BOARD OF GOVERNORS
Strategy & Planning Committee (S&P)

April 3, 2025
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Teams Meeting

Members: Eric Agius (Chair), Lisa McBride (Vice-Chair), Ahmad Barari, Laura Elliott, Emily Whetung-MacInnes, Mitch Frazer, Matthew Mackenzie, Peter Marchut, Steven Murphy, Michael Rencheck, Hannah Scott

Staff: Kirstie Ayotte, James Barnett (regrets), Nicola Crow, Lee Hays, Krista Hester, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Jennifer MacInnis, Brad MacIsaac, Sarah Thrush

AGENDA

No.	Topic	Lead	Allocated Time	Suggested Start Time
PUBLIC SESSION				
1	**Call to Order**	Chair	5	1:00 p.m.
2	***Agenda* (M)**	Chair		
3	**Conflict of Interest Declaration**	Chair		
4	**Chair's Remarks**	Chair	5	1:05 p.m.
5	**President's Remarks**	Steven Murphy	10	1:10 p.m.
6	**Strategy**			
6.1	*Strategic Conversation: Annual Digital Strategy Update** (D)	Lori Livingston Brad MacIsaac Ade Oyemade	30	1:20 p.m.
6.2	*Research & Innovation** (U)	Les Jacobs	10	1:50 p.m.
7	**Planning**			
7.1	*Strategic Research Plan** (D)	Les Jacobs	15	2:00 p.m.
8	**Consent Agenda* (M)**			
8.1	*Minutes of Public Session of Meeting of February 6, 2025** (M)	Chair	5	2:15 p.m.
9	**Adjournment (M)**	Chair		2:20 p.m.
BREAK – 10 minutes				

D – Discussion M – Motion P – Presentation U – Update I – Information * Documents attached

No.	Topic	Lead	Allocated Time	Suggested Start Time
NON-PUBLIC SESSION **(material not publicly available)**				
10	**Call to Order**	Chair	5	2:30 p.m.
11	**Conflict of Interest Declaration**			
12	**Chair's Remarks**		5	2:35 p.m.
13	**President's Remarks**	Steven Murphy	10	2:40 p.m.
14	**Advancement & Alumni Update* (U)**	Lee Hays	10	2:50 p.m.
15	**Consent Agenda (M)**	Chair	5	3:00 p.m.
15.1	Minutes of Non-Public Session of Meeting of February 6, 2025* (M)			
15.2	S&P 2024-2025 Workplan/Action Points* (I)			
16	***In Camera* Session**	Chair	10	3:05 p.m.
17	**Termination (M)**	Chair		3:15 p.m.

Nicola Crow, University Secretary

COMMITTEE REPORT

SESSION:		**ACTION REQUESTED:**	
Public	☒	**Decision**	☐
Non-Public	☐	**Discussion/Direction**	☒
		Information	☐

TO: **Strategy & Planning Committee (S&P)**

DATE: **April 3, 2025**

FROM: **Brad MacIsaac, Vice-President, Administration**
Ade Oyemade, CIO

SUBJECT: **Strategic Discussion: Digital Strategy**

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:
The Strategy and Planning Committee (S&P) is responsible for overseeing the strategic planning for all aspects of the University and assessment of the plans in the context of the University's Vision, Mission and Values.

This Board Committee Report and associated presentation are provided to inform the Committee of the desired outcomes, risks, and actions being undertaken to enable the 2023–2028 Integrated Academic Research Plan (IARP) as it relates to the IT enabling plan.

At this starting point some key questions are:

- Are there any concerns about the action path in connection with the IARP?
- Are there notable gaps in the report that you would expect us to be working on?
- Is the digital transformation fundamentally changing how the business (and sector) creates value?

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:
In March 2022, management presented the discussion paper *Reimagining Information Technology at Ontario Tech* to S&P, outlining an enabling plan for the IARP. Since then, we have provided annual updates to track progress and assess emerging challenges and opportunities.

Higher education in **Canada is undergoing significant transformation**, with increasing emphasis on **continuous learning, microcredentials, and flexible learning models**. These shifts demand a more agile and technology-enabled approach to education. Ontario Tech is committed to supporting these trends through **scalable digital learning solutions, AI-driven analytics, and workforce-aligned microcredential programs** to enhance accessibility and lifelong learning. Through the IARP the

University prioritized several technology related actions such as:

A) Expanded student, staff, and faculty usage of digital/virtual platforms governed by robust policies and processes which we have spent the past year on. Last year, we prioritized **process mapping and efficiency reviews** across the institution, engaging with stakeholders to assess the current state of IT and business processes. This collaboration identified key areas for improvement, aligning IT investments with institutional priorities and ensuring that digital transformation efforts enhance operational effectiveness and student success. A key for the next 18 months is privacy related governance.

B) Supported differentiated learning styles by ensuring a mixture of in-person, online, hybrid and asynchronous course options, while simultaneously committing to enhancing learner engagement. We have updated our "myOntarioTech" self-service modules. The next 7 months is a focus on expanding our Learning Management System for 24-hour support.

C) Reimagined existing physical spaces (i.e. indoor and outdoor) in combination with virtual platforms to create dedicated meeting, recreational, and social spaces and social hubs. To do this we must invest heavily in a new Enterprise System

A core component of our IT strategy remains the **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) transformation**. When Ontario Tech was initially established, it was pragmatic for the institution to share the same enterprise system (i.e., Banner) with Durham College. However, as both institutions have grown significantly, and their strategic priorities have evolved—particularly Ontario Tech's focus on digital innovation and experiential learning—the need to separate our systems has become increasingly clear. Not only is this of strategic importance due to our different business process, it is a risk mitigation as the past two years have shown that our customizations continue to break with each of the regular system updates.

The separation of Ontario Tech's **Banner instance from Durham College** and the implementation of Banner SaaS is a critical initiative in supporting the University's long-term growth and ensuring greater flexibility and agility. This transformation will not only improve operational autonomy but also enhance the institution's ability to integrate systems more effectively, enabling streamlined academic and administrative functions. The migration to a cloud-based ERP system will improve scalability, enhance data security, and allow for more efficient management of resources. In addition to the ERP transformation, improving integrations and data flow across various platforms is a key priority. The goal is to ensure that data is accessible and actionable across departments to improve student services. A particular focus is on improving early alert systems and student retention efforts through predictive analytics. By leveraging advanced data insights, we will be better equipped to identify students at risk of disengagement, enabling early interventions that support student success and retention.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is also a key component that we are looking at as it is reshaping the digital landscape. We are integrating AI-powered solutions to **support student success, streamline administrative workflows, and enhance decision-making**. This includes AI-driven chatbots, predictive analytics, and adaptive learning technologies that personalize the student experience. The Chief Technology Officer (CTO) is currently exploring further AI applications, including leveraging machine learning for predictive academic advising and AI-powered tools for faculty and staff professional development.

As we look toward the future, we acknowledge the rapid evolution of higher education in Canada, driven by emerging technological trends such as AI, machine learning, and data analytics. At Ontario Tech, our digital strategy is designed to address the realities of a competitive global education landscape while supporting the diverse needs of our students, faculty, and staff. With limited funding opportunities we are committed to directing IT investments toward mission-critical initiatives that will support our long-term

growth and enhance the overall student experience.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- PPT presentation entitled “Digital Strategy.”

S&P Digital Strategy Report April 2025

OVERVIEW

- ITS MANDATE
- PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
- IT 3 YEAR ROADMAP
- ERP TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY

“Our mandate is to…”

ONTARIO TECH UNIVERSITY

"Be a digital innovation leader and deliver a top-tier technology experience to our community."

DIGITAL STRATEGY OBJECTIVES 25-26

Transformation Roadmap

To achieve our vision, we will follow our roadmap to see our digital strategy goals come to fruition. Consultation and collaboration is fundamental to effecting change of this magnitude. A concerted focus on the student experience will support student success, enhance the university's reputation, and improve the productivity of our administrative employees.

