

CREATING CAPACITY, CULTIVATING CHANGE

2013-2018

Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education

Strategic Academic Plan



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF KINESIOLOGY & PHYSICAL EDUCATION



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DEAN'S MESSAGE



“This plan signals our desire and intent to take full advantage of the fertile research, learning and experiential platforms afforded by our integrated Faculty.”

The Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education

is embarking on a bold course that, over the next five years, will propel us into national and international spotlights, renowned for our excellence in research, learning and practice. The strategies within this plan were carefully gleaned from over 200 proposed initiatives that arose out of consultation with an unusually broad spectrum of groups and individuals – among them students, student-athletes, faculty, staff and partners within and outside the University – all passionately interested in the future of the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education.

Our breadth and passion emanate from a key characteristic that differentiates this Faculty from other divisions at the University of Toronto – and also makes us an increasingly rare breed among the myriad kinesiology and physical education programs in the country: the integration of academic and co-curricular endeavours. We fulfil concomitant responsibilities to be the University of Toronto’s vehicle for excellent research, undergraduate and graduate degree programs in our disciplinary areas; to deliver a huge slate of co-curricular physical activity and sports programs; and, to provide the opportunities and supports for students from all divisions and campuses to represent the University of Toronto as Varsity Blues athletes. We embrace this multi-faceted mission.

While our integrated nature has always been a feature of the Faculty, this is the first academic plan to incorporate and articulate the strategic objectives for our co-curricular programs alongside those for our curricular programs. This plan signals our desire and intent to take full advantage of the fertile research, learning and experiential platforms afforded by our integrated Faculty. To do so effectively and efficiently requires creating capacity by marshalling and directing resources (e.g., people, space, dollars, time and energy), and cultivating change through a shared understanding of the future vision for our Faculty.

Without such clarity, there is a risk that decision-making in the future will be done on an ad hoc basis. With that clarity comes transparent decision-making about the alignment and allocation of Faculty resources in order to progress towards the shared vision of our future state. The documentation and communication of that shared understanding is the objective of this academic plan.

