student life
programs & services
annual report
16-17
Student Life Programs & Services supports all graduate and undergraduate students in reaching their academic goals, engages students in their own development and challenges students to construct their own experiences.

Our programs foster leadership and community involvement, locally and internationally and support the health and well-being of our students. We help students engage with the broader community through co-curricular and service-learning opportunities.

We are also increasingly connected globally. We welcome and support our many international students and build relationships with universities abroad through our exchange programs and research opportunities.

Our many offerings are united by a commitment to helping students flourish, both academically and in experiences beyond the classroom. We aim to make all of our programs and services engaging, accessible and inclusive, respecting and reflecting the diverse needs of the students we serve.

areas of focus

Student Life operates with four main areas of focus:

» Student Development, Learning and Engagement
  Expand opportunities for student learning through experience

» Health and Well-Being
  Support the physical, emotional, social and spiritual health and well-being of students

» Divisional and University Support Services
  Enhance, support and coordinate quality services for students

» Academic Support
  Help students to achieve their academic goals
The Division of Student Life brings coherence to complexity and creates opportunities for students to build skills, experience diverse communities, and integrate learning.

We connect life to learning.

Through our work and partnerships, every student will have the opportunity to actively participate in university life; find connection, community and friendship; encounter new ways of thinking and being in the world; and experience leadership, independence and success.
### by the numbers

- **1,225** students participated in an exchange
- **27,470** sets of notes provided by 1,017 volunteers using the note-taking service
- **871** first generation students who participated in FG programming
- **17,552** students have taken a community-engaged learning course in 10 years:
- **3,128** students wrote **14,402** accommodated exams
- **40,841** student positions for students from FG programming
- **761** students participated in career exploration
- **3,625** organizations posted on the Career Learning Network
- **230,333** visits to @UofT blog
- **49,060** students logged into MyRes to apply for residence
- **4,312** work study positions
- **219,969** visits to Ulife website
- **5,013** ASKme inquiries at booths during Orientation 2015
- **59,212** BETTER STARTS HERE

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Students have taken a community-engaged learning course in 10 years. The table below provides a summary of key statistics:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Statistic</th>
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Students have taken a community-engaged learning course in 10 years.
planning through strategic alignment

We align our work with the needs and values of the students we serve along with strategic frameworks that help guide our path. Student involvement is key to our work. We engage students through advisory councils, consultations, focus groups and committees to ensure effective services and programs. Some examples of how students help guide our work include:

- Academic Success Centre peer staff
- Accessibility Services annual focus group
- Centre for Community Partnerships Student and Alumni Advisory Council
- Centre for International Experience Student Advisory Committee (CIESAC)
- Co-Curricular Record consultations
- Committee on the Allocation of Student Activity Space (CASAS)
- First Nations House Student Advisory Committee
- GradLife Advisory Committee
- Health & Wellness Student Advisory Committee
- Housing Services Student Advisory Committee
- Semi-annual Student Faith Leaders meetings
- Student Initiative Fund Committee
- Student Life Community Crew
- Ulife Advisory Committee

In addition, the strategic frameworks that guide our programs are:

⚠️ **Presidential Priorities (PP):**

1. Leverage our urban location more fully, for the mutual benefit of university and city.
2. Strengthen and deepen key international partnerships.
3. Re-imagine and re-invent undergraduate education.

⚠️ **Student Life Strategic Objectives (SL):**

1. Communicate interactively with students to exchange information that is relevant and delivered at the right time.
2. Engage students in their own academic development and learning.
3. Help students better understand, navigate and access services available.
4. Provide opportunities for students to explore and apply leadership skills, engage in experiential learning, participate in mentorship and connect to learning communities.
5. Support students in making successful transitions to university and through their exploration of opportunities beyond degree completion.
6. Support the unique needs of students involved in international experiences.
7. Expand programs and services to meet the needs of graduate students.

⚠️ **Themes from the Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA):**

1. Jobs Innovation/Economic Development
2. Teaching and Learning
3. Diverse Student Population
4. Research and Graduate Education
5. Program Offerings
6. Institutional Collaboration to Support Student Mobility
We continue to innovate in response to student needs, enhancing current programs and developing new offerings.

