

UTSC Clusters of Scholarly Prominence Program (CSPP)

The Vision

Game-changing research and innovation increasingly requires both collaboration across a broad range of disciplines and multi-sectoral partnerships. To help facilitate such outcomes, the University of Toronto Scarborough's (UTSC) strategic plan, *Inspiring Inclusive Excellence Beyond 2030: A strategic vision for the University of Toronto Scarborough*, commits to the establishment of "three research institutes, organized around our areas of established and emerging strength, and supported by an appropriate funding framework which will build the capacity in people and infrastructure necessary to realize our vision of global prominence in particular areas of scholarship." As noted in the strategic plan, the institutes are to be provisionally known as:

- i. Institute for Globalization, Transnationalism and the Advancement of Resilient, Inclusive Suburbs and Economies (GTA-RISE) – related to global cultures, connectivities, identities, and livelihoods
- ii. Institute for Environmental, Conservation, and Sustainability Research (ECSR) – related to environment, conservation, sustainability and related technologies
- iii. Institute for Integrated Health Research (IHR) – related to health, well-being, and resilient communities

Opportunities will also exist to establish additional Institutes or areas of collaboration that are yet unknown. The institutes will provide administrative support for the development and operation of strategic clusters of research excellence at UTSC, foster synergies among clusters within each institute, and facilitate collaboration across institutes. (Please refer to Appendix 1 of this document – UTSC Inclusive Excellence Strategic Framework for Scholarly Collaboration and Prominence – Global Research, Local Relevance.)

The funding framework identified in *Inspiring Inclusive Excellence Beyond 2030* is to be known as the **Clusters of Scholarly Prominence Programme (CSPP)**. Its purpose is to promote self-sustaining, interdisciplinary, inter-departmental, collaborative clusters of scholarship in areas of established and emerging strength at UTSC that have a demonstrable capacity to augment University of Toronto's (U of T) global standing through prominence in research, creative activity and exceptional learning.

CSPP-supported clusters are expected to generate impactful, transformative research that transcends traditional departmental and institutional boundaries and thereby enables UTSC to create and disseminate new knowledge and innovations that will benefit the citizens of Canada and beyond. The clusters are expected to foster strategic global research alliances such as the VPRI/VPI initiative of Global Research Alliances (see: <https://global.utoronto.ca/idc-application/>).

Clusters funded by the CSPP should clearly exhibit significant potential to:

- elevate the University of Toronto Scarborough’s provincial, national and international profile as a cluster of research excellence across a wide diversity of fields;
- succeed in major, large-value funding competitions (e.g. NSERC Alliance, NSERC CREATE, SSHRC PG and IG, NFRF, NCE, CFI);
- help attract new top-tier faculty and high-quality trainees;
- support and enhance undergraduate and graduate training and post-doctoral fellowship programs;
- draw upon regional, provincial and/or national assets and partnerships to promote knowledge mobilization (i.e., knowledge co-creation, sharing, translation, operationalization) and/or to generate socio-economic impact; and
- become financially sustainable.

While the CSPP is primarily meant to support areas of established and emerging strength, in line with the strategic plan’s priorities as represented by the institutes, it is also available to support other nodes of high-profile, high-impact research and creative activity that may not fit into the above-noted three institutes but show the capacity to achieve the goals of the CSPP.

Projects supported by the CSPP are also expected to address the U of T’s commitments, as articulated in its Institutional Strategic Research Plan 2018-2023 (ISRP) (<http://www.research.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/documents/2018/01/2018-2023-ISRP-final.pdf>). In particular, the ISRP identifies five strategic objectives – informed by key societal challenges – to enable U of T to continue to increase its research excellence:

- demonstrate national and global leadership in research and innovation
- foster collaborations, partnerships and engagement
- advance equity, diversity and inclusion
- support integration of research into student curricular and co-curricular experiences
- strengthen the institutional supports that foster research and innovation excellence

ELIGIBILITY

- Proposed clusters shall consist of between five and 10 members, with representation from at least three UTSC units if the cluster is entirely comprised of UTSC faculty, and at least two UTSC units if it includes members from either/both of the other two U of T campuses.