2025-2026

- Give students fast and accurate answers to their questions by utilizing intelligent bot technology
- Digital experience portal will provide a streamlined student experience
- Improve technology adoption with AI-based technology to increase student engagement within the LMS
- Equip students for success by installing early warning systems

Q1 - Q4

- LMS Reporting tool
- Digital Student Platform

- Enhance group collaboration in classrooms & other convergent environments by utilizing cutting edge technologies
- Give students real-time access to courses on the LMS
- An intelligent learning platform to curate lifelong learners educational pathway to align with their career aspirations.
- 24/7 contextualized support that leverages analytics to facilitate data-driven decisions to enhance student success

Q1 - Q4

- Intelligent Student Learning Platform
- 24/7 LMS Support

- Streamline, automate, and simplify co-op and internship processes for student and employers
- Partner with faculty to develop capstone projects for student yielding both experiential learning and innovation
- Opportunities for students to enhance the university community by contributing to the development of new technology solutions

Q1 - Q4

- Experiential Learning
- Intelligent Lifelong learning system solutions

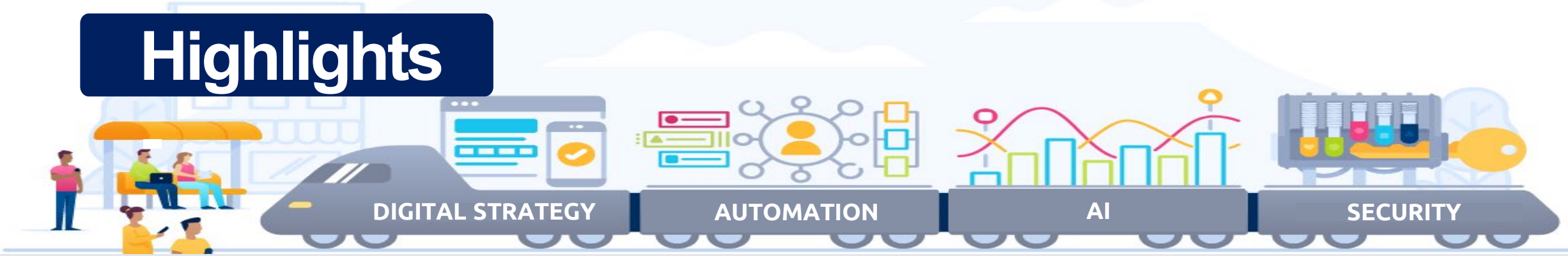
- Enhance the student experience by leveraging workflow automation to streamline processes
- Reduce the elapsed time for end-to-end processes through re-engineering of business procedures
- Improve efficiency by seamlessly integrating innovative tools with the Banner enterprise resource planning system
- Adapt to the evolving educational technology landscape by embracing cloud services to achieve agility and interoperability

Q1 - Q4

- Banner SaaS
- Admission CRM
- BI Analytics

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights

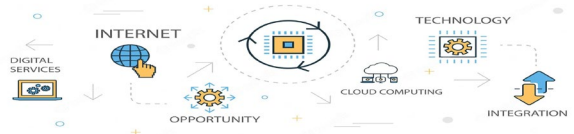


Enhance the digital and classroom experience with easy access to information and services

INTELLIGENT STUDENT ADVISING – Launched QuadC system to streamline advisor-student interactions.

LIFELONG LEARNING – Corporate training is now centralized and optimized via LMS, ensuring compliance and minimizing risk.

ONECARD, ONE TAP– Integrated Digital ID Card with Apple Wallet to provide convenient payment solution for our students.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Improve efficiency and speed by re-engineering business processes

CLOUD-POWERED EMAIL – Seamless migration to Microsoft Exchange Online for enhanced reliability and accessibility.

TESTING WITHOUT LIMITS – Secured a dedicated test environment to enhance LMS development

GLOBAL PAYMENTS, SIMPLIFIED – Enabled CIBC International Payments, making student transactions effortless.

AUTOMATION

AI-Driven Transformation

MICROSOFT COPILOT

GOOGLE GEMINI

Strengthen our security posture and incident recovery preparedness

M365 & DUO: This added layer of security to enhance our overall security and ensure the safety of Ontario Tech's data.

Increase transparency by providing the university community with easy access to critical information on strategic IT priorities, initiatives, and governance

TECH CONNECT: The new quarterly IT newsletter provides valuable information and enhances transparency.

IT 3 YEAR ROADMAP

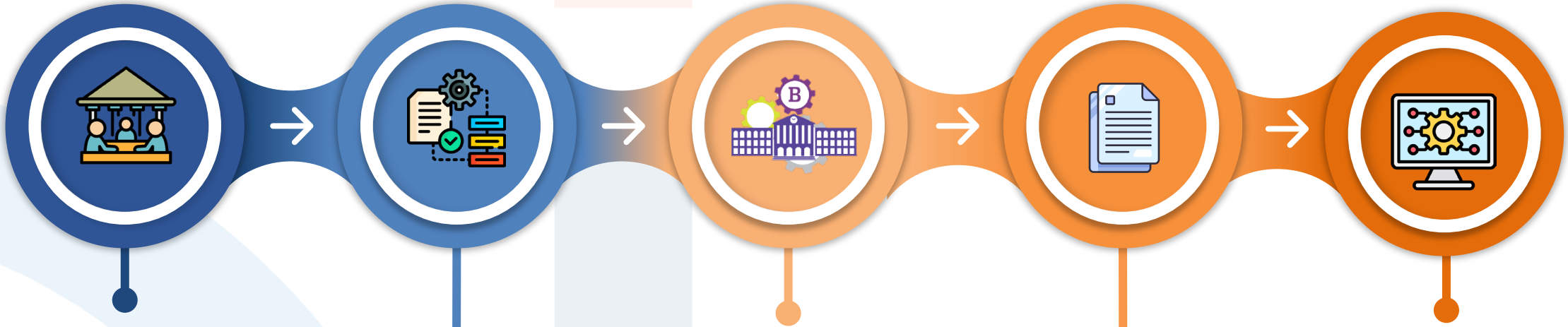
	EFFICIENT & INTEGRATED ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS	PREMIUM SUPPORT SOLUTIONS	ROBUST & RESPONSIVE IT INFRASTRUCTURE WITH STRENGTHENED SECURITY	AI TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENTS
2025	ADMISSIONS CRM - P1 BANNER SAAS ILP – INSTANT ACCESS TO THE LMS	24/7 CANVAS SUPPORT CHERWELL UPGRADE	CLOUD MIGRATION: AD SPLIT TEAMS TELEPHONY MIGRATION - P1 SERVER LIFECYCLE REFRESH WIFI LIFECYCLE REFRESH MS DUO	CANVAS IMPACT MICROSOFT COPILOT GOOGLE GEMINI
2026	STUDENT DIGITIAL PLATFORM ADMISSIONS CRM - P2 BANNER SAAS BI ANALYTICS SELECTION	CHERWELL UPGRADE ITSM SOLUTION TRANSITION - P1	CLOUD MIGRATION: AD SPLIT TEAMS TELEPHONY MIGRATION - P2 SERVER LIFECYCLE REFRESH WIFI LIFECYCLE REFRESH	PREDICTIVE AND GENERATIVE AI FOR REPORTS – ELLUCIAN INSIGHTS ADVISOR VIRTUAL ASSISTANT 24/7
2027	LMS REPORTING TOOL BANNER SAAS IMPLEMENTATION BI ANALYTICS ROLLOUT	ITSM SOLUTION TRANSITION – P2	TEAMS TELEPHONY MIGRATION – P3 SERVER LIFECYCLE REFRESH WIFI LIFECYCLE REFRESH	STUDENT PERONSALIZED LEARNING PLATFORM STUDENT WORKFLOWS

ERP TRANSFORMATION

ERP TRANSFORMATION UPDATES

BUSINESS PROCESS FOCUS

TECHNOLOGY FOCUS



APPLICATION GOVERNANCE
(COMPLETED)

Established governance and change management processes for full SaaS compliance.

BUSINESS PROCESS ANALYSIS SESSIONS
(IN-PROGRESS)

Assess and document the current components of our Banner system and work back to baseline

SEPARATE OT BASELINE BANNER
(IN-PROGRESS)

A distinct OT ERP instance to support autonomy, scalability, and tailored system configurations.

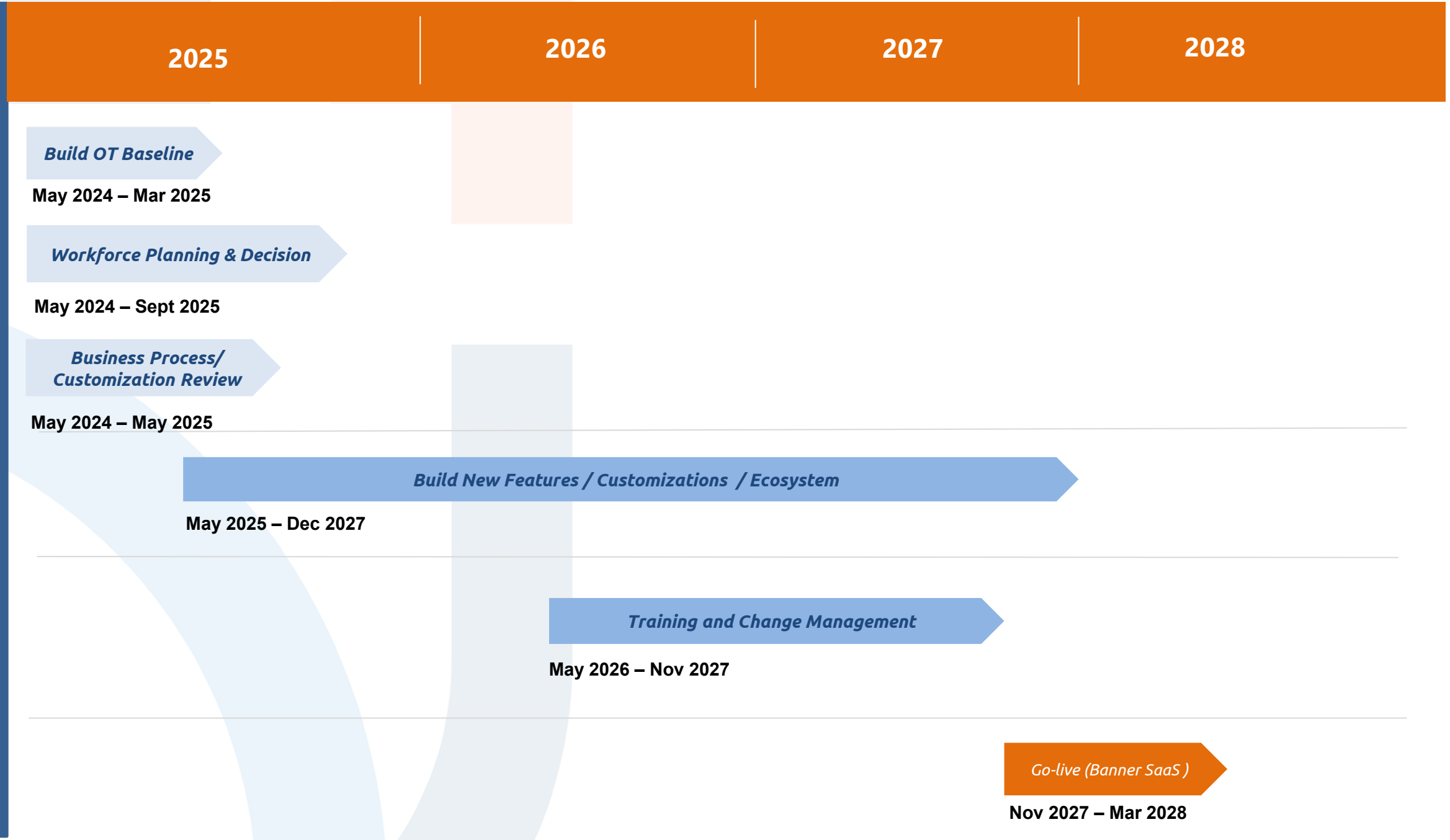
LICENSE & COMPONENT MANAGEMENT
(IN-PROGRESS)

