



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MEDICINE

# Academic Strategic Plan

Leadership in advancing new knowledge,  
better health and equity

2018–2023



## Overview

**The Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto** has a deep history of global leadership in all aspects of its work – from discovery science and ground-breaking innovation to preparing expert physicians, rehabilitation professionals and researchers. The Faculty is known for: developing graduates who lead in their fields; attracting powerhouse scientists; fostering interdisciplinary research and learning; an unprecedented network of integrated academic and clinical sites; and access to one of the most diverse populations in the world.

With this unique breadth, depth and strength, developing a strategy for the next five years was about examining and articulating the impact that the Faculty of Medicine is having on the world, and identifying how it can fully live into its possibilities.

In early 2018, the Faculty held a series of engagement sessions to bring together diverse voices to explore high level strategic questions: How do we fully enable the “Toronto Advantage” – our unparalleled resources and strengths – to make a difference in the world? How do we anticipate what the world will need from our graduates and ensure they are poised to lead and create change in an increasingly complex world? And with our unique resources, where should we be focusing our provincial, national and global leadership?

These conversations included more than 400 faculty, learners, staff, academic and clinical partners, innovation leaders and patients and focused on the full scope of the Faculty of Medicine – Rehabilitation Sciences, Basic Sciences and Clinical sectors encompassing all aspects of teaching, research and administration.

Among the multiple strengths for the Faculty, the community continually pointed to an openness to collaboration, ranging from interdisciplinary research and interprofessional learning to the Faculty’s ability to connect diverse clinical sites through the TAHSN network. This openness to collaboration was matched by a perceived valuing of equity and inclusion, and a deep desire to fully enable diversity in all aspects of our work. This means bring people together from across different disciplines and professions, but also ensuring we reflect the multitude of identities present at U of T and in the population of the Greater Toronto Area. Finally, the engagement sessions revealed a thirst to take the potential for innovation within the Faculty to a new level.

Throughout the planning process it became clear that the Faculty of Medicine is well established in all of its realms for ground-breaking research and innovation, leading approaches to teaching, meaningful relationships with clinical sites and economic sustainability. At the same time, there is a high desire to take on even greater leadership on some of the biggest health, science and equity issues, including Indigenous health, partnering to improve clinical care and ramping up the impact of its research and innovation, through meaningful translation to clinical practice and through commercialization.

Over the next few years, the primary strategic need is not to invent new elements for the Faculty, but to amplify the impact of what it is already achieving. This amplification should be focused on a fusion of what currently exists, to more fully share knowledge and resources across the Faculty, University and TAHSN network, and to expand international partnerships and impact. There is a need to actively incentivize and shape collaboration, cross-pollination and new ideas through process and support. Finally, a need was identified to bring the Faculty’s focus on diversity and wellbeing to a new dimension, recognizing that excellence is not possible without equity, diversity and a thriving human environment. We cannot equip the next generation nor address the most difficult scientific and health questions without bringing the full force of multiple perspectives to bear.

# Engagement Process

**This strategy was developed through broad consultations**, beginning with the engagement of a Strategic Planning Steering Committee made up of representatives from leaders in Clinical Medicine, Rehabilitation Sciences, Basic Sciences, students, and partners from the Toronto Academic Health Science Network. This group helped to identify topics of inquiry and key targets for our initial stakeholder consultation.

Between January and March of 2018, we hosted 14 focus groups with existing committees and teams from across the Faculty of Medicine, and members of the Steering Committee reached out to key partners from across our network and into the international community of academic health science institutions to gather input and perspectives about how the University of Toronto is perceived today and what we need to pay attention to as we plan for the next 10–15 years. In total, more than 400 people were consulted.

The initial consultation informed the creation of six big strategic topics that needed further exploration:

- Preparing the Health Sciences Leaders of the Future
- Strengthening Collaborative Research and Research Pathways
- Healthy Organization/Belonging and Wellness
- Our Focus as a Leader
- Enabling Thriving Innovation
- University/Health Sciences Centre Collaborations

These topics were each explored in half-day intensive strategy sessions that brought together leaders from across the Faculty and TASHN, faculty, staff, students and key partners to explore possible priority areas of focus in each of these domains. The results of these rich and meaningful conversations were consolidated to create a guiding vision for the Faculty of Medicine, three strategic domains of focus and two enabling elements.

