



REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE COLLEGES ON THE ST. GEORGE CAMPUS

SEPTEMBER 2022

Final Report

Review of the Role of the Colleges on the St. George Campus

Executive Summary

The Review of the Role of the Colleges on the St. George Campus (the Review) was conducted from November 2019 to June 2022, and examined the role of the seven constituent and federated colleges. The goal of the Review was to consider how individuals and organizational units across multiple communities can best work together in support of common goals around student experience, academic programming, and student success. The Review was led by a Steering Committee, which coordinated the work of five working groups: Reviews, Academic Planning and Academic Change; Student Experience; Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrolment Planning; Residences; and Resources.

This report highlights the continuing role of Colleges in supporting students, and provides numerous recommendations for further strengthening the ability of Colleges to provide this support.

Introduction

Colleges on the St. George campus are integral to the academic life of students and are renowned for their broad-based excellence. Each of the seven colleges on the campus serves as a connection to the Faculty of Arts & Science (FAS) and more broadly to other Faculties on the St. George campus, while also providing a vibrant sense of community and an important hub for student services. The Colleges offer a unique campus experience for a diverse population of students, providing community, residence, registrarial and support services, academic advising, as well as academic, educational, co-curricular, and international experience programs. For many students, their College serves as an academic home early in their academic careers and a source of support for their entire time as undergraduates.

The role of Colleges has evolved over time. Colleges have been a core constituency at the University of Toronto since shortly after its foundation in 1850, with University College coming into being in 1853. Victoria, Trinity, and St. Michael's all federated with the University in the 1890s and early 1900s, and Innis, New, and Woodsworth colleges were created in a second wave of college-building in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1974, the first Memorandum of Agreement Relating to the Role of the Colleges in the Faculty of Arts & Science was struck between the University, FAS, and the Colleges. In 1983, the Dalzell Report outlined the changing role of colleges, their complementary nature to departments, and the need to define Colleges' role within the University. In the 1980s and 1990s, agreements were reached regarding the particular role of the federated universities within the U of T system. In 2008, the Statement on the Role of the Constituent & Federated Colleges aptly summarized:

“The Constituent and Federated Arts Colleges ("Colleges") are intellectual and social communities of students, faculty and staff which contribute to the advancement of learning at the University of Toronto. They provide opportunities for personal learning and friendships, making it possible for members of the University of Toronto to enjoy the advantages of both a small college and Canada's largest urban research university. The college system is one of the distinctive features of the St. George campus (...)"

This report builds on this significant history and work in developing these relationships over generations. The report also underscores the importance of periodically reviewing the vital role of the Colleges.

The University of Toronto launched the Review in November 2019 to consider how individuals and organizational units across multiple communities can best work together in support of common goals around student experience, academic programming, and student success. Soon after the review was launched, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed much of the work of the Review, as other academic planning and operational priorities took precedence. The pandemic itself revealed new insights about the role of Colleges; as the community came together, the strengths of the College system became even more apparent, as well as areas that needed additional attention and support.

It is important to note that this Review also highlighted the differences between relationships with federated universities and the Faculty of Arts & Science, between the constituent Colleges and the Faculty of Arts & Science, and between the constituent Colleges and federated Colleges all within the U of T context. Much of this report focuses on changes in the constituent Colleges, while highlighting possibilities for further discussion and collaboration between the federated universities and U of T.

The Review was led by a Steering Committee, which coordinated the work of five working groups, each with a mandate that included consultation with students, staff, faculty, and academic administrators. Each working group developed recommendations to guide future decision-making, and proposed changes to policies and/or procedures.

These five Working Groups were:

1. Reviews, Academic Planning and Academic Change
2. Student Experience
3. Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrolment Planning
4. Residences
5. Resources

Consultation

Each working group provided guidance to the Steering Committee based on their consultations. The Steering Committee also consulted with the Working Group heads, the College Principals, and leadership of the Faculty of Arts & Science. The fulsome consultations of the Working Groups also informed their final discussions and are reflected in the recommendations.