**STUDENT DEVELOPMENT, LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT**

**Aboriginal initiatives**

- Expanded student engagement with learning opportunities that encourage understanding and established connections with Aboriginal communities:
  - Biweekly traditional teaching with the elder in residence
  - Annual Indigenous Education Week focused on the theme of Identity
  - Offered enhanced academic supports by establishing a learning strategist position focused on the needs of Aboriginal students, offering more skills building workshops and increasing the number of hours available for individual consultation.
  - First Nations House, in collaboration with Aboriginal Studies, Women and Gender Studies and Human Biology, organized a week-long educational trip to Belize for students. The students connected with an Indigenous community, working closely with a Mayan scholar (who is an adjunct faculty member).

**Accessibility initiatives**

- Career exploration events for students with disabilities to explore their interests and think about their accommodation needs at work.
- Increased outreach to academic departments to collaborate on an effective accommodation process.
- Accessibility Services moved to one location supporting a single point of access for all accessibility needs.
- Improved student access to services, including the installation of a new database management system and a review of administrative processes to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- New online accommodation renewal system has eliminated the need for in-person appointments.

**Building capacity with our peer colleagues**

Our student staff and volunteers are essential to our connection with the wider student body. Our focus is on training and professional development, recognition of effort and increasing collaboration:

- Enhanced a campus-wide curriculum for student staff to reflect on and articulate skills obtained through on-campus employment and developed training and resources for campus employers of students.
- Expanded the Career Peer Program to include specialized positions for Career Start, offering resume and LinkedIn reviews along with leadership and facilitation skill development.
- Trained over 100 peers in the Health and Wellness Peer Collective together to foster collaboration among groups.
- Hosted a central recognition event to celebrate the accomplishments of approximately 250 student colleagues in the Division of Student Life.
- More than 150 student leaders from campus clubs and organizations and student government were trained at Ulead and the Student Leadership Conference.

**Civic engagement**

We prepare and encourage students to engage in their local, national and global communities.

- Launched an elections committee that encouraged participation in democratic processes through awareness of issues surrounding the municipal and federal elections.
- Developed programming for students to engage with municipal issues and local community partners:
  - Let's Talk Toronto: Panel discussion on the Toronto Vital Signs Report
  - Democracy Talks: Facilitated activity-based discussion to build democratic engagement
  - We Belong event to explore racism, sexism, homophobia and Islamophobia in the municipal election
  - Expanded community partnerships in Aboriginal community agencies.

**Co-Curricular Record**

- The Co-Curricular Record (CCR) provides a growing database of more than 4,300 opportunities where students can search for activities, attach competencies to their involvement and receive recognition for their learning and experiences. 7,400 students participated in CCR activities last year.
- Working with U of T Business Intelligence unit, developed tools to better analyze the relationship of the CCR with other student attributes, including student outcomes, persistence and academic performance.
Entrepreneurship

- Piloted a five-part series of workshops to build entrepreneurial competency, from exploration to ideation and then culminating in a capstone Rapid launch Program, an intensive hands-on business planning boot camp.
- Partnered with the Banting and Best Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship on communications strategies to raise awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities throughout the university.

Experiential Learning

Student Life supports experiential opportunities that allow students to engage in applicable and transferrable high-impact learnings.

- Expanded career exploration opportunities for students:
  - Extern Job Shadowing Program
  - In-the-Field Program
  - Expanded employer practice interviews with pre-education and post-reflection
  - Placed 300 students with 116 community organizations for community-engaged learning courses.
  - 1,225 students participated in an international student exchange.

International experiences

We support students developing intercultural competencies and gaining international experiences through programs, study abroad opportunities and services for students from other countries.