- Each cluster can have a maximum of two cluster leads. When two cluster leads are named, one must be identified as the “administrative cluster lead”.
- The cluster lead/administrative cluster lead must be a tenure-stream (i.e., not teaching-stream) faculty member with a primary appointment at UTSC.
- Individual faculty can lead only one cluster, and can participate in a maximum of two clusters.
- Members of the adjudication committee (see below) cannot participate in any CSPP application.
- While cluster lead(s) and the majority of cluster members must be faculty whose primary appointment is at UTSC, cluster members may include faculty from the other campuses of U of T.
- Faculty from other postsecondary institutions can be involved in projects undertaken by a cluster, but the primary aim of the programme is to promote and facilitate the establishment of multidisciplinary clusters of expertise at UTSC.

AWARD DETAILS

Proposals can request funding ranging from \$100,000 to \$200,000 per year. The budget (and funding) does not have to be equal each year of the proposed project as long as expected spending each year is based on the research goals and methodology proposed and justified in the application. Successful applications will be funded for three years. Successful proposals can be awarded full or partial funding. There will be triannual meetings with the Associate Vice-Principal Research–Strategic Initiatives (UTSC) to discuss progress towards cluster milestones. Following the last of these meeting, a determination will be made as to whether sufficient progress has been made in achieving identified yearly goals to warrant the release of the subsequent year’s funding.

The cluster lead(s) will be required to:

- work with the UTSC Office of the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation (OVPRI) throughout the funding period to review annual budgets, expenditure forecasts, and activity planning; and
- meet with the Associate Vice-Principal Research–Strategic Initiatives at least once per year (typically at the mid-point of the year) to discuss progress toward achieving that year’s objectives
- demonstrate by no later than the conclusion of year 2 that they have applied for one or more major external grants
- on **October 1** of each year, following the award, provide an annual report that clearly outlines progress toward identified goals, the emergence and response to any unforeseen challenges and opportunities, and a detailed description of the use of all funds secured during the year in question. The cluster lead(s) is/are responsible for managing all aspects of the cluster,

including financial oversight and the on-schedule submission of the aforementioned annual report.

ELIGIBILITY OF BUDGET REQUESTS

Proposed budgets (*form attached below as Appendix 4*) should be realistic and justified, containing expenses related only to activities that will support the development and success of the cluster. As a general rule, expenses should conform with the University of Toronto Financial Guidelines (<http://finance.utoronto.ca/policies/gtfm/>) to be considered eligible. While all direct research costs are in principle eligible, they must be demonstrably connected to advancing the development of the cluster at UTSC. (*NB: A revised budget will be required for clusters that are awarded only partial funding.*)

Eligible expenses

- The costs of cluster meetings, workshops, and/or conferences
- Community and stakeholder engagement costs, such as per diems or honorariums
- Communications and marketing materials or services
- Costs for professional development or training of team members and their HQP (e.g., EDI training or cultural competence training)
- Consumables needed to conduct research
- Postdoctoral stipends and/or top-ups
- Undergraduate and Graduate student stipends and/or top-ups
- Critical shared research equipment that is demonstrably of benefit to cluster members (one-time, to a maximum of \$25,000)
- Cluster member travel between U of T's three campuses in Scarborough, Toronto and Mississauga
- Cluster member travel to important conferences and meetings (annual maximum of \$5,000 per cluster)
- Faculty or trainee recruitment visits (annual maximum of \$5,000 per cluster)

Non-eligible expenses:

- Furniture
- Renovations
- Course/teaching releases

Any questions regarding the eligibility of a particular expense should be directed to Carmen Siu, Research Operations and Financial Officer, OVPRI (carmenwn.siu@utoronto.ca).

DEADLINE

A mandatory Notice of Intent (NOI) is due **May 4th of each year**. NOIs will be reviewed by the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation (VPRI) and the Associate Vice-Principal Research–Strategic Initiatives (AVPR–SI) to identify any overlap between proposals. In cases of overlap, relevant applicants will be contacted to discuss the possibility of collaborating on a single application. The annual deadline for the submission of full applications is **June 15th**. If the deadline for either the NOI or full application falls on a weekend or public holiday, the submission deadline will be the next business day. Please email the NOI document (*attached below as Appendix 2*) and, in turn, a full application, (combining all forms [*attached below as Appendix 3 and Appendix 4*] into a single PDF attachment) to the OVPRI via researchoffice.uts@utoronto.ca.

Files should use the following title format: Cluster lead(s) surname(s)-CSPP NOI-Year.

