

UTAA President's Annual Report

University of Toronto Alumni Association Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, May 31, 2023 – Virtual Meeting

The University of Toronto Alumni Association's (UTAA) mission is to strengthen the bonds amongst alumni and between the University of Toronto and its community of more than 660,000 alumni living around the world.

The UTAA is holding its AGM virtually. We welcome the opportunity presented by this virtual meeting to engage our global membership. I look forward to your virtual engagement in our AGM, whether from near or far.

Before I report on some of the activities of the past year, I would like to express my thanks to my fellow members of the [UTAA Board of Directors](#). They are a highly dedicated group of individuals who have devoted their time and energy to furthering our mission. It has been a pleasure to work with this outstanding group of volunteers, to engage with their ideas, and to benefit from their counsel and diverse perspectives.

I would, in particular, like to thank outgoing UTAA Directors, Tye Farrow (BArch) and Lennox Phillips (HBA UTM) for their service. Throughout their time as Directors, they exemplified outstanding commitment and dedication in serving their alma mater and their fellow alumni. We look forward to their continued engagement with the University. I would like to express the UTAA's gratitude to Tye Farrow for his leadership and vision in his roles of President and Past-President and the outstanding work he has done in guiding the UTAA's EDI Committee. I would also like to thank Lennox Phillips for his commitment and support to the Board, as well as his expertise and conscientiousness in his role as Treasurer.

UTAA Strategic Priorities:

The UTAA continued its work this year on its identified priority areas of mentorship and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

UTAA Mentorship Initiative:

Recognising the key role that mentorship plays in student success this initiative focuses on promoting University-wide alumni-student mentorship programs via the work of a committee comprised of volunteers and staff members from across the University. The Mentorship Community of Practice engages mentorship program coordinators from different alumni-student mentorship programs at U of T. The Community of Practice met in June 2022 to hear presentations about facilitating post-pandemic mentorship programs. The Community of Practice met again in January 2023 to discuss how micro-mentorship and short-term mentoring opportunities could complement traditional one-to-one mentoring programs.

UTAA EDI Committee:

The UTAA is committed to tangibly supporting the efforts of the University and the U of T community to ensure that the University is an equitable and inclusive environment. In 2021, the UTAA created a

committee focused on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in response to the important findings and recommendations made by the U of T Anti-Black Racism Task Force.

Over the course of this year, the EDI Committee worked to revise and reimagine the Carl Mitchell Award for Community Engagement as the Carl Mitchell Community Impact Award. Developed in consultation with alumni representatives, the Carl Mitchell Community Impact Award recognizes one individual for their volunteer efforts that advance the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the community. The inaugural recipient will be announced at the AGM.

Supporting Our University

Over the last year, the UTAA has sponsored and supported many U of T programs and initiatives.

The UTAA has partnered with the University on the annual [Awards of Excellence](#) since its inception. This prestigious program promotes and celebrates the achievements of some of U of T's most outstanding faculty, staff and students. The program consists of ten awards and two student scholarships. In 2022, there were 36 recipients in total. Their achievements may be viewed [online](#).

In 2023, the University of Toronto [Student Leadership Awards](#) recognized 183 outstanding graduating students for extra-curricular contributions to their faculty, college, or the University broadly. The award continues the UTAA's long-standing tradition of partnering with U of T in recognizing outstanding student leadership and volunteerism.

As part of its ongoing commitment to support outstanding students, the UTAA contributed towards the [National Scholarship](#) program, one of U of T's most prestigious entrance awards for Canadian high school students.

This year we were finally able to acknowledge The Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain, our 2021 [Rose Wolfe Distinguished Alumni Award](#) recipient, in person. This award recognizes exceptional alumni who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in their professional lives, dedication to civic, charitable and social causes, and extraordinary service to the University of Toronto, in a way that enables or inspires others to reach their full potential. The Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain was recognised as tireless advocate for children and families, including her pioneering work on early childhood education.

The board was also delighted to support the University's inaugural [Giving Day](#) on March 28, 2023. The Giving Day was a 24-hour University-wide fundraising campaign to foster support for our students and researchers. The *Giving Day* raised \$1.232 million. The initiatives support student programs, infrastructure, research, and student scholarships and awards and make a tangible difference in people's lives.

Contributions and participation in U of T Giving Day bring the University closer to its ambitious \$4 billion fundraising goal for the [Defy Gravity campaign](#) and support the objective of engaging 225,000 alumni a million times over the course of the campaign.

Finally, the UTAA is pleased to support student mental health initiatives by directing a donation to *The Student Wellness Fund* or *Inlight Student Mental Health Research*, which will be voted on at the AGM.

The Landmark Project

In 2017, the UTAA was proud to be a leading supporter of the University's Landmark initiative to dramatically revitalize the heart of the St. George campus. The Association made a lead gift of \$1 million

to the Project, specifically towards the creation of Alumni Plaza by Convocation Hall. This gift continued a century-long tradition of alumni support for the St. George campus.

The Landmark Project is one of the most significant open-space projects at the University of Toronto in the past 100 years. The project is transforming the St. George campus core into a greener, more sustainable, accessible and pedestrian friendly space.

Please visit the Landmark [website](#) to see how the campus will be transformed. I encourage you all to stay current on exciting Landmark updates. Information on how you can contribute is also available on this site.

Soldiers' Tower Committee

I would like to express our gratitude to the Soldiers' Tower Committee (STC) for their ongoing commitment to preserving the memory of the University community's contributions to the war efforts. After being affected by pandemic-related restrictions on gatherings for several years, the [Service of Remembrance](#) returned to the Soldiers' Tower on November 11, 2022 and drew more than 700 people. The event was also livestreamed and drew a large viewing audience. The committee is planning for events in June 2024 to mark the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Soldiers' Tower. I would like to thank STC Chair, Daniel Hendrickson (HBA New College) for his perseverance and leadership over the past year. The UTAA Board looks forward to working with him and the committee in the year ahead.

Our Extended Alumni Volunteer Leadership Community

I would also like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the other members of our alumni volunteer community, including Alumni Governors, the Council of Presidents, the College of Electors, and the UTAA's committees for their commitment, expertise, and active engagement over the past year. The guidance and leadership provided by these volunteers in their respective spheres is greatly valued by both the UTAA and by the University.

In closing, I would like to express my deep thanks to the staff of the Division of University Advancement for their support over the year and, in particular, Barbara Dick, Assistant Vice President of Alumni Relations, and her colleagues Anne Cobban, Satpal McCaughey and Gladys de Guzman. Much of what the UTAA lends its name to would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of the Alumni Relations team and other colleagues within DUA.

I would also like to thank you for your attendance at this year's virtual UTAA AGM as well as for your ongoing interest in the University of Toronto.

In closing, please accept my very best wishes for your health, safety, and well-being.

Best regards,

Sana Halwani
President, UTAA