

Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre Annual Report 2025-2026

Prepared by Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) Staff and Faculty

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UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
MISSISSAUGA

ROBERT GILLESPIE
ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTRE

Executive Summary

The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) is the learning and teaching hub at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM). We support the development of academic skills for student success and the development of instructors' pedagogical practices. The RGASC is housed within the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy (ISUP). Our team of full- and part-time staff and students is dedicated to meeting the needs of our diverse student and instructor populations at UTM, working productively with campus partners and in alignment with UTM's Strategic Framework and Academic Plan.

In 2025-2026,

- 717 unique students received writing, math and numeracy, study skills support in our one-on-one appointments, Writing Studio drop-ins, and dedicated course drop-ins
- 109 students (non-unique) attended the Caribbean and Black Writing Collective
- 196 students passed the Professional English Language Skills (PELS) program
- 3253 students attended Facilitated Study Group (FSG) sessions
- 63 courses were supported by FSGs
- 25 courses were supported by the Writing Development Initiative (WDI)
- 26 in-class writing workshops were delivered across campus
- 159 students attended course-specific Dedicated Drop-ins for writing
- 294 students attended the Program for Accessing Research Training (PART)
- 85 unique instructors and 14 unique staff consulted with Educational Developers
- 12 teaching observations were conducted by Educational Developers
- 62 faculty, staff, graduate students participated in 7 Pedagogical Reading Groups
- 6 new workshops in Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy were delivered by the Special Projects Officer, Curriculum and Pedagogy

In addition, we

- Celebrated the RGASC's 30th anniversary in various ways: commemorative graphic elements and swag items; dedicated web page with timeline, archival research, news stories; winter open house in the RGASC; anniversary reception with students, staff, faculty, alumni, and donors (planned in collaboration with the Office of Advancement)
- Wrote and published the RGASC's first Academic Skills Handbook
- Commissioned and installed Indigenous art by graphic designer Katie Wilhelm in the RGASC's ALC; this initiative included an opening event with the artist and attendees from across UTM

In 2026-2027, the RGASC team will

- Respond to instructor and student needs in the area of generative artificial intelligence
- Refine online resources
- Explore initiatives in the area of Learning Strategies
- Build partnerships and develop programming in mathematics and numeracy

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Land Acknowledgement

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.



Part of the Seven Teachings series by Indigenous artist Katie Wilhelm.

All seven pieces of art are installed in the RGASC.

About the RGASC

The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) is UTM's hub for learning and teaching. We support the development of academic skills for student success and the development of instructors' pedagogical practices.

Mission

- To provide a full range of individual consultations, workshops, and programs to help students identify and develop the academic skills they need for success in their studies.
- To work collaboratively with University of Toronto Mississauga faculty and teaching assistants to help them create the best possible environments for learning in their classes, labs, and tutorials.

Organizational Structure

In 2025-2026, the RGASC employed 14 permanent staff (listed in alphabetical order by last name):

- Dianne Ashbourne – Senior Educational Developer & Team Lead (until December 2025)
- Corrine Bent-Womack – Educational Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies (until December 2025)
- Amanda Brijmohan – Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Louis Busch – Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy
- Karl Cheung – Interim Program Administrator
- Adriana Grimaldi – Senior Educational Developer & Team Lead
- Rob Huang – Educational Developer, Instructional Practices and Student Engagement
- Becca Koessler – Learning Strategist
- Kerrie Martin – Learning Strategist and Program Manager
- Laura McKinley – Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Accessible Pedagogy Coordinator
- Linda Duong – Learning Strategist
- Louis Nguyen – Interim Outreach and Engagement Coordinator
- Brooke Ramsey – Administrative and Communications Assistant
- Laura Smith – Outreach and Engagement Coordinator (on secondment)

RGASC was supported by ISUP Administrative Staff:

- Aimy Lieu – Associate Director, ISUP

- Bukky Okege – Business Officer

RGASC employed 13 part-time Writing, Numeracy and Math, and Study Skills Instructors:

- Tara Al-Hadithy – Writing
- Joel Benabu – Writing
- David Calloway – Writing
- Monica Gagnon – Writing
- Danny Huong – Math and Numeracy
- Marvin Lam – Writing
- Patti Luedecke – Writing
- Carter Man – Math and Numeracy
- Danielle Martak – Writing
- Sean McPhail – Writing & Study Skills
- Erfan Nazari – Math and Numeracy
- Paul Raymont – Writing
- Yulia Smirnova – Writing

We employed students in part-time roles: 8 Work Study and 29 Program Assistants.

RGASC programs were designed and/or delivered by ISUP Faculty and Staff:

- Sheila Batacharya – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Mark Blaauw-Hara – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Michael De Braga – Associate Professor, Teaching Stream
- Talla Enaya – Program Assistant
- Tyler Evans-Tokaryk – Professor, Teaching Stream
- Jordana Garbati – Associate Professor, Teaching Stream
- Sheliza Ibrahim – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Rita Karrass – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Michael Kaler – Associate Professor, Teaching Stream
- Mitchell Pedicelli – Program Assistant, ISUP
- Nelesi Rodrigues – Assistant Professor, Tenure Stream
- Sarah Seeley – Associate Professor, Teaching Stream
- Laura Taylor – Associate Professor, Teaching Stream
- Oguzhan Tekin – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Jonathan Vroom – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream

RGASC Director is:

- Jordana Garbati, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream

ISUP Director is:

- Andreas Bendlin, Associate Professor

Undergraduate Support

Writing Appointments

Overview

One-on-one writing support is a significant RGASC program for UTM students. Undergraduate and graduate students can book 50-minute appointments with our writing instructors in person and online (synchronous and asynchronous). Scheduling is done through the WCONLINE platform, and online appointments use Zoom. Students also have access to daily drop-in hours through our Writing Studio.

In 2025-26, we offered 1397 hours of in person, online, and drop-in general writing support. Writing appointment distribution was as follows:

- 42% of total writing hours were in-person appointments (instructor and student meet face-to-face at the RGASC)
- 48% of total writing hours were online synchronous (instructor and student meet over Zoom) appointments
- 3% of total writing hours were asynchronous (students upload drafts for feedback) appointments

The remaining appointment hours (99 hours or 7% of the total) were allotted to Writing Studio Drop-in. These were offered in the RGASC Boardroom four days a week in the Fall and Winter semesters.

The total utilization rate for our writing appointments in 2025-26 was 83% used by 495 unique students.

Summer 2025

In Summer 2025, we offered a total of 244 hours of writing appointments:

- 41% of total writing hours were in person appointments
- 59% of total writing hours were online synchronous appointments

Demand for these writing appointments was modest with 67% of hours used by 72 unique students. We did not offer Writing Studio drop-in hours during the summer semester.

Fall 2025

In Fall 2025, we offered a total of 557 hours of writing appointments:

- 43% of total writing hours were in person appointments
- 3% of total writing hours were asynchronous appointments
- 54% of total writing hours were online synchronous appointments

Online asynchronous appointments were particularly popular, with 86% of offered appointments (12 hours) used. Writing Studio drop-in hours were also popular, with 84 unique students attending the 50 hours offered over the semester.

Demand for writing appointments was strong with 91% of hours (505 hours) used by 235 unique students.

Winter 2026

In Winter 2026, we offered a total of 497 hours of writing appointments:

- 50% of total writing hours were in person appointments
- 4% of total writing hours were asynchronous appointments
- 46% of total writing hours were online synchronous appointments.

The 49 Writing Studio drop-in hours offered attracted 86 unique students. Many of these students made the drop-in hours a regular part of their weekly schedules.

Demand for writing appointments was strong with 85% of hours (424 hours) used by 185 unique students.

Writing appointment and Writing Studio Drop-in utilization rates for fall 2024 and winter 2025 are on par with trends in recent years as noted in Table 1.

Table 1

Writing Appointments (individual appointments and Writing Studio drop-in) Yearly Comparison

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Unique Students	538	561	495
Total Available Appointment Hours	1708	1629	1397
Total Utilization Rate	70%	80%	83%

Course-Embedded Writing Support

The RGASC offers embedded writing support in a wide range of courses. Because the support is customized for each course, it can take a variety of forms, including:

1. Presentations/workshops
 - These can cover a wide variety of writing topics and genres (e.g., lab reports, thesis statements, argumentative writing, first-year writing, research essay introductions, research proposals).
2. Dedicated drop-ins
 - Blocks of time where students from particular courses can drop in to the Centre (without an appointment) to receive writing support on specific assignments; the blocks of time correspond to each assignment's due date, and the writing instructors familiarize themselves with the assignment instructions prior to each session.
3. Benchmarking and TA training/harmonization
 - Sessions specifically designed to help TAs with providing feedback about writing.
4. Writing Retreats
 - Course-specific sessions facilitated by faculty are scheduled (in person or virtually) for students to work on and get support from their peers on specific writing assignments.

Please note that course-embedded writing support for courses supported by the Writing Development Initiative is detailed in the next section, immediately below.

In 2025-2026, we offered 26 in-class or in-tutorial presentations and workshops. This is a decrease from 65 in 2024-2025 and 68 in 2023-2024. The decrease is mainly due to a reduction in faculty workload.

In 2025-2026, we saw 159 students attend 36 Dedicated Drop-In (DDI) sessions for 25 courses. In 2024-2025, we saw 676 students attend 57 Dedicated Drop-In sessions for 39 courses (740 students in 2023-2024).

Writing Development Initiative

The RGASC also offers the Writing Development Initiative (WDI), which provides resources, support, and financial assistance, for innovative course- and discipline-specific projects to enhance students' use of writing in the target course.

In 2025-2026, over 25 courses had WDI-supported projects, involving approximately 30% of UTM's overall student population. The RGASC provided funding for Teaching Assistant (TA) hours for all of these projects, and many projects benefited from planning support by RGASC and ISUP faculty.

In 2025-2026, we offered 11 (13 in 2024-2025) in-class or in-tutorial presentations and workshops. We held 14 (8 in 2024-2025) benchmarking sessions for specific courses.

We also offered the Writing Development Initiative TA Training program; a total of 35 TAs participated in the training (46 in 2024-2025), and they received seven hours of instruction on writing pedagogy.

Responding to the expressed needs of our partners, we reintroduced online writing office hours for some WDI-funded courses; these were augmented by in-person dedicated drop-ins. We offered 8 dedicated drop-in sessions (2-3 hours each) for WDI-supported courses and 42 online writing office hours sessions (typically 3 hours each) for WDI-supported courses.

Caribbean and Black Writing Collective

The Caribbean and Black Writing Collective (CBWC) began in 2022-2023. The CBWC gives students who identify as Caribbean (Black, Indo Caribbean, Chinese-Caribbean etc.) and/or Black (African, Caribbean, Canadian etc.) an opportunity to work on their assignments and engage deeply with their studies in a collaborative environment with faculty, supportive friends and peers who identify with the collective. The CBWC aims to build community, motivation, and accountability. Check-ins, networking, reflective discussions, writing/reading/numeracy support, special workshops facilitated by Black-led and Black serving community organizations, visits by Caribbean and Black identified UTM faculty members are all available components to enhance the session experience. This year CBWC was led by Sheliza Ibrahim and Nelesi Rodrigues with support from Efe Eghujovbo, Jordana Garbati, Aimy Lieu, Brooke Ramsey, and Tia Sager (CDRS).