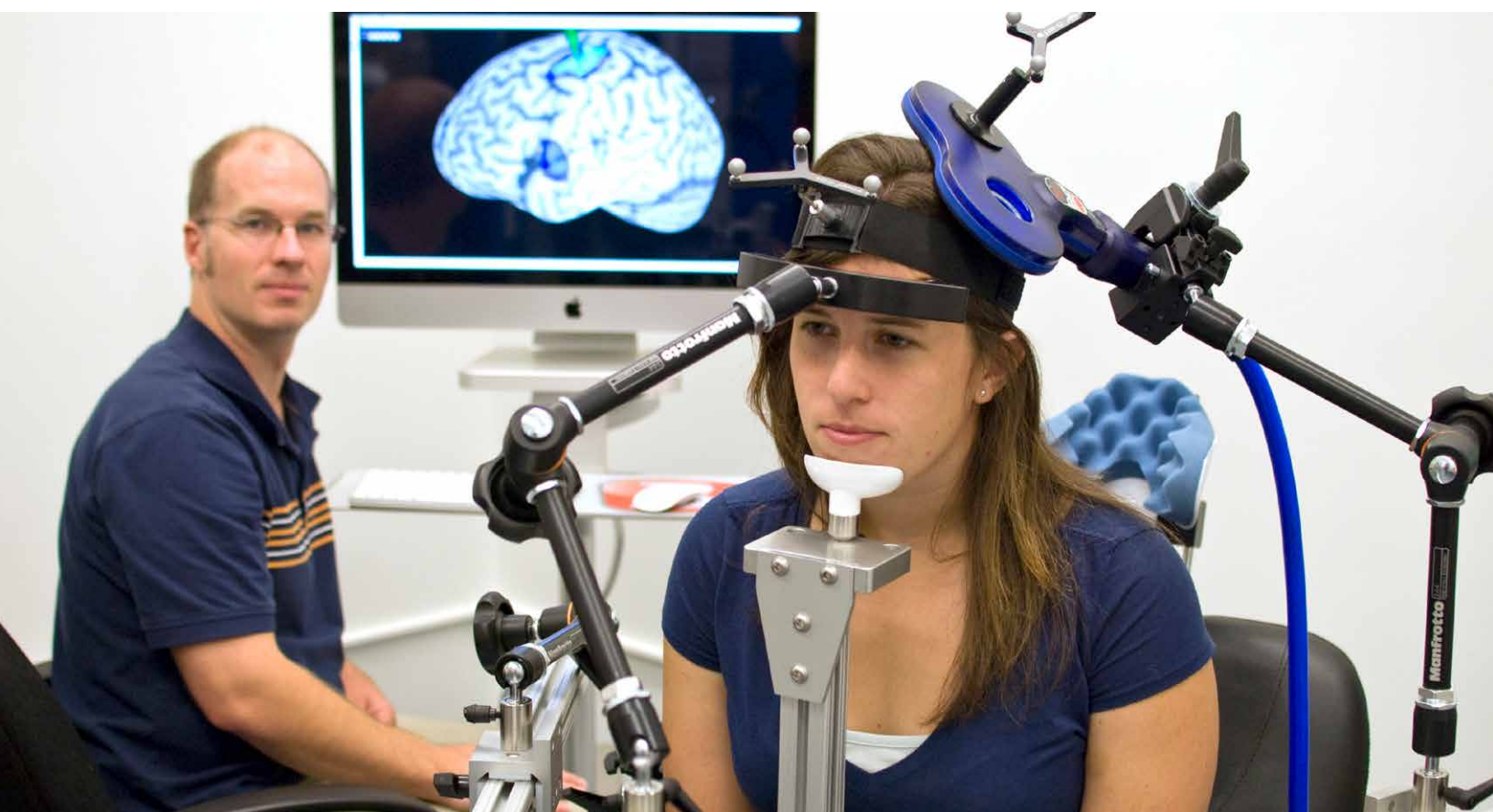
INTRODUCTION

**“The mission
of our Faculty
remains more
important today
than ever”**

today we find ourselves facing a confounding contradiction: the awareness of the importance of physical activity to our overall health and well-being has never been higher, and yet the crisis of physical inactivity persists – indeed, it grows – year over year. Moreover, the research is unequivocal: those who participate in physical activity and sport programs are likely to reap huge benefits for their health and well-being, and for our students those benefits extend to their academic experience, their social networks and their leadership skills.

The mission of our Faculty, therefore, remains more important today than ever given what we now know about the personal health and well-being benefits of healthy active living, and the costs of physical inactivity to our collective health and our health care system. We aim to develop, advance and disseminate knowledge about physical activity, health and their interactions through education, research, leadership and the provision of opportunity. Areas of study cover the spectrum of physical activity, including exercise, play, sport, dance and physical inactivity. We draw upon all of the major sources of knowledge in the academy: the physical and life sciences, the social sciences and the humanities. This framework has been our *raison d'être* since the creation of the Faculty in 1998, and this new academic plan confirms that we will remain grounded in this mission.

This academic plan clearly identifies major strategic goals and operational initiatives that we believe are key to fulfilling that mission: guided by a vision of achieving international recognition for excellence in all our endeavours – research, teaching and practice – to such an extent that we inspire our nation to achieve higher levels of engagement in healthy physical activity and sports.



MISSION

We develop, advance and disseminate knowledge about physical activity, health and their interactions through education, research, leadership and the provision of opportunity.

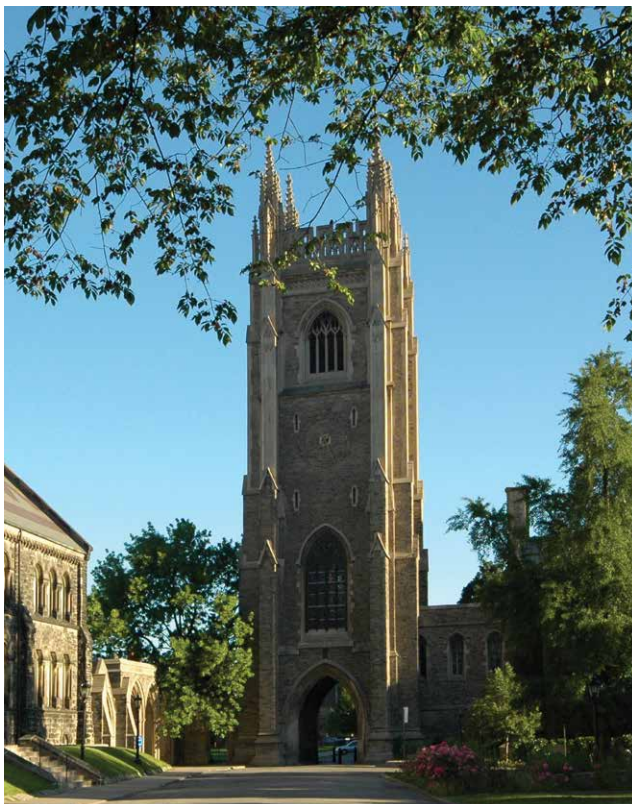
VISION

International recognition for our excellence in research, teaching and practice, and for inspiring our University community and nation to achieve higher levels of engagement in healthy physical activity and sports.

