
Together We Can Rise To Any Challenge

Defy Gravity: The Campaign for the University of Toronto

A Community that Defies Gravity

For close to 200 years, the University of Toronto has been a catalyst for discovery, innovation, and progress. We are a diverse community—including 640,000 alumni, 95,000 students, and 23,000 faculty and staff—that transcends disciplines and borders to create knowledge and solutions that make a tangible difference around the globe. A community that accomplishes things no one else believed possible. A community that defies gravity.

With remarkable strengths across a broad range of disciplines, U of T is one of the few universities worldwide that can leverage a comprehensive approach to solve the most complex social, economic, and health issues. Working together, we have an opportunity to strengthen our efforts to tackle society's highest priorities, capitalizing on the strengths and advantages that exist only at the University of Toronto.

Defy Gravity: The Campaign for the University of Toronto is the largest alumni engagement and fundraising effort in Canadian history. The campaign will include, for the first time in U of T history, a goal for alumni engagement: to inspire 225,000 alumni to get involved as volunteers, mentors, donors, and leaders and encourage them to contribute their time and talent to the University one million times collectively. The campaign will also seek to raise \$4 billion for the University's highest priorities, allowing us to fully realize our aspirations for transformation and impact.

A Framework for Inclusive Excellence

As one of the world's great public universities, we recognize that game-changing talent and ideas can come from anywhere. That's why we believe that bright students—no matter their financial circumstance—belong at U of T. And it's why we aim to provide a rigorous, equitable, and supportive environment where everyone can discover, learn, create, collaborate, and thrive. For us, excellence is inclusive excellence. Because embracing the broadest range of ideas, cultures, experiences, and perspectives results in bold and compassionate thinking. Thinking that shifts the calculus of what's possible. Thinking that defies gravity.

“At the University of Toronto, we see the impossible as a challenge, the uncharted as an invitation, and every obstacle or setback as motivation to push onward.”

Meric Gertler, President of the University of Toronto



Our Campaign Priorities

Defy Gravity: The Campaign for the University of Toronto has seven priorities that capture the University's highest ambitions and provide a robust framework for supporting inclusive excellence across our three campuses. They speak to the immense contributions we can make to improving health, sustainability, and equity in our society through our creativity, exploration, innovation, and support for the next generation of students.

Build Equitable Cities and Societies

The COVID-19 pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, and the uncovering of mass graves at residential schools revealed—once again—the deep divisions and inequities in our society. At U of T, we're taking steps to embed equity and promote belonging across our three campuses and advance world-leading research and teaching that drives social change. The campaign will support this work to build stronger, more inclusive cities and societies, where everyone can thrive.

Create a Sustainable Future

We have a short window to prevent catastrophic climate change. As a global leader in sustainability research and education, U of T is already providing solutions for climate change by drawing on our deep expertise in clean tech, renewable energy, climate science, natural resource management, sustainable design, environmental law and policy, global health, and global governance. The campaign will nurture climate leaders, fund bold research and innovation, and support our efforts to make our campuses exemplars of sustainability.

Drive Scientific Discovery

The basic and applied sciences help answer fundamental questions about our world and pave the way for the medicines, technologies, and industries we rely on. U of T researchers, together with our hospital and research partners, are pushing the boundaries of AI, astrophysics, chemistry, data science, molecular biology, materials science, neuroscience, nanoscience, and many other fields. Investing in these areas will help lay the groundwork for tomorrow's game-changing ideas, breakthroughs, and discoveries.

Support Student Success

Technology and the rapid pace of change are reshaping our lives and our livelihoods. That's why we provide an education that stresses critical thinking and other competencies that will serve students long after graduation, in an environment that prizes excellence, wellness, diversity, and belonging for equity-deserving communities. The campaign will help provide the life-changing spaces, supports, and opportunities that prepare our students for success in an ever-changing world. And through expanded mentorship and career programs, thousands of our alumni volunteers will help students transition successfully to the next phase of their lives.

Enable Healthy Lives

Chronic disease, climate change, and growing inequity all pose serious risks for health and well-being worldwide. U of T, a key partner within one of the largest research hospital networks in North America, is at the forefront of health research, teaching, innovation, outreach, and policy work. Our scholars are helping to prevent future pandemics and revolutionizing the way we predict, prevent, and treat disease. The campaign will help pave the way for solutions that enable people to live longer, healthier lives.

Spark Creativity and Culture

The humanities enrich our lives by creating meaning, empathy, and understanding and opening our minds to new possibilities. They help us think deeply about the structures and discourses that shape our world and what we can do to build a more just and equitable future. From breaking new ground in the digital humanities to studying Indigenous knowledge systems to examining the implications of AI, U of T students and faculty are exploring the most consequential topics of our time. The campaign will support this vital work.

Power Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Innovation is the bedrock of social and economic prosperity. As Canada's most innovative university and a recognized leader in developing and commercializing ingenious ideas, we are using our multidisciplinary expertise to create technologies and ventures that are both game-changing and socially constructive. Our world-class network of incubators and accelerators provides students with the support they need to develop and launch their ventures. Investing in this area will help us create solutions that generate social and economic value and improve lives around the world.



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