In 2025-2026, the CBWC team secured a two-year grant from the Access Programs University Fund to support already established components of the collective and cultivate emerging ones. Over the course of the year, we refined program logistics, developed social media and on campus promotional materials, developed the objectives of the collective, collaborated across units, and connected with student associations (e.g., African Student Association, Caribbean Connections) and departments (e.g., English & Drama Department and Black@UTM) to develop collaboration and collegial connections.

In 2025-2026, we offered nine sessions of two and a half hours and three special event sessions (details below). 109 students (new and repeat attendees) participated in CBWC sessions.

The CBWC continued with three events in 2025-2026:

1. Vision Boarding Workshop Series: In winter 2026 and in collaboration with the Caribbean Connections and Black Literature and Arts student organizations, the CBWC hosted a vision board session focused on students' academic futures. A total of 10 students attended.
2. Black on the Shelf: In Winter 2026, the CBWC collaborated with Black@UTM and the UTM Library for the Black on the Shelf book reading/signing featuring two U of T/UTM authors: Matthew R. Morris and Abdulsalam Oladimeji. The event featured our collaboration with over nine campus partners and student groups (RGASC, UTM Library, Black at UTM, Black Literature Club, Centre for Student Engagement, Department of Recreation, Athletics and Wellness, Caribbean Connections, Black in STEM, African Student Association, Black Student Association). 55 people attended (18 staff and 37 students).
3. Black Futures Sip-and-Create, Paint & Poetry Exam: In Spring 2026, the CBWC co-sponsored the Black Futures Sip-and-Create, Paint & Poetry Exam de-stressor event in collaboration with the English and Drama Student Society. The event featured Black and Caribbean speakers who are UTM poets & artists. There were more than 26 attendees, including 21 students, 1 alumni, and 4 faculty members.

The CBWC initiated three new events in 2025-2026:

1. In Fall 2025, the CBWC hosted the Roots Community Services organization for a collaboration event where representatives from their AMANI program facilitated an engaging session on the importance of caring for your health and wellness as a student, and they delivered a wellness activity designing handheld mirrors with encouraging messaging to help students recharge. 19 participants registered their attendance. This included 1 graduate student, 1 faculty family member, 3 faculty, 9 high school students, and 4 undergraduate students.
2. In Spring 2026, the CBWC collaborated with the Peel District School Board, Roots Community Services, and Chalice Catering to host the 2nd Annual Black Unity Social for Black Families across Peel held at Lorne Park Secondary School. We aimed to deliver a creative workshop where participants designed book covers representing their life stories. We sourced and compensated five CBWC members as student facilitators to lead the workshop and participate in the panel discussion as well as four current SEE students to support the programming. This initiative allowed our students to strengthen their public speaking skills and comfortability with panel discussions, gave them a chance to network with Peel District School Board representatives, and allow mentorship opportunities with younger Black students.
3. Engaged our SEE students in volunteer, community and UTM service beyond their SEE@UTM program, specifically in the Community Outreach event mentioned above.

Other Highlights from 2025-2026:

- Student leadership and development opportunities: As part of our efforts to facilitate opportunities for CBWC students to cultivate their academic and professional identities while affirming their cultures, we co-presented with two CBWC students at the Conference on Discourse and Writing (May-June 2025). CBWC students will also co-facilitate an interactive session during our upcoming outreach event.
- Co-curricular record: For the first time since the collective started, five students received co-curricular record for their sustained involvement with and contributions to CBWC.

Plans for 2026-2027 include:

Continuing:

- to provide special collaborative events that engage our UTM Black and Caribbean population with community organizations
- to develop consistent measuring and assessment practices
- outreach to first-year students through Orientation events
- outreach with the SEE@UTM students with programming for Peel/local community
- to provide Co-Curricular Accreditation (CCR)
- to increase graduate student and alumni outreach
- to revisit the Black and Caribbean Scholar Speaker Series
- to refine our funding allocation strategy with our Access Programs University Funds (APUF)

Mathematics and Numeracy Support

Mathematics and numeracy are critical for students' academic development. The RGASC offers one-on-one appointments and drop-in hours in mathematics and numeracy instruction. While we target students who are taking first-year math courses, our instruction is not limited to them.

Appointments

In 2025-2026, we offered 234 hours of in-person and online synchronous mathematics and numeracy appointments. The utilization rate of these appointments was 64% which was higher than the previous academic year (56%) but indicates that there is much room for improvement in student awareness and outreach. There were 141 unique students that used these appointments which is higher than previous years, but low compared to our writing appointments.

In Summer 2025, 25 unique students used 61% of the offered appointments (28/46 hours). In Fall 2025, 33 unique students used 81% of the offered appointments (101/124 hours). In Winter 2026, 19 unique students used 44% of the offered hours (65/149 hours).

These patterns suggest that mathematics and numeracy appointments continue to serve a relatively small but highly engaged group of students who rely on this support consistently throughout the term. Across 2025–2026, a total of 141 unique students accessed appointments. The fluctuation in utilization in each term indicates stronger engagement during the Fall term, with a notable decline in Winter usage. Overall, while the service is clearly valuable for those who access it, the relatively low number of unique users compared to writing appointments highlights an ongoing opportunity to increase awareness, broaden outreach, and expand engagement across the wider student population.

Drop-ins

We continued with Math Drop-ins on Tuesdays and Thursday afternoons for 2025-2026.

Math and Numeracy appointment utilization rates for fall 2025 and winter 2026 are on par with trends in recent years as noted in Table 2.

Table 2

Mathematics and Numeracy Appointments Yearly Comparison

	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Unique Students	63	68	141
Total Available Appointment Hours	457	336	366
Total Utilization Rate	57%	57%	64%

Learning Strategies

Overview

The learning strategy portfolio focuses on providing study skills support through peer-led programming. Our three primary programs are:

- Facilitated Study Groups (FSGs)
- Promoting Academic Skills for Success (PASS)
- Peer Mentor Learning Communities (PMLCs)

In addition, we offer:

- Study skills workshops for the RGASC's Head Start program
- Study skills workshops for departments and academic societies upon request

- Study skills support to wider UTM initiatives and programs including Exam Jam, the Summer Academic Skills Institute (SASI), and the Support, Engage, Experience (SEE) UTM program
- Individual study skills appointments with a part-time Study Skills Instructor
- Study skills drop-in sessions led by Learning Strategists

Facilitated Study Groups (FSGs)

FSGs are rooted in the Supplemental Instruction (SI) model developed by the University of Missouri at Kansas City. SI is a non-remedial approach to learning enrichment that uses peer-assisted study groups to integrate essential academic skills with course-related material. FSGs are only offered in support of courses in which there is active collaboration between the course instructor and the RGASC. The sessions are led by a team of facilitators, model volunteer students who have been successful in the course and who have had approval from or been hand-picked by the course instructor. Facilitators are intensively trained by the RGASC in Supplemental Instruction techniques and proactive study strategies before leading FSG sessions.

Table 3 shows a comparison of overall attendances, number of courses, and number of FSG sessions for the past 3 years.

Table 3

FSG Attendance Data

	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Unique FSG Leaders	200	183	200
Student Attendances	4045	3201	3253
Number of Courses	57	68	63
Number of FSG sessions	972	916	1176

In 2025-2026, the FSG program supported 63 courses. 1176 sessions were offered, and 3253 students attended.

The increase in sessions offered reflects efforts to improve the efficiency of scheduling, which led to earlier launches. In both semesters, FSGs launched by the 2nd or 3rd week, however Winter 2026 launches were disrupted by two snow days.

In 2026-2027, the FSG program will refresh volunteer training, explore departmental collaborations, and seek new partnerships with courses with content that most align with the Supplemental Instruction (SI) approach.

FSG and SEE UTM

The FSG program continued to support the Support, Engage, Experience University of Toronto (SEE UTM). SEE UTM aims to make post-secondary education more accessible to students who come from communities historically underrepresented at UTM.

Three co-facilitators led 12 FSG sessions for Black high school students from the Peel District School Board throughout the Fall Term with over 12 students in attendance each week.

Collaboration with EDS325 H5

The RGASC continued to collaborate with the Department of Language Studies to run the placement component of EDS325 H5: Supplemental Instruction in Higher Education, a credit-bearing course that introduces students to the theory and practice of Supplemental Instruction in higher education. EDS325 incorporates the RGASC’s FSG program as a mandatory internship for every student in the course.

In 2025-2026, 34 students were enrolled into EDS325 compared to 52 students in 2024-2025 and 57 students in 2023-2024, with all students being directly placed in the FSG program. Although enrolment in the course continues to decline, 16 eligible students ultimately withdrew. Had these students remained enrolled, total enrolment would have been 50, aligning more closely with levels observed in previous academic years. A more selective vetting process remained in place, including a minimum CGPA and completion of at least two FSG courses. This did not meaningfully impact enrolment, as the majority of ineligible students failed to meet these same criteria in previous academic years.

Table 4 summarizes the number of enrolment requests into EDS325 H5 over the past three academic years to further quantify enrolment trends.

Table 4

Total Yearly EDS325 H5 Enrolment

	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Total Applications	126	116	104
Total Eligible Student	91	79	52

Only 50% of the enrolment requests into EDS325 H5 for 2025-2026 were from eligible students as compared to about 70% in the past two academic years. We are also observing a continued decrease in the total number of applications for the course enrolment. It is possible that continued communication about the placement requirements have deterred ineligible students from applying and supporting students in making decisions about their time and academic commitments.

Looking towards the new academic year, we plan to continue liaising with the Department of Language Studies to ensure that our communications with students are aligned and that students are utilizing the correct sources for information.

Facilitation Labs

Facilitation Labs are an initiative we originally planned through a Special Project in Winter 2024. These labs were intended to be a space for applied in-service training for facilitators where they could explore, develop, and practice new techniques to enhance their practice and to build a learning community with other facilitators by sharing their knowledge and experiences. By sketching out a facilitator lifecycle to map the common facilitation development trajectory our team observed, we began to plan a curriculum to target areas in facilitative and reflective practice. Additionally, it was hoped that the Facilitation Labs would allow returning facilitators to continue enhancing their practice, share their knowledge with others, and be incentivized to continue facilitating.