The Faculty of Medicine's  
**Guiding Vision:**

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*Our learners, graduates, faculty, staff and partners will be an unparalleled force for new knowledge, better health and equity.*

*We will cultivate and bring to life ideas that impact scholarship and society through unprecedented collaboration drawing in the diverse voices of our research, learning and clinical network.*

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This vision will be realized through **action in five areas:**

### 3 Strategic Domains of Focus:



#### Ecosystem of Collaboration

Promote, incentivize and support a new level of collaboration among our faculty, staff, learners, academic health science partners and our community that fuses the diverse strengths of our network and creates new possibilities for research, education and solutions for better health in our communities. Everything we do will set us up for exponential impact that draws on the diverse voices in our unparalleled research, learning and clinical network.



#### Groundbreaking Imagination

Amplify our discoveries and academic excellence, escalate the real-world impact of our research and teaching and make space for novel collaborations that produce the extraordinary. We will cultivate and bring to life ideas that impact scholarship and society.



#### Excellence through Equity

Make inclusion and equity essential components of how we define and foster excellence in scholarship, practice and health outcomes. Individuals across the Faculty of Medicine, regardless of how they identify, will be invited to have a voice and be empowered to effect change. Our environment will draw in and draw on our global outlook through diverse perspectives from a range of disciplines. Our graduates will be internationally recognized as a change force for equity.

### 2 Enablers to Support these Domains:



#### Support Health and Wellbeing in Everything We Do

Foster a culture where health, wellbeing and resiliency are considered and integrated in all elements of our enterprise from the places we work, learn and conduct research to the opportunities people have to express their diverse needs.



#### Infrastructure, Policies and Technology that Compel Collaboration and Support Sustainability

Create seamless flow of ideas and effective stewardship of resources within the Faculty of Medicine, across the University, across the TAHSN network and with other local, national and international partners to enhance our ability to collaborate and have collective sustainable impact.

# Goals, Objectives and Strategic Initiatives



## 1. Ecosystem of Collaboration

Promote, incentivize and support a new level of collaboration among our faculty, staff, learners, academic health science partners and our community that fuses the diverse strengths of our network and creates new possibilities for research, education and solutions for better health in our communities. Everything we do will set us up for exponential impact that draws on the diverse voices in our unparalleled research, learning and clinical network.

### GOALS

- Enable integration and collaboration opportunities across the Faculty of Medicine's sectors and educational portfolios
- Make robust collaboration rewarding and more seamless Faculty-wide, University-wide and city-wide
- Act as the catalyst and connector for addressing big questions in health and healthcare

### OBJECTIVES

- Create tools, resources and venues to enable easy sharing of existing research, innovation and scholarship across the Faculty and among our academic partners
- Investigate, design and implement incentives for meaningful collaboration across our academic health sciences network
- Elevate our teaching and student experience to embed expectations of collaboration in learning, clinical care and research
- Identify strategic topics where a city-wide effort provides obvious benefits and pilot a robust collaboration approach

### INITIAL PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- Build on successful models of large-scale data-driven projects (e.g. UTOPIAN, Gemini) to create new opportunities for collaboration with data sciences
- Engage in Master Planning process to identify gaps, avoid duplication and create transformational environments to meet the Faculty's future needs for collaborative learning and research across all sectors and programs
- Optimize our learning environments to deepen the integration of wellness, respect and resilience
- Develop and integrate programs to promote the highest standards of research integrity and other professional values that align with the University and TAHSN partners
- Enhance shared processes, agreements and contracts across TAHSN to catalyze collaborative research and learning (e.g. Indirect costs, major infrastructure, data management)
- Explore strategic joint-fundraising initiatives with hospital partners for aligned and shared priorities that maximize donor impact



## 2. Groundbreaking Imagination

Amplify our discoveries and academic excellence, escalate the real-world impact of our research and teaching and make space for novel collaborations that produce the extraordinary. We will cultivate and bring to life ideas that impact scholarship and society.