Common Themes

Common themes emerged in the deliberations and findings of all Working Groups. Even early on, there was clear overlap in discussion: residences impact student experience, resources affect services, enrolment influences academic planning, and so on.

Overall, a common theme reported by all working groups was the importance of preserving the unique culture and particular strengths of each College, while ensuring consistent quality standards in all aspects of the student experience – both academic and non-academic. The need for both differentiation and consistency remains the challenge and opportunity for the Colleges on the St. George campus as well as at University of Toronto overall.

Other common themes that arose during the Review included the following:

Accountability. What are the mechanisms to evaluate the success of the Colleges when it comes to academic excellence and student experience in particular? For example, one of the key issues identified in relation to many processes included clear lines of reporting for academic programs. How can we ensure we clarify who is responsible for academic processes?

Consultation. Colleges want to have a voice in decisions affecting their students. This requires clearer and more efficient governance and decision-making structures. Several of the working groups identified the need for ‘middle tables,’ ‘communities of practice,’ or ‘advisory groups’ to keep lines of communication open among all the relevant stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

Consistency in service levels. Keeping the character and distinct nature of each College is important; however, much of the feedback addressed the need for students to have access to some consistent service standards across the Colleges. These would include: student numbers and staff ratios, minimum standards for some services such as academic advising, and consistent practices around operations such as whether all student have access to residence spaces over the holidays.

Aligned processes. Time and time again, feedback from students, staff, and faculty revealed the challenges and complexity faced by students where College processes had different timings, schedules, and deadlines, such as for residence allocation and application processes.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility. Overall, there was a sense that equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) should be at the forefront of considerations around changes to College practices and services. These principles must be embedded in the ongoing work of the Colleges.

Recommendations

Working groups provided guidance to the Steering Committee based on their consultations. Below is a summary of each working group’s recommendations, some of which have already been implemented or are in progress. (See “Accomplishments to Date” section below).

Reviews, Academic Planning and Academic Change

The Reviews, Academic Planning and Academic Change working group explored principles and processes for reviewing FAS programs and courses administered by Colleges, the way reviews inform academic and strategic planning, academic staffing to support first-year academic experience, interdisciplinary programs and research, as well as for-credit offerings.

Key Recommendations:

- Undertake modest revisions to the *2008 Statement on the Role of the Constituent & Federated Colleges* in line with this review.
- Develop and implement a framework to support the academic success of teaching-stream faculty who hold appointments in Colleges.
- Update the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) review schedule and other UTQAP materials to clarify that, in the case of College programs, the academic division (in terms of appointing a commissioning officer for reviews, and leading the development and governance pathways for program creation / change / closure) is Faculty of Arts & Sciences (FAS), and the academic unit is the College.
- Establish an FAS schedule to review all non-program for-credit offerings (i.e., non-program activities that appear on the academic transcript), following the principles that underly the UTQAP and in a manner appropriate for the scale of the offering. To the extent possible, in commissioning these reviews, FAS should

consider their timing relative to other planning and review processes to ensure that processes mutually inform each other in order to avoid review 'fatigue'.

- Roll out unit-level planning for College for-credit activities.
- Create and promulgate a clear pathway for individual faculty members to engage in the academic life of the Colleges.
- Develop a framework (e.g., a MOU template, manual, and/or other guiding material) that can be leveraged to capture the agreement under which faculty appointed to FAS departments or EDUs become engaged in College academic activities to ensure the sustainability of the activities.
- Explore appropriate incentives for program collaboration across departments, EDUs, and Colleges with FAS.
- Enhance transparency about how to become a Fellow of a College and what such a role entails (or more broadly, how faculty members and others can engage in the life / intellectual community of a College).

Student Experience

The Student Experience working group reviewed programming, staffing, and student experience in academic and co-curricular areas, including academic advising. Their findings built on the principles of the 2019 Vision on Undergraduate Education project. The working group focussed on six key areas: transitioning to university life; academic advising and success; wayfinding, referrals and navigating policies; fostering community and mentorship; case management; and Colleges as a node for co-curricular activities.