Building on our past work, in 2025-2026, we offered a multi-tiered CCR opportunity to our facilitators through Facilitation Labs. Facilitators had the option to additionally participate in Facilitation Labs Level 1 or Level 2 for additional in-service training focused on further development skills in facilitation or reflection. The option for a multi-tiered CCR opportunity allows facilitators to engage in a curated set of experiences while being incentivized to continue facilitating. The Labs themselves were 50-minute applied workshops on specific topics that would allow facilitators to learn and apply a new skill they would be able to use in their facilitation practice. Some of the topics were new while others offered a deeper dive into a specific facilitation technique and built on previous training. While EDS325 H5 students were also welcome to participate in the program, they were not eligible for the CCR notation in the same semester that they were enrolled in the course.

Table 5 summarizes the set up for the CCR requirements and audience restrictions for each level.

Table 5

Facilitation Labs Multi-tiered CCR Set Up

Item	Level 1	Level 2: Facilitation Focus	Level 2: Reflection Focus
Audience	All facilitators	Returning facilitators by application only	Returning facilitators by application only
Requirements to earn CCR notation	Earn the Volunteer Course Facilitator CCR Attend 2 facilitation labs Design and deliver an in-person announcement Facilitate a Mega FSG or related FSG event Complete a reflective survey	Earn the Volunteer Course Facilitator CCR Attend 3 facilitation labs, one should have a facilitation focus Design and deliver an in-person announcement Facilitate a Mega FSG or related FSG event Complete a reflective survey Attend a launch meeting Design and lead a facilitation lab	Earn the Volunteer Course Facilitator CCR Attend 3 facilitation labs, one should have a reflection focus Design and deliver an in-person announcement Facilitate a Mega FSG or related FSG event Create a portfolio snippet Attend a launch meeting Attend a check-in meeting Participate in an FSG showcase

Table 6 summarizes the participation, not necessarily the attainment of CCR, in Facilitation Labs.

Table 6

Participation in the Facilitation Labs

Cycle	Level 1	Level 2: Facilitation Focus	Level 2: Reflection Focus	# of Learning Strategist led labs	# of Facilitator led labs
Fall 2025	29	5	1	4	2
Winter 2026	19	1	7	9	1

Our total attendance to the labs in Fall 2025 was 55 and in Winter 2026 was 55.

From the Fall 2025 survey for facilitators who attended at least one Facilitation Lab, the 18 facilitators who responded shared overall positive impressions with the experience. In terms of the content of the labs, facilitators agreed that they were able to learn strategies that they could use in their FSGs and that the topics they explored were relevant to what they had encountered in their facilitator journey. Facilitators felt more connected with each other and learned from each other. Facilitators also were more interested in their professional development and found that the multi-tiered CCR structure also motivated them to continue facilitating. We received a Net Promoter Score of 50 in Fall 2025 (N=18) and 55 in Winter 2026 2026 (N=11) from the Facilitation Labs Level 1 surveys.

In addition to supporting the development of our facilitators, the Facilitation Labs have been a sandbox to explore new training ideas for the continued refinement of the FSG program. For the upcoming academic year, we plan to explore how to continue scaling this opportunity while building additional opportunities for facilitators to build community.

FSG Process Improvement Project

In Winter 2026, the FSG team connected with the Project Management Office to explore process improvements to the FSG operations and logistics. The project aimed to streamline processes involving our Program Assistants' work and to build capacity within the full-time staff team. By using tools such as processing mapping and RACI charts, the team explored potential changes in a to-be process, task re-alignment, and planned changes for our Program Assistant standard operating procedures. We look forward to a sub-project with the Project Management Office specifically on metrics to gauge the impact of these changes. As this current project wraps up, the team will

prioritize examining approximately 15 metrics related to major pain points identified in the process analysis.

Promoting Academic Skills for Success (PASS)

The PASS Program provides dedicated support to academically “at-risk” students. The program’s goal is to rebuild students’ motivation, model successful behaviors, and raise students’ self-awareness (i.e., to build students’ resilience). The PASS program typically comprises a six- to seven-week course (non-credit-bearing) in one term (PASS Term 1) followed by supplemental support and mentoring in the subsequent term (PASS Term 2).

In 2025-2026, total attendance for PASS Term 1 was 183 students (an increase from 155 in 2024-2025). Student retention was roughly 64%, compared to 66% in 2024-2025. Total attendance for PASS Term 2 was 38 students (an increase from 35 students in 2024-2025). PASS Term 2 did not run in Summer 2025 given low program registration. Student retention for PASS Term 2 increased to 50% from 38%.

PASS Term 1 Curriculum Updates

In Summer 2025, the Learning Strategist team reviewed and refreshed the content of the PASS Term 1 modules. Student feedback over multiple cycles highlighted that while the study planning and note-taking sessions were viewed to be highly beneficial, more time needed to be dedicated to both. Specifically, students asked for greater emphasis to be placed on the time management element of study planning and to learn more about how to approach the note-taking process. It had also been observed that while the topic of effective reading strategies was addressed in PASS Term 2, this topic was only implicitly covered in PASS Term 1.

To address these issues, Session 1, which previously combined study planning and note-taking, was revised to focus exclusively on study planning and time management. Note-taking was restructured as a half session paired with academic advising, and a new focus on reading was introduced alongside the writing session. To accommodate these changes, the numeracy session was suspended. While the numeracy session was valued by many students, a review indicated that the content required updates. Given that the RGASC provides several other numeracy-focused supports, priority was instead placed on expanding content on reading, note-taking, and time management. Numeracy continues to be offered as a module in PASS Term 2, and should the program return to a seven-week format, as was offered prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, numeracy would be the topic most strongly considered for inclusion.

OVPIUE Special Project Funding (2026-27)

In the Winter term, the Learning Strategist team successfully applied for the Retention and Progression Initiatives funding awarded by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education (OVPIUE) to run a pilot project focused on supporting students returning from academic suspension. The *Learning Strategy Mentorship Project for Students Returning from Suspension* aims to provide ongoing peer mentoring throughout the Fall and possibly Winter semesters following a return from suspension and will include goal setting and accountability activities, in addition to strategic referrals to support the student's academic skills development.

Peer Mentor Learning Communities (PMLC)

The Peer Mentor Learning Communities (PMLC) program is a joint initiative with Accessibility Services, which serves to offer a series of study skills workshops rooted in the Supplemental Instruction approach in addition to group study sessions, and social gatherings to help build a sense of community amongst all UTM students who are registered with Accessibility Services.

RGASC Program Assistants provide facilitation and study skills training for Accessibility Services peer mentors, who lead study skills sessions for Accessibility students. The RGASC Program Assistants also provide logistical support to schedule and book the sessions and provide feedback on the peer mentors' facilitation during and after session delivery.

In August 2025, RGASC Program Assistants provided training in workshop facilitation to the Accessibility Services peer mentors and provided planning support to the Summer Academic Skills Institute (SASI). SASI aims to equip incoming students registered with Accessibility Services with academic skills and strategies to make a successful transition to postsecondary education. Table 4 shows the attendance data of SASI and PMLC since 2020, with PMLC attendance reflecting total attendance at workshops, group study sessions, and social activities. 36 PMLC sessions were offered this year to serve the student community, which was the same as in the 2024-2025 academic year, though attendance at PMLC events decreased by 25.55% in 2025-2026. In 2026-27, greater emphasis will be placed on the timing of workshop topic delivery, alongside a renewed focus on peer mentor training.

Table 7

SASI and PMLC Attendance

	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
SASI Attendance	20	11	14
PMLC Sessions	27	36	36
PMLC Attendance	311	279	201

Study Skills Appointments

We continued to offer 30-minute Study Skills appointments through the WCONLINE platform. In Fall 2025, we offered 48 hours of appointments, and in Winter 2025, 26 hours of appointments. We continued with a mix of online and in person appointments but despite this offering and frequent requests for this type of support from students, these appointments continue to be in low demand.

In Fall 2025, 14 unique students booked 40% of the available appointments (19/48 hours). While in Winter 2026, 10 unique students booked just 38% of the available appointments (10/26 hours). The majority of students attended one appointment while three students attended twice.

The addition of a third Learning Strategist created the capacity to offer one-on-one appointments with a Learning Strategist for the first time. In the last half of the Winter 2026 semester, we piloted 30-minute Learning Strategy appointments, offering 20 total hours of appointments (5 hours online). Demand was high (39/40 appointments booked; 97.5%) as was the attendance rate (28/39 appointments; ~72%). Of the 25 unique students served, 4 (16%) booked two appointments (the maximum allowed).

Learning Strategy appointments were marketed through digital media (website, RGASC email newsletter, Instagram posts and reels), print material (postcards), and targeted in-person and email outreach to over 22 Academic Advisors and 10 campus partners involved in student and/or academic success (e.g., the Student Hub, Residence, UTM Libraries, Math Learning Centre, etc.). Marketing materials specifically highlighted that these appointments were “NEW!” and with a Learning Strategist, in contrast to an instructor. These appointments were booked through Microsoft Bookings but will be moved to WCONLINE for 2026/2027.

The Learning Strategy appointment pilot met a clear and unique need for one-on-one academic support provided by a Learning Strategist. Staff and students expressed keen interest that resulted in conversion to appointment referrals and bookings, respectively. Personalized outreach efforts strengthened connections between the Learning

Strategist team and campus partners, which resulted in front-line staff being better informed about the RGASC and our services.

Study Skills Drop-ins

The learning strategist team offered three 1.5-hour Study Skills drop-ins each in Fall 2025 and Winter 2026. The intent was to provide students with a flexible space that met their diverse needs for effective studying prior to exams and during a time of peak stress. The drop-in space was organized in three sections to give students the flexibility to access general study skills handouts and chat with peer facilitators, work independently, or consult one-on-one with a Learning Strategist.

In Fall 2025, 16 student facilitators supported the study skill drop-in sessions, and each session drew 2-9 students. In Winter 2026, we had 11 student facilitators support the sessions and the sessions were attended by 2-9 students. In total, 26 individual appointments were provided for students seeking study skill support.

Learning Strategies Workshops & Course Support

In 2025-2026, Learning Strategists were asked to deliver 16 workshops and to present at or support 4 campus events. (Note that 5 workshops were not supported; 3 of these were cancelled by the requestor.) We delivered 11 workshops and 4 events). Requests were received from the Health & Counselling Centre, Centre for Student Engagement, Black at UTM, Office of the Registrar, and the Departments for Anthropology & Forensic Science.

Study Skills Materials Development

In Winter 2025, a Research Assistant (RA) was hired to review study skills resources at the RGASC, while conducting an environmental scan of materials at Ontario colleges and universities to help update RGASC's materials. The RA also conducted a literature review and interviewed faculty, staff, and students to find out what resources UTM students need most. The outcome of this project was a collection of updated study skills resources.

With the support of work-study students, the collection of updated study skills resources was compared with the existing content on the RGASC Study Skills Resources webpage. The process of refreshing the website to incorporate the content in the updated study skills resources and removing outdated and redundant content commenced in Winter 2026. Discussions about the organization of the website are ongoing, with a focus on improving the navigation of the site to enable students to find relevant resources for just-in-time support. The updated study skills resources were also used as source material for content in the RGASC Academic Skills Handbook (see below). Infusion of the updated information to our new and existing resources

demonstrates that our team and our recommended learning strategies are informed and supported by the latest scientific research.

