



OVERVIEW OF TASK FORCE ON UNIVERSITY RELATIONS AND CONTEXT

This is the final report from the Task Force on University Relations and Context, constituted as part of the 'Towards 2030' long-term planning process at the University of Toronto.

Mandate

The Task Force on University Relations and Context was mandated to address the issue of what Canadian society needs from the University of Toronto given our pre-eminent role in research and in producing innovative thinkers and leaders. The focus of the task force was as follows:

1. Promoting Public and Stakeholder engagement with the planning process.
2. Focusing on the perspective of those who participate in and benefit from post-secondary education.
3. Determining what students need to know if they are to thrive in the generations ahead; and
4. Examining ways to promote and engage the University's role in the leadership/stewardship of ideas, as well as knowledge transfer.

To this end, the Task Force solicited feedback on the following questions:

1. What are the stakeholders' expectations of the University of Toronto and how should we address them?
2. What qualities and competencies should we be developing in our students?
3. What type of leadership is the country/world expecting from the University of Toronto?
4. What partnerships are required and needed with the university i.e. partnerships with government, communities, industry etc.?

The issues raised can be consolidated into the following headings:

1. Excellence
2. Role of the University
 - a. Not Just Future Employees
 - b. What Kind of Graduates are Needed
 - c. Educating Leaders and Thinkers
3. Role in the Community
4. International Reputation
 - Creating Global Citizens

EXCELLENCE

The majority of those we consulted talked about the university's need to preserve and enhance its role as an institution that focuses on nurturing successive generations of Canadian leaders, innovators and citizens. Though some were more concerned with the role of post-secondary education in skills training and helping Canada meet its labour market needs, the overwhelming majority supported a much broader and innovative vision for the University in the coming years.

The theme of excellence permeates all other issues raised. It is important to note that there was some concern that in trying to be everything to everyone, the University could find itself attempting to fulfill an overly broad and unmanageable mandate. Our discussions with members of the community confirmed that the University of Toronto is without doubt a research intensive university and that we must build upon that strength and integrate research experiences into our undergraduate experience.

As seen in the chart on the following page, the demand for post graduate education is increasing in response to market demands both in the public and private sector. In addition to the substantial growth in post graduate education, there is a recent acknowledgement by the government and by the university, that there should be an increase in our training of Masters and Doctoral students to meet the needs of a competitive economy. However, there was a clearly expressed view that the University of Toronto is already a large institution with limited resources. Maintaining the current undergraduate population along with an increase in graduate student population will have negative effects on the overall quality of education. One possible solution we heard is that at the undergraduate level, the University would benefit from a smaller population to ensure quality both for current and future undergraduate students.

Total population aged 25 to 64 by level of university attainment, Canada, 2001 and 2006

| Level of university attainment | 2001 | 2006 | % increase |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------|
| Total | 16,288,310 | 17,382,115 | 7 |
| No university degree | 13,080,875 | 13,396,370 | 2 |
| University degree | 3,207,440 | 3,985,745 | 24 |
| Bachelor's degree | 2,079,650 | 2,538,355 | 22 |
| University certificate or diploma above bachelor level | 331,285 | 416,815 | 26 |
| Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry | 102,340 | 113,740 | 11 |
| Master's degree | 584,745 | 774,655 | 32 |
| Earned doctorate | 109,420 | 142,180 | 30 |

Source: Statistics Canada. March 13, 2008. **Total population aged 25 to 64 by level of university attainment, Canada, 2001 and 2006** (table). Educational Portrait of Canada, 2006 Census. Version updated March 13, 2008. www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/education/tables.cfm (accessed March 19, 2008).

In addition there is an opportunity for the community to create an environment of excellence in the University by utilizing community partners in a broader role. For example, there is an active group of retirees here at the University who have the expertise and time to devote to the University whether it be former faculty willing to teach classes, seminars or sit on committees; or staff interested in assisting with special projects or advocacy issues. Our entire community including staff, faculty, volunteers, alumni, industry partners and parents can also help to advocate for the need for greater resources. The justification for more resources needs to be heard repeatedly in government and in the broader community.

What constituted the “best” student body was also discussed and how the admissions process needs to attract well-rounded students with outstanding academic achievement. Members of the community were clear that a goal for the University is to continue to foster leaders and educate productive members of society with transferable skills. Furthermore the admissions process should be structured to reflect these goals and entrance standards should not be relaxed as a means to increase the number of students for the purpose of increased tuition revenue.

ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Intrinsic role of the university: The development of questioning minds and critical thinkers.

Industry leaders told us repeatedly that they do not need the University to teach our graduates specific skills or prepare them for specific future jobs. Rather than preparing students for specific work, the University of Toronto's most important role is preparing our students to be active, intelligent and well-rounded members of the workforce and of society.

What do you think is the University's role in Canadian society?

Two-fold; taking a leadership role in research and as a think tank. Canada has lost its edge as a manufacturing country but will grow in "thought leadership". My experience is in business and manufacturing, but nurturing the liberal arts and social sciences gives us all an appreciation for an environment in which society can grow and prosper.

Alumni 8T9

In general, the U of T's role is two-fold. First, to both provide a medium through which a number of types of specific research can be focused and the results of that research shared, analyzed and communicated; second, to train and educate the future leaders of Canada (business, politics, education, medicine, etc) both in their specific fields of study and more broadly as to how they can contribute to Canadian society.

Alumni 8T6

Industry leaders and others were most impressed by the ability of our graduates to adapt themselves to any work situation, their ability to communicate clearly, their ability to solve problems, to work in groups and to contribute effectively and meaningfully to their work situations. Some specific employment training is important for a few programs, particularly professional programs, however generic, transferable skills are important, even within these programs. Coupled with a passion for life-long learning, such graduates will truly have an advantage in the career possibilities presented in 2030.

In addition to the knowledge gained by students in their course of study, equally important is the University's role in producing innovators. Those with whom we consulted spoke of the greater opportunities afforded to students who have opportunities to participate in research. Research projects allow students to take intellectual risks and innovate. The learning and skills derived from participating in research is highly valued by corporations and other future employers whether they are research-based or not. Graduates with an interest in innovation will continue to question assumptions and develop creative solutions to many problems they encounter in their future fields of endeavour.

Even those with whom we consulted who focused on the importance in university programs of specific skills training for employment, emphasized that the University also needs to concentrate on the broad-based transferable skills that are vital for future employment.

Not Just Employees

Numerous employers told us that they need students who can write, who can work in an office environment, who can engage and present ideas. Employers can teach graduates the “hard” skills, or they can learn those in a college setting; what the University can teach are “soft” skills; the kinds of skills derived from interaction in small intimate classes, from working together on group projects and presentations; the kind of skills that are derived from living in residence, running for student government or getting involved in any number of campus activities.

Assuming the growing trends in electronic communication, social networking, distance learning, technological assistance and immediacy of satisfaction, graduates of 2025-2030 will need to understand that the soft skills that are acquired through participation in a University, and the interaction with people via extracurricular activities will in many ways be the most important assets that they graduate with. *Alumni 9T2*

The overwhelming majority of alumni who graduated in the late 80s and early 90s, listed soft skills (the ability to work in multi-disciplinary diverse environment and team-based environments) as the number one competency required for career success, followed by broad based knowledge gained through formal education or professional development, and lastly specific job related skills.

Several participants, particularly alumni, raised the issue of increasing and improving co-op style partnerships. The results of our meetings with members of the community indicate that this is something that the University should expand, especially considering the success that other Ontario universities have had in this area. This is however, more suitable in some academic fields than in others.

It is obvious that the University plays an important role in training students for eventual roles as members of the workforce. Mention was made of the need for graduates who are capable of expressing their ideas well, of thinking clearly, of having the capacity to work in a team environment. Repeatedly we heard that “soft” skills (attitude, behavior etc.) are seen to be as important as obtaining specific knowledge. Those skills are acquired through small group learning and interaction.

It was noted that recent writings, including authors such as Richard Florida, have noted that locations with well-educated, skilled people clustered are the most useful places for innovative businesses to congregate. The kinds of employees that universities train – high-value, motivated and intelligent workers – are also needed for the creation of these clusters where innovative businesses, universities and other cultural institutions flourish.

Not only does the University of Toronto produce employees and consumers, the University of Toronto also produces Canada's leaders. Further, Canada's scientific, political, business, intellectual and artistic leaders are overwhelmingly products of Canada's great universities and in particular the University of Toronto.

In our consultations with business leaders they expressed the importance of graduates with a broad education and an ability to adapt to different work environments.