ADJUDICATION PROCESS

- The adjudication committee will be composed of accomplished external reviewers from the University of Toronto’s St. George and Mississauga campuses and/or other universities/organizations, who have expertise in the area(s) covered by the proposals, and the UTSC Principal, the Vice-Principal – Academic and Dean, the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation (VPRI), and the Associate Vice-Principal Research–Strategic Initiatives (AVPR–SI).
- Each application will be evaluated by two external reviewers, who will each submit a written assessment of the proposal.
- Final decisions on funding will be made by the UTSC Principal, the Vice-Principal – Academic and Dean, the VPRI, and the AVPR–SI.
- The adjudication committee reserves the right to fund successful proposals fully or partially.
- Each proposal will be assessed based on the evaluation criteria listed below and Uoft’s strategic research objectives outlined above.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND WEIGHTING

The purpose of each cluster is to support the establishment of new research collaborations involving UTSC researchers from multiple disciplines, to pursue research projects the initiation of which is not easily accomplished by a single individual or discipline. The proposed collaborative projects must present bold ideas seeking big impacts, involve external organizations as collaborators/partners (when needed for the success of the project) and have significant potential to secure major new external funding to sustain the projects and their impact beyond the period covered by the CSPP award.

Each proposal must include the following:

Vision (35%):

- A clear vision for the cluster, which includes a description of its potential to:

- have a transformative impact on UTSC, UofT and on society;
 - establish itself as a cluster of excellence in collaborative scholarship and related partnerships;
 - attract substantial external funding and become self-sustaining following the CSPP funding period;
 - support training opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students and postdoctoral fellows;
 - serve as a mechanism for faculty to work with trainees in different disciplines/units
 - elevate UTSC's provincial, national and international profile as a cluster of research excellence in the particular area of multi/inter-disciplinary scholarship.
- A detailed description of the planned activities – such as governance meetings, strategic planning meetings, research workshops, conferences and other knowledge mobilization initiatives, co-supervision/training of students, etc – that will facilitate the development and enhancement of a sustainable cluster of scholarly excellence.
 - An account of the anticipated outcomes, expected outputs (deliverables) and the potential impacts and benefits for stakeholders and society.
 - A management plan for the cluster that considers governance, communications, team-building and administrative supports that will enable the cluster's success.
 - A letter of support from the UTSC Departmental Chair(s)/Centre Director(s) of the cluster lead(s) indicating how the Departments/Centres will support the initiative.
 - If the Departmental Chair/Centre Director is participating in the application, the Chair's/Director's designate (the Associate Chair in Department's that have such a position) must provide the letter of support.

Research Excellence (35%):

- a brief literature review that describes the novelty and/or impact of the proposal, research questions, methodology, anticipated findings and their significance; a knowledge translation/mobilization plan; and a detailed budget. This component of the overall proposal should be **no longer than 6 pages long** (excluding any references/bibliography section and the budget);
- evidence that cluster members have demonstrated global leadership and excellence in the proposed research areas and are top-tier scholars with established or emerging leadership in their area(s);
- evidence of suitable leadership experience on the part of the cluster lead(s);
- a description of the cluster's planned multi/inter-disciplinary research approaches to address key questions facing society, and why those approaches are needed;
- evidence that the cluster's members possess the expertise necessary to execute a multi/inter-disciplinary approach.

Engagement and Commitments (15%):

- Involvement/engagement of community organizations/groups as needed for the success of the project;
- Plan to address the initiative's impact on communities and/or society;
- Plans for stakeholder consortia (e.g. industry, clinical, community);
- Plan to communicate or engage with the public or to mobilize or translate the knowledge generated;
- A team comprised of faculty at different career stages;
- An explanation of how the cluster will satisfy the requirements and expectations contained in the University of Toronto's ISRP and in the University of Toronto Scarborough's Strategic Plan concerning Indigenization, equity, diversity, inclusion networks and partnerships (e.g., a management/governance plan that embodies EDI best practices, systems and structures and provides for recruitment and training of diverse trainees), as embodied in its commitment to inclusive excellence and in its anchor strategy. Such commitments must be accounted for in the vision, activities, and the proposed budget for the cluster;
- Demonstrated financial or personnel commitment (e.g., matching support [cash and/or in-kind]) from the academic divisions involved.