Numeracy-Focused Learning Strategies Support

In pursuit of developing more robust offerings involving numeracy-focused supports, the new Learning Strategist spent the first quarter of 2026 observing and gathering information about existing supports at UTM, including RGASC Math & Numeracy appointments, Math Drop-Ins, the Math Learning Center (MLC), and math- and numeracy-related Facilitated Study Groups (FSGs).

Informal informational interviews were conducted with 10 math and STEM Learning Strategists at UTSG, Math & Numeracy instructors, professors and TAs in the Mathematical & Computational Sciences department to better understand what difficulties students are demonstrating, how students are (or are not) seeking support, and historical details about interventions or support initiatives that have already been tried. In addition, casual conversations with FSG facilitators and students in the MLC provided important context regarding challenges they experience with numeracy skills and content.

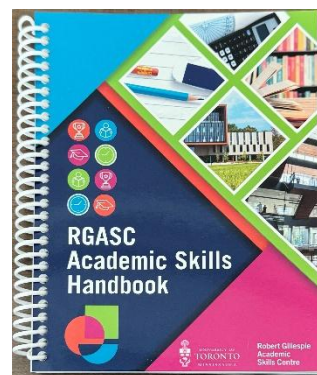
The knowledge gained from the informational interviews revealed some exciting avenues for potential interventions and programming, created new connections, and strengthened existing connections between math- and numeracy-related faculty and staff and the RGASC, building a foundation for collaborations in the future. Looking ahead, the Learning Strategist will move forward with the planning and development of new math and numeracy supports to launch in late summer and throughout Fall 2026.

Academic Skills Handbook

In 2026, we created the RGASC's first paper, coil-bound academic skills handbook. The team leads for this project included: Brooke Ramsey, Louis Nguyen, Dr. Sean McPhail, Dr. Becca Koessler, Aimy Lieu, and Dr. Jordana Garbati.

Our main objective was to create a resource that would support students in their academic skills development. Co-authored by Dr. Sean McPhail, a writing and study skills instructor, and Dr. Becca Koessler, a Learning Strategist, the handbook includes over 150 evidence-based tips, activities, and reflections relating to the development of writing, study and numeracy skills.

The first printed copies of the Academic Skills Handbook were distributed in May 2026 and the RGASC's 30th anniversary



reception. The Academic Skills Handbook will be reprinted and distributed in Fall 2026 orientation events.

Head Start Program

Head Start, our first-year transition program, was offered over four days, three hybrid days and one online day, at the end of August 2025. Two days were in-person with live streaming to an online audience, and one day was fully online. Sessions ran from 9am until 5pm and offered incoming first-year students workshops in foundational academic skills development; an orientation to UTM's academic support services; and opportunities to connect with senior students, RGASC staff, and faculty through panels and tabling.

Head Start sessions attracted 151 unique students, 17 of those students attended sessions on all three in-person days, 25 attended two in-person days, and 39 attended one in-person day. For online, 26 of those students attended all four days, 28 attended three days, 38 attended two days, and 86 attended one day.

In-person attendance was manageable with 50 students attending each day. Online sessions were more popular, with a total of 775 attendances, or an average of 190 attendances per day. The 4 days attracted a total of 915 attendances.

The most well-attended sessions, as in recent years, were:

- Writing for University with Dr. Mark Blaauw-Hara (ISUP), 120 students attended
- Time Management with Kerrie Martin (RGASC), 80 students attended
- Note Taking Strategies for University with Linda Duong (RGASC), 114 students attended
- First Year Math 101 with Dr. Andie Burzain (ISUP), 90 students attended online

In Summer 2026, Head Start will be offered in a three-day hybrid delivery mode, to ensure greater student access. To increase attendance, a dedicated marketing campaign on social media and through email will be executed in the weeks leading up to the program. We will update and expand the asynchronous content hosted on our Quercus shell, to provide additional support to students who cannot attend the program.

Game-Based Learning

Game-Based Learning (GBL) uses board games to aid learning in and out of the classroom in both academic development and student wellness. The RGASC's houses UTM's largest board game collection with 308 unique games. This collection is made up of acquisitions from the RGASC and donations from the community, with a majority donated by Tom Klubi.

In 2025-2026, we supported CCT419 by providing copies of board games. We currently do not offer extended course support in game-based learning.

Our primary contribution in GBL is our Game Cafés. These Cafés use games to encourage students to socialize and de-stress to avoid isolation and burnout. The Game Cafés also provide peer-to-peer learning opportunities whereby volunteer facilitators teach games to student attendees. Game Cafés occurred four times per semester, averaging around 135 students in attendance per session. Game Cafés do not run during the summer.

We have also collaborated with many student groups on campus such as Erindale Gaming Organization, UTM Chess Club, UTM E-Sports, University of Toronto Trading Card Game Club, and UTMD&D. These clubs provide volunteers and assist with advertisements for the Game Cafés. Groups on campus have been invited to use games from our collection and get advice on how to incorporate games into their programming. We received over 40 borrow requests from groups on campus, including student services, departments, and student societies and clubs. Some examples include Accessibility Services, the Academic Integrity Unit, the Office of Communications, the Office of the Vice-President and Principal, the Department of Political Science, Forensic Science, Historical Studies, English and Drama, Philosophy, and Management. As well as student groups, including UTM Robotics, Afghan Student Association, UTM Women's Health and Wellness, and the Mathematical and Computational Sciences Society.

Professional English Language Skills (PELS)

Overview

In 2025-2026, English as an Additional Language (EAL) support was provided in the Professional English Language Skills (PELS) program. This supplemental instruction allowed for extra marks in credit-bearing courses: Fall 2025 & Winter 2026 RLG101 and Winter 2025 CCT110. Additionally, PELS was offered through the Co-Curricular Record (CCR) Office for validation and transcript notation. Although designed to support EAL students, all UTM first-year students are encouraged to participate and develop their academic and writing skills in PELS.

PELS is an asynchronous program offered over eight weeks in Fall and Winter semesters. Successful completion of PELS is credited once, either for extra course marks in one course or CCR transcript notation. Students in RLG101 and CCT110 were added to PELS and instructed to accept the Quercus invitation for bonus marks or merely to access PELS content for self-learning without doing the assessments. This strategy encourages one-click access instead of redirection to a form registration link.

Students in the CCR section of PELS emailed the instructor who enrolled them in the Quercus course.

In 2025-2026, PELS hired Jingjing Xing, Master of Arts Candidate, OISE/UT, and hiring a teaching assistant was instrumental to program success. Student hour participation in 2025-2026 had 10 unique attendances, and Jingjing Xing co-organized special events such as guest talks by Kaitlin Phillips and Faith Desmoulin from the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. She graded assignments, facilitated discussion boards in Quercus, and created a video to teach students about using APA Style in written assignments. Jingjing Xing facilitated word game activities, and she created a Critical Language Awareness video for the 2026-2027 offering of PELS. Additional PELS activities included walks on UTM Campus, a visit to the Erindale Theatre, and a gallery tour at the Blackwood Gallery.

Class visits in RLG101 and CCT110 featuring PELS students who were successful in 2024-2025 continued in 2025/26. Prospective students asked questions, and PELS alumni offered information and assurances about the program structure and assignment expectations. This model was replicated from UTM Orientation PELS events that also featured successful PELS students from prior years. Peer-to-peer interaction and leadership has been integral to the success of PELS, and students who participated this year say they will volunteer to promote PELS to 2026-2027 incoming first-year students. Furthermore, PELS students were invited and attended ISUP research events in December 2025 and April 2026 for their scholarly development.

The enrollment numbers for 2025-2026 show a decline from previous years. The pass rate reflects a 7% decline since the first online offering in 2020/21 and a 9% decline since the previous academic year, 2024/25.

Table 8

PELS Student Enrolment and Completion Yearly Comparison

	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Student Enrolment	1909	1371	1118
Student Completion	577	372	196
Completion Rate	30%	27%	18%

Strengths and Challenges in 2025-2026

PELS continues to develop with the help of teaching assistants, guest speakers, RGASC staff, and collaborations with UTM colleagues in other departments. PELS was featured for the second time at UTM Orientation in Fall 2025. The session titled,

“Finding Your Words & Building Confidence in Academic English. - Professional English Language Skills” was a great success with approximately 20 students attending. This session was facilitated by the PELS instructor, teaching assistant, and second-year students who were successful in PELS the previous year. PELS was presented as an opportunity for students, both international and domestic, multilingual, and monolingual, to meet and have fun. PELS students talked about the transition to university studies from the perspective of language and cultural diversity, and students introduced themselves and participated in small group activities. This session was intentionally interactive and informative. Students were encouraged to understand that English language learning and writing development is a process that occurs with effort and that writers have more to learn. Several students who attended this session joined PELS and attended Student Hours regularly.

PELS continues to offer academic English language learning and writing development to first-year students – both EAL and non-EAL students – and assist them in the transition to university expectations. The strengths of the program include:

- peer-leadership and community building (teaching assistant & Student Hour activities and events)
- a model of delivery that offers asynchronous self-study
- formative and corrective assessment feedback
- encouragement to use supports at the RGASC
- course marks that reward students' participation through successful completion of at least seven PELS modules; however, many students complete all eight modules

Meetings with faculty to debrief course offerings of PELS indicate that the online design of PELS supports students without skewing course grades or creating additional labour for faculty and teaching assistants. Students are motivated to participate in PELS, and survey responses consistently indicate that assessments are fair and allow students to demonstrate their learning.

Assessing written assessments continues to be challenging due to the frequent use of Artificial Intelligence (AI); however, curricular revisions were made to address patchwriting and plagiarism. For example, assessments with greater complexity demand that students demonstrate critical thinking and writing metacognition. Auto grading is a necessity, but PELS continues to include manually graded tasks to capitalize on teaching moments and offer corrective feedback. Moreover, students continue to be engaged in discussions about writing skills and ethical academic expectations.

Administration (student emails and tracking assignments) continues to be labour intensive. However, several advancements on the best way to enrol and track student participation and success in PELS have been implemented. Overall, PELS is adapting to new challenges posed by AI and maintaining strong student engagement through asynchronous (i.e., emails, discussion boards, assignment feedback) and in-person student hours.

Program for Accessing Research Training (PART)

Overview

The Program for Accessing Research Training (PART) is an online research training program designed to prepare UTM undergraduate students for potential participation in campus-based research opportunities. The program also supports students in developing foundational research skills that may be useful for graduate studies. Since Summer 2024, PART has been coordinated by an ISUP faculty member.

Attendance patterns from the Winter 2025 and Summer 2025 offerings were important in shaping the current 2025-2026 iteration of the program. In particular, the data suggested that students were more likely to engage when modules were offered earlier in the academic year and when registration and attendance tracking were easier to manage. These patterns informed several changes to the 2025-2026 delivery model, including the reintroduction of Fall programming, the use of separate Quercus shells for Fall and Winter/Summer offerings, and the implementation of an individual session registration process to better monitor attendance and support planning.