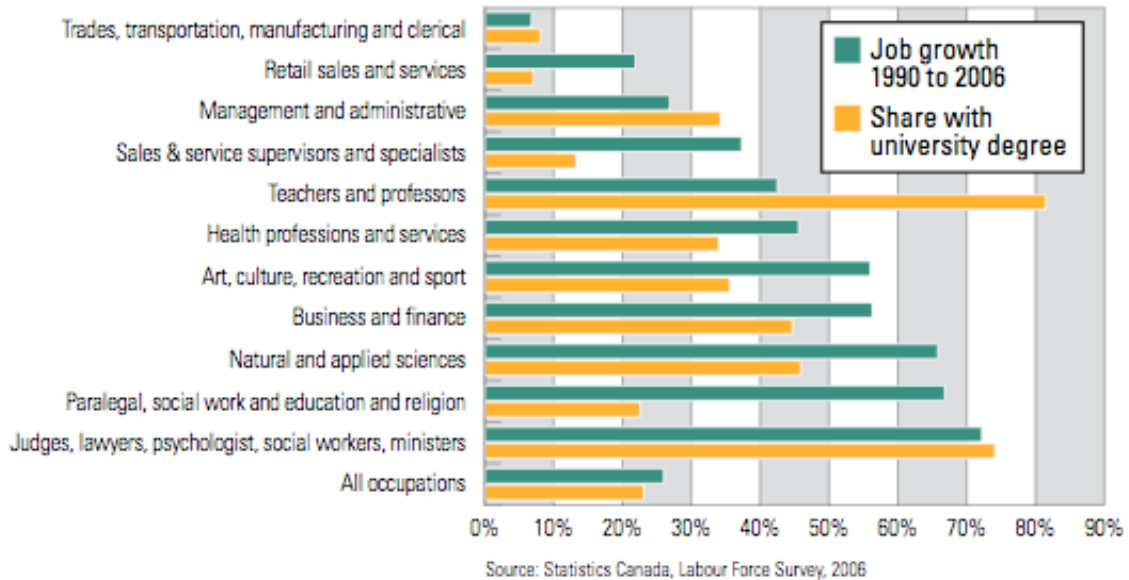
What Kind of Graduates are Needed

There is a growing recognition that as the Canadian economy and Canadian society becomes ever more sophisticated there will be a growing demand for university graduates. These graduates are not merely needed to fill the highly skilled jobs that already exist. They will need to face challenges that do not yet exist, use tools that have not yet been invented and adapt to a society that is changing at an ever-increasing rate.

Similarly, as our population ages, the productivity provided by younger members of the workforce will need to increase to ensure continued economic development and prosperity. A well educated and innovative workforce will be essential for this continued success. Our consultations with community leaders generally indicated that there is a growing demand in all sectors for ever more graduates of post-secondary institutions. Our findings are confirmed by substantial research in this area.

According to the AUCC between 2000 and 2006, the labour market for those with university degrees grew quickly; jobs for those with degrees grew by 30%, jobs for those with trade certificates grew by 5% and over-all job growth of 12%. Further, this builds on research that shows that from 1990 to 2006, those fields that showed the greatest degree of job growth were also the ones with the greatest share of university graduates.

Many of the fastest growing occupations require university education



In a recent Conference Board survey of 431 human resources professionals: 1 in 3 indicated that they plan to reduce the number of high-school graduates they hire; 6 in 10 said they plan to increase the number of university graduates they hire. As a result of these demands, graduate enrollment continues to grow as well, and the provincial government recognizes this by continuing to support this growth.

We heard that student exchange and study abroad programs must be expanded, not only in the anticipation that employers expect international experience, but to broaden the experience of the students. Students need to have a solid understanding of the world – not just of the geographic borders, but of the cultures, politics and history.

The combination of a growing and well educated immigrant population together with growing demand for higher levels of education in the labour force and the increasingly interconnected nature of business means that there are tremendous advantages to a dynamic and diverse university student body. Our anecdotal and survey evidence suggests that businesses are looking for employees with strong communications skills and the ability to work in diverse environments.

Educating Leaders and Thinkers

In our discussions with members of the external community, our task force heard time and again that what we need to do is to encourage innovation. Though Universities play an important role in skills training and certification, our real strength is offering young people opportunities that will allow them to question, to challenge and to find innovative solutions.

Describing Canada as a “knowledge based economy” has become so common as to be almost meaningless. We received input to the effect that Canada must become an innovation based economy. Rather than merely imparting knowledge, the University’s primary role should be to educate students to use their new knowledge to become innovative and creative.