Evaluating and managing licenses, software components, and system dependencies to ensure cost-effectiveness and compliance

INTEGRATIONS & CUSTOMIZATIONS
(IN-PROGRESS)

Assessing and redesigning integrations to maintain seamless data flow while preserving essential functionality.

ERP Transformation RoadMap



Ontario Tech University

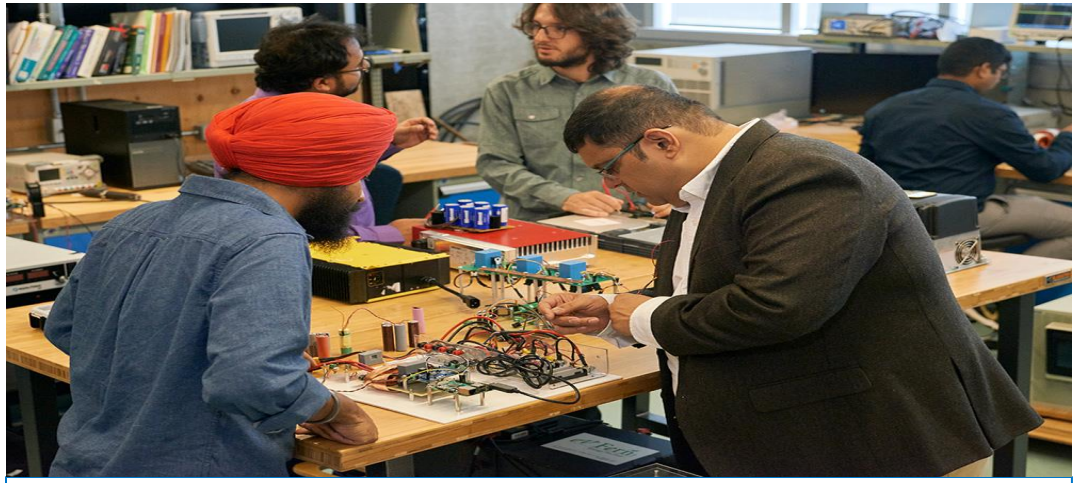
Strategy & Planning Committee, Board of Governors
April 2025

Research Update
Prof. Les Jacobs, Vice-President, Research & Innovation

Research Funding Performance

Factbook	2024	2025 (Mar 19, 2025)
Tri-Council		
NSERC	$5,665,469.00	$5,024,495.00
SSHRC	$922,366.00	$1,089,306.00
CIHR	$971,758.00	$739,819.17
CFI	$0.00	$19,500.00
CRC	$1,040,000.00	$1,090,000.00
TIPS	$374,875.00	$0.00
Other Federal Government	$3,804,140.47	$3,509,141.01
Total Federal Government	$12,778,608.47	$11,472,261.18
MCU	$400,004.00	$43,000.00
OCE/OCI	$130,000.00	$457,299.00
Other Provincial Governments	$279,422.33	$222,650.00
Total Provincial Governments	$809,426.33	$722,949.00
Industry	$1,300,563.36	$1,395,752.68
Associations, Societies & Foundatic	$5,333,739.60	$2,832,987.65
Other	$1,861,976.59	$1,199,097.95
Total Other Sources	$8,496,279.55	$5,427,838.28
Total Cash	$22,084,314.35	$17,623,048.46
Total In-Kind	$583,325.00	$1,057,301.00
TOTAL	$22,667,639.35	$18,680,349.46