PART consists of 18 modules organized into five categories: Core, Special Topics, Methods, Data Analysis, and Communication. Core modules include topics such as conducting literature searches; Special Topics modules focus on areas such as STEM, the Humanities, and the Social Sciences; Methods modules address topics such as conducting interviews; Data Analysis modules include topics such as descriptive statistics; and Communication modules focus on areas such as communicating research findings. Each module includes up to four hours of instruction with a module facilitator, along with a homework exercise or assessment. Modules combine conceptual discussion with hands-on practice.

Each module is offered during the Fall and Winter semesters and again in a compressed format through the PART Summer Institute. Since 2023-2024 academic year, students are eligible to receive up to three Co-Curricular Record CCR annotations: Core, Intermediate, and Advanced. Students must complete the requirements for these annotations within one academic year, including Fall, Winter, and the condensed PART Summer Institute.

Attendance Data

In 2025-2026, a total of 277 students registered in PART. Of these students, 67, or 24%, attended and completed at least one PART module. This represents an 8% improvement in unique attendance compared with the previous year.

The 67 students who participated completed a total of 294 module attendances. Of these, 212 occurred in the Fall term and 69 occurred in the Winter term. The PART Summer Institute was offered over two weeks, with some sessions taking place during the week of April 27 and others during the week of May 4, 2026. Unlike the previous year's Summer session, only 13 attendances occurred over 7 modules.

Table 9

PART Attendance by Module Category

Module Category	Total Complete Attendance
Core	151
Special Topics	38
Methods	32
Data Analysis	39
Communication	34

Student completion of CCR accreditation increased in 2025-2026. In 2025-2026, 12 students completed Level 1 (compared to five in 2024-2025), nine students completed Level 2, and four students completed Level 3.

Future Considerations for PART

As in the previous year, students requested asynchronous module options. Although asynchronous sessions were not offered in 2025-2026, this delivery format should be considered in future iterations of PART, particularly given the attendance patterns observed across the academic year.

The 2025-2026 data suggest that Fall programming was especially effective in supporting student participation. Fall sessions were very well attended, whereas Winter and Summer sessions were significantly less well attended. The most notable change was the sharp decline in Summer attendance relative to the previous year – dropping from 112 to just 13, a decline of 88%. One possible explanation is that, because Fall sessions were not offered in the previous year, students may have relied more heavily on the Summer Institute as an alternative to Winter participation. In 2025-2026,

however, the strong attendance in Fall likely reduced demand for both Winter and Summer sessions.

These patterns indicate that the timing of module delivery plays an important role in student engagement. Offering a robust set of modules in the Fall appears to provide students with an earlier and more accessible entry point into the program. At the same time, lower Winter and Summer attendance suggests that future planning should consider whether all modules need to be repeated across all terms, or whether Winter and Summer offerings should be more targeted, flexible, or asynchronous.

Several administrative changes introduced in 2025-2026 also helped strengthen the program. With the support of Kathleen Scheaffer, Strategic Initiatives and Liaison Librarian, PART introduced an individual session registration tool. This tool allowed instructors to monitor attendance more effectively and plan their sessions with more accurate information about expected participation.

The Quercus shell was also partially revised by creating separate shells for Fall and Winter/Summer sessions. Together with the individual registration process, this change improved attendance management and made the program easier to administer. These adjustments were directly informed by the challenges and attendance patterns observed in the Winter 2025 and Summer 2025 offerings and should continue to guide future refinements to PART.

Graduate Student Support

Since Summer 2024, the RGASC has not had a dedicated graduate programming coordinator. That said, in 2025-2026, in addition to TA training and RA opportunities and in-class writing instruction noted elsewhere in this report, we continued to offer graduate student programming.

Graduate Student Appointments

Graduate students can book appointments for one-on-one appointments related to writing, numeracy, and study skills. Only six graduate students booked a writing appointment in the Fall 2025 semester, and 10 students booked in Winter 2026. These students were looking for support as they prepared grant proposals, statements of intent for graduate degree programs, or graduate writing.

Graduate Student Workshops

Five workshops for graduate students were offered in 2025-2026 and are noted in Table 10.

Table 10

Graduate Student Workshops

Workshop	Mode of Delivery	Attendance
Preparing, Designing, and Delivering Effective Presentations	hybrid	3
Writing for Publication: Considerations for Manuscript Preparation	hybrid	2
Preparing for a Large Writing Project: Tackling Writer's Block and Procrastination	hybrid	1
A Practical Approach to Guiding Learning in the Age of AI	online	3
"But I'm a Scientist!": How Indigenous Knowledge Systems Enrich the Sciences	in person	10

Instructor Support

Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy

The Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogies supports the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre in advancing Indigenous curriculum and pedagogical initiatives across UTM. During the 2025 to 2026 reporting period, this work included consultations, workshop development and facilitation, planning and delivery of educational events, collaborative research, resource development, and partnership-building across units and initiatives. These activities supported instructors, staff, and academic units in engaging Indigenous knowledges, perspectives, and pedagogical practices in respectful and ethically grounded ways. This work is aligned with the University of Toronto's Calls to Action set out in *Answering the Call, Wecheehetowin*, the University's final report on its response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Building Relationships

Building relationships remained a core part of the Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogies role during the 2025 to 2026 reporting period. This included

strengthening connections across UTM, working closely with UTM's Office of Indigenous Initiatives, and maintaining regular contact with counterparts at St. George and UTSC to share resources, align projects, and explore collaborative opportunities. These relationships supported collaboration with faculty, staff, and administrators across a wide range of departments and units, helping to advance curriculum development, shape workshops and pedagogical reading groups, support event planning, and strengthen a more coordinated approach to Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy work across the university. These efforts were recognized through the 2025 to 2026 ISUP Staff Award for Community Partnership and Development.

Individual Consultations

Individual and department-level consultations continued to be a significant part of the work this year. These included collaborations with Biology, Political Science, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Geography, Geomatics and Environment, the Institute for Management and Innovation, the Centre for Child Development, Mental Health, and Policy, Astronomy, Forensic Psychology, Computer Science, Chemical and Physical Sciences, the Master of Management of Innovation, Italian Studies, the Centre for Community Partnerships, the Office of the Dean for Graduate Programs, Alumni Relations, and the Experiential Learning Committee. These consultations supported a range of activities, including course and curriculum development, workshop and event planning, research partnerships, assignment and assessment design, and guidance on respectful community engagement.

Workshops

Workshop development and delivery expanded significantly over the course of the year. Sessions and presentations supported faculty and staff in engaging Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy in practical, relational, and contextually grounded ways. Topics included ethical spaces of engagement; the Four Rs; land acknowledgements; ethical research partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, organizations, and communities; Indigenous knowledge systems in the sciences; and challenges in academic writing and scholarly development such as imposter syndrome, perfectionism, and writer's block. These offerings supported reflection, dialogue, and more grounded approaches to teaching, curriculum, and research.

Pedagogical Reading Groups and Educational Development Collaborations

Pedagogical reading groups and collaboration with the Educational Development team remained an important part of the work this year. In partnership with Adriana Grimaldi, pedagogical reading groups were facilitated on *Re-Storying Education* by Carolyn Roberts and *Red Pedagogy* by Sandy Grande. Both were well attended and created space for sustained reflection on Indigenous education, curriculum, and relational approaches to teaching and learning. These discussions have also led to early

conversations about a possible collaborative paper with several participating faculty members. Related collaborations with the Educational Development team included support for the Ready, Set, Teach and Ready, Set, Reflect workshop series, development of an assessment-focused initiative with Amanda, and early planning with Rob for a future workshop on artificial intelligence and teaching and learning.

Research and Resource Development

Research and resource development remained an important part of the work this year. A major initiative in this area was the March 5 to 6, 2026 gathering on Indigenous perspectives of development, held in Richmond, British Columbia, in partnership with the Centre for Child Development, Mental Health, and Policy, AIDE Canada, and the University of Alberta. Supported by \$30,000 in research funding from AIDE Canada, the gathering brought together Elders from across the country and generated material that is now being carried forward through thematic analysis and the development of pedagogical tools, including videos and related educational resources. Other work in this area included continued progress on an environmental scan of Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy initiatives, development of a scoping review on Indigenous pedagogy and curriculum in Canada, and the compilation of materials for future integration into the RGASC website. These efforts supported consultations, workshop development, collaborative research, and the longer-term growth of Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy work across UTM.

Institutional Collaborations and Strategic Initiatives

The work this year also involved a number of institutional collaborations and strategic initiatives across UTM and the broader tri-campus system. This included collaboration with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, Alumni Relations, First Nations House, Hart House Farm, and other campus partners to support programming, events, faculty engagement, hiring processes, and longer-term planning related to Indigenous teaching, learning, and knowledge sharing. Key initiatives included planning for Indigenous Futurities in Higher Education, featuring a keynote by Dr. Sandy Grande and a panel of respected Indigenous scholars, collaboration on the *Braided Paths* webinar and planning for a future tri-campus panel with Alumni Relations, participation in the Experiential Learning Committee, support for graduate-focused initiatives, and partnership-building around projects such as the LEAF-funded Biology initiative and the Political Science Indigenization blueprint. The work also extended across the tri-campus system through support for hiring processes at the St. George campus Office of Indigenous Initiatives, ongoing connection with parallel roles, a January 2026 presentation to the President's Teaching Academy, and facilitation of a Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation roundtable on ethical spaces of engagement.

Educational Development

The RGASC Educational Development team provides pedagogical support to UTM Instructors of all ranks through individual consultations and programming. The overarching goal of the Educational Developers is to help UTM function effectively as a teaching and learning community.

Individual Consultations

The Educational Development team supported instructors in over 230 individual consultations; 85 unique UTM instructors and 14 unique staff members were supported.

Teaching dossiers (18% of all consultations) was the most common consultation topic, followed by accessible pedagogies (14%), assessment and academic integrity (11%), and the scholarship of teaching and learning (10%).

Most consultations were with Assistant Professors, Teaching Stream (19%), sessional instructors (15.8%), Associate Professors, Teaching Stream (10%), and Associate Professor (8.5%).

Consults supporting UTM staff increased; if sustained, reporting will be updated to reflect this shift. The RGASC supported instructors across departments at UTM. Instructors from ISUP: Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy, Historical Studies, Language Studies, MCS: Mathematical & Computational Sciences, and ICCIT: Institute of Communication, Culture, Information and Technology most often sought one-on-one consultations.

Most of our consultations continue to occur online (70%) despite offering both on campus and online options.

Teaching Observations

The RGASC Educational Developers conducted 12 teaching observations for UTM instructors this year. Each teaching observation consisted of a pre-observation meeting, a teaching observation either for one or two hours, and a post-observation consultation meeting where feedback was provided along with formative questions to help guide the instructor's pedagogy. This feedback averaged two to four pages in length.