- Support and programs for international students:
  - Learning Support Workshops on academic integrity, procrastination, time management, critical thinking, note taking and exam preparation
  - Workshops on immigration, work permits and visas
  - International Transition advising
  - iConnect Mentorship Program
  - Airport Welcome Booth to greet new international students as they arrive at Pearson International Airport
  - Expanded opportunities for global experiences including more summer research opportunities for science and engineering students and more summer exchange programs.
  - Launched programming to assist international students in transitioning to work, obtaining job-search support and preparing for summer internships:
    - “I need to find a job” job search support club
    - “Transitioning to a new workplace” workshops for MasterCard Foundation Scholars
    - Nine-part workshop for Science Without Borders students
  - Developed the sustainable Visiting International Student Program (VISP), creating university pathways for international students to study in short-term, non-degree opportunities.
  - Launched the new “build your own experience” exchange tool that helps students search exchange programs based on language of instruction, faculty, campus and country. The tool is integrated with the new Transfer Navigator tool which allows students to access past course approvals.
  - Piloted the Intercultural Learning Program with international students, students going abroad and to encourage internationalization at home.
Programs and services for graduate students

We work with our campus partners to provide opportunities for professional and personal growth and development specifically tailored to the needs of graduate students.

- In partnership with the School of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Students’ Union, launched a pilot of the Conflict Resolution Centre to provide training on best practices for university graduate students and support to faculty and administrators for dispute prevention and the effective and respectful resolution of conflict.
- Held the first Optimizing your Grad Student Experience conference to teach strategies for dealing with graduate student issues and career planning.
- Enhanced academic support programming for Aboriginal graduate students.
- Launched the Flexible Futures program to help graduate students navigate career options, including piloting a Teaching Dossier program.
- Embedded counselling at the School of Graduate Studies. The Wellness Counsellor offers brief counselling services tailored to the challenges presented by graduate-level university life.
- Launched a new Gradlife website in partnership with the School of Graduate Studies.
- Grad Talks offers a series of sessions to help graduate students build skills and gain balance. Examples include sessions on mental health, writer’s block and dealing with your supervisor.
- Graduate Writing Group offers graduate students with thesis writing support.

Religious diversity and interfaith initiatives

- Provided opportunities for students to cultivate civic responsibility and leadership on issues related to religious diversity through the Religious Diversity Youth Leadership Project. 3,052 young adults were involved with issues of civic engagement in the context of religious pluralism.
- In partnership with the Centre for Women and Trans People the Multi-Faith Centre launched Sisters in Spirit Together Engaging in Religious Support (S.I.S.T.E.R.S.) which provides a safe, positive, trans-inclusive, anti-oppressive space for self-identified women to discuss their religious and spiritual experiences.

Student Initiative Fund

The Student Initiative Fund provides $100,000 annually to support student initiatives for individuals and campus groups who need resources to help realize their plans. Examples of projects funded this year included:

- U of T Sustainability Conference
- Emerging Young Artists: Invitational Exhibition
- Winter Week of Welcome
- Comparative Literature Conference
- Innovations in Immunotherapy
- Annual Mandarin Debate Competition
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The Report of the Provostial Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health recommended the university adopt a systems-approach to student mental health well-being. To this end, we have implemented a series of changes and improvements throughout Student Life.

Better Starts Here – Health & Wellness Centre
On September 8, the new Health & Wellness Centre began offering students a single point of entry for access to all services previously offered through Health Services and Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS).
Through this single entry point, the new Health & Wellness Centre provides a clear pathway to individualized care. At their first appointment, students are now assessed by nursing staff or a family physician and referred according to their needs – ensuring each student receives the right care at the right time with the right wellness professional, program or service.

Conflict Resolution Centre
In partnership with the School of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Students’ Union, launched a pilot of the Conflict Resolution Centre to provide training on best practices for university graduate students and support to faculty and administrators for dispute prevention and the effective and respectful resolution of conflict.
Expanded programs, workshops and events

- Expanded embedded counselling services to 17 sites.
- Expanded Counselline, an online counselling service in partnership with the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work and the Faculty of Arts & Science.
- Launched online skills building programming.
- Expanded group therapy programming, adding Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), and ADHD groups.
- Delivered more than 90 events during Mental Wellness Month. Events focused on building resiliency and making sustainable lifestyle changes to reduce stress.
- Expanded the HealthyU Crew, a student-led team dedicated to a healthier campus. HealthyU peer teams now focus on four key pillars of mental and physical health: Eating well (FuelU), physical activity (MoveU), mental health (HappyU), and healthy relationships (SafeU).
- Mindful Moments programming was expanded and now offers more than a dozen opportunities per week across campus.
- Continued support of concussion prevention and awareness.
- Expanded the number of Housing Services drop-in conflict coaching clinics from four to 10 embedded sites.