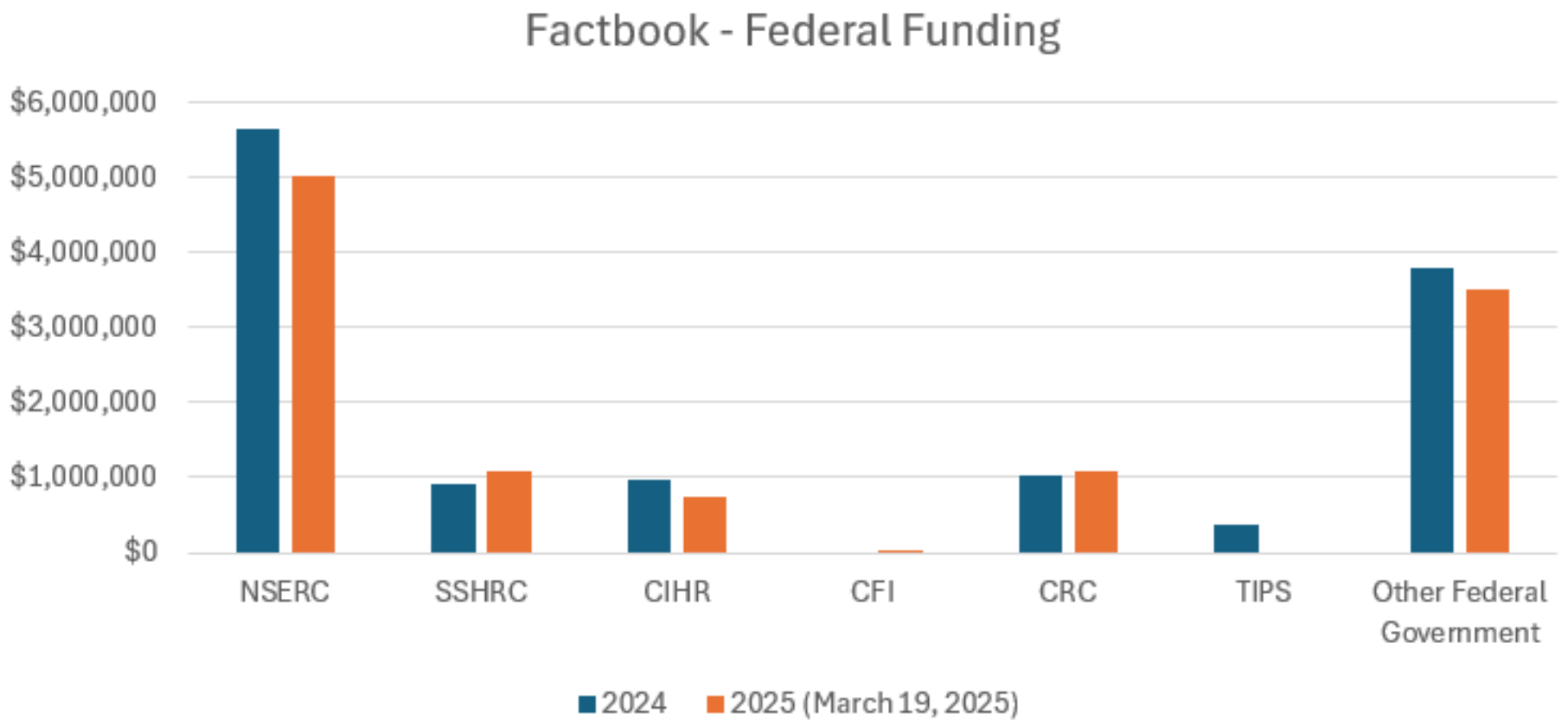
Note: FY 2025 date as of Mar 19, 2025



Research Infosource Ranks Ontario Tech

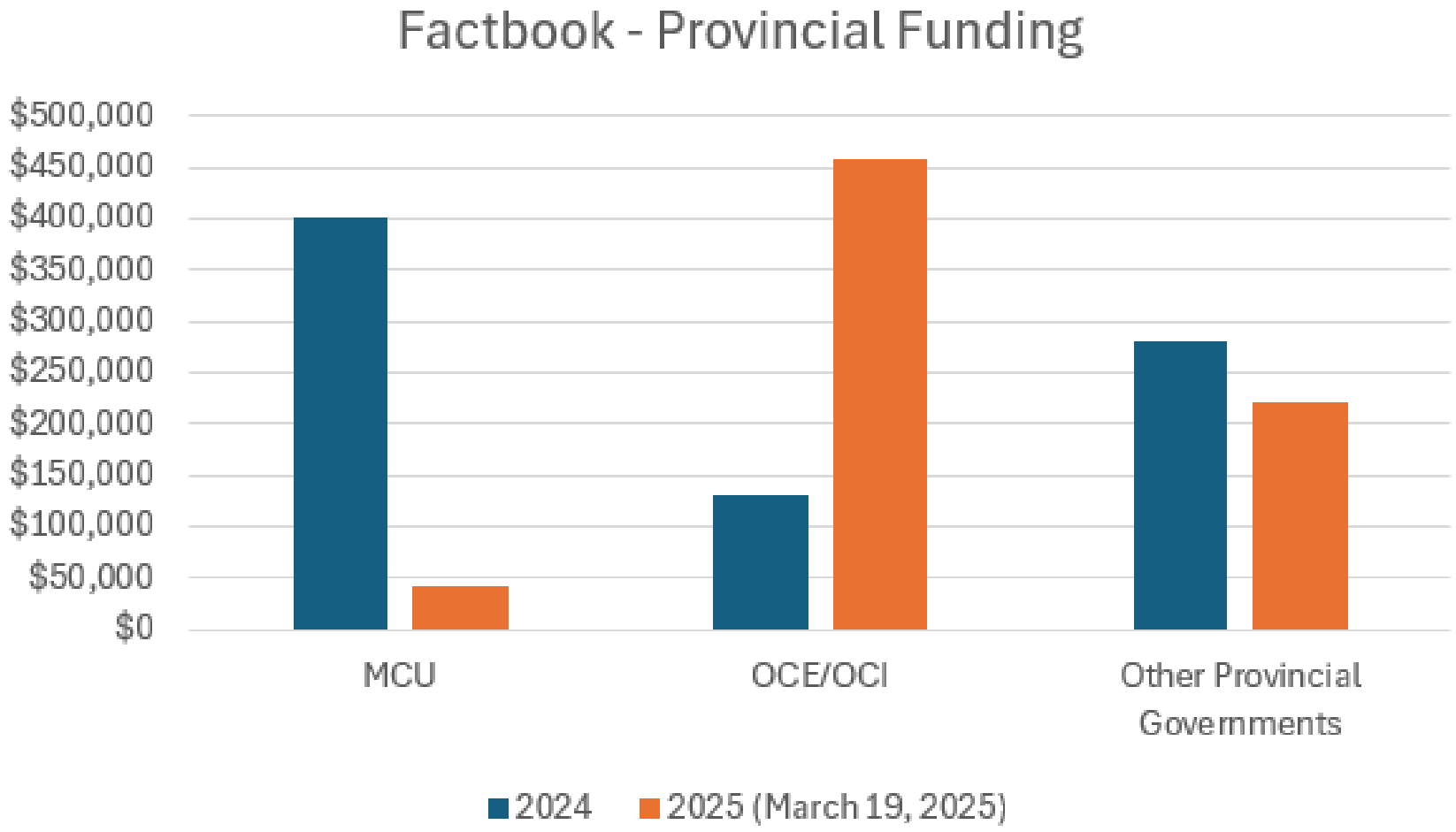
- For the second consecutive year, Ontario Tech is Canada's Research University of the Year, as designated by Research Infosource (RI), Canada's premier research raking organization and leading provider of research intelligence for business and higher education.
- Research Infosource's Winners Circle: Research Universities of the Year 2024
- Research Infosource's overall list of Canada's Top 50 Research Universities for 2024