### GOALS

- Actively promote an environment where world-leading fundamental research and novel ideas have the highest potential to thrive
- Build infrastructure and opportunities that drive learning across disciplines, fields and perspectives
- Link existing incubators and entrepreneurship programs to advance and translate knowledge into positive benefits for our communities
- Foster an environment and support system where innovation activities, entrepreneurship, commercialization and risk-taking are rewarded

### OBJECTIVES

- Leverage the University's position as a hub to remove barriers and stimulate interdisciplinary research and collaboration within and beyond the Faculty of Medicine
- Foster passion for research among students and trainees to strengthen future generations of clinician-scientists
- Give students the tools to create successful career pathways
- Create better links to existing supports for entrepreneurship and bridge identified gaps including education and certificate opportunities

### INITIAL PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- Build capacity to reflect the emerging role of artificial intelligence in health professions
- Develop a pipeline for research and innovation leadership in the Faculty through training and faculty development (e.g. creating a Research-Entrepreneur-in-Residence pilot program)
- Stimulate interdisciplinary research and collaboration across the Faculty and TAHSN (e.g. through novel seeding funding grants, expanding citywide Rounds and developing an annual summit on innovation and collaboration)
- Explore novel digital platforms to enhance educational and research opportunities
- Increase rehabilitation research and clinical capacity to address burgeoning demographic needs

# Goals, Objectives and Strategic Initiatives



## 3. Excellence through Equity

Make inclusion and equity essential components of how we define and foster excellence in scholarship, practice and health outcomes. Individuals across the Faculty of Medicine, regardless of how they identify, will be invited to have a voice and be empowered to effect change. Our environment will draw in and draw on our global outlook through diverse perspectives from a range of disciplines. Our graduates will be internationally recognized as a change force for equity.

### GOALS

- Create a community of leaders across the Faculty of Medicine that is held accountable to advance equity, diversity and inclusion
- Empower students and graduates as leaders who will effect positive change and drive health equity
- Build world-leading scholarship around equity and inclusion
- Transform our Faculty to be fully inclusive of the communities that we serve
- Actively draw in diverse voices and perspectives to elevate our work in scholarship, practice and health equity

### OBJECTIVES

- Embed principles of equity and inclusion into curricula and teaching across the Faculty to create a safe and healthy learning environment for all
- Work with central University partners to ensure education, outreach and resources are provided to strengthen equity mechanisms, and to hold leaders accountable for supporting inclusion
- Maximize opportunities for qualified learners from diverse backgrounds to gain admission to all programs in the Faculty
- Partner with Indigenous communities, patients and across TAHSN to deliver on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Create interdisciplinary structures that draw in and draw on diverse voices around key education and research questions

### INITIAL PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- Create and resource a comprehensive equity, diversity and inclusion plan, including a review of current resources across the Faculty, development of interdisciplinary programs, and expansion of the “We All Belong” campaign
- Review and clarify policies, procedures, reporting processes and best practices in communication with respect to intimidation, discrimination and harassment, and improve alignment across the Faculty.
- Expand the mandate of the Office of Indigenous Medical Education to support learners, faculty and staff across the Faculty, identifying appropriate resources and Indigenous leadership
- Expand our Diversity Mentorship Program beyond first- and second-year MD program learners
- Foster principles-based international partnerships that recognize and build on Faculty investments and strategic priorities



## Enabler 1: Support Health and Wellbeing in Everything We Do

Foster a culture where health, wellbeing and resiliency are considered and integrated in all elements of our enterprise from the places we work, learn and conduct research to the opportunities people have to express their diverse needs.

### OBJECTIVES

- Develop a leadership role and comprehensive strategy to advance health, wellbeing and resiliency across the Faculty, including a robust mentorship approach
- Build on comprehensive Faculty survey data to create a set of metrics and programs that support a culture of wellness
- Create tangible opportunities to reward professionalism and health-supporting behaviours from Faculty leaders
- Create a joint Faculty of Medicine/TAHSN shared equity and wellness initiative to support faculty, staff and learner health and wellbeing within the University and across teaching and research sites



## Enabler 2: Infrastructure, Policies and Technology that Compel Collaboration and Support Sustainability

Create seamless flow of ideas and effective stewardship of resources within the Faculty of Medicine, across the University, across the TAHSN network and with other local, national and international partners to enhance our ability to collaborate and have collective sustainable impact.

### OBJECTIVES

- Eliminate “red tape” across the Faculty and beyond, to foster easy transfer of data, knowledge, resources and people to strengthen research, collaboration and learning
- Work with TAHSN partners to create unified strategies for information management for clinical and research data sharing, liability, health and safety, agreements and contracts
- Work with our partners to create TAHSN-wide enabling roles to take action on integrated approaches to structures, policies and incentives
- Align investments in technology and other infrastructure to support our strategic goals and the ongoing sustainability of our work