Budget (15%):

- Appropriateness and justification of budget
- Plan to utilize existing resources and/or facilities, and/or to share any newly created resources (e.g., management and operations staff; trainees; instruments; core facilities)
- Feasible plan for applying for major external grants

COVID-19 RESEARCH IMPACT STATEMENT

We recognize that COVID-19 has impacted faculty research activities. Accordingly, we invite applicants to provide information on how COVID-19 has impacted their research activities. This information will be shared with program competition adjudication committees.

Required: Please check no more than two responses.

My proposal is for:

- 1) Recovery: The award funds research recovery (I was not able to do research, or my research activities have been reduced because of COVID-19 restrictions, and I am seeking funds to recover my research program)
- 2) Realignment: The award funds realigned research (Restrictions – past, present or anticipated – require that I adjust my research program)
- 3) Pivot: The award funds a new research agenda or method (Given restrictions and their impact on my research, I am seeking funds to pursue a new area of research)
- 4) Opportunity: The award funds COVID-19-related research

- 5) Not relevant: The award will fund ongoing or new work, and COVID-19 has no bearing on this research proposal

Optional: Please specify in no more than 100 words how (if at all) the COVID-19 pandemic relates to/might impact your research proposal.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The term of the grant is three years, with funding for Years 2 and 3 conditional upon receipt and approval of an annual report that details satisfactory progress towards goals, milestones and outcomes articulated in the proposal.

Disbursement of funding for Years 2 and 3 is also contingent on a closing balance at the end of the previous annual reporting period of less than 50% of the funding allocated for that year.

Budget changes must be justified and must have a positive impact on the planned cluster-building and research activities of the cluster.

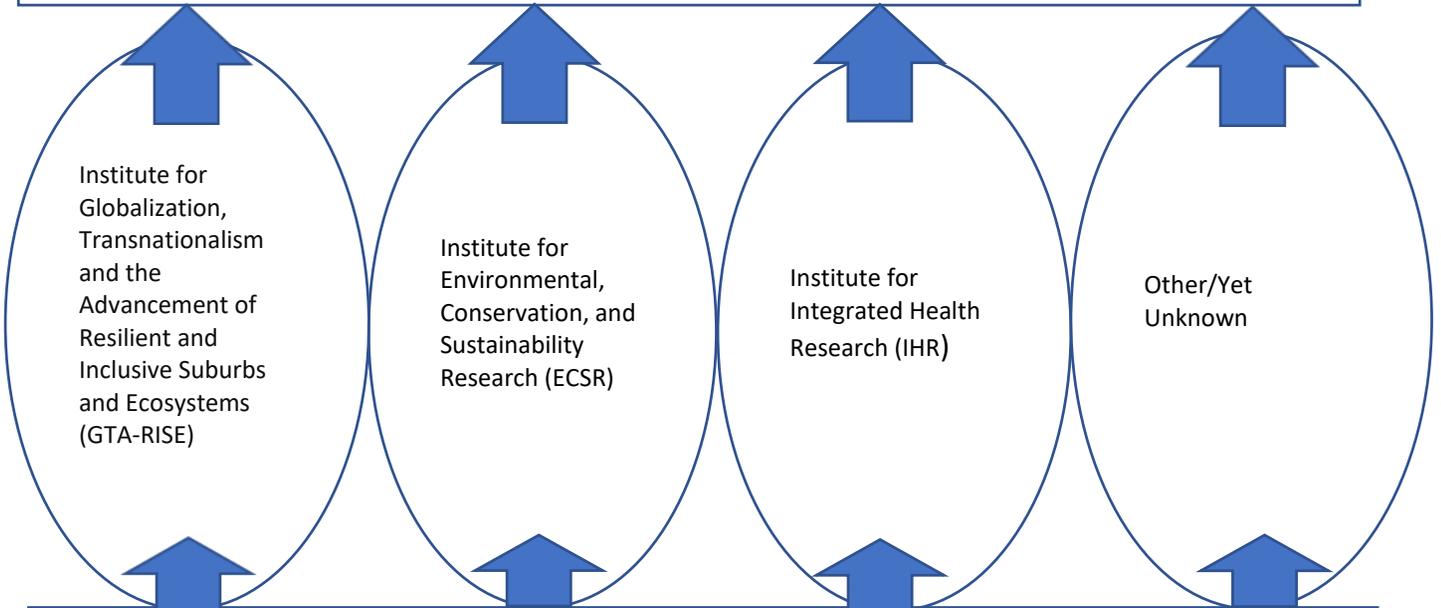
Changes in cluster faculty composition, including the addition of new researchers, is permissible following the approval/establishment of a cluster. However, the cluster budget will remain as originally allocated.

