

City of Mississauga
Corporate Report



<p>Date: September 23, 2025</p> <p>To: Mayor and Members of Council</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>From: Geoff Wright, P.Eng, MBA, City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer</p>	<p>Meeting date: October 22, 2025</p>

Subject

Academic Partnership with the University of Toronto Mississauga - Update

Recommendation

That the Corporate Report entitled "Academic Partnership with the University of Toronto Mississauga - Update" dated September 23, 2025, from the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer be received for information.

Executive Summary

- On June 1, 2023, the City of Mississauga and the University of Toronto (UTM) established a five-year memorandum of understanding to jointly pursue initiatives in five areas of shared interest: foster a healthy city, advance a prosperous future, build sustainable communities, promote Truth and Reconciliation, and combat racism.
- To date, about half (12) of the City's divisions have been engaged in academic partnership initiatives.
- Since 2023, the City has been a collaborator on academic grants worth \$199,553 to support City initiatives.
- Experiential learning opportunities have been created for 34 UTM students, and 15 UTM student placements contributed 2,600 hours of service to various City teams over the past two years while earning academic credit to complete their programs.
- Continuing to strengthen this partnership supports the City's long-term objectives and shared goals in the Strategic Plan.

Background

On June 1, 2023 the City and UTM established a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) to pursue shared goals and strategic collaborations to promote Truth and Reconciliation, combat racism, build sustainable communities, foster a healthy city and advance a prosperous

future. The MOU is implemented through strategic collaborations and operational working committees that include City and UTM directors who represent various lines of business. The partnership depends on collaboration among various City Divisions and various UTM staff. UTM was established in Mississauga in 1967 - before the City of Mississauga was incorporated the on Jan. 1, 1974. UTM is the second-largest division of the University of Toronto. It is known as one of Canada's leading universities on the world stage. It is ranked number one in Canada for teaching, research and innovation, graduate employability across North America for public universities, and is the world's only university to rank in the top 50 across 46 subjects.

UTM has 16,000 undergraduate students, 900 graduate students, over 3,800 full- and part-time employees (including 1,500 appointed faculty, staff and librarians) as well as over 75,000 alumni. In 2012, KPMG analyzed the economic impact of UTM on the Canadian and Ontario economies and found that the economic impact of ongoing spending associated with UTM generated an estimated value-added of \$272.7 million in Ontario. It is estimated that \$141.0 million in value-added was accrued in Mississauga alone. UTM plays an important role in Mississauga's economic growth and development.

The purpose of this corporate report is to provide an update to Council on the benefits of this academic partnership as we approach the midpoint of the five-year MOU, and to highlight some upcoming initiatives as part of this partnership.

Comments

The City has established a strong partnership with UTM that has resulted in many successes to date. Through the MOU, the City works with UTM on opportunities for promoting Truth and Reconciliation, combatting racism, building sustainable communities, fostering a healthy city and advancing a prosperous future.

Highlights of the many benefits this academic partnership has generated over the past two years are outlined below. See **Appendix 1** for a complete list of achievements.

Shared Goal	Achievement	Benefits	Divisions Involved
Truth and Reconciliation	In 2024, the City supported the UTM Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) in securing and expediting permits required to host the All-Nations Powwow on Sept. 28, 2024. The City waived all permit fees to the event and promoted this	Several hundred Indigenous community members from different nations gathered in Mississauga for the Powwow. The event served as an opportunity for non-Indigenous residents and community members in Mississauga and beyond to engage in a Powwow and	Enforcement Strategic Communications and Initiatives Parks Forestry & Environment Planning and

	event as part of the City's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation campaign.	further Truth and Reconciliation in Mississauga.	Building
Combatting racism	In 2023, the Capstone course in the Master of Urban Innovation (MUI) program explored how the City could build an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion lens tool.	This academic work established a foundation for the City's ongoing "Empowering Change: A Comprehensive Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy".	Strategic Communications and Initiatives
Building sustainable communities	In 2023, the City presented a "What's for Dinner? Exploring Locally Sourced Meals in Southern Ontario" exhibit. In 2024, the City presented the "Meet me at the Park" exhibit in partnership with the university's Master of Museums Studies program.	This partnership with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information began in 2021. It has allowed the City to nurture talent and deliver diverse programming in City museums that support City priorities, including public discussions on promoting sustainability.	Parks & Forestry & Environment
	Since 2023, the Master of Urban Innovation (MUI) program has allowed the City to tap into the next generation of talent to grow the City's micromobility program. In 2023 and 2024 the City hired MUI students and received the UTM Mobility Network Summer Internship Award that provided \$5,000 of salary support each year.	This program has allowed the City to nurture talent, and students supported initiatives in Active Transportation.	Infrastructure Planning & Engineering Services