Research Funding Update - Federal Funding



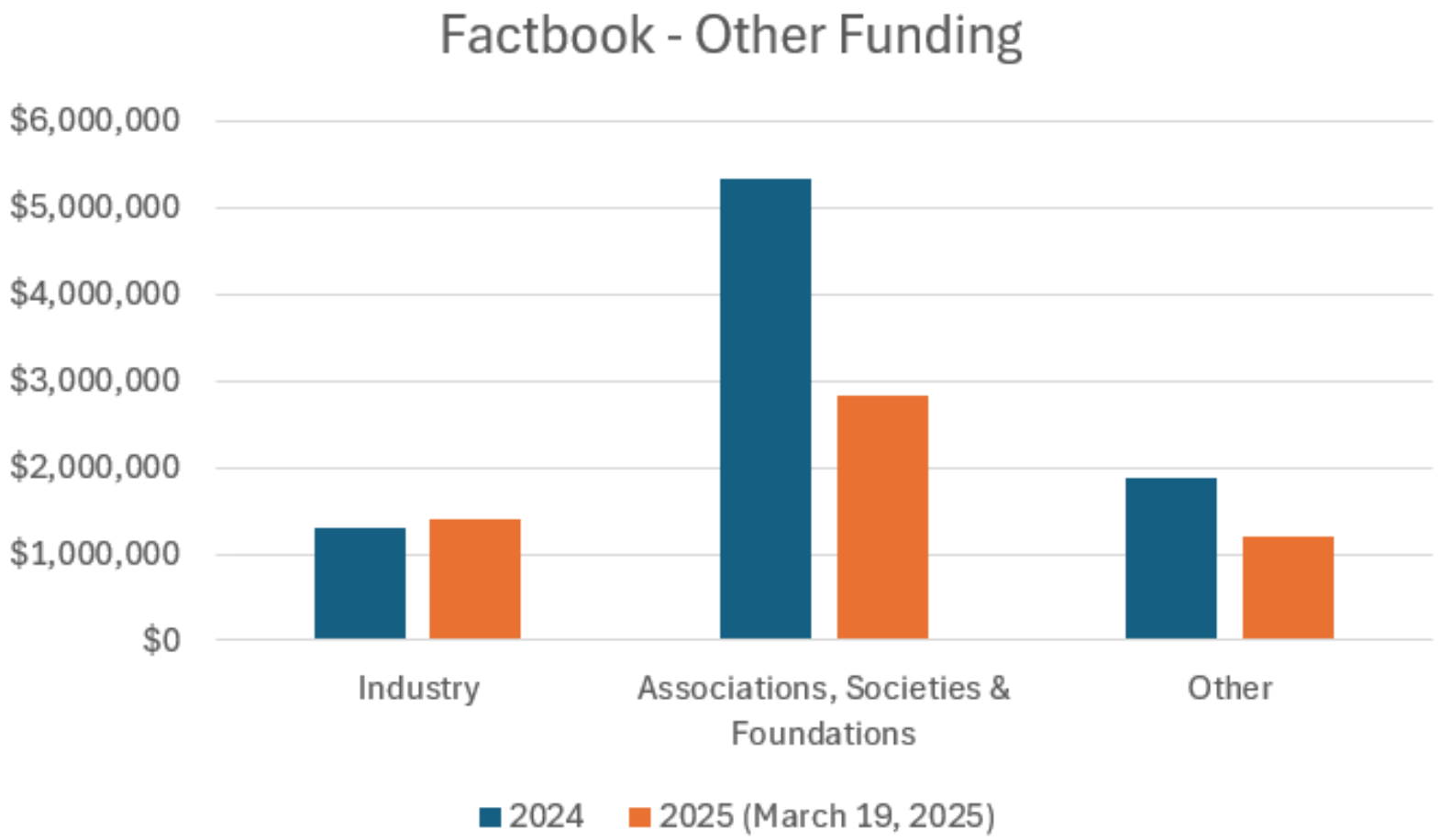
Note: FY 2025 date as of Mar 19, 2025

Research Funding Update - Provincial Funding



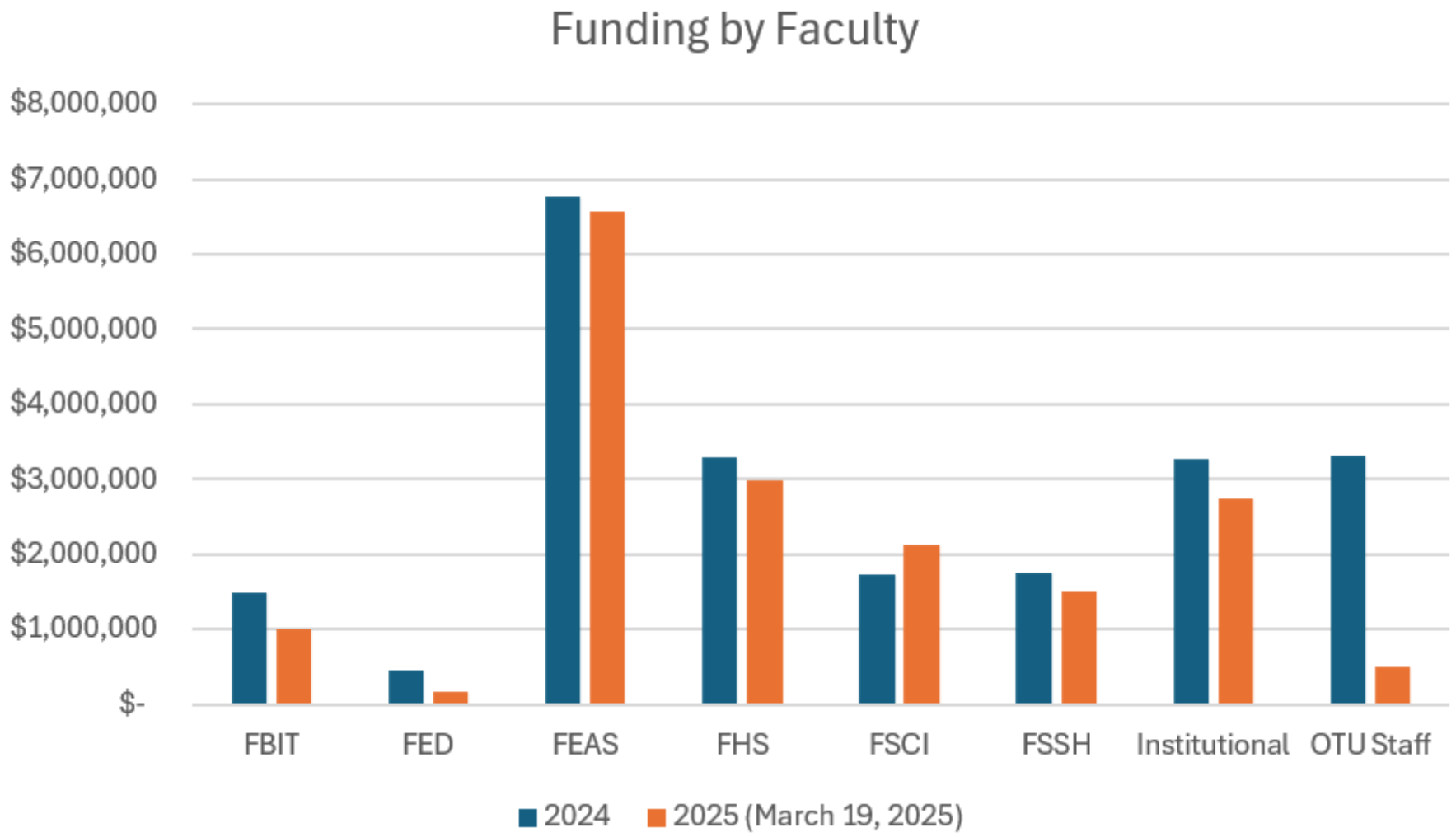
Note: FY 2025 date as of Mar 19, 2025

Research Funding Update - Other Funding



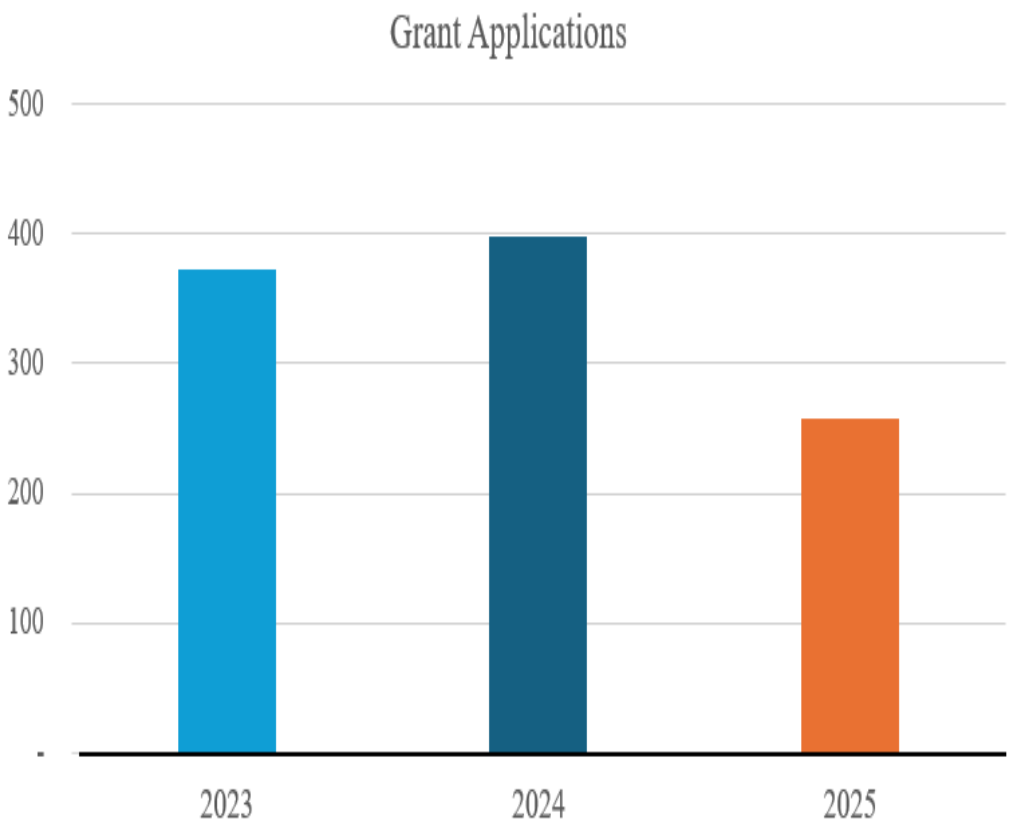
Note: FY 2025 date as of Mar 19, 2025

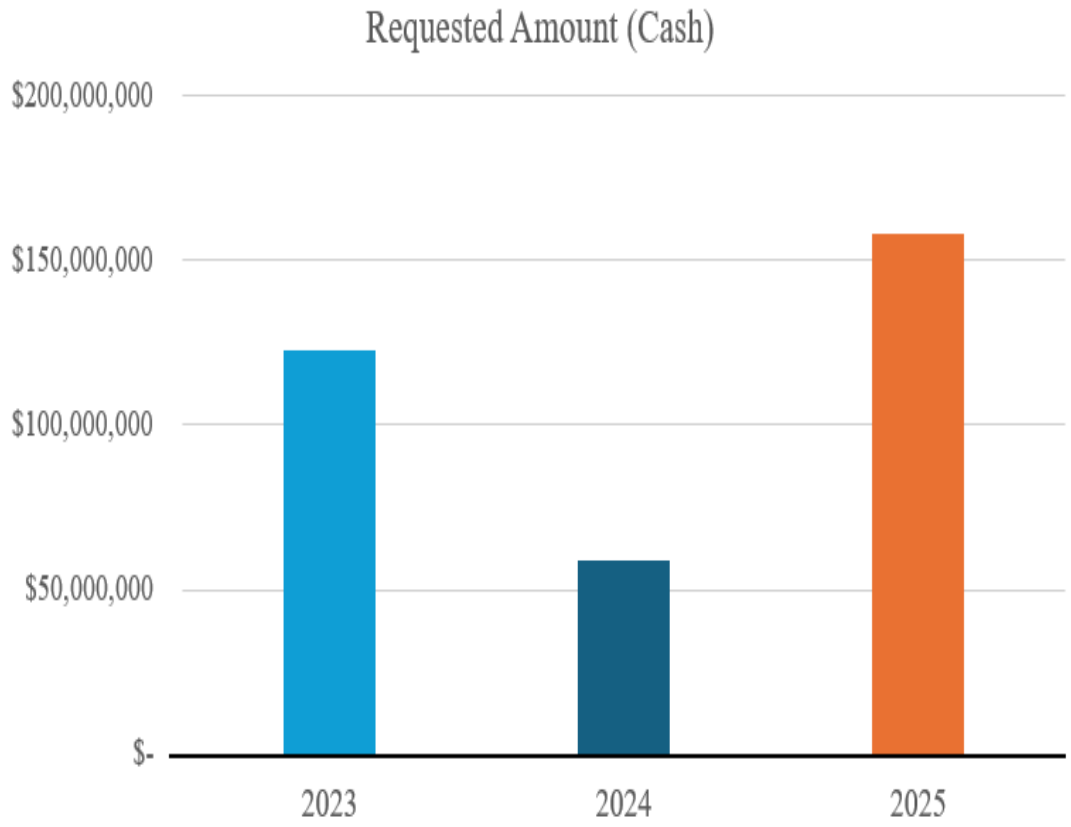
Research Funding Update – Faculty



Note: FY 2025 date as of March 17 2025

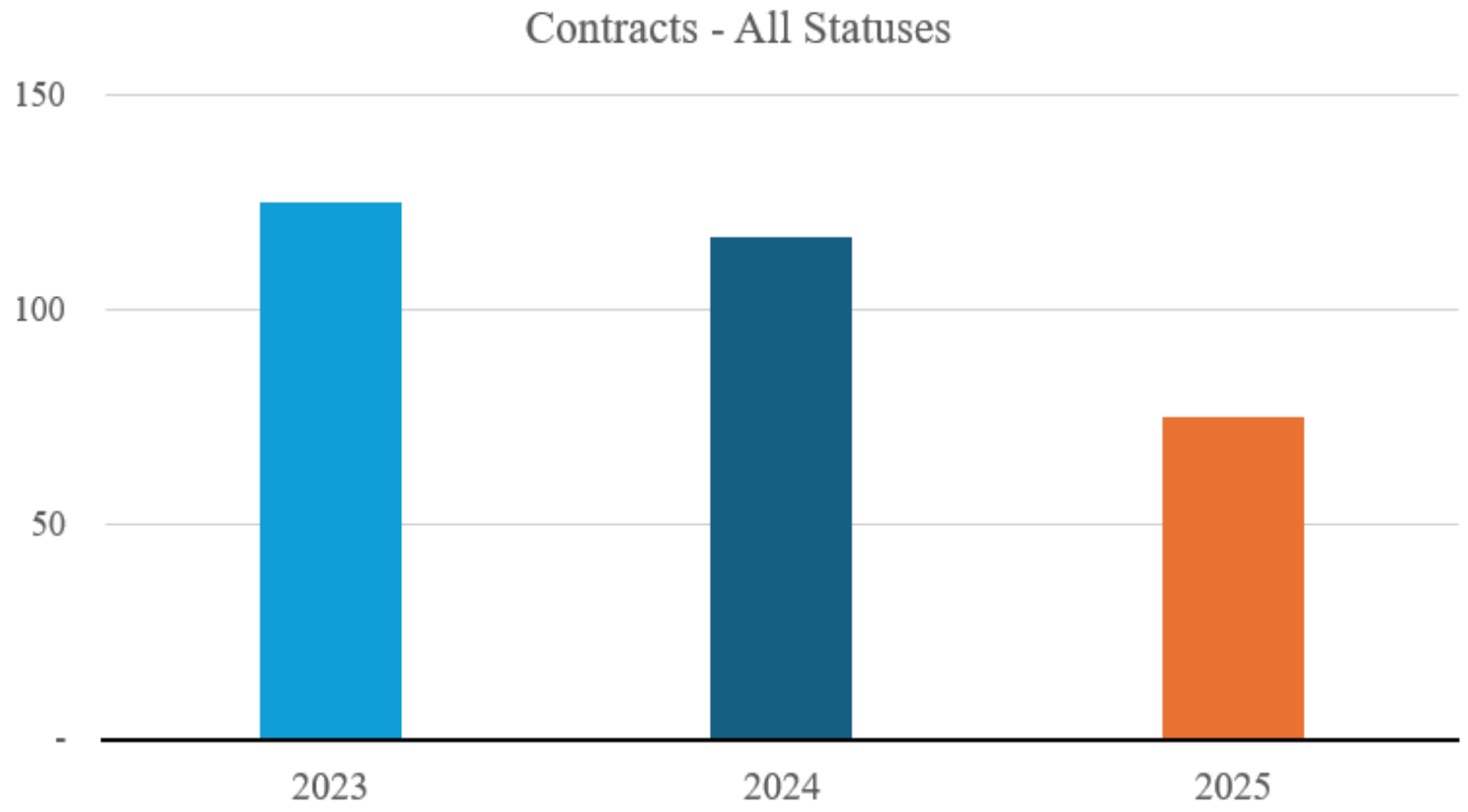
Research Grant Application Activity





Note: FY 2025 date as of March 17, 2025

Research Partnership Agreement Activity



Note: FY 2025 date as of Jan. 9, 2025

Inclusive Research Excellence at Ontario Tech University
SRP, 2025-2030, V. 5.0 March 2025
Strategy & Planning Committee Consultation

As Ontario Tech University enters its third decade, it has emerged as a national leader among Canada's smaller research-intensive universities. It was designated as Canada's Research University of the Year for both 2023 and 2024 among predominantly undergraduate universities by Research InfoSource, the country's premier research ranking organization. The University's current Strategic Research Plan, 2020-2025, expires on June 30, 2025.

The University's new **Strategic Research Plan, 2025-2030** is designed to be a strategic guide for the University to extend its national leadership role in Inclusive Research Excellence among Canada's research-intensive universities. The plan is being developed in close collaboration with the Research Committee of Academic Council during the 2024-2025 academic year. The process also involves consultation with the University's research community.

Below are four key components of the draft Strategic Research Plan for feedback from the Strategy and Planning Committee (S&P) as well as the Board of Governors:

1. Short Version of the Strategic Research Priorities, 2025-2030
2. Detailed Explanation of the Strategic Attributes for Inclusive Research Excellence
3. Strategic Attributes Matrix for Inclusive Research Excellence, 2025-2030
4. Detailed Explanation of Strategic Research Priorities, 2025-2030

The complete and final Strategic Research Plan will also include statements on research values and principles including its commitment to both fundamental and applied research, research metrics, enabling success/implementation, and existing research strengths.

Short Version
Strategic Research Priorities, 2025-2030

Artificial Intelligence and Its Applications

New fundamental research in artificial intelligence and its applications are driving innovation in every sector of society and the economy. Contributing to this research as well as ethical considerations on artificial intelligence remains a fundamental priority at Ontario Tech University.

Canada's Clean Energy Future

Canada's clean energy future remains one of the biggest challenges the country has ever faced, with immense economic, environmental and social implications for all Canadians. Ontario Tech's research on clean energy and environmental sustainability is an important contributor to the vision for that future.

Health Promotion, Performance, and Equity

Advancing the social, mental, and physical health of all Canadians across the lifespan with innovative research is an important priority for the university. This includes research on chronic and infectious diseases, disability and rehabilitation, mental health, drug discovery, behavioural risk factors, physical function and performance, and the social determinants of health.

Autonomous Systems in the Lives of Canadians

Autonomous systems such as smart home devices, assisted-driving vehicles, and robots are playing an increasing role in the lives of Canadians. Ontario Tech is committed to ongoing enabling and ethical research in health care, education, mobility, community living, dementia care, and other applications of the Internet of Things.

Community Well-Being, Justice, and Social Innovation

Innovative research that strengthens community well-being and public sector institutions including the justice system, schools, cultural organizations, and hospitals is integral to how Ontario Tech defines itself as a research-intensive university.

Entrepreneurship and Business Analytics

Entrepreneurship and commercialization are emerging strengths of Ontario Tech. Integral to this strength is prioritizing business analytics and marketing research, which is focused on the scientific process of transforming data using advanced technology into insights for improving decision-making within business organizations.