VALUES

While achieving this vision, our decisions and actions will be guided by and consistent with the values of integrity, respect, equity and diversity, leadership and excellence.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



The Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education

is building momentum for its journey towards the new vision through three distinctive characteristics, which are also valuable points of leverage, referred to here as “springboards.” Throughout the academic planning process, these springboards served as catalysts for the generation and prioritization of our goals, and for identifying initiatives with high potential to move the Faculty towards those goals effectively and efficiently.

The first springboard is the **University of Toronto** itself. The sheer volume, spectrum and depth of knowledge and innovation that is within arms’ reach provides immense potential for targeted partnerships and initiatives within the U of T community that could be applied toward our vision.

The second is our geographical location within the **Greater Toronto Area**, in close proximity to a broad range of agencies and organizations that are potential partners for collaborative research platforms, resource-sharing, and experiential learning and professional development opportunities.

The third is **our integrated Faculty**, with its curricular and research programs as well as responsibilities for university-wide co-curricular programs, recently rated by external reviewers as among the largest and best on our continent. An enormous amount of time and energy has been successfully invested in building this integrated Faculty since its founding, and the potential is tremendously promising for that investment to yield rich academic dividends.

OUR CURRENT ENVIRONMENT



The academic discipline of kinesiology is a comprehensive one that spans and integrates socio-cultural, biophysical and behavioural studies. Fast becoming a model of inter-disciplinarity, the Faculty draws upon all the major disciplines of knowledge, from the life and physical sciences to the social sciences and humanities. Moreover, our extensive co-curricular programs help realize the University priority of enhancing the student experience, contributing significantly to the health and well-being of the student body and to learning outside the classroom.

There is great interest in and demand for both our undergraduate and graduate programs. We also have a burgeoning research culture. Moreover, we offer co-curricular physical activity, recreation and sport programs to over 50,000 U of T students as well as faculty, staff and community members. Through these programs we employ over 1,000 individuals annually, many of whom are students, which distinguishes us as the largest divisional employer of part-time students on campus. Our Faculty is also the home of a highly-regarded sport medicine clinic that serves U of T student-athletes and the broader community.

The Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education is one of seven health sciences faculties at the University of Toronto, together

with Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health and Social Work. We also share common challenges and interests with all U of T single department faculties and the other direct entry faculties. We are linked programmatically with additional faculties such as the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education for our concurrent teacher education program; the Faculty of Arts and Science, where many of our students take elective courses; and most of the other University of Toronto divisions where student-athletes are enrolled and where tens of thousands of students participate in our co-curricular programs and activities. Our faculty members are actively engaged in inter-divisional collaborative programs and research centres at U of T, as well as in research institutes, professional bodies, and public, non-governmental and private organizations across the GTA.

Our recent academic growth is reflected in the 30 per cent increase in our faculty complement since 2011, 45 per cent and 55 per cent increases in our respective undergraduate and graduate student bodies in that same timeframe, and the recent addition of critical research services and teaching staff. This growth nurtures an increasing population of graduates who will become “change agents” in their communities, continuing to fulfill the Faculty’s vision long after they leave us.

As we take stock within the Faculty, at the University of Toronto and beyond, a number of factors that impact our new vision emerge. They include:

Challenges

- **Developing the capacity – through our students, faculty, staff and infrastructure – to realize our goals.** We have made some good progress, but our renewed vision requires increased capacity in all of these areas.
- **Building partnerships to leverage people, space and experiential learning.** Our network of connections must continually expand as we look for creative new collaborative research platforms and learning opportunities.
- **Differentiating U of T's KPE programs from the myriad kinesiology programs across the country.** As the number and quality of kinesiology programs in Canada grow, our expectations for excellence mean that we must stand out from the crowd to recruit the best and brightest students and faculty from across the country and around the world.
- **Providing a continuum of physical activity and sports opportunities for students.** Building and maintaining co-curricular programs that meet the needs of tens of thousands of University of Toronto students is a tall order. Faced with finite resources we know we must prioritize carefully, but we remain committed to providing rich learning experiences beyond the classroom that reflect the diversity of our student body.
- **Offering a broader array of flexible learning and program opportunities for our students.** Modes of producing and sharing knowledge and experiential opportunities are constantly evolving. Attracting top students requires that we engage, motivate and challenge them throughout their academic experience.