<p>Healthy City</p>	<p>The City partnered with community organizations and University of Toronto academic partners as part of the 2025 Catalyst Grant projects. These projects aim to reduce social inequities in the risk and burden of diabetes and related cardiometabolic diseases through improved care, reduced risk factors, and healthier living environments. Each Catalyst Grant provides \$100,000 of annual funding. The project “Integrating Community Perspectives into Greenspace Policies and Planning in the City of Mississauga” led by Dr. Gillian Booth, Professor in the Department of Medicine, is being done in collaboration with the City.</p>	<p>The City was a co-applicant for the grant, which will provide the City with access to research to further its Healthy City Strategy and other initiatives, such as recommendation 13 from the City’s Future Directions: Parks, Forestry, and Environment Plan, “Develop approaches to remove barriers and enable marginalized and equity-deserving groups access to more spaces within parks.”</p>	<p>Strategic Communications and Initiatives Parks Forestry & Environment</p>
	<p>The City has continued its relationship with UTM’s Novo Nordisk Network for Healthy Populations (NHP) and joined its NHP Partnership Table.</p>	<p>Collaboration has allowed the City to leverage expertise and data for an evidence-informed approach to support the creation and continues to support the implementation of the City’s Healthy City Strategy.</p>	<p>Strategic Communications and Initiatives</p>
<p>Advancing a prosperous future</p>	<p>In 2023, the former Mayor joined UTM Vice-President and Principal, Alexandra Gillespie, at the BIO International Convention to announce the creation of SpinUp.</p>	<p>The City works in close collaboration with UTM to leverage strategic opportunities to attract investment to Mississauga that increase economic activity. SpinUp has attracted investments and</p>	<p>Economic Development Division/Invest Mississauga</p>

		<p>created jobs due to it being the “first venture incubator offering wet lab space in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area”. SpinUP is incubating the next generation of life science start-ups, enriching Mississauga’s life science cluster and filling a critical gap in the regional and provincial ecosystem for affordable wet-lab space, right here in Mississauga.</p>	
	<p>Since 2024, the City has worked in collaboration with the UTM Centre for Urban Environments (CUE) Research Awards Program. The focus is on City challenges and promoting a deeper understanding of civic issues. Five student researchers have been involved each year and are supported by a faculty member with relevant expertise.</p>	<p>Research projects are selected based on available academic expertise to supervise research, and existing council priorities or Master Plan Commitments to ensure all projects are actioned and progress is made. While the City benefits from new, bespoke research in support of policy-making and city-building, independent academic expertise also provides additional benefits.</p>	<p>Parks, Forestry & Environment Strategic Communications and Initiatives Infrastructure Planning & Engineering Services Recreation Enforcement MiWay</p>

	<p>The Fall 2025 MUI Local and Regional Government course allowed the City to identify best practices surrounding the governance and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) based on four comprehensive environmental scans with insights from Helsinki, San Jose, Seoul and more.</p>	<p>The research completed was used to identify and shape the interim actions of the City’s approach to AI.</p>	<p>Strategic Communications and Initiatives</p> <p>Information Technology</p> <p>Human Resources</p> <p>Legal Services</p> <p>City Clerks & Legislative Services</p>
--	---	--	--

As part of the City’s academic partnership with UTM, students and faculty have engaged meaningfully with the work of multiple divisions and important files. As a result, new paths to leverage research and resources have been uncovered across the City. Indeed, successes to date show how UTM student involvement has supported evidence-based city building. Similarly, the impact of engaging with staff and City challenges is opening students to new career paths and options after graduation.

While the City of Mississauga has enjoyed a relationship with UTM for many years, programs, partnerships and initiatives were developed on an ad hoc basis between faculty and divisions at the City. Through the MOU, a deliberate effort has been made to foster deeper connections between the two organizations and uncover new opportunities and relationships that otherwise would not exist. When embarking upon this MOU, staff reviewed the approach other national and international cities have taken to partner with their post-secondary institutions. The Mississauga/UTM MOU builds on this benchmarking but creates a made-in-Mississauga framework and agreement that works for both organizations.

Strategic Plan

Initiatives accomplished through the City’s Academic Partnerships Program help to:

- Bridge the gap between municipal needs and academic research;
- Use world-class expertise to continue building a world-class city;
- Promote innovation, job creation and economic growth;
- Offer experiential learning opportunities for students attending these schools; and
- Deepen our shared commitment toward equity, truth and reconciliation.

This work aligns with all five Strategic Pillars for Change (Move, Belong, Connect, Prosper and Green). Community engagement initiatives with UTM through the Imagine Mississauga campaign have helped to inform and refine the development of the City’s next Strategic Plan.

Financial Impact

Since the execution of the MOU on June 1, 2023, the City has been a collaborator on academic grants worth \$199,553 to support City initiatives. Furthermore, experiential learning opportunities have been created for 34 UTM students, and 15 nine UTM student placements contributed 2,600 hours of service to various City teams over the past two years while earning academic credit to complete their programs.

Conclusion

The City and UTM have a long history of working together to achieve mutually beneficial results. UTM's contributions to Mississauga's social, economic and urban environments are instrumental to the city's bright future. The ongoing execution of the MOU between the City and UTM continues to build a strong foundation and create new opportunities to meet shared goals.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Achievements and Benefits from the City's Academic Partnership with UTM



Geoff Wright, P.Eng, MBA, City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared by: Karen Gomez, Project Leader, Partnerships