Educational Development Workshops

The Educational Development team offered a number of workshops and workshop series in response to changed in the higher education landscape and instructor input.

Diversifying Your Reading Lists

The **Diversifying Your Reading Lists** workshop supported instructors in building more inclusive and representative course syllabi. The session focused on centering equity-deserving scholars, addressing systemic exclusion, and applying principles of citation justice in teaching practice. Participants explored practical strategies to identify gaps in representation and locate diverse scholarly resources, reinforcing inclusive reading lists as a key component of academic justice and student belonging.

Twelve (12) instructors participated in this session that took place in Summer 2025. The session was offered online.

The session was co-facilitated by the Educational Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies, and Navroop Gill, Teaching & Learning Librarian.

Assessment of Learning Series

The **Assessment of Learning Series** focused on practical, research-informed approaches to assessment that support student learning and equity. The series allowed instructors to explore feedback literacy, assessment design in the context of generative AI, and strategies for assessing collaborative group work in higher education. Collectively, the offerings helped instructors adapt assessment practices to evolving teaching conditions while centering student learning and engagement.

A total of sixty-two (62) instructors participated across three sessions that took place in Fall 2025. Each session was delivered twice: once in person and once online. Overall, 96.77% of participants attended via the online format.

The sessions were facilitated by the Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, with the online offering of Session 2 done in collaboration with Tori Sheldon, Educational Developer, Teaching, Learning & Technology, CTSI. The session titles were as follows:

- Session 1: Exploring Different Feedback Practices in Your Classroom
- Session 2: Assessment Design Strategies with Generative AI in Mind
- Session 3: Assessing Collaborative Learning and Group Work

Anti-Racist Pedagogies Learning Series: From Intention to Meaningful Action

The **Anti-Racist Learning Series** comprised four interconnected sessions designed to support instructors in moving from intention to meaningful action in equity centered teaching. Across the series, participants examined the foundations of anti-racist pedagogy, reflected on positionality and power, and explored how systemic racism

(including antisemitism and Anti-Palestinian Racism) can manifest in classroom contexts. The workshops offered practical, reflective, and dialogue-based approaches to rethinking course design, syllabus construction, and classroom practices. Collectively, the series fostered sustained professional learning focused on cultivating inclusive, accountable, and justice-oriented learning environments. Each session featured a guest instructor, as listed in the session details below.

A cohort of eighteen (18) instructors participated in this series which took place in Fall 2025. The sessions were offered online.

The series was facilitated by the Educational Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies, and their session titles, along with guest speakers, were as follows:

- Session 1: What is Anti-Racist Pedagogy? Naming, Reframing, and Reflecting with Guest Instructor Julia Boyd, English and Drama
- Session 2: Teaching with Integrity: Naming and Addressing Antisemitism and Anti-Palestinian Racism (APR) in the Classroom with Guest instructor Zoe Wool (Anthropology)
- Session 3: Anti-Racist Pedagogy in Action: Rethinking Your Syllabus with Guest Instructor Soaleha Shams (Biology)
- Session 4: Teaching with Intention: Positionality, Power, and the Work Ahead with Guest Instructor Ghazal Fali (Geography)

AI Teaching and Learning Series

The **AI Teaching and Learning Series** equipped instructors with research-informed strategies for navigating generative AI through a pedagogical, ethical, and disciplinary lens. The series examined student cognitive engagement, AI literacy as a values-driven teaching practice, faculty identity in AI-augmented contexts, and proactive approaches to AI-ready curriculum and assessment design. Collectively, the offerings supported reflective, future oriented teaching that centers human distinctive skills and intentional human-AI collaboration.

A total of one hundred four (104) instructors participated across six sessions, with three sessions offered in each semester (Fall 2025 and Winter 2026). Each session was delivered twice: once in person and once online. Overall, 91.3% of participants attended via the online format.

The sessions were facilitated by the Educational Developer, Instructional Practices and Student Engagement, and their session titles were as follows:

- Session 1: Teaching in the Age of Cognitive Offloading: Rethinking Engagement and Learning

- Session 2: AI Literacy/Fluency as a Pedagogical Practice
- Session 3: Faculty Identity and Praxis in the Age of AI
- Session 4: Teaching in Two Lanes
- Session 5: Thinking with AI: Practical Classroom Strategies for Creative and Critical Engagement
- Session 6: AI-Ready Teaching: What Does This Mean for You?

Trauma-Informed Pedagogy and Student Engagement: Strategies for Supportive and Safer Learning Environments

The Neuroinclusive Classroom: Supporting Executive Function to Address Disengagement, Procrastination and Absenteeism

The **Neuroinclusive Classroom** workshops supported instructors in creating more supportive, inclusive, and effective learning environments by addressing the impacts of trauma and neurodiversity on student engagement and learning. Grounded in trauma-informed pedagogy and Universal Design for Learning, the sessions highlighted evidence-based strategies to reduce harm, strengthen executive functioning, and address disengagement, procrastination, and absenteeism. Collectively, they emphasized care-centered, flexible course design that promotes accessibility, wellbeing, and academic success for a diverse student population.

A total of thirty-two (32) instructors participated in these two workshops which took place in Fall 2025. Each session was delivered twice: once in person and once online. Overall, 84.38% of participants attended via the online format.

Both workshops were facilitated by Educational Developer, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Accessible Pedagogies.

Pedagogical Renewal and Professional Sustainability: Re-invigorating the Journey of Mid-Career Faculty

The **Pedagogical Renewal** workshop was an inaugural initiative designed to support Mid-Career Faculty (MCF), the largest cohort in higher education. Recognizing that mid-career educators have distinct needs from early-career faculty, the session focused on providing targeted support for continuous improvement in teaching. It acknowledged the multifaceted nature of MCF roles and positioned pedagogical growth as connected to broader academic and professional responsibilities.

Two (2) instructors participated in this workshop which took place in Winter 2026. The session was offered in person. This is an emerging support area which will continue to be explored in the upcoming year.

The workshop was co-facilitated by the Senior Educational Developer & Team Lead, and the Interim Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Series

The **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Series** equipped instructors with research-informed frameworks for investigating student learning through ethical, and methodologically sound pedagogical inquiry. The series addressed the translation of reflective teaching questions into SoTL projects, ethical considerations in instructor-led pedagogical research, and the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods to better understand student learning. Collectively, the offerings supported reflective, evidence-informed teaching and strengthened institutional capacity for rigorous, values-driven pedagogical research. Each session featured a faculty co-facilitator, as listed in the session details below.

A total of sixty (60) instructors participated across five sessions, which took place in Winter 2026, except for Session 5 which took place on May 14 but has been included in the current annual report. The sessions were offered online.

The sessions were facilitated by the Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and their session titles were as follows:

- Session 1: What is SoTL? Where to Begin with Developing SoTL Research Questions with Faculty Co-Facilitator Christopher Eaton (Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy)
- Session 2: Situating SoTL: An Overview of Research Paradigms for Studying Teaching and Learning with Faculty Co-Facilitator Mark Blaauw-Hara (Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy)
- Session 3: Navigating Ethical Considerations in SoTL Research with Faculty Co-Facilitator Jayne Baker (Sociology)
- Session 4: Quantitative Research Methods in SoTL with Faculty Co-Facilitator Rutwa Engineer (Math and Computational Sciences)
- Session 5: Qualitative Research Methods in SoTL with Faculty Co-Facilitator Nelesi Rodrigues (Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy)

The Neuroinclusive Classroom Series

The **Neuroinclusive Classroom Series** equipped instructors with research-informed approaches for designing assessment and feedback practices that better support neurodiverse learners. The series focused on examining how traditional assessment structures can create unintended barriers and on applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to promote flexibility, equity, and academic rigour.

Collectively, the offering advanced neuroinclusive practices as a core component of effective teaching and learning.

A total of thirty (30) instructors participated across three sessions. Each session was delivered twice: once in person and once online. Overall, 93.33% of participants attended via the online format.

The sessions were facilitated by the Educational Developer, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Accessible Pedagogies, and their session titles were as follows:

- Session 1: Creating Calm & Connected Learning Environments
- Session 2: The Paradox of AI in Neuroinclusive Teaching
- Session 3: Assessment & Feedback for Neurodiverse Learners

Pedagogical Reading Groups

The Educational Developers facilitated seven pedagogical reading groups: three in Summer 2025 (26 participants), two in Fall 2025 (18 participants), and two in Winter 2026 (18 participants). In partnership with Louis Busch, two additional reading groups were facilitated: *Re-Storying Education* by Carolyn Roberts and *Red Pedagogy* by Sandy Grande.

The groups of faculty and staff met weekly or biweekly with assigned chapters to discuss. Participants were encouraged to share how the readings intersected with their pedagogical practice and how they could implement the suggested strategies from the readings in their courses or other related contexts.

A total of 42 unique participants from 12 different UTM departments and 8 different UTM staffing units participated in the pedagogical reading groups. This year's reading groups focused on the following books:

1. *Plagiarism in Higher Education: Tackling Tough Topics in Academic Integrity* by Sarah Elaine Eaton
2. *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi
3. *The Present Professor: Authenticity and Transformational Teaching* by Elizabeth A. Norell
4. *SNAFU EDU: Teaching and Learning When Things Go Wrong in the College Classroom* by Jessamyn Neuhaus
5. *Burnout From Humans: A Little Book About AI That is Not Really About AI* by Aiden Cinnamon Tea & Dorothy Ladybugboss
6. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire
7. *Tiny Experiments: How to Live Freely in a Goal Obsessed World* by Anne-Laure Le Cunff

Participants expressed that they enjoyed the opportunity to create new learning communities with members outside their discipline, and that the reading groups offered a generative learning space. They also noted, and appreciated, the curated, inclusive and thoughtful spaces provided by the facilitators.

Communities of Practice

1st year Community of Practice (CoP)

The Senior Educational Developer & Team Lead supports a community of practice (CoP) for instructors teaching first-year courses, launched by the Interim Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning. The CoP brings together instructors to connect with colleagues and share insights on the challenges and opportunities of teaching large cohorts of incoming students. Through facilitated discussions and invited talks, the CoP fosters a sense of community among instructors, paralleling the cohort experience of their students. This past year, three meetings were held, with a fourth planned for June 2026. The CoP currently includes 18 members.

GenAI Community of Practice (CoP)

The Educational Developer, Instructional Practices and Student Engagement, supports a community of practice (CoP) focused on the use and impact of generative AI. Launched by the Interim Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, the CoP brings together instructors from across disciplines to share approaches, explore the implications of this rapidly evolving technology, and identify opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

Through discussion and knowledge-sharing, the CoP helps instructors consider how to respond to and make effective use of this emerging, potentially transformative tool. This past year, two meetings were held, with a third planned for June 2026. The CoP currently includes 16 members.