Opportunities

- **The knowledge, expectations and capabilities of our future students, faculty and staff.** Our Faculty has a history of attracting great people. We need to pave the way for continued success in recruiting, retaining and developing: talented, dynamic and passionate students and student-athletes; outstanding researchers and scientists; excellent teachers, coaches and instructors; and responsive, effective and efficient staff.
- **"Kinesiology" as a new regulated health profession in Ontario.** In April 2013 "registered kinesiologist" became a provincially-regulated health profession in Ontario. We need to provide a framework for success for those of our students who aspire to join this health profession.
- **Public thirst for research and knowledge translation in physical activity, health and sport.** There is a progressively growing demand for our disciplinary expertise from government organizations, non-governmental organizations, and commercial/industrial sectors.
- **Institutional research funding programs.** Our Faculty's researchers have recently made strong strides in securing new funding in recognition of their growing prominence and the Faculty's expanding research capacity. We intend to build on this momentum as we seek support from major institutional funding sources such as the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Canada Research Chairs program.
- **Increasing student demand for sport and physical activity infrastructure and programming.** This reality is both an opportunity and challenge that reinforces the importance of our mission.
- **Advances in teaching and learning technologies.** Avenues for engaging our students continue to evolve. We aim to stretch our thinking about technologies that facilitate our mission and are not constrained by the boundaries of our physical spaces.
- **The research, scholarship and experiential learning scenarios presented by the Toronto 2015 Pan and ParaPan American Games.** The hosting of these Games in Toronto opens up a world of possibilities for research collaborations, partnerships, student leadership and community engagement. We intend to capitalize on these opportunities.

SHAPING OUR FUTURE

In determining the best way to broaden our impact and realize our vision, we have identified four priority goals linked to a number of strategic initiatives. Over the course of the next five years, these are the key areas toward which the Faculty's time, energy and resources will be directed:

Educate
Students

Strengthen
Research

Improve
Participation

Build
Capacity



1 Educate and graduate a diverse student body who become productive contributors and leaders in their fields



STRATEGIC GOAL #1:

EDUCATE AND GRADUATE A DIVERSE STUDENT BODY WHO BECOME PRODUCTIVE CONTRIBUTORS AND LEADERS IN THEIR FIELDS

INITIATIVES:

1. Embrace initiatives that differentiate our programs from those of other universities
2. Develop recruitment and enrollment plans to ensure that optimal numbers of high quality students are enrolling in our academic degree programs
3. Develop and implement tracking mechanisms that will improve our knowledge about our students' academic and career aspirations, changes in those aspirations during the time they are our students, and their careers after they leave the Faculty
4. Expand and promote experiential education and research opportunities throughout graduate and undergraduate curricula
 - a) integrate concepts and theoretical learning with practical
 - b) expand opportunities for research-based learning
 - c) optimize the "Outdoor Programs" curriculum and consider its offering to other divisions, affording related leadership opportunities for KPE students
 - d) leverage U of T engagement in Pan & ParaPan Am 2015 Games for experiential education and leadership development opportunities
 - e) develop opportunities for academic specialization (e.g., diplomas, certificates)
5. Prepare students who aspire to become educators, health professionals (including registered kinesiologists), and researchers
6. Strengthen partnerships with other U of T divisions for mutual benefit
 - a) provide opportunities for "inter-professional education"
 - b) consider offering the "Outdoor Programs" curriculum to other divisions, affording related leadership opportunities for KPE students
 - c) seek delivery of Physical Activity & Health courses in other divisions
7. Increase opportunities for flexible teaching and learning modes
8. Embrace technology advances to expand access and opportunities
9. Develop active and focused international exchange opportunities program for students, faculty and staff
10. Enhance equity and diversity content throughout undergraduate and graduate degree programs

2 Strengthen recognition and productivity in research, scholarship, innovation and creative activity



STRATEGIC GOAL #2:

STRENGTHEN RECOGNITION AND PRODUCTIVITY IN RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, INNOVATION AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

INITIATIVES:

1. Focus on faculty recruitment and retention that nurtures and cultivates comprehensive and inter-disciplinary approaches to research areas of societal importance
2. Revise the associate dean graduate education and research position to one dedicated solely to the research portfolio.
3. Build collaborations within and beyond the University of Toronto
 - a) leverage the broad spectrum of potential U of T research collaborators, our location in the Greater Toronto Area and our co-curricular mandate
 - b) establish and nurture new extra-departmental units; possibilities include Centre for Equity and Diversity in Sport, Health & Physical Activity; Centre for Exercise & Chronic Diseases; Centre for Physical Activity & Mental Health; Centre for High Performance Sports Research
 - c) foster research partnering links with external organizations such as government, the not-for-profit sector, schools, industry and international collaborators
 - d) strengthen intra-faculty research teams
 - e) increase the linkages between faculty research and knowledge exchange among the Faculty, the university community and society
4. Establish a research chair(s) to lead one of the research centres, to be filled by a figure of international prominence
5. Increase number of PhD students as proportion of total graduate student complement
6. Dedicate resources to facilitating linkages between research and co-curricular programs
7. Promote and support the David L. MacIntosh Sport Medicine Clinic as a research platform
8. Broaden communications and promotional vehicles to highlight our research accomplishments within and outside of U of T
9. Leverage U of T engagement in 2015 Pan & ParaPan American Games

3

Improve participation rates and performance outcomes across the continuum of co-curricular physical activity and sports programs



STRATEGIC GOAL #3:

IMPROVE PARTICIPATION RATES AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES ACROSS THE CONTINUUM OF CO-CURRICULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS PROGRAMS

INITIATIVES:

1. Realize greater participation among the entire U of T student body in broad-based physical activity programming
 - a.) support initiatives to increase the co-curricular program participation rate, and identify and diminish barriers to participation
 - b.) increase awareness of students that KPE facilities are accessible to all and there are programs to meet diverse physical activity and sport interests
 - c.) augment programming that is sensitive and attuned to university community demographics and diversity
 - d.) augment, improve and enhance student leadership development opportunities through the Faculty's co-curricular programs
 - e.) identify desired learning outcomes in co-curricular programs that can be incorporated into the U of T Co-Curricular Record
2. Promote and support opportunities for students to excel at high performance sport because of the associated contributions to and from academic success, institutional identity, research, teaching, practice, coaching, partnerships and leadership
3. Refine the University's sport model to better meet our concurrent commitments to excellence, equity and student engagement
 - a). Identify and implement viable recommendations from the 2013 Sport Model Review that are aligned with a commitment to excellence, equity and student engagement in sport and physical activity programming. A new "sport model" should provide a continuum of opportunities for club, intramural and intercollegiate sports while being aligned with the Faculty's strategic goals.
 - b). Develop criteria to inform decision-making, and implement decisions about resource allocation directed at increasing success in intercollegiate sports
4. Augment and improve the organizational framework and physical infrastructure for co-curricular program operations to facilitate achieving strategic goals
5. Enhance student leadership opportunities
6. Build resources through partnerships with other U of T divisions and external partners
7. Leverage U of T engagement in 2015 Pan & ParaPan American Games to improve the co-curricular experience
8. Increase opportunities for professoriate in KPE and other academic divisions to be more engaged in the Faculty's equity and diversity initiatives

4 Build new capacity through investments in infrastructure, people and partnerships



STRATEGIC GOAL #4:

BUILD NEW CAPACITY THROUGH INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE, PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

INITIATIVES:

- 1. Create capacity to accommodate the increased interest in undergraduate and graduate studies in kinesiology and exercise sciences**
 - a) Reach a new “steady state” of 250 first-year undergraduate students
 - b) Reach a new “steady state” of 104 graduate students across all years of the MSc and PhD programs
- 2. Increase internal Faculty research funding**
 - a) create new KPE research award fund to support proof-of-concept research leading to research grant proposals to prominent research granting agencies
 - b) identify and prioritize areas for KPE support for next rounds of Canadian Foundation for Innovation research infrastructure grants
- 3. Augment staff support for:**
 - a) student academic counseling and support
 - b) research services
 - c) undergraduate and graduate student recruitment
 - d) human resources coordination and management
 - e) teaching laboratory coordination
- 4. Optimize infrastructure**
 - a) develop a master plan for all the facilities that the Faculty manages or programs, including playing fields and spaces in other divisions on the three campuses that may be available, with a view to optimizing their use by and for students, and to create a healthy and hospitable environment in which to work
 - b) improve facility access, functionality and visibility
 - c) renovate underused and unused physical infrastructure space in Benson Building
 - d) leverage U of T support of Pan & ParaPan Am 2015 Games to improve infrastructure
- 5. Launch the Faculty’s “Boundless” advancement campaign as one that focuses on generating resources for “excellence”**
- 6. Establish and promulgate clear policies, procedures and standards for regular administrative operations**
- 7. Promote, instill and reward a “service-first” culture among staff**