Key Recommendations:

Critical Role of Colleges: Creation of Community

- Appropriately and equitably resource Colleges so that they can focus on relationship-building and community-building and not only on providing transactional services.

New Vision for the Future of the College Experience

- Assess the impact of the effectiveness of programming and initiatives, whether these services should be expanded, and if so, in what way. Explore communication channels for wayfinding to on-location supports and build upon existing assessment activities.
- Provide training for all staff in Colleges and FAS about College, FAS, and institutional services and about different primary responsibilities, eliminating student “bounce” and referrals to the wrong place.

Consistency of Access to Student Services Within the Unique College Environments

- Ensure that a minimum registrarial advisor-student ratio is in place and sustained for all Colleges. Use industry benchmarks to define appropriate minimum ratio.
- Ensure greater consistency in the proportionate number of academic advisors among Colleges, distribution of bursary support and variable financial support for important student services.
- Ensure that tools for case management (e.g., referrals and follow-up) are provided as well as coordination for consistency.

Clarity for Students on Roles and Pathways to Support

- Clarify and communicate to students, staff, and faculty the appropriate pathways to support in different areas.

Actioning and Embedding the Principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility (EDIA)

- Integrate the fundamental principles of equity, diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility (EDIA) into the ongoing work in this area.

Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrolment Planning

The Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrolment Planning working group reviewed different areas of the admissions and recruitment process, including: student enrolment data and processes, student recruitment messages, responses to applicant surveys, admissions statistics and College enrolment plans, technology, and data about College choices. Recurring themes included the need to prioritize the student experience; the need to proactively address EDIA; as well as the need to mitigate and avoid institutional risk.

Key Recommendations:

- Continue to build on improvements to prospective student communications and collateral material to better promote the College system. The opacity of the process of College assignment and the lack of differentiating information for individual Colleges should be improved.
- Explore the means by which Colleges can ensure that their student intakes are representative of FAS's and the Colleges' EDIA priorities, including evaluating demographic information of those students submitting supplemental applications.
- Improve assessments of student experience at the individual College level for comparison purposes. There is currently a dearth of data on how FAS students experience each College.
- Provide a closer tie between enrolments and budgets to achieve a minimum standard of service levels across Colleges. The Working Group encouraged a review of enrolment counts that considered the additional resources required in meeting the needs of international and part-time students.

Residences

The Residences working group conducted a review of student engagement activities, residence numbers, staffing, and other aspects of residence life and planning. The scope of this working group was broader than those of the other College Review working groups in that it extended to all students in direct-entry undergraduate programs, and not just FAS students in the Colleges. Currently, there are over 5,000 students housed in College residences on the St. George campus and in Chestnut Residence. There is a shortfall of approximately 2,000 residence spaces for direct-entry undergraduates on the St. George campus. This review was in alignment with the broader U of T [4 Corners Strategy](#).

Key Recommendations:

- Appoint a senior leader to conduct a strategic planning exercise for residences on the St. George campus. There is a need for an overarching governance and decision-making structure that can adopt new policies for selecting and assigning residence spaces among the Colleges and Chestnut, can ensure equitable and inclusive supports for U of T students in residence that meets best-practice standards, and can plan collaboratively for new residences in alignment with institutional priorities.
- Initiate planning for additional residence capacity over the next five to ten years on the St. George campus to address the immediate estimated shortfall of 2,000 residence spaces for direct-entry undergraduate students. This plan will form part of an upcoming strategic planning exercise.

Resources

The focus of the Resources working group was on operating and ancillary service plans, alternative funding models, and recommending a new model for resource distribution to constituent and federated Colleges. Beyond budget and finances, this group also looked at needs in areas like IT support, classroom technologies, space needs and capital planning, including deferred maintenance.