One of the faculty consulted suggested that imparting knowledge has the ring of an antiquated conception of education; of professors at the front of the classroom reciting information that students learn. If the University is to maintain its place in the 21st century that model is inadequate. More important is the University’s role as a place where innovation and scholarship is encouraged and where our students have the opportunities to allow them to become innovators in their own fields of endeavor.

This implies a closer tie between faculty and students: greater opportunities for interdisciplinary and international education, greater opportunities for laboratory and practical work for students and an abundance of challenging and applicable extra-curricular activities. Alumni who graduated in the late 80s and early 90s confirmed these views.

ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

Role of the University in serving the broader community – continuing education, professional and foreign accreditation

The University is a crucial component in the creation of citizens; involved, informed and intelligent actors in the daily life of Canadian society. Not only does an engaged citizen guarantee the consistent evolution and growth of Canada’s system of liberal democracy, there is a direct correlation between post secondary education and economic growth, innovation, prosperity and political stability. The kinds of educated citizens that the University produces provide the basis for a stable and progressive society desired by business leaders and the general community.

“According to the [2006] census, among Canadian workers in the core working-age group (ages 25 to 54), those who had not completed high school had an unemployment rate of 9.4%. This was more than twice the rate of 4.2% among those who had completed a university degree.”

Source: Canada's Changing Labour Force, 2006 Census: National picture <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/labour/ov-cclf-09.cfm>

Furthermore, some members of the community suggested that as the leading Canadian university, the University of Toronto needs to take a particular leadership role, not just in providing our students with the tools they need to be leaders, but also in imparting a sense of responsibility and commitment to the broader society. A former Ontario cabinet minister, suggested that as a cornerstone of Canadian public and political life, the University has a responsibility to inculcate a sense of commitment to Canada and

to our broader society. Not only do we need to educate leaders and innovators, we need to encourage and motivate them to lead.

Finally, leaders of the Design Review committee at the University discussed the important role of the University as part of the city's 'built environment' in the heart of Toronto. As a result we have a responsibility to maintain and preserve our historical buildings as well as to take particular care in our ongoing development. The University needs to recognize that there is an important role for architecture, landscape and urban design in enriching the student experience as well as attracting students and faculty to the University.

As the University expands, our physical development should respect our role as a leader in innovation and social responsibility and should reflect principles of sustainability and efficiency.

INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION

Creating Global Citizens

In discussions with representatives of the international community, the role of the University in creating global citizens was also stressed. Commentators from outside North America stated that too often Canadian students have very little broad cultural knowledge. If Canada truly wants to be a global leader Canadian students must be encouraged to work in other countries and become experienced in other cultural contexts which will allow for a much broader understanding of Canada's place in the world.

Generally, those with whom we consulted were surprised that there seemed to be so little focus on encouraging Canadian students to work and study abroad, to broaden their horizons and encourage them to look and think more broadly about Canada's and Canadians' place in the world. This lack of international education was seen in direct contrast to the strength of international programs in other countries and their emphasis on encouraging their university students to work and study abroad.

This kind of international experience is seen as crucial in creating citizens and leaders. By focusing on and increasing international opportunities the University would work to broaden the world view of our graduates giving our students a greater capacity to adjust to international realities and take on global leadership roles. Further, those we consulted suggested that this focus on increasing the international experience of our graduates and the international presence of the University must focus on a much broader range of partners than our traditional partners in international education, namely the United States and the United Kingdom.

As the economic and intellectual influence of other countries and regions continues to grow, Canada needs more citizens who understand and can work in a broader range of languages and who are familiar with other national and cultural contexts. Those with whom we consulted stated that the University has a unique role to encourage and foster international partnerships and opportunities in order to give our students the opportunity to become global, rather than just national leaders. Expanding on the University's role in creating citizens, students need to be global citizens rather than just national citizens.

Our external partners suggested that there are a number of ways this could be encouraged. Apart from traditional study abroad programs, the University could work with international partners, other universities, governments etc. to create nodes of the University of Toronto outside Canada. These nodes could not only provide international experience for Canadian students and faculty but could be used as a gateway to attract international students and faculty to the University of Toronto. Numerous Universities have begun similar type programs across the world. Particularly noted are recent initiatives in which American universities have set up academic programs in some of the Gulf States. They see the benefits for their faculty who have an opportunity to teach in these institutions and benefits for the international reach of the brand of these institutions.

