students at UTM conduct their research in laboratories located here. Efforts to introduce additional research-based programs can enhance UTM's capacity to be a

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research leader. We may create additional extra-departmental units to foster interdisciplinary research across the entire university and beyond.

One area that can effectively advance UTM's achievements along all these dimensions is communication about our research accomplishments both internally and externally. Communicating about our research can be enhanced through means beyond academic publications and conference presentations. Community-focused research, perhaps in partnership with local community organizations or groups, is one way to communicate effectively about research and create positive impacts. Connecting with high school students and prospective graduate students directly about research work and opportunities through departments can further promote UTM's research successes. Finally, deepening our relationships with our alumni and volunteers can represent a rewarding way to share our expertise across boundaries.

We will...

Enrich the student experience by embracing opportunities for community involvement

To achieve this goal, we will focus on:

- Retaining high quality students
- Creating partnerships for eliminating barriers
- Enhancing student engagement and experiential learning opportunities
- Giving back through arts and culture
- Collaborating with local and global communities
- Helping the public know what we do

### Goal 3: Enrich the student experience by embracing opportunities for community involvement

Post-secondary institutions have a significant role to play in community development, education, and diversification. Through partnerships with the community, we can do our part to accelerate learning and distribute knowledge and skills as well as ensure that student engagement with their communities is encouraged and supported. UTM has developed and maintained a long-standing relationship with the City of Mississauga. We have been engaged with the City through advising on higher education and economic development, acting on advice from the community to build specific types of programming and through the involvement of faculty members and students in local research, volunteer work and student internship placements.

Partnerships with groups and individuals in the external community (both locally and globally) give real meaning to a university's mission in society. UTM must continue to be useful to its community in a direct and applied way, through the education it provides and the long-term benefits of our research. Two crucial areas are through enhancing student engagement and experiential learning opportunities. We will strive to provide our students with experiential learning and work-integrated learning opportunities that promote mutually beneficial connections to organizations within the community. We will expand curricular and co-curricular experiences by working with Departments to identify opportunities. Collaboration between partners from the community with members of the university can enhance the student learning environment and lead to even stronger community relationships.

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The reach and influence of UTM extend beyond the campus. From the City of Mississauga to the Region of Peel and further into the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), UTM has a presence in many local communities. Partnerships with the external community will open opportunities for research, networking, knowledge transfer, and professional development for students, faculty, staff, and librarians. To facilitate, nurture and sustain even better relationships and linkages with the broader community, we will explore an initiative to create an engaged form of research between community partners and interested

UTM faculty and students. Additionally, we will actively work to engage the broader public, exploring the possibility to create spaces that will bring the community on campus, to help enhance external community engagement and awareness.

To attract and retain high quality and motivated students, UTM needs to provide programs, services and facilities that promote engagement and personal development, through which students are encouraged to stretch their thinking to confront both abstract ideas and real-world problems, and where the impact of their efforts can be seen in the community. Efforts to improve the retention and graduation rates of our students are critical to our commitment to excellent standards for higher education and to enrich the undergraduate learning experience. We plan to study various retention programs and design a UTM-focused state-of-the-art retention program.

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We will...  
Focus on transformation and innovation

To achieve this goal, we will focus on:

- Establishing equity and diversity
- Building academic community
- Supporting innovative pedagogical practices and infrastructure
- Creating a high-performing culture that supports staff development, effectiveness, and recognition
- Recruiting the next generation of outstanding students
- Continuous enhancement of physical and technological infrastructure

#### Goal 4: Focus on transformation and innovation

This Academic Plan and the vast majority of the submissions, feedback, and survey results from the departments and other units at UTM emphasize several common themes that at their core focus on transformation and innovation. In brief, these themes include: increasing the diversity of our academic and administrative staff; focusing on community both external to UTM and within and between academic units; and the need for students to master foundational competencies. We have identified priority areas that should allow UTM to hire the best people and help students to further develop their foundational competencies, at the same time as we become a more just, cohesive and creative community.

UTM needs to continue attracting outstanding faculty to the campus who excel at research at the same time as they are committed to effective teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. UTM currently attracts some of the most highly qualified and most engaged faculty in the world. However, UTM aspires to enhance the diversity of our staff, librarians, and faculty so that we more closely mirror the make-up of our incredibly diverse student body. Recent research shows that the hiring practices at institutions can be greatly improved through changes in recruitment and interviewing practices, both of which we believe we can implement over the next five years. An upfront investment, which begins with faculty complement but then extends to Human Resources practices more generally, is a key element in approaching this challenge in a transformative manner.

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An integrated and collaborative campus must necessarily include support of all the hard-working staff whose work permits students, librarians and faculty to thrive. We will provide opportunities for staff to enhance their skills, engage more directly with students and faculty on a more regular and positive basis and to interact with each other across divisions and job categories. A vibrant community requires the voices and aspirations of all stakeholders to be understood, valued, and promoted. While this is a more unusual goal for a university, it is a priority clearly expressed by many submissions to the Academic Planning process.

Looking ahead to the next generation of university students, recruitment will require engagement at all levels. We endeavor to collaborate with our campus partners (such as the Office of Communications, the Career Centre and Office of Student Recruitment and Admissions) in developing strong communications about the excellence and relevance of our academic programming. Our aim is to have department faculty, staff and students actively participate in various recruitment events. We intend to invite prospective students to engage in a substantive way with our research, labs and professors, and we will participate in targeted outreach programs in our various communities that provide opportunities for us to showcase UTM innovation and success.

Garnering and prudently managing our economic and spatial resources is one of the most complex challenges facing UTM, as well as most universities in North America, at this time. Having sufficient resources to implement our ambitious plans for the future of the campus underpins our ability to meet all of the goals outlined in this document. Implementation of our goals, in turn, will allow us to make the most of faculty and librarian time and energy, our physical plant and our staff (whether they be administrative, technical or logistical). If we are able to allocate our resources effectively in ways that support our academic goals, we will be able to make significant progress towards creating a university campus that is dynamic, creative and attractive in terms of both its physical layout and intellectual infrastructure.

UTM is investing daily in both the intellectual and physical infrastructure of the community. We are committed to providing our students, staff, librarians and faculty with access to optimal space, exemplary technology and inspiring locations in which to pursue learning and scholarship. This Academic Plan, in combination with the UTM Vision, will be used to encourage students, staff, librarians and faculty to align around a common set of principles that add tremendous value to the University and empower us all to achieve significant and lasting positive change that propels us forward.

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We will...  
Educate future leaders to be global citizens

To achieve this goal, we will focus on:

- Attracting diverse perspectives to UTM
- Hiring full-time faculty in global topics
- Integrating global content into curriculum
- Developing more international partnerships
- Expanding international opportunities for students

### Goal 5: Educate future leaders to be global citizens

UTM must create leaders, educating students who are fully aware of their communities and can actively engage in discussions of how to create an environmentally, politically and socially better world. We must ensure that UTM graduates globally competent students who have a heightened sense of social responsibility, can investigate the world, interact with a variety of audiences, weigh perspectives and take action.

Our faculty members are global research leaders with key collaborators around the world. Our research influences global thinking and makes an impact on distant communities. As a result, our faculty can provide a powerful force for advancing students' global learning in the classroom and through research collaborations. We must continue to attract and recruit faculty members who carry out research in global topics, who have worldwide connections to build research strength at UTM and who will continue to integrate international and Indigenous perspectives into our classrooms.

Appreciating and understanding different religions, cultures, and points of view are essential elements of global

competence and are necessary in order to recognize different perspectives in a multicultural region, such as the one we live and work in. We

We must ensure that UTM graduates globally competent students who have a heightened sense of social responsibility, can investigate the world, interact with a variety of audiences, weigh perspectives and take action.

will continue expanding and promoting our cross-cultural opportunities to provide students with options for study and research that deepen this understanding and global perspective. Students will also be encouraged to acquire exposure to various cultures and viewpoints by working with recent immigrants in local communities through experiential learning placements as well as embracing different ways of knowing. These experiences promote socially conscious awareness that can prepare students to think about both local and international community development and understand social change.

We will work towards better integrating global content into the curriculum. To respond to current workplace opportunities within a complex and multicultural landscape, students need more than the traditional model of scholarly education. Students need robust sociolinguistic and pragmatic competencies to navigate across cultures and behaviors in order to communicate efficiently and appropriately. We will work towards teaching students how to document their global knowledge, skills, and experiences to share with potential employers and community members in various capacities. We aim to develop more Indigenous connections and international partnerships that can facilitate such opportunities. We must increase awareness of and financially support students who are interested in UTM Abroad programs. We plan to encourage a broader range of international students to attend UTM at the same time as we seek out new ways to provide students with the opportunity to study abroad and learn about cultures first hand through immersion.

We have a responsibility to help students understand the meaning of engaged living in a culturally diverse and rapidly changing world. Through a combination of academic courses, research opportunities, and exchange opportunities in the form of co-curricular and for-credit activities, we will aim to offer all students the opportunity to gain a global perspective with a deep understanding of diversity, cultural complexity, and an increased sense of personal and community responsibility.

## **CLOSING THOUGHTS (OR CONCLUSION)**

*To be added once feedback from the community has been considered.*