Scholarship of Teaching (SoTL) Community of Practice

Geography, Geomatics and Environment (GGE) Community of Practice

The Educational Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies continued to facilitate this CoP in the Fall of 2025, with the goal of emphasizing hands-on application of anti-racist pedagogies and practices in diverse classroom settings. One session was successfully completed, and the CoP is currently on pause.

Celebration of Teaching Excellence

In collaboration with the Interim Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, the RGASC Educational Developers coordinated the fourth annual celebration of UTM's recent teaching award recipients. This year (March 25, 2026) we celebrated Lisa Zhang, Tingting Zhu, Christoph Richter, Faisal Halabeya, Lara Wulandari, Mohannad Abusarah, as well as the ISP100 Curriculum Development team of Northrop Frye Award: Tyler Evans-Tokaryk, Laura Taylor, Sheila Batacharya, Mark Blaauw-Hara, Sarah Seeley, Christopher Eaton, Jordana Garbati, Michael Kaler, Nelesi Rodrigues, Janine Rose, Mustafa Siddiqui, Oguzhan Tekin, Erin Vearncombe, Jonathan Vroom, Zhaozhe Wang, Monique Kampher, Kathryn Franklin, Malisa Zhou, Mitchell Pedicelli, and Talla Enaya.

We had an excellent turnout for this event with over 40 people joining to celebrate the teaching and scholarly achievements of the award winners.

Ready, Set...Reflect!

Ready, Set...Reflect! was an inaugural half-day, in-person workshop held on May 1, 2025 designed to support instructors in cultivating reflective and responsive teaching practices. The half-day programming emphasized reflection as a cornerstone of effective, iterative pedagogy and provided dedicated time and practical tools for critically examining teaching approaches. Participants engaged with questions related to course design, the use of course evaluation data, and the role of reflective practice in strengthening teaching dossiers. The event featured a keynote address by Kathleen Scheaffer (Strategic Initiatives & Liaison Librarian) "Contemplating Pedagogy Through Immersive Practices" alongside guided reflection facilitated by Louis Busch (Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogies). Participants also learned from one another and from the Educational Development team, who shared a year-in-review highlighting emerging supports and pedagogical trends.

As the inaugural offering, *Ready, Set...Reflect!* welcomed 20 participants and established a strong foundation for *Ready, Set...Teach!* by linking reflective practice with intentional preparation for the upcoming academic year.

Inviting Constructive Dialogue

Inviting Constructive Dialogue to the Classroom was co-hosted by the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Office (EDIO) and the RGASC. It brought together faculty and instructors for a half-day, in-person event which took place on May 8 and explored how intentional teaching strategies can support constructive dialogue around complex and challenging topics.

Through interactive sessions featuring contributions from Louis Busch, Special Projects Officer in Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogies, along with Educational Developers

specializing in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Anti-Racist Pedagogies, and the Senior Educational Developer & Team Lead, participants explored practical strategies for facilitating constructive classroom conversations. The symposium also included a cross-disciplinary roundtable with representatives from Biology, MCS, ISUP, and English & Drama. Together, these activities created an inclusive space that welcomed varying levels of experience and comfort, helping participants build confidence and capacity to engage in constructive dialogue.

As its inaugural offering, *Inviting Constructive Dialogue* welcomed 20 participants and established a strong foundation for this emerging area of support. This momentum led to a follow-up session at *Ready, Set...Teach!* and continues to inform ongoing efforts to further support the UTM community in this important area.

Ready, Set...Teach!

Ready, Set...Teach! was a full-day, in-person learning event held on August 18, 2025 designed to support instructors in preparing for the upcoming academic term through timely, evidence-informed pedagogical practices. The program featured a range of interactive sessions focused on key teaching priorities, including constructive classroom dialogue, generative AI and assessment design, neuroinclusive pedagogy, feedback practices, and community building across instructional modalities. Participants engaged with practical frameworks, real-world case studies, and guided reflective activities to support intentional course design and student engagement. The event also included a plenary address by Dr. Sarah Elaine Eaton, entitled “From Detection to Direction: Reframing Teaching, Learning, and Academic Integrity in a Postplagiarism Era” Facilitated in collaboration with campus partners including EDIO, CTSI, UTM Library, and the Office of the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, the event demonstrated a coordinated institutional approach to teaching excellence.

With over 60 participants in attendance, Ready, Set...Teach! provided a vibrant, collaborative space for instructors to translate pedagogical reflection into actionable teaching strategies for the year ahead.

The session titles are:

- Teaching with Intention: Inviting Constructive Dialogue to Your Classroom (x EDIO)
- Toward an AI-Ready Instructor: Framing AI for Teaching Integration
- Teaching with Intention: Developing Meaningful Community Guidelines
- Toward an AI-Ready Instructor: Considering Generative AI in Your Assessment Design (x CTSI)
- Exploring Different Feedback Practices in Your Classroom

- Neuroinclusive Classrooms: Supporting Executive Function to Address Disengagement, Procrastination, and Absenteeism (x Accessibility Services)
- Building Community: In-person and Online (x UTM Library)
- Syllabus Clinic: Designing for Connection, Clarity and Change (x Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning)

Resource Development

The Educational Developer, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Accessible Pedagogies completed a UDL 3.0 Resource that offers instructors an asynchronous option to learn about key highlights from recent update, with examples and strategies for implementation.

Collaborations and Outreach

The Educational Development team engaged in several collaborations and outreach activities in 2025-2026.

Outreach Activities

In collaboration with counterparts at UTSC (Educational Developer, Universal Design for Learning) and UTSG (Team Lead, Pedagogy and Educational Technologies) the Educational Developer, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Accessible Pedagogies, and the Senior Educational Developer & Team Lead helped establish the Tri-Campus Accessible Pedagogies group. Meeting monthly to share updates and advance collective priorities, the collaboration led to two key outcomes this year: a proposal for a UDL-focused tri-campus teaching and learning theme aligned with the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP), and a presentation “Navigating Complexity Together: Tri-Campus Collaboration for Accessible and Inclusive Pedagogies” delivered at the April 2026 at the CTL Teaching and Learning Showcase at UTSC.

In December 2025, EDGE (U of T Educational Developers Group Exchange) launched a renewal initiative to reimagine the network as a collaborative tri-campus community supporting educational developers and related roles. The Educational Development team participated in this event and will work with colleagues to help meet the mandate of strengthening professional identity, fostering collaboration and innovation and building sustainable engagement structures, with the Senior Educational Developer & Team Lead serving on the Steering Committee and contributing to the development of a new EDGE directory.

Workshops

In addition to the workshop series noted earlier in this report, Educational developers designed and delivered a variety of workshops and presentations:

- Course design workshop for UTM's New Faculty Orientation (in collaboration with Interim Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning).
- Overview presentation of instructor programming supports for the Department of Historical Studies
- Managing Difficult Conversations workshop for the Teaching Assistants' Training Program (TATP) at CTSI (in collaboration with Lisa Aikman, Educational Developer, Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars, UTSC).
- Effective Use of AI in Teaching and Learning workshop for the Institute of Forensic Sciences
- Teaching dossier workshop for ISUP faculty (in collaboration with ISUP's Associate Director, Instructor and Faculty Development)
- Accessible Pedagogies in Practice workshop for the Department of Anthropology
- Featured conversationalist for CTSI's UDL Conversation Series
- Overview presentation of teaching dossier supports for the Department of Anthropology
- Overview presentation of instructor programming supports for the Department of Mathematical and Computational Sciences
- Introduction to Anti-Racism workshop for the Institute for Management and Information (IMI) (in collaboration with Noor Leghari, EDI Project Specialist – Sciences, Equity Diversity and Inclusion Office (EDIO))
- GenAI and Exploratory Data Analysis: Possibilities and Precautions for Learners for graduate students at the Institute for Management & Innovation (IMI)
- Overview presentation of the use of generative-AI for the Institute of Communication, Culture and Information (ICCIT)

External Collaborations

The Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning presented an assessment design workshop at McMaster University's 2025 Innovations in Education Conference. The workshop was called "Assessment Design Strategies with Generative AI in Mind", and was co-presented with Tori Sheldon, Educational Developer, Teaching, Learning & Technology from U of T's Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (CTSI).

The Educational Developer, Assessment & Scholarship of Teaching and Learning collaborated with Dr. Phoebe Kang (ISUP) to co-moderate a national panel discussion called "AI in Higher Education: Where are We Now?" The goal of the panel was to bring

together a group of faculty, librarians, instructional specialists, and policy specialists to discuss how our understanding of what it means to teach, learn, and research has changed in the age of generative AI. The panel discussion was hosted through the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE), as a part of their 2026 CSSHE Webinar Series.

Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

The Educational Development team provided substantial support to the UTM teaching and learning community through more than 230 individual consultations offered both online and in-person. This work was complemented by a robust suite of UTM-wide programming, including our well-attended workshop series on generative AI, anti-racist pedagogy, assessment design, scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), and neuroinclusive teaching. Signature events such as *Ready, Set...Teach!* and *Ready, Set...Reflect!* further enriched these efforts. Together, these initiatives supported reflective, evidence-informed teaching and promoted cross-disciplinary engagement.

In response to an identified need to include multiple delivery modalities, we expanded our programming to typically include both an online and in-person option. While online sessions attracted the highest attendance, the in-person sessions allowed for deeper conversations that helped to support the development of our pedagogical relationships with instructors. Both formats facilitated rich discussion and allowed us to connect with a broader segment of the UTM community. We also refined our programming to include more practical implementation-focused examples of anti-oppressive and anti-racist pedagogy. This led to the development of the *Anti-Racist Pedagogies Learning Series* and the *Neuroinclusive Classroom Series*.

We also prioritized targeted outreach to departments, clearly communicating the scope and details of our supports. This strategy resulted in an increase in departmental workshop requests. At the same time, we strengthened connections with resource partners across UTM and the tri-campus, leading to collaborative sessions within *Ready, Set...Teach!* in partnership with Accessibility Services, CTSI, and EDIO. We continue to build and deepen these partnerships to better coordinate supports and reduce the cognitive load associated with navigating multiple services.

Building on the success of the SoTL Community of Practice, we launched a new Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Workshop Series. Designed for participants at all levels of pedagogical research experience, this series supports the development of SoTL research capacity among UTM instructors, with the aim of driving innovation in teaching and learning.

Recognizing the rapid emergence of generative AI and its potential to reshape higher education, the *AI Teaching and Learning Series* provided comprehensive perspectives and practical strategies to help instructors make informed decisions about the use of AI

in their courses. This will be a continued opportunity for the Educational Development team.

We also continued to explore collaborations with the Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogies. Louis served as the keynote speaker for *Ready, Set...Reflect!* in May 2026.

Challenges this year included ebbs and flows in the members of the Educational Development Team. During parts of 2025-2026, the Educational Development team operated with four educational developers. We are continuing to identify and better support under-engaged groups, including Mid-Career Faculty (MCF), and are working to connect more effectively with instructors across campus by offering meaningful, context-responsive pedagogical support.