Key Recommendations:

Make Investments in Spaces and Services for Students at the College Level

- Establish a minimum technology standard across institutional and College classrooms while taking into account unique pedagogical and servicing needs at each College.
- Dedicate funds for classroom technology renewal to address divisional and College classrooms.
- Adopt a single, transparent funding mechanism for College program teaching.
- Establish service standards and minimum staffing levels for registrarial / advising services. Increase per-student funding to the Colleges with appropriate accountability measures.
- Review the peer buildings used to determine Federated College occupancy cost payments.

Increase Engagement of the Colleges with the Faculty of Arts & Science on Planning and Resource Issues

- Increase integration of Constituent Colleges into FAS space planning and budget planning processes.
- Consider ways to more formally integrate Constituent College ancillary budgets into FAS budget and planning processes.

Seek Efficiency in Administrative Service Delivery

- Consider ways for Colleges to partner with Ancillary Services on operational aspects of ancillary service delivery to assess if such partnerships would be mutually beneficial
- Review the overhead cost model for ancillary operations.
- Establish processes for sharing of operational best practices amongst.
- Explore opportunities to share administrative management systems.

Accomplishments to Date

Some of the Recommendations detailed above have been implemented quickly, in order to start working towards the outlined principles, themes and issues presented by the working groups.

On May 5, 2022, Professor Cristina Amon was [appointed Provostial Advisor on Residences](#). Former Executive Director of Planning & Budget Sally Garner, Senior Strategist Richard Levin, Provost's Division CAO and former CAO of Innis College Joyce Hahn, and Jessie Metcalfe, Assistant Director, Office of the Vice-Provost, Students, will be core members of the team that support Professor Amon in this work. As per the recommendation of the Residences Working Group, the Provostial Advisor on Residences and her team will develop both a short-term and long-term strategy for student residences, with a primary focus on residences located on the St. George campus.

As well, in order to clarify and reflect the relationships between constituent Colleges and FAS, as of July 1, 2022, the Provost has formally delegated the reporting relationship of Constituent College Principals to the Dean of Arts & Science.

Following the recommendation of the Resources and Student Experience working groups, FAS will be hiring additional FTEs in the Constituent Colleges to achieve an across-the-board decrease in the student-to-staff ratio, and will monitor service levels to adjust as needed. This will also include alignment of College service ancillary operations with the Faculty's budget planning and implementation for the Faculty's budget review.

The Student Advising System is being launched as the central student advising relationship management (CRM) platform. This transformational project will aim to ensure consistent service excellence to undergraduate students across FAS, one of the key concerns of the Student Experience Working Group.

This academic year, the Review and Revision of the Agreements between the University of Toronto and the Federated Universities will be launching. This negotiation among U of T, Trinity University, Victoria University and University of St. Michael's College includes the federation framework agreements and the operating/block grant agreements, and will also seek to address some of the issues identified by the working groups.

Conclusion

Consultation was extensive for the Review of the Role of Colleges on the St. George Campus, and included presentations, data analysis, discussions, surveys, and submissions. The Working Groups and Steering Committee engaged widely with students, College Principals, Chief Administrative officers, College bursars, high school guidance counsellors, student advisors, frontline staff, and administrators. All working groups understood that at the heart of this review is the student experience at the University of Toronto.

The work that has been completed and that is yet to come represents efforts to recognize the excellence of our Colleges, the necessity of the supports they provide to U of T students, the dedicated work that goes into fostering these communities, and the need to remain a welcoming, inclusive environment for our students.

As alluded to, this review coincided with the response to COVID-19 at the University, and we are appreciative that even during significant academic disruption, students, staff, faculty and academic leadership took the time to study these issues and articulate a vision for Colleges into the future.

Thank you to all the College Principals, all the members of the working groups, the Steering Committee, and the staff who participated in supporting this project and in the drafting of this final report.