Materials and Advanced Manufacturing

In the current climate of global economic uncertainty, strengthening Canada's materials development and advanced manufacturing capacity is key to securing the country's economic future. Ontario Tech prioritizes supporting research partnerships with industry partners support the next generation of manufacturing superclusters in innovation, science and economic development.

Strategic Attributes for Inclusive Research Excellence, SRP 5.0
Detailed Description

Ontario Tech University is committed to inclusive research excellence in our efforts to be a world-class research-intensive Canadian university, characterized by high-quality, interdisciplinary, scientifically rigorous, and innovative research activities, programs, and facilities. We believe that equity, diversity, fairness, and inclusion for everyone in our research community is integral to achieving inclusive research excellence at our university.

There are eight core strategic attributes for inclusive research excellence that we have identified as key to the strategic research priorities for the next five years.

Tech with a Conscience

Technology is a tool imagined by humanity to uplift society and our planet. Our ingenuity is our greatest asset. It has allowed us to survive for generations and, if we are purposeful and critical in its development, will empower us to thrive for many more. At Ontario Tech, we strive to improve the lives of humans and the planet through the ethical application of technology and innovation. Technology is inherently human. We intend to keep it that way. We believe that technology is only as ethical as the humans guiding it. We are building a brighter future, where leaders are a force for good and technology is built with human values at its core.

Economic Growth and Prosperity

The research enterprise at Ontario Tech University has an important role to play in economic growth and prosperity locally in Durham Region, the Greater Toronto Area , and the Great Lakes Region, as well as nationally across Canada. It is fundamental that our strategic research priorities reflect that we conduct research that creates knowledge, solves problems, and results in economic and social innovation that strengthens the economy.

Experiential Learning Opportunities for Students

At Ontario Tech, opportunities for so many of our undergraduate and graduate students to participate and contribute to the research and innovation enterprise are foundational to what differentiates us from other Canadian universities. These opportunities include not only paid lab and research assistance roles, but also the space for students to undertake their own research projects and commercialize them by setting up their own start-up company or working with an industry partner. Our community and industry partners have unique opportunities to collaborate with our incredibly talented students.

Sustainability

Ontario Tech University is committed to improving climate change resilience and contributing to Canada’s goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. We believe strongly that our research on new and emerging technology, and its ethical limitations, has an important role to play in helping Canada become a leader in sustainability solutions.

Industry Partnerships

Industry partnerships are a key differentiator for Ontario Tech. We have more than 350 industry partners directly working with the university on research projects and more than 250 start-up companies supported through our entrepreneurship programs in the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation. These partners provide our students with incredible real-world learning experiences, and our cutting-edge research helps these partners solve industry-specific problems. Growing the research and innovation enterprise requires that we continue to expand our industry partnerships.

Community Engagement and Partnerships

Our faculty and students work collaboratively with diverse community partners in the Greater Toronto Area, across Canada, and around the world to address societal needs. The learning opportunities community engagement provides for our students strengthen their job-readiness with skills in research and innovation. These collaborations are fundamental to Ontario Tech University's commitment to socially just, innovative and impactful work opportunities.