Promotion and Outreach

Outreach Activities

We continued to be active at large UTM-wide events, for prospective students, incoming students, and current students. These large-scale events included Fall Campus Day, March Open House, Resource Fairs for September Orientation, as well as Exam Jam and the Be Well UTM fair.

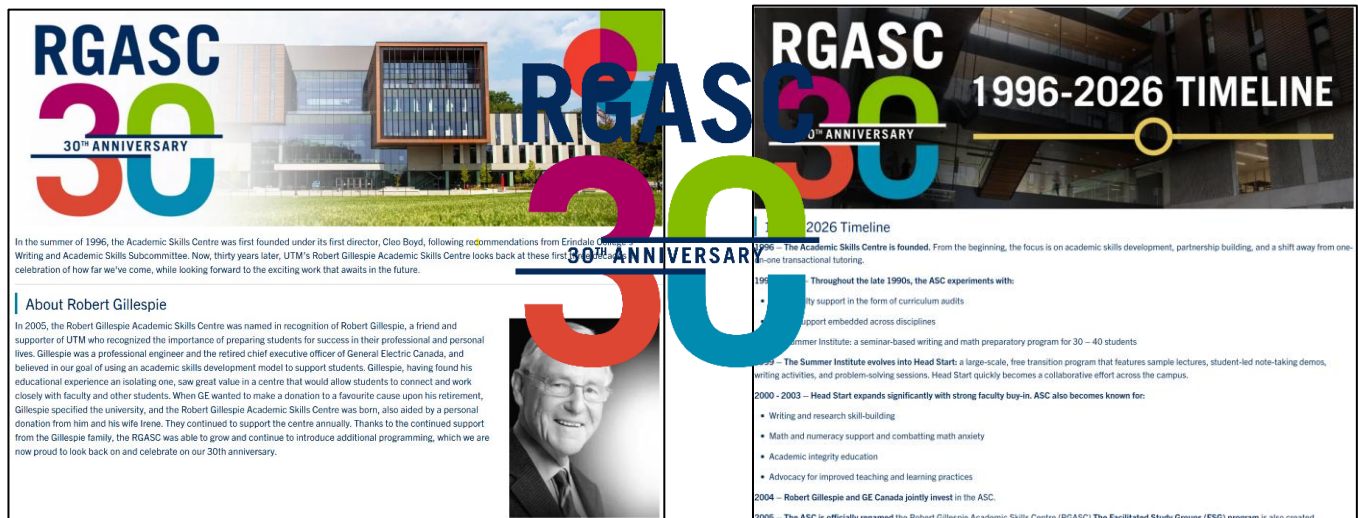
We were also active in department-level events that catered to specific cohorts of students, such as the Graduate Student Welcome BBQ and the IMI Orientation event. Additionally, our Director and learning strategists offered a number of on-demand workshops for academic departments and student groups.

We interacted with more than 1200 students at 35 events across the academic year.

RGASC 30th Anniversary

After initially launching as the Academic Skills Centre in the Summer of 1996, the centre is celebrating its 30th anniversary during 2026. To commemorate this milestone, we worked with the UTM Library to gather archival materials and interviewed numerous current and former staff and faculty with ties to the RGASC. Using these resources and information, we created a website, timeline, special branding, social media content, and celebratory outreach events to honour and strengthen our connection with the UTM community.

A graphic element was created to recognize our 30th anniversary, incorporating the same colours and themes as our current visual image. This element has featured prominently on our digital and print materials during 2026, serving as a ‘third pillar’ alongside our official lockup and existing graphic designs.



We hosted two celebratory events: a winter open house and a spring reception. The winter open house was held in the RGASC. Students, staff, and faculty were invited to attend.

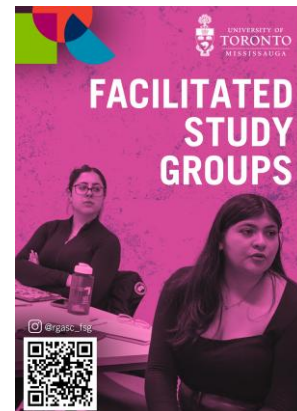
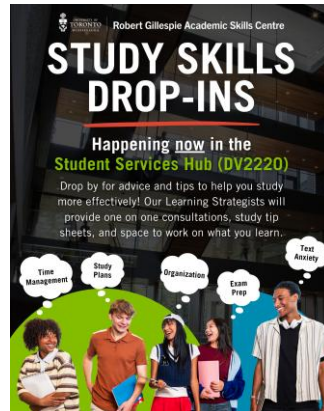
The spring reception was held on May 6, 2026. Students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community partners were invited to attend an afternoon reception in MN Grand Hall. Approximately 150 people attended, including members from the Gillespie family. The RGASC worked in collaboration with the Office of Advancement.

Print Materials and Digital Screens

In 2025-2026, the RGASC continued to expand its communications and marketing initiatives using the new, cohesive look and feel designed with the external marketing company STC during 2024. This look and feel, featuring multiple arrangements of brightly coloured shapes that represent the RGASC as building blocks for academic success, has given us a strong and recognizable identity within the university.



We have continued to enhance STC's initial concept by designing new print and digital material including: our Academic Skills Handbook, new postcards for programs including our rebranded Learning Strategy appointments, Facilitated Study Groups, a Roadmap for engaging with RGASC services, PowerPoint presentation templates, social media content, physical posters, banners, and digital screen content posted across campus. Print and digital material was targeted for specific programming or groups such as Math and Study Skills Drop-Ins, Facilitated Study Groups, Caribbean Black Writing Collective, Game Café, and instructor programming.



Our print materials and digital screen content increase our presence in the UTM community and makes it easy to connect with students, faculty, and parents during multiple events including Fall Campus Day & March Open House. Our print materials are available throughout campus, including at the Student Services Hub, and from Academic and Departmental advisors. To continue expanding awareness of the RGASC, we distributed posters, and brochures throughout campus and consistently post promotional materials on the UTM campus digital screens.

In 2026-2027, we plan to continue celebrating our 30th anniversary, create more engaging video content and interactive opportunities for our social media, further revise and improve our digital and print materials to guide student engagement with the RGASC, work closely with internal team leads and external program partners to design promotional materials that suit their needs, and continue to develop attractive and engaging designs with our now established look and feel.

Website

We have continued to streamline the presentation of our Faculty & Instructor pages on our website, combining all events for instructors in a single, easy to read page and improving our efficiency in keeping everything up-to-date. Past events are bundled into collapsible menus to allow continued access to recordings and slides.

We also further refreshed the web presence of the Pedagogical Reading Groups with the addition of an archive of past selections and all posters for each semester's offerings to date.

The new webpage for our 30th anniversary has been spotlighted on our home page throughout 2026, featuring a timeline of the RGASC's history and development, student-contributed articles, featured events, and call to action for visitors to contribute their own stories and photos.

Web Analytics

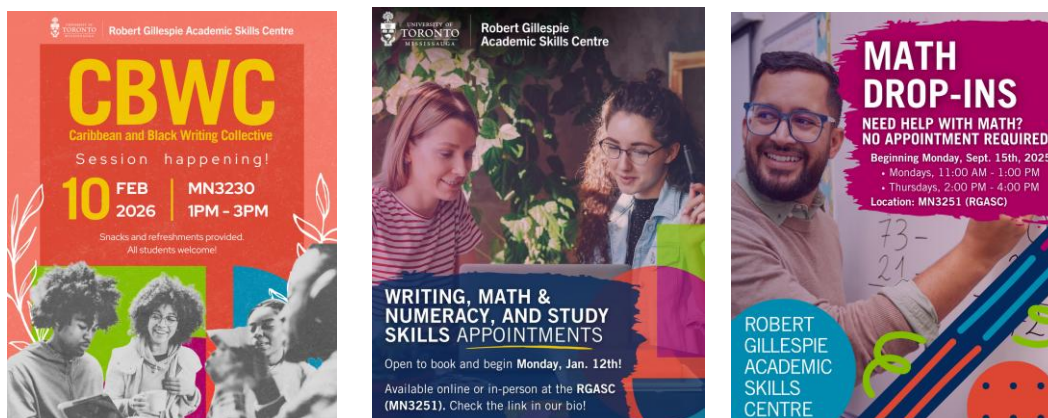
Our website has largely seen an increase in engagement, with total views of 148,279 (an increase of 23.2% the previous year). Our top viewed pages include the Writing Resources - Six Effective Tips to Write a Summary page (18,965 views, an increase from 10,547 the previous year), the home page (13,122 views, an increase from 12,387 the previous year), and the appointments page (9,979 views, a slight decrease from 10,803 the previous year).

The device breakdown demographic data shows us that 23.4% of our users access the website via their mobile device, 75.5% access via desktop, and 1.2% access via tablet. This means that as we continue to update our website and audit for accessibility, we are always considering the mobile user experience. Furthermore, the top of the week demographic information conveys that users are the most active during weekdays, especially Monday-Wednesday. Therefore, weekly website updates should be scheduled accordingly.

In 2026-2027, our goals are to revitalize our resource pages to increase our engagement with the Teaching and Learning Resource Hub and Student Resource Hub, boost engagement with appointments, and further improve webpages highlighting our Educational Developers and Learning Strategists and their services while ensuring the website remains accessible and informative.

Social Media

In 2025-2026, the RGASC increased its output of video content through Instagram Reels and continued to deploy a cohesive social media strategy using our new look and feel, including our newly created RGASC 30th Anniversary branding and theming.



We continue to use a content scheduler to assign, schedule, and organize social media content. We created numerous Instagram Reels including content like 'What to know about Head Start', 'A Day in my Life – with the PELS Program', and 'Game Café Semester Recaps' and targeted reels to explain and advertise individual programs like Caribbean & Black Writing Collective and our appointments and drop-ins, as well as unique events being hosted, all of which help us to connect with the UTM community. We continue to improve the communications work-study program and give students individualized portfolios for their content creation, as well as collaborate in a virtual notebook space to share drafts, ideas, and inspiration. This division of workload helped us to increase our reach and grow our audience.

From May 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026, our cumulative reach increased by a staggering 82.7% compared to last year by connecting with 29k accounts (up from 15.9k) throughout the year. Our cumulative content interactions including likes, saves, and comments totaled 3.9k. We expanded RGASC's awareness within the UTM community and grew in metrics including our lifetime followers of 2k. In the future, we plan to continue producing additional video content to help promote the RGASC, incorporate more interactive forms of engagement that generate responses, and revise and improve our novel resources for academic skills by implementing a more consistent content strategy primarily on Instagram.

Our secondary Instagram account, @rgasc_fsg for our Facilitated Study Groups program, has been revised and given a new focus from our communications team, allowing it to see significant growth and improved consistency in 2025-2026. From May 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026, it has reached 10.4k unique accounts, had 1.1k content interactions, and hit a total of 1.3k followers. We plan to further develop a detailed content plan for this Instagram to increase consistency of posts and visibility of the FSG program for the UTM community.