Appendix A – Membership of Steering Committee and Working Groups

Titles are as of the time of membership

Steering Committee for the Review of the Role of Colleges on the St. George Campus

- Cheryl Regehr, Vice-President & Provost (Chair)
- Sandy Welsh, Vice-Provost, Students (Acting Chair)
- Melanie Woodin, Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Charlie Keil, Principal, Innis College
- Mayo Moran, Provost and Vice Chancellor, Trinity College
- Chris Damaren, Director, UTIAS, Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering
- John Magee, Professor, Department of Classics and Centre for Medieval Studies, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Support: Daniella Mallinick, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance; Tomas Flecker, Special Projects Officer; Toks Weah, Special Projects Officer

Reviews, Academic Planning and Academic Change Working Group

- Susan McCahan, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs and Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education (Chair)
- Mark Schmuckler, Acting Vice-Provost, Academic Programs and Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education (Acting Chair)
- Angela Esterhammer, Principal, Victoria College
- Poppy Lockwood, Vice-Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Cheryl Shook, Assistant Principal and Registrar, Woodsworth College
- Nicholas Terpstra, Interim Chair, Department of Italian Studies, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Vincent Tropepe, Chair, Department of Cell and Systems Biology, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Support: Daniella Mallinick, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance; Jane Harrison, Director, Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty & Academic Life

Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrolment Planning Working Group

- Joseph Wong, Associate Vice-President & Vice-Provost International Student Experience (Chair)
- Randy Boyagoda, Vice-Dean, Undergraduate, Faculty of Arts & Science (Former Principal, St. Michael's College)
- Mark McGowan, Principal, St. Michael's College
- Donald Boere, Assistant Principal and Registrar, Innis College
- Ettore Damiano, Chair, Department of Economics, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Lisa Feng, Interim Faculty Registrar, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Richard Levin, Senior Strategist
- Brenda McCabe, Provostial Advisor on Student Enrolment
- Ryan Woolfrey, Registrar, University College
- Support: Michelle Beaton, Director, International Strategy and Partnerships

Residences Working Group

- Sandy Welsh, Vice-Provost, Students (Co-Chair)
- Micah Stickel, Acting Vice-Provost, Students (Acting Co-Chair)
- Sally Garner, Senior Strategist, Operational Initiatives (Co-Chair)

- Carol Chin, Principal, Woodsworth College
- Randy Boyagoda, Vice-Dean, Undergraduate, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Heather Kelly, Executive Director, Student Life Programs & Services
- Andrea McGee, Registrar & Assistant Dean, Students, John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design
- Anne Macdonald, Assistant Vice President, Ancillary Services
- Kristen Moore, Dean of Students, Trinity College
- Steve Masse, Dean of Students, Innis College
- Chirag Variawa, Director, First Year Curriculum, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
- Support: Jessie Metcalfe, Assistant Director, Office of the Vice-Provost, Students

Resources Working Group

- Scott Mabury, Vice-President, Operations & Real Estate Partnerships (Co-Chair)
- Trevor Rodgers, Assistant Vice-President, Planning & Budget (Co-Chair)
- Bonnie McElhinny, Principal, New College
- Michael Ratcliffe, Dean of Arts, Trinity College
- Larry Alford, University Chief Librarian
- Horatio Bot, Director, Financial Services, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Gillian Morrison, Assistant Vice-President, University Advancement
- Ray de Souza, Bursar, Victoria University
- Jamie Stafford, Vice-Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Support: Kirin Jeffery, Special Projects Officer, Planning & Budget

Student Experience Working Group

- Sandy Welsh (Co-Chair), Vice-Provost, Students
- Micah Stickel (Acting Co-Chair), Acting Vice-Provost, Students
- Dwayne Benjamin (Co-chair), Provostial Advisor Recruitment, Enrolment, and Educational Space & Technology
- Yvette Ali, Registrar, Victoria University
- Robert Batey, Chair, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Alana Boland, Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Arts & Science
- Vicki Lowes, Director, Experiential Learning & Outreach Support, Faculty of Arts & Science
- David Newman, Executive Director, Student Experience, Division of Student Life
- Lance McCready, Interim Director, Transitional Year Program
- Leah McCormack-Smith, Dean of Students, New College
- Markus Stock, Principal, University College
- Support: Julia Allworth, Manager, Innovation Projects