We also heard that we need to welcome more international students. Students from other countries include a study exchange/abroad program as part of their expectations when attending university. One such example is India, where only 1.5% of students who study abroad do so in Canada. We need to consider how to expand our position in the growing international competition for the best students. Positive steps are our programs already in place such as the UTSC's Greenpath program, Navigating UofT for Academic Success (for Exchange Students) – a joint program through the School of Continuing Studies and the International Exchange Office – and the International Student House which provides a sense of community to international students. However, these programs need to be expanded and broadened.

Exposure to people from around the world that attended the same college was an experience that cannot be underestimated as a foundation to understanding the world. Perhaps one poignant example is to have friends who were Croatian and others that were Serbian and hearing them debate, often incredibly heatedly, the reasons for their longstanding conflict. It brought the world much closer together in my mind, long before the concept of "globalization" was ever even on the radar.
Alumni 9T2

CONCLUSION

Two major themes emerged from the consultations conducted by this task force. The first is that the University of Toronto must continue to prepare, with excellence, successive generations of citizens for roles in Canada and throughout the world. Though the University has a role in skills training and meeting current and future labour market needs, the true value of the University is in providing our students with the skills they need to succeed in all aspects of their lives; economic, intellectual, political and social.

We must prepare our students to become leaders in all areas of society; science and the humanities, engineering and medicine, business and law, athletics and the fine arts. We must prepare our students for jobs that do not yet exist, to make discoveries that we have not even imagined and to take on roles for which they cannot ready themselves ahead of time.

As such, the University must continue to focus on excellence and advocate for the resources to do so. Students and faculty should be encouraged to take risks in intellectual development and discovery. We must take pride in our continuing role in developing critical thinkers and developing minds.

Externally the University needs to continue to advocate for the resources and relationships that will allow the achievement of these goals. These include adequate funding to hire enough faculty members to ensure close collaboration between teachers and students, adequate funding for graduate scholarships so our scholars can continue to pursue their studies with their full attention, research funding that will allow the University to create world class laboratories and libraries that will give our scholars the resources and tools they need.

And we must do all these things in collaboration with government, the community, other institutions and the world at large. The University must continue to pursue new partnerships to ensure that our students have the exposure and opportunities they need to succeed.

Membership

| | |
|------------|--|
| Chair | Dr. Alice Dong |
| Vice-Chair | Judith Wolfson |
| Members | Ms Marilyn Booth, Director, School of Continuing Studies Ms Louise Cowin, Warden, Hart House Ms Coralie D'Souza Ms Susan Eng Professor Jane Gaskell, Dean, OISE Professor Meric Gertler, Interim Dean, Arts & Science Professor Ulli Krull, Vice-Principal Research, UTM Mr. David Palmer, Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer Professor Yves Roberge, Acting Principal, St. Michael's College Professor Suzanne Stevenson, Vice-Dean, Students, Faculty of Arts and Science Professor Franco Vaccarino, Vice President & Principal, UTSC |
| Secretary | Ms Meredith Strong |

Process:

Industry Letter:

Letter from the Chair and Vice-Chair to the industry leaders who had received a letter from the President sent December 17, 2007.

140 letters were sent.

MP/MPP/Councillor Letter:

264 letters were sent from the President on January 14, 2008 to Ontario MPs, all MPPs and all Mississauga and Toronto Councillors.

Alumni/Donor Letter:

234 letters were sent to alumni and donors who had been identified by DUA.

Robert Berdahl:

Members of the Task Force met with Robert Berdahl on December 18, 2007.

Consultation Groups:

Invitations to participate in the 2030 process were sent to 5 groups - Professionals, International Organizations, Feeder Groups (School Board Directors), Community Groups (Board of Trades, HEQCO, MPPs), and alumni who graduated 20 years ago.

Meetings were held with:

President, Mississauga Board of Trade
Chairman & CEO, AGF Management Limited
Vice President, Corporate Development and
Vice President, Global Talent – Manulife Financial
Deputy Consul General, Federal Republic of Germany
Private International Consultant
Alumni Group
Retired Academics and Librarians of the University of Toronto (RALUT)
Design Review Committee
Former Minister, Province of Ontario
University staff - International Relations

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Submissions have been received from:
Faculty of Arts and Science,
Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design
Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing
University of Toronto Mississauga
The Design Review Committee
President, Imperial Oil
Alumni (via survey)