SETTING THE STAGE

More opportunities for students.

We will continue to increase our faculty complement to support the growth in our student complement – continuing to seek excellence in new faculty and staff to ensure our students enjoy a wide range of courses, professional placements and research opportunities from which to choose.



Enhanced infrastructure.

The Goldring Centre for High Performance Sport and the two new synthetic turf fields on back campus will represent tremendous resources for furthering both our curricular and co-curricular missions. Major investments in existing facility renewal are also ongoing and will continue into the future.

Strengthened organizational capacity.

We will continue to build our capacity by stretching our thinking about new resources (human and financial) and by casting a critical eye on potential areas of divestment so that the goals and initiatives identified in this academic plan can be appropriately supported with focused energy.

A smiling woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a dark blue Toronto Track and Field shirt. She is looking towards the camera with a bright smile. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a gymnasium setting.

ASSESSING PROGRESS

We will know we are making progress when:

Our **students, faculty and staff** demonstrate increased enthusiasm, engagement and initiative

The **University leadership** and broader U of T community express greater support for, engagement in and prioritization of our programs and initiatives

Student applicants identify our Faculty as their “first choice” for undergraduate and graduate programs

We are seen as excellent in the eyes of the **research community**, as evidenced by strong research metrics and “esteem indicators”

We receive greater attention and engagement from the **community at large**

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

STRATEGIC GOAL #1

Educate and graduate a student body who become productive contributors and leaders in their fields

- Acceptance rates from student applicants increase
- Student retention and graduation rates increase
- NSSE scores improve
- Post-graduation status of our students indicates engagement in related fields
- Diversity indicators reflect society around us
- Student survey data reflect improved satisfaction with courses
- International student numbers increase
- Kinesiologists of Ontario Regulatory College data indicate students are well-prepared
- Experiential education opportunities increase and are well-received

STRATEGIC GOAL #2

Strengthen capacity, productivity and recognition in research, scholarship and creative activity

- Traditional research metrics improve
- Endowed research chair(s) are established
- CFI funding awarded to Faculty increases
- Research esteem indicators rise
- Membership on granting councils grows
- Leadership in scholarly organizations increases
- Requests for access to our expertise and invitations to collaborate in research increase
- Impact analyses of research by individual faculty members is demonstrated
- Communications media hits rise
- Numbers of PhD and post doc fellowships and applicants increase
- Visiting scholars increase
- Indicators of undergraduate student engagement in research improve
- Physical infrastructure area available for research grows
- Intellectual property increases

STRATEGIC GOAL #3

Improved participation rates and performance outcomes across the continuum of co-curricular physical activity and sports programs

- Faculty programs are validated in the new U of T Co-curricular Record
- Participation rates rise
- Spectator attendance grows
- Learning outcomes for co-curricular programs are identified and validated
- The importance of co-curricular sports and physical activity programs for university pride, identification and morale is more broadly recognized at the University
- Records in high performance sports improve
- Success rates in recruiting student-athletes improve
- Uptake by other divisions of physical activity program initiatives increases
- Indicators of personal development through sport improve
- Student-athlete evaluations of their experience improve
- Diversity of program offerings better align with the diversity of our population
- Engagement of faculty members and graduate students grows
- Research and science contributions by faculty members – and uptake and engagement of coaches/athletes in research – grow
- Indicators of quality of care in sport medicine support improve
- Awards and indicators of recognition increase

STRATEGIC GOAL #4

Build capacity through investments in infrastructure, people and partnerships

- NASMs available to Faculty increase
- Advancement achievements augment capacity
- Faculty complement increases
- New partnerships inside and outside of U of T create more leverage
- Co-location with other organizations' facilities and personnel is realized



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