From Intention to Action (FITA)

The Academic Success Centre piloted the From Intention to Action program (FITA) for students to take a proactive approach to fostering their resilience, well-being and life and learning skills. FITA trains practicum students from the Social Work and Counselling programs over a 12-week period on developing effective academic and life management skills with students who feel overwhelmed or who may be at academic or psychological risk. 48 students are currently registered in the FITA program; 278 appointments have been conducted.

HealthyUofT

The HealthyUofT campaign was launched on the St. George campus:

- New healthyUofT.ca website provides links to campus programs, resources and events in support of the four pillars of Health and Wellness, Mental Health, safety, physical activity and nutrition. The pillars are HappyU, SafeU, MoveU and FuelU.
- Material developed includes postcards, condoms, cutlery sets, hand sanitizer and stress balls to reflect the four pillars.

Learning support for faculty and staff

Student Life works to educate faculty and staff across the university on strategies to support students’ mental health:

- Student Life partnered with Massey College to deliver training for a newly developed peer support program for Junior Fellows at Massey College who may be experiencing difficulties. The training program was provided for the peer support team, staff and faculty at Massey College and was concluded with an expert panel on mental health.
- Provided training for staff, faculty, teaching assistants and exam invigilators on assisting and referring students in distress and student mental health.

Prevention of sexual violence

- A new tri-campus “Understanding Consent” campaign was launched during orientation focusing on defining what consent is and how to obtain it. The campaign is supported via peer leader training, print materials, social media, tabling at key events and ongoing sexual violence prevention training across the university. To date, more than 30,000 bracelets, postcards and buttons have been distributed across the three campuses in support of the prevention of sexual violence.
- Train the trainer sessions were held for a new Bystander Awareness program. Full program roll out is scheduled for the new academic year.
Assessment

We regularly evaluate and assess our work and provide support for institution-level surveys and initiatives. Some highlights include:

- Significant efforts have been made to use NSSE data in more meaningful ways so we can better understand student experiences and develop programming tailored to student needs.
- Provided support for the Food Services review on the St. George Campus, including support for a campus-wide survey as well as soliciting student and Student Life participation in focus groups.
- Conducted the Multi-Institutional Study on Leadership (MSL) with seven campus partners.
- Through the provision of recommendations and support, participated in the StudentMoveTO transportation study and project, as envisioned by the four Toronto universities’ Presidents.
- Developed capacity within Student Life on assessment, including developing a curriculum for staff to enhance their skills and approach in assessing their programs and services.

Communicating interactively with students

Guiding students through the complexity of university life demands timely and clear communication. Improvements to our student communications this year include:

- Launched a new and enhanced student facing website. The new site is arranged based on student needs allowing for easier access to information, as well as increased awareness of cross functional student support mechanisms.
- Expanded our student social media team to include a video crew and two new bloggers to represent the first-year experience and the professional faculty experience.
- Developed new publications for students in every year of their studies to provide just-in-time information pivotal to student success. These publications were mailed to all students in the summer.
- Launched Nine New Things, a weekly Student Life e-newsletter designed to bring awareness to key dates, unique events and student support programs being offered at the St. George campus.
- Developed an emergency resource card that students can carry in their wallets.
- Revised the “how are you feeling today” publication into a booklet that contains more information and links to services.
Enhancements to residence admissions

Completed phase two of a new financial interface between ROSI and the StarRez residence management system, allowing for streamlined processing of residence financial information, improving the timeliness and accuracy of charges.

Helping navigate U of T

The ASKme program was expanded to include more pop-up booths at the beginning of the term as well as continued pop-up presence throughout the year. The ASKme Information Hub at the Koffler Student Services Centre has helped more than 5,000 students and the ASKme Online answer tool now contains answers to more than 600 student questions, and continues to grow daily.

Orientation and transition

Transitioning into university is an important part of the student experience. We have provided leadership in the following areas:

- Launched Step-Up Pre-Orientations for 120 international undergraduate students.
- Expanded orientation for students with family responsibilities to UTM.
- Enhancements and increased involvement from orientation coordinators and executives in training sessions at Joint Orientation Leader Training (JOLT).