Agile and Nimble

The world is facing immense levels of disruption and change, fueled in part by technological innovation. Ontario Tech excels at being agile and nimble in responses to new and emerging technologies. The university recognizes the importance of being agile and nimble with our industry and community partners, adjusting to changing needs and circumstances. We are responsive to the challenges our partners face, and can move quickly to propose viable solutions. As a university, we strive to model this sort of flexibility for our students because we know that this helps equip our students to be more resilient and resourceful in the face of an uncertain future.

Interdisciplinarity

As the research enterprise at Ontario Tech grows, it is fundamental that Learning, research, and innovation are not siloed experiences for our students and faculty members. Research and innovation advances inclusive research excellence when there is not rigid separation between academic fields and disciplines. It is essential that the strategic research priorities reflect an embrace of this interdisciplinarity, requiring collaboration and the sharing of expertise between faculty and students across the university.

Strategic Attributes Matrix for Inclusive Research Excellence, 2025-2030

Strategic Priority	Strategic Attribute Red - Very Strong Green - Strong Blue - Moderate							
	Tech with a Conscience	Economic Growth & Prosperity	Experiential Learning Opport-unities for Students	Sustain-ability	Industry Partner-ships	Community Engage-ment and Partner-ships	Agile & Nimble	Inter-disciplinary
Artificial Intelligence and Its Applications	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Canada's Clean Energy Future	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health Promotion, Performance, and Equity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Autonomous Systems in the Lives of Canadians	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Well-Being, Justice, and Social Innovation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Entrepreneurship and Business Analytics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Materials and Advanced Manufacturing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Strategic Research Priorities, 2025-2030
Detailed Description, SRP 4.0

The university has set seven specific strategic research priority areas where we aspire to be research leaders by 2030. These priority areas, which are adjacent to and build on our current research strengths, are a reflection of both the major anticipated research funding opportunities – provincially, nationally, and internationally – that will be available to the university and our research partners over the next five years, as well as the research and commercialization needs of our diverse set of partners – industry, community organizations, the not-for-profit sector, and governments. These seven priorities will guide decisions about areas for new Canada Research Chairs and Ontario Tech Research Excellence Chairs, investments in new research facilities and other research support resources, grand challenges, industry and community partnerships, and targeted funding opportunities.

All seven of these strategic research priorities align with key strategic attributes Ontario Tech identifies as foundational to inclusive research excellence and our commitment to being the leader among Canada's smaller research-intensive universities. Every Faculty – Business and Information Technology, Education, Engineering and Applied Science, Health Sciences, Science, Social Science and Humanities – is reflected in three or more of these priorities.

Artificial Intelligence and Its Applications

New research in artificial intelligence and its application are driving innovation, while at the same time creating risk and mistrust, in all sectors of the economy. The use of generative AI is revolutionizing diverse sectors of Canadian society ranging from cybersecurity and gaming to public education and health care. The integration of our existing capacities in fundamental AI research, related emerging technologies as well as enabling technologies, and immersive technologies such as augmented reality, wearables, robots, games, digital and virtual simulations, and custom chatbots are important strengths to build on. At the same time, we also focus on ethical considerations of AI such as the risk of racial bias and social exclusion. Consistent with our concern with sustainability and clean energy, we also value research on the disruptive and environmentally destructive potential of the AI revolution. The broad area of AI research remains a fundamental priority at Ontario Tech University.

Canada's Clean Energy Future

Canada's transition to a net-zero energy future remains one of the biggest challenges the country has ever faced, with immense economic, environmental and social implications for all Canadians. The effects of climate change and resiliency underpin this challenge. It requires new thinking that reaches beyond research and jurisdictional silos and integrates advances in the natural sciences and engineering, computer and computational science, business and the digital economy, health sciences, and the social sciences. This vision must reflect our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and engagement with Indigenous Peoples – where the environment is essential to our well-being and all of us are caretakers of the planet. Ontario Tech University, with its immense research strength in energy, applied bioscience, environmental sustainability, community engagement, and digital technology has an important role in contributing to this vision.

Health Promotion, Performance, and Equity

Advancing the health of all Canadians with critical and innovative research addressing health promotion, human performance, and health equity is an important priority for the university. We prioritize healthy aging, chronic disease prevention and management, and rehabilitation by considering a range of conditions and behavioural risk factors across the lifespan and in multiple settings where people live, work and play. We also prioritize optimizing performance and well-being across the spectrum of "ability". This includes optimizing physical function and performance for people of all abilities. Our research extends to infectious diseases, mental health, drug discovery, health policy, and the social determinants of health.

Autonomous Systems in the Lives of Canadians

Autonomous systems such as smart home devices, assisted-driving vehicles, and robots are playing an increasing role in the lives of Canadians. With our advanced testing and research labs and facilities, we are well-positioned to develop and evaluate these systems and their real-world impacts. Ontario Tech is especially committed to autonomous systems research in health care, education, supply chains, manufacturing, telecommunications, business analytics, mobility, community living, rehabilitation, and dementia care settings. Ensuring that these autonomous systems are ethical, resilient, and secure from cyber threats are key concerns for the university.

Community Well-Being, Justice, and Social Innovation

Ontario Tech University has a national research reputation in fields intersecting psychology, neuroscience, criminology, law, communications, environmental sciences, and forensic science addressing societal change, social justice, and social innovation, as well as the emergence of new technology. Our researchers also work within education spaces to explore leadership, play and inquiry, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics innovations while promoting equity and inclusion. Research that conserves environmental ecosystems, addresses social isolation and marginalization, and sustains public sector institutions including the justice system, social services, schools, and hospitals is integral to how Ontario Tech defines itself as a research-intensive university.

Entrepreneurship and Business Analytics

Entrepreneurship and commercialization of research are emerging strengths of Ontario Tech University. Prioritizing business analytics research, which is focused on the scientific process of transforming data into insights for improving decision-making within business organizations, is an important investment in building this strength. Researchers use a variety of advanced computational and statistical methods to investigate problems in marketing, finance, human resources, strategic management, and operations.

Materials and Advanced Manufacturing

In a climate of global economic uncertainty, strengthening Canada's advanced manufacturing capacity is key to securing the country's economic future. Research at the university has always positioned itself as an important contributor to materials development and advanced manufacturing. Disruptive and emerging technologies are creating new opportunities to expand these contributions. The integration of

intelligent and autonomous technologies that utilize artificial intelligence and machine learning for advanced manufacturing is a research priority for the university, allowing us to build on current research strengths to establish ourselves as a leader in manufacturing and materials innovation. We prioritize supporting our industry partners as key contributors to the next generation of manufacturing superclusters in innovation, science and economic development.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Strategy & Planning Committee (S&P)

Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of February 6, 2024
2:00 p.m. to 3:14 p.m. Videoconference

Members: Eric Agius (Chair), Ahmad Barari, Laura Elliott, Matthew Mackenzie, Peter Marchut, Lisa McBride (Vice-Chair), Steven Murphy, Michael Rencheck, Hannah Scott, Emily Whetung-MacInnes

Regrets: Mitch Frazer,

Staff: Kirstie Ayotte, James Barnett, Nicola Crow, Krista Hester, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Jennifer MacInnis, Brad MacIsaac, Sarah Thrush

Guests: Chelsea Bauer, Mikael Eklund, Joanne Nickle, Dwight Thompson (guest Governor)

1. **Call to Order**
   The Chair called the Public session of the S&P meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and read aloud the Land Acknowledgment.

2. **Agenda**
   Upon a motion duly made by M. Mackenzie and seconded by L. Elliott, the Agenda was approved as presented, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents.

3. **Conflict of Interest Declaration**
   No conflicts were declared.

4. **Chair's Remarks**
   The Chair began by reminding Committee members of some meeting protocols, and Public session attendees were welcomed though were noted unable to participate or engage in the meeting. He continued by congratulating team members for recent awards: President Steven Murphy for the King Charles III Coronation Medal, Dr. Barbara Perry for the Order of Canada, and Chancellor Mitch Frazer for also receiving the King Charles III Coronation Medal. He acknowledged Black History Month, with the theme "Black Legacy and Leadership," and highlighted Ontario Tech University's launch of the Black Youth Visionary Program on February 25th, noting that the program, supported by Scotiabank, is in conjunction with the University's first-annual Black Student Showcase. He encouraged Committee members to engage with

learning opportunities throughout the month and invited President Steven Murphy for his remarks.

5. President's Remarks

The President highlighted the University's ongoing efforts amid the challenging fiscal reality in Ontario, a situation shared by many regions globally. The President also updated the Committee on his progress to date of getting out to all Faculty Councils and Administrative Units to talk to everyone about the current context and how the University is responding.

He discussed the impact of a 10% tuition cut and freeze since 2019, compounded by rising inflation. He noted that the Province, rather than increases in base-funding as recommended by the Province's Blue-Ribbon Panel, is providing one-time funding instead, complicating long-term planning. He emphasized the uncertainty of future funding and stressed the need for the University to take control of its own destiny by focusing on unique, high-quality programs that target diverse learners across age groups.

He also mentioned the impact on the international student sector, with the University's international enrollment at 9%, below the target of 15%, and noted the need to resuscitate "Brand Canada" due to the international student situation and the processing delays for visas.