All eligible expenditures must be incurred prior to the end of the award term, after which time any unspent funds will be returned to the OVPRI. With justification, a one year, no-cost extension may be granted at the end of Year 3 at the discretion of the OVPRI.

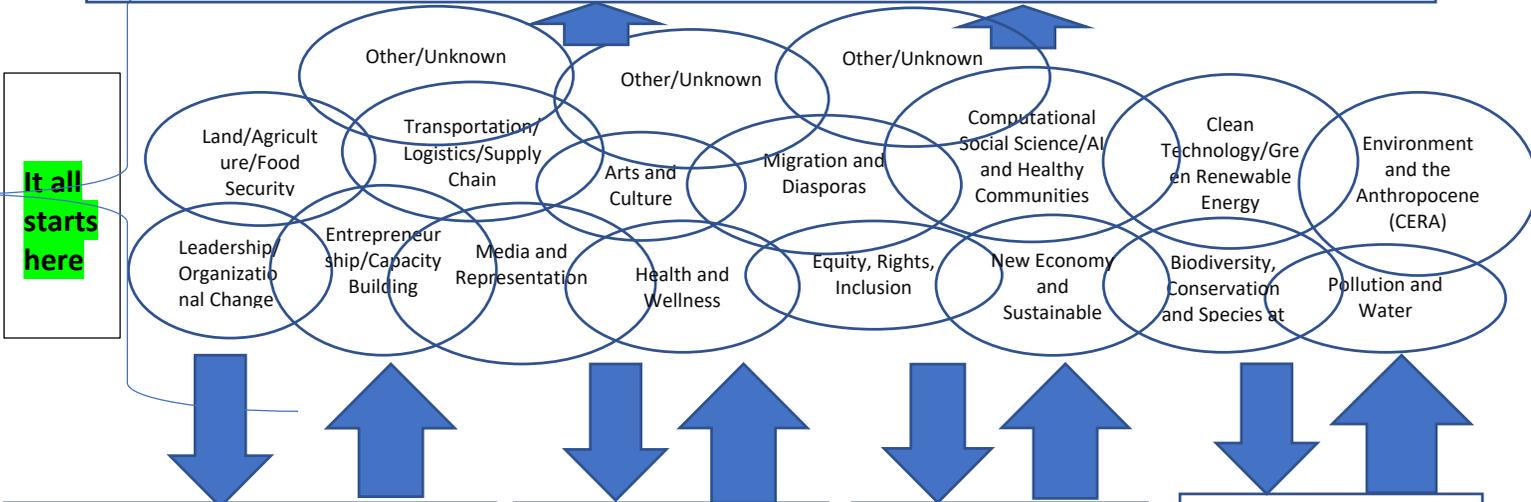
Appendix 1
UTSC INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOLARLY COLLABORATION AND PROMINENCE – GLOBAL REACH, LOCAL RELEVANCE

RESEARCH INSTITUTES IN AREAS OF ESTABLISHED AND EMERGING STRENGTH
 (Under Overall Leadership of the Vice-Principal Research Office, and supported by research-support and administrative staff)

Institute Governance
 Chair – Associate Vice-Principal – Special Research Initiatives
 Members: Institute Directors; representative group of cluster leads



CLUSTERS OF SCHOLARLY PROMINENCE
 (Examples of potential clusters to be supported by Clusters of Scholarly Prominence Program (CSPP), based on evidence of critical mass of research and creative activity and productivity)



<p>MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS (TEACHING AND RESEARCH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INDIGENOUS HOUSE • INSTRUCTIONAL CENTRE 2 • CENTRE FOR CULTURES, ARTS, AND PLURALISM (C-CAP) • SCARBOROUGH ACADEMY OF MEDICINE AND INTEGRATED HEALTH (SAMHI)/BIOLOGICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE • EARTH AND RELATED TECHNOLOGIES HUB (EARTH) 	<p>ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING AND PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATIONS (Supported with Learning Enhancement and Related Networks (LEARN) Fund)</p>	<p>ANCHOR INSTITUTION PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS MOUs, IRCs, Joint/Adjunct Appointments, etc.</p>	<p>ADVANCEMENT (Student Support, Capital Projects, Chairs, Distinguished Series, Mentorship, Fellowships, etc.)</p>
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