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Enhanced learning support

- Undertook a division-wide curriculum review of programs and services to maximize student learning and provide clear paths for students to take.
- Developed a divisional strategy for online learning supports and services.
- Enhanced programming across the division, including an increase in the number of workshops offered and the development of additional workshops on more diverse topics (e.g., critical thinking).
- Launched the From Intention to Action (FITA) Program for students who want to take a proactive approach to fostering their resilience, well-being and life and learning skills.
- Centre for Community Partnerships successfully piloted training for PhD students that provides training for PhD students in using service-learning as a pedagogical approach.

Peer engagement in academic development

Students benefit from support provided by other students. We have increased the number of opportunities for students to provide peer support.

- Expanded the role of Academic Success peer mentors to include development and delivery of academic success workshops for students in the colleges and residences.
- Created student staff positions for the peer mentoring program at Accessibility Services and enhanced the training model for these students in leadership development and ongoing support.
- First in the Family Peer Mentor Program, which provides first-generation university students with one-on-one mentorship, guidance and support, enhanced programming, including the introduction of a workshop of financial literacy.
We regularly assess and evaluate our programs and services based on student feedback.

- **94%** First in the Family participants indicated it prepared them successfully for U of T.
- **92%** International Students in Step Up indicated it prepared them successfully for U of T.
- **91%** Housing Services Conflict Mediation Coaching Clinic participants prepared successfully.
- **90%** In The Field participants confident performing in a professional area.
- **78%** Health & Wellness Services participants who improved their coping behaviours.
- **26%** Study abroad participants reported increase in Student-Faculty Interaction.
- **21%** Service Learning participants reported increase in Collaborative Learning.
- **12%** Study abroad participants reported increase in Discussions with Diverse Others.
- **10%** Study abroad participants reported increase in Reflective and Integrative Learning.
Meeting students where they are in the community.

Through our partnerships in all corners of the campus, we improve student access to our services by embedding staff in key locations.

### LS – Academic Success Centre Learning Strategists:
- Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
- Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education
- First Nations House
- John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape & Design
- Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy
- Rotman Commerce Program
- St. Michael’s College
- University College
- Victoria College
- Woodsworth College

### CE – Career Educators:
- Chestnut Residence
- Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education
- Faculty of Music
- Graduate House
- Innis College
- John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape & Design
- New College
- St. Michael’s College
- Trinity College
- University College
- Victoria College
- Woodsworth College

### TA – International Transition Advisors (CIE):
- Chestnut Residence
- Faculty of Arts & Science, Sidney Smith Hall
- Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering Registrar’s Office
- Innis College Registrar’s Office
- Innis College Residence
- John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape & Design
- New College, Wilson Hall
- OISE Registrar’s Office
- OISE, 6th Floor Student Lounge
- Robarts Library
- Rotman Commerce Program
- School of Graduate Studies, 63 St. George Street
- School of Graduate Studies, Grad Room
- School of Graduate Studies, Grad House
- St. Michael’s College, Registrar’s Office
- St. Michael’s College, Brennan Hall lobby
- Student Family Housing, 35 Charles St. W.
- Trinity College Registrar’s Office
- University College Registrar’s Office
- University College Ferguson Dining Hall

### AS – Accessibility Services:
- Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education

### FC – Family Care Office Advisors:
- Student Family Housing, 35 Charles St. W.
- UTM Campus, Davis Building

### A – Aboriginal Learning Strategists:
- St. Michael’s College

### WC – Health & Wellness Counsellors / Counseline Counsellors:
- Academic Bridging
- Faculty of Arts & Science
- Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
- Faculty of Dentistry
- Faculty of Law
- Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work
- John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape & Design
- New College
- Physiotherapy
- Rotman Commerce
- Rotman MBA
- School of Graduate Studies
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Transitional Year Program (TYP)
- University College
- Woodsworth College
- Varius Athletics
- Victoria College

### HS – Housing Services:
- Grad Room
- Innis College
- Trinity College
- Victoria College
- Woodsworth College

### MF – Mindfulness Meditation:
- Centre for International Experience
- Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education
- Faculty of Medicine
- Faculty of Dentistry
- Family Care Office
- Hart House
- Health & Wellness Centre
- Multi-Faith Centre
- St. Michael’s College
- Victoria College