

# **UTAA President's Annual Report**

## **University of Toronto Alumni Association Annual Meeting**

### **Saturday, June 1, 2024 – Virtual Meeting**

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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 680,000 alumni living around the world.

The UTAA is holding its Annual Meeting virtually. We welcome the opportunity presented by this virtual meeting to engage our global membership. I look forward to your virtual engagement in our Annual Meeting, 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 like to thank outgoing UTAA Director, Matthew Stodolak (MT OISE) for his service.

#### **UTAA Strategic Priorities:**

The UTAA continued its work this year on its identified strategic priorities, governance, and community engagement.

#### **UTAA Governance:**

At the 2023 University of Toronto Alumni Association (UTAA) Annual Meeting quorum was lost shortly after the business portion of the Annual Meeting started, prior to any significant resolutions being passed (such as the election of directors, approval of financial statements, and appointment of auditors). The UTAA by-law requires quorum for the entirety of the meeting.

UTAA sought legal counsel about this irregularity. It was determined that, despite losing quorum, the UTAA By-law allowed the work of the UTAA to continue. In particular, section 4.03 of the By-Law states that current Directors remain in office until their successor is elected. As such, all existing Directors who were put forward for re-election simply remained in their current positions.

After the Annual Meeting, Tye Farrow and Lennox Phillips, whose terms were set to expire, submitted their resignations to allow for their positions to be replaced. Section 3.04 of the By-Law allows for vacancies of the Board to be filled by resolution of the Board. Eugene Choi and Jennifer Dolman who had been proposed for election during the Annual Meeting were appointed by the Board to fill these vacancies, with the result that the Board has since the date of the last Annual Meeting been comprised of the full proposed slate of nominees presented at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

A second resolution to be passed at the 2023 Annual Meeting was to reappoint the existing Auditor. Section 15.01 of the By-Law indicates that the incumbent Auditor continues in office until a successor is appointed. Therefore, without a valid vote, the existing Auditor retained its position, which was the desired result.

The UTAA continued to work with legal counsel to provide advice and recommendations for the upcoming 2024 UTAA Annual meeting, and to advise on amendments to By-law 2017-1. The result of this work is the proposed UTAA By-law 2024-1, recommended for adoption at the 2024 Annual Meeting.

### **UTAA Mentorship Initiative:**

Recognizing 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 on January 23, 2024, this meeting was structured to provide more time for discussion and engagement between mentorship coordinators regarding four suggested topics: Hybrid Mentorship, Defining objectives and measuring outcomes, Volunteer Mentor Recruitment, and Compensating volunteers. To close off the year, the Mentorship Community of Practice will meet again on June 18, 2024, this meeting will feature a panel discussion with other Ontario universities touching on common issues in mentorship program management.

### **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 2023, the College of Electors (COE) asked the EDI committee to design a tool that could assist the committee in gauging diversity for the Chancellor search. The committee developed a matrix that examined different attributes that should be considered for the Chancellor search.

### **Council of Presidents:**

The UTAA hosts the [Council of Presidents \(COP\)](#) comprising the presidents of constituent alumni associations, the UTAA board of directors and the alumni governors of the Governing Council. COP is a unifying body of alumni leaders that communicates best practices through professional development and orientation to the workings of the University of Toronto. At its October 26, 2023 meeting, COP members learned about Soldiers' Tower from Daniel Hendrickson, Chair, Soldiers' Tower Committee, followed by table discussions on the leadership structures of alumni associations. The COP's April 15, 2024 meeting welcomed the UofT's Christine Szustaczek, VP Communications, who highlighted her team's work to share the University's many stories with a global audience. The talk led into a discussion on the communication practices used by alumni associations in connecting with their members.

### **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 of which two are student scholarships. In 2023, there were 36 recipients in total. Their achievements may be viewed [online](#).

In 2024, the [University of Toronto Student Leadership Awards](#) recognized 174 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 Paul Cadario received the [Rose Wolfe Distinguished Alumni Award](#). 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. Paul Cadario was one of the first students elected to Governing Council and since that time has taken on more than thirty-five (35) volunteer positions at U of T and undertaken philanthropic efforts in support of numerous faculties, disciplines, and scholarships.

In the 2023, the UTAA announced R. Douglas Elliott as the inaugural recipient of the [Carl Mitchell Community Impact Award](#). This award recognizes alumni who advance the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) through their extraordinary volunteer contributions to the community at large. R. Douglas Elliott is a renowned litigator and widely celebrated for his decades of work fighting discrimination on behalf of the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

Finally, the UTAA donated to The Student Wellness Fund to support student mental health initiatives at the University.

### **The Landmark Project**

In 2017, the UTAA was proud to be a leading supporter of the University's Landmark Project initiative to dramatically revitalize the heart of the St. George campus. The Association made a lead gift of \$1 million to the Project. This gift continued a century-long tradition of alumni support for the St. George campus. In recognition of the UTAA's lead gift the University named the plaza in front of Convocation Hall as "Alumni Plaza". A stone plinth by Convocation Hall's main entrance carries the following inscription:

*"Dedicated to our global community of alumni, whose common experience of a U of T education binds them together as our greatest ambassadors.*

*Through a gift from the University of Toronto Alumni Association, our alumni have revitalized this space for our enjoyment of future generations. In the proud tradition of alumni supporting iconic spaces such as Convocation Hall and the Soldiers' Tower memorial, Alumni Plaza will be a place of proud reflection, celebration, and a symbol of the enduring legacy of our graduates for year to come. 2023."*

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 the [campus transformation](#). 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. The Service of Remembrance took place on November 10, 2023, and drew more than 700 people. The committee is planning for a lecture this spring to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> 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 particularly Barbara Dick, Assistant Vice President of Alumni Relations, and her colleagues Anne Cobban, Melanie Waring-Chapman, and Glady 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 Annual Meeting 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,

Corwin Cambray  
President, UTAA