

30 Years of the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre: A Year-Long Celebration

The RGASC is planning a year-long celebration in 2026, honoring its past and present with community events and reflections on its history.

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Jordana Garbati, Director of the RGASC

Photo by Sara Li/The Medium

The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) at the University of Toronto Mississauga is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2026. It is celebrating three decades of work and academic support provided to the students and faculty at the university.

The RGASC is a hub of activity for academic work on campus, offering support to students with math, writing, and study skills, and helping faculty and instructors foster quality educational environments. The anniversary celebrations will highlight the RGASC's legacy with learning and teaching, while also broadcasting the resources available to students and instructors who may be unfamiliar its offerings.

"I can't reveal all right now," says RGASC Director Jordana Garbati, "but we have been planning several events that welcome students, staff, and faculty into the RGASC to learn more about what we do and maybe have a celebratory treat, too!"

Planning has been underway for months according to the director, as staff are working behind the scenes to organize a celebration with events hosted throughout the year of 2026. Among these is a community event commemorating the centre's campus partners, alumni, donors, staff, and students. Garbati said that they were aiming to host this sometime in the spring of 2026.

The RGASC has accumulated a lot of history in 30 years, which will also be highlighted as a part of the year-long celebration. Garbati spoke about a social media campaign that will promote the RGASC to students and staff and explore its evolution and impact over the years. They plan to interview current and former staff, as well as former students on their involvement with the centre.

"I've been a director for nearly four years. Interviewing the former director or former directors on what they remember about the RGASC, as well as former students who've worked with us, former peer mentors and work study students will help us all learn more about the history of the RGASC and its influence on teaching and learning at UTM."

The social media campaign will also feature photo stories to showcase the history of the RGASC. It will compare how the RGASC looked years ago to how it looks now. The centre moved to the MN building in 2019, and it previously occupied a smaller space in the campus library.

Garbati suggested the incorporation of archival records on the RGASC into the campaign, given that the search yields interesting results.

“We're also working with an archivist at the library. We've been looking for historical records that we don't have at the RGASC,” she said.

Stay tuned for more specific details on 30th anniversary programming in the winter term and beyond. The RGASC kicked off the festivities right away in January of 2026.

While celebrations are ongoing, the centre has a variety of programming and resources available in the winter, summer, and fall terms.

Undergrad and grad students can book individual appointments to strengthen writing, math, or study skills.

The centre is hosting workshops for the Professional English Language Skills (PELS) program and the Program for Accessing Research Training (PART). It's also recently completed a new three-part workshop series called Making Sense of AI and Learning.

The centre's Facilitated Study Group (FSG) program embeds peer mentors in courses all over campus, assisting students in group study sessions.

On the instructor and faculty side, the centre has programming in various areas of teaching such as anti-racist pedagogy, inclusive pedagogy, Gen-AI, and assessment in teaching. All of these resources and more are at the disposal of students and staff that reach out to the RGASC.

The RGASC is located in MN 3251 and is open from Monday to Friday.