He underscored the importance of adapting to the evolving educational landscape, where offering lifelong learning is essential, and ensuring high quality in all formats – whether in-person, online, or hybrid. The President addressed the outdated universities' business model, calling for a challenging of assumptions including rethinking of delivery methods, such as incorporating professionals with a lifetime of experience to teach specialized programs. He emphasized flexibility and nimbleness in the University's approach. He also stressed the importance of job readiness, advocating for more internships, co-ops, and creative industry collaborations to ensure students are prepared for the workforce. He confirmed he will elaborate on these themes at the upcoming Board Meeting, focusing on how the University will shape its future in an uncertain environment.

6. Strategy

6.1 Student Recruitment and Success* (D)

L. Livingston discussed the Annual Report, noting at the outset that this year she has combined Student Recruitment and Success into one report. She highlighted the University's commitment to supporting student success throughout the recruitment-to-alumni lifecycle and the ethical obligation the University has to support the success of students once they are admitted to their degree programs.

She outlined a multi-pronged recruitment strategy focused on domestic, international, and digital efforts. Despite increased competition in domestic recruitment, the

University has seen a 70% rise in applications over the past five years, with confirmations up 1.5% as of today for the 2025-2026 academic year – final confirmation numbers will be known in June. She noted ongoing challenges in international recruitment due to restrictive policies but emphasized its importance in maintaining cultural diversity on campus and how essential it is in supporting graduate programs and faculty research.

She also mentioned the University's partnership with Border Pass to expedite application processing and the University's ongoing efforts to diversify international markets. She highlighted digital recruitment which has become increasingly important, noting that the University generated over a million impressions through targeted campaigns and commended J. Stokes, the Registrar, and the Recruitment Team for their dedication, strategic initiatives and multiple recruitment events.

In response to a question about standout strategies, L. Livingston explained that no single approach dominates, as success depends on a combination of efforts. She emphasized the increasing importance of personalized experiences, such as virtual visits and individual campus tours, with 500 virtual visits last year, and this year 600 visits. She agreed with the value of student-to-student interactions, especially in the post-COVID era, when students place high value on the on-campus experience. She acknowledged the growing influence of podcasts among high school students and mentioned that the University's Academic Advising department hosts weekly podcasts. In response to a question, she expressed interest in exploring opportunities for sponsorship or participation in more widely listened-to podcasts, particularly those popular with high school students.

L. Livingston explained that the University employs both centralized and Faculty-based recruitment strategies, with individual faculties conducting regular recruitment activities. She acknowledged that faculty involvement, especially through discipline-specific discussions, is effective with high school students. In response to a question on offering tuition reductions for senior citizens, she addressed the challenges of offering such reductions, and highlighted current options available such as micro-credentials, and certificate programs.

Regarding a question on differentiated growth, she noted that each Faculty has distinct growth opportunities, attracting diverse types of applicants, including domestic and international students, as well as high school, mature, and career learners.

Moving onto retention, L. Livingston re-emphasized the University's ethical obligation to support student success, noting the increasing complexity of students today. Key highlights included a significant rise in student financial aid, with OSAP funding increasing by over $13 million year-over-year, reflecting both higher student need and higher student enrollment numbers. She also mentioned the revamped student orientation with kudos to M. Bluechardt for her work in this regard, which now includes separate programming for new and mature students, along with parent and supporter information sessions. The Learner Enhanced Academic Program (LEAP) has also

been successful, with about two-thirds of students at risk of suspension being retained.

Overall, undergraduate student retention rates have improved, with first-year retention increasing from 81% to 84% and upper-year retention rising from 91% to 95% over the past four years.

In response to concerns about students struggling with math and physics due to disruptions during the COVID years, L. Livingston acknowledged the issue and mentioned existing support programs, including study halls and the LEAP program. She also highlighted the U-prep program and suggested combining it with other initiatives to create a pre-university offering for students. While she noted that success rates in these programs are tracked, data on whether COVID-affected students are experiencing more challenges than those from prior years has not yet emerged.

6.2 Strategic Discussion: Campus Master Plan Update* (D)

The Chair introduced the Strategic Discussion and invited B. MacIsaac to present the Campus Master Plan Update. He also encouraged Committee members to think about any feedback they may have on the Plan's Vision and planning principles whilst listening to the presentation.

B. MacIsaac outlined the Campus Master Plan (CMP) refresh, focusing on changes over the past 10 years and future needs. He noted that this will not be a full review as the CMP already has established principles. The plan will be updated in three phases: reviewing land changes since 2015 by April, refining phasing in the summer, and holding consultations in September and October, with a Board presentation in November. It will consider all locations, including Oshawa, Whitby, and downtown Oshawa. The refresh will prioritize building locations, public open spaces, and active transportation, while seeking community feedback on valued spaces and areas for improvement. The goal is to transition from the overall scope of the previous plan to more practical implementation, ensuring the campus grows effectively over the next decade.

The Committee then engaged in a fulsome conversation on the CMP refresher during which B. MacIsaac clarified that public open spaces on University property are intended to be welcoming to the community for activities like walking along trails if they are used appropriately. The spaces are private property but open to the public under certain conditions and acknowledged that better wording may need to be considered.

In response to concerns regarding the availability of food services on campus, B. MacIsaac noted that food services will be factored into the CMP only as a high level planning ratio of total space proposed. The implementation will be more of an annual review focusing on the challenges with food services which stem from funding

constraints, making it costly to extend hours. He noted that the University continues to work on improving food services but struggles with their financial sustainability.

B. MacIsaac agreed on the importance of integrating industry partnerships into the CMP, acknowledging the President's focus on industry collaboration. He suggested that future buildings could include spaces for both industry partnerships and academic activities, and that this could be highlighted either with a dedicated section or enhanced mention within the CMP principles. He also recognized the potential of using external business spaces for experiential learning and expressed interest in incorporating this idea into future planning, moving beyond the traditional focus on university-owned spaces and acknowledged the challenge of prioritizing the 17 principles in the CMP. He mentioned that a criteria sheet is used when determining the location of new buildings and noted that some principles have been merged to create more focus. He agreed with the importance of prioritization and will consider it further during the summer consultation process.

A comprehensive discussion focused on the proposal of creating an AI Data Centre with a super-computer powered by nuclear energy from nearby Darlington or Pickering sites, emphasizing that this initiative could attract industry, foster partnerships, and shape the CMP with an emphasis on innovation. B. MacIsaac acknowledged the idea, noting that the 2015 CMP included spaces for academic and industry collaboration. He expressed interest in further exploring this concept and potential industry partnerships. He also stressed the importance of out-of-the-box thinking in this planning process, citing the President's encouragement of innovative ideas and shared an example of a student design project where students reimagined campus spaces, with plans to continue such engagement. He recognized the need to challenge traditional University planning approaches and expressed a commitment to incorporating more creative and unconventional ideas moving forward.

The President added that future discussions focused on planning spaces for industry-related activities and labs, with an emphasis on anticipating future needs. He mentioned efforts to secure funding for an AI Data Centre powered by nuclear energy, prioritizing energy efficiency while meeting high computing demands and emphasized the importance of collaborating with both industry and government, not only to attract future partnerships but also to demonstrate the University's innovative and forward-thinking approach to growth. This collaboration aligns with the goal of building spaces that meet industry needs and foster future advancements.

7. Planning

7.1 Board Retreat Planning* (D)

The President noted that the upcoming Board Retreat will focus on AI, exploring its role in both student programs and University operations. A key topic will be an early-stage partnership with Lakeridge Health, which is already showing promising results and highlighting the bridge between industry and academia. The retreat will also address the governance of AI, with the Board considering important issues such as

ethics, data management, algorithmic bias, and cybersecurity as AI becomes more integrated into the University's functions.

N. Crow added that the upcoming Board Retreat aims to provide the Board with a foundational understanding of AI's potential and its governance role at the University. It will cover current AI projects, governance and ethical considerations, and how the Board can engage, including key questions to ask. The session will build on prior strategic discussions and identify action items for the 2025-2026 workplans. There was a suggestion that risk considerations also be incorporated within the session.

N. Crow suggested considering the renaming of the upcoming Board Retreat to a "Board Advance" to better reflect Ontario Tech University's forward-thinking, visionary approach. She noted that the term "retreat" might imply a backward focus, while "advance" aligns more closely with the strategic and growth-oriented discussions planned and sought feedback from the Committee.

The Committee discussed shifting from a "retreat" to an "advance" to better reflect a forward-thinking approach, particularly regarding AI and Ontario Tech's future. The group agreed that this terminology aligns with the emphasis on building from past successes while focusing on strategic progress. There was also recognition of the importance of incorporating reflection on past actions as part of the planning process. The consensus was to embrace a term that balances both reflection and forward movement.

8. Significant Project and Contract Oversight

The Chair noted that there were no items for discussion.

9. Consent Agenda* (M)

9.1 Minutes of Public Session of Meeting November 14, 2024* (M)

The Chair confirmed that the contents of the Consent Agenda were approved and received under Agenda Item #2.

10. Adjournment

There being no other business, and upon a motion duly made by M. Rencheck, the Public session of the S&P meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary