

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

February 6, 2025  
2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Join via [TEAMS MEETING LINK](#)

**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, Nicola Crow, Krista Hester, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Jennifer MacInnis, Brad Maclsaac, Sarah Thrush

**AGENDA**

No.	Topic	Lead	Allocated Time	Suggested Start Time
<b>PUBLIC SESSION</b>				
1	Call to Order	Chair	5	2:00 p.m.
2	Agenda (M)	Chair		
3	Conflict of Interest Declaration	Chair		
4	Chair's Remarks	Chair	5	2:05 p.m.
5	President's Remarks	Steven Murphy	10	2:10 p.m.
6	Strategy			
6.1	<i>Student Recruitment and Success*</i> (D)	Lori Livingston	15	2:20 p.m.
6.2	<i>Strategic Discussion: Campus Master Plan Update*</i> (D)	Brad Maclsaac	30	2:35 p.m.
7	Planning			
7.1	<i>Board Retreat Planning*</i> (D)	Steven Murphy Nicola Crow	10	3:05 p.m.
8	Significant Project & Contract Oversight	-	-	-
9	Consent Agenda* (M)			
9.1	<i>Minutes of Public Session of Meeting of November 14, 2024*</i> (M)	Chair	5	3:15 p.m.
10	Adjournment (M)	Chair		3:20 p.m.
<b>BREAK – 10 minutes</b>				

No.	Topic	Lead	Allocated Time	Suggested Start Time
<b>NON-PUBLIC SESSION</b> (material not publicly available)				
<b>11</b>	<b>Call to Order</b>	Chair	5	3:30 p.m.
<b>12</b>	<b>Conflict of Interest Declaration</b>			
<b>13</b>	<b>Chair's Remarks</b>		5	3:35 p.m.
<b>14</b>	<b>President's Remarks</b>	Steven Murphy	10	3:40 p.m.
<b>15</b>	<b>Advancement &amp; Alumni Update* (U)</b>	James Barnett	10	3:50 p.m.
<b>16</b>	<b>Consent Agenda (M)</b>	Chair	5	4:00 p.m.
16.1	Minutes of Non-Public Session of Meeting of November 14, 2024* (M)			
16.2	S&P 2024-2025 Workplan/Action Points* (I)			
<b>17</b>	<b><i>In Camera</i> Session</b>	Chair	10	4:05 p.m.
<b>18</b>	<b>Termination (M)</b>	Chair		4:15 p.m.

Nicola Crow, University Secretary

# COMMITTEE/BOARD REPORT

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**SESSION:**

Public   
Non-Public

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Decision   
Discussion/Direction   
Information

**TO:** Board Strategy and Planning Committee

**DATE:** February 6, 2025

**PRESENTED BY:** Dr. Lori Livingston, Provost and Vice-President, Academic  
Dr. Joe Stokes, Assistant Vice-President, International and Registrar

**SUBJECT:** Student Recruitment and Success

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**BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:**

The 2023-208 Integrated Academic-Research Plan is explicit in its call for a strategic commitment to a “differentiated growth” agenda. More specifically, going forward, Ontario Tech needs to continue to grow its reputation as a unique and innovative post-secondary institution with a commitment to excellence in all that we do (i.e., teaching, research, service, and community outreach). Overall reputational excellence is key to enabling us to growing our enrolments year over year by attracting new students. At the same time we need to retain those who have already opted to study at Ontario Tech. Both are important to the overall goal of maintaining robust enrolments.

Enrolments necessarily rely on the constant addition of new students and the retention of the existing student base. Once we recruit and admit a student into an academic program, we have an ethical obligation to support them to succeed along the course of their academic journey. We must constantly remind ourselves of this obligation and routinely challenge ourselves to adapt as needed to support their success.

The purpose of this briefing note is to update the Committee on our strategic approaches to supporting student recruitment and retention, including a brief summary of some of our efforts over the past year.

**RECRUITMENT**

Ontario Tech’s **domestic recruitment strategy** focuses on connecting members of our recruitment team with established high affinity schools while also developing new relationship with schools and in areas where our footprint is still developing. During the current recruitment cycle, recruiters have visited over 540 high schools in Ontario, and have conducted over 600 virtual discussions with students and parents. These activities aim to build relationships with students

as well as push them to the second phase of our recruitment life cycle which is to get students to attend an on campus event. These efforts have also generated over 100,000 prospective student leads, each of which is subsequently assigned to an individual recruiter for personal follow up.

During the current academic year, on campus event attendance has increased with over 3,000 students and parents attending the Fall Open House and the completion of 636 group tours. These represent year-over-year increases of 20% and 5%, respectively, in comparison to the same events in 2023-2024. Our student-staffed conversion call centre is now up and operational, and all applicants will receive a call from a student in their program of intended study, with conversations aimed at getting students to campus for our experience days in March.

Data from the Ontario Universities Application Centre (OUAC) shows that at the recent January secondary school application deadline, Ontario Tech has had a small 2% decrease in overall applications in comparison to last year's numbers but the university is still maintaining an increased market share from previous years. Since 2021 we have experienced the largest growth in overall applications amongst Ontario universities with a 69% cumulative increase in secondary school applications.

On the **international recruitment** front, we continue to be strategically focused on the development of six priority markets – China, South Asia, South East Asia, the Middle East, West Africa and Latin America/Caribbean. Ontario Tech has offshore recruiters working in all of these regions and continues to deploy complementary market development strategies such as media and government relations, partnership development, and direct student recruitment.

Strategically we continue to look at market diversification so as not to be too reliant on any one source country. This is important as geopolitical tensions (e.g., between Canada and India and Canada and China) and government policies (e.g., imposition of caps on student visas for undergraduate and graduate students) continue to create challenges for Canada's reputation as a desired study destination. In an effort to mitigate these challenges, recruiters will be increasingly in-market to build trust and control potential fallout. In addition, we continue to leverage our partnership with a company called Border Pass which allows international students to access the services of an immigration lawyer for the purposes of obtaining a study permit. This new measure should help the university cement more enrolments despite the imposed immigration caps on international students.

In terms of **digital recruitment** activities, the overall market for digital advertising was fierce this year with more universities going after the same market share of applicants. Ad saturation was high and cost per impression was much more expensive due to many universities greatly increasing their advertising spends. This increased competition for the same online ad space which resulted in doubling the cost of many keyword bids (e.g., cost to buy keywords like "engineering" increased by 200%).

Despite the significant competition in the market, we were still able to meet our preset goals for ad impressions, beating out industry benchmarks with impactful digital ad creativity. Some of the highlights of our digital efforts included:

- Realizing our most successful Spotify campaign to date with 350k impressions, up 45.6% from our next highest performing campaign;

- Increasing the number of visits to our tours page by 300 views per day, therefore increasing our tour bookings by 40% per day;
- Increasing the number of live chat conversations with potential applicants, therefore providing opportunities to nurture more applicant leads;
- Implementing a new geo-targeted ad campaign specifically for students at the high schools we were visiting. This gained 1.02 million impressions

## **SUCCESS (RETENTION) INITIATIVES**

The barriers to success (e.g., cost, mental health needs) are far greater today than they were in the past. Moreover, some of the unique demographics of Ontario Tech's student population (e.g., high proportion of first generation students, commuters) have to be taken into account when defining our strategies.

There are multiple units on campus which contribute to the sense of community and provide supports for our students. These are situated in various offices across campus including the Office of the Registrar (e.g., Student Awards and Financial Aid, International Office, English Language Centre), Office of the Deputy Provost (e.g., Student Accessibility Services, Student Learning Centre, Test Centre, Student Mental Health Services, Career Services, Academic Advising, Teaching and Learning Centre, etc.), and the School of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies.

The following provides an overview of some (but by no means all) of the major initiatives that we undertake to support student success.

### **STUDENT FINANCIAL AID<sup>1</sup>**

In 2023-2024, the Student Awards and Financial Aid Office processed and issued 1,633 Awards and Scholarships totaling \$2,278,168 to our students as follows:

- \$197,168 (n=23) in Admissions Scholarships
- \$891,000 (n=531) First Year Entrance Scholarships
- \$922,000 (n=770) In-Course Scholarships
- \$268,000 (n=79) Athletic Scholarships

Ontario Tech students (N=8,113) also readily access OSAP funding at both the undergraduate (n=7,870) and graduate (n=243) levels. In total, \$69,412,340 in funding was issued in the form of loans (i.e., \$36,936,464 or 53%) or grants (i.e., 32,474,876 or 47%).

### **NEW TO ONTARIO TECH STUDENT UNDERGRADUATE ORIENTATION**

A key to retaining new students is ensuring that they develop a sense of connection to the university in the first few weeks of arrival on our campuses. In September, 2024 we introduced new and improved orientation programming to seamlessly link together a variety of activities including residence move-ins, meeting new classmates, tours of Oshawa, and Faculty-based academic orientations, to name a few. This programming is differentiated based, for example, on

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers are for the 2023-2024 academic year. This summary does not include the financial supports provided to graduate students via guaranteed funding packages, supervisor and Dean top-up funding, the Graduate International Tuition Scholarships (GITS), or other internal and external scholarship programs.

the needs of new from high school versus mature student groups or residence-based versus commuter students. Information sessions for our students' parents and supporters were also introduced this past fall with great success.

### **MENTAL HEALTH, STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES, AND TEST CENTRE SUPPORTS**

As the number of students seeking these support services continues to rise, a great deal of effort has gone into better integrating the services within and between all three of these units. For example, students requesting academic accommodations also often require the specialized services offered by the Test Centre. Key to this integration is the use of software and IT systems and real time visual dashboards to coordinate student registrations, requests for these services, and the scheduling and completion of tests and exams throughout the academic year. Recently, our Test Centre has been recognized as a best practice site by its peers in Ontario.

Ontario Tech's Student Mental Health Services team offers a robust set of mental health supports which is supported by a Stepped Care model. This model was introduced to reduce wait times for service, and to increase the likelihood that students receive a service that matches their needs. As demand for these services continues to grow, we apply for numerous grants and work with Advancement to secure additional funds to expand these services.

### **STUDENT-CENTRIC ACADEMIC ADVISING**

In March, 2021 the university implemented a new approach to undergraduate student advising, moving from services that were managed on a Faculty-by-Faculty basis to a centrally-led overseen by a Director of Advising and three dedicated Managers of Advising. This has created a student-centric approach to academic advising, as well as a more consistent and accessible service model.

With the adoption of a continuous improvement mindset, our Academic Advising unit has introduced multiple new initiatives to both improve its services for students, but also to roll with the accessibility challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key accomplishment this year was the introduction of software and IT systems, supported by a grant from the Telus Innovation Fund, to introduce an early alert system for at risk students.

### **PROGRAMMING FOR AT RISK STUDENTS**

Enrolment into the Learner Engagement Academic Program (LEAP) is offered to first year students who, at the end of an academic term, are destined for suspension from their degree program due to poor academic performance (i.e., GPA less than 2.0). Students who enroll sign a learning contract which stipulates that they may proceed with a reduced workload in their current academic program while concurrently attending all of the LEAP program's weekly information and coaching sessions. They must also complete all required assignments. Failure to adhere to these conditions results in removal from the LEAP program and the re-imposition of their probation or suspension status.

The program is supported by the Registrar's Office and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC). Weekly in-class sessions focus on topics such as effective learning habits, goal setting, personal accountability, short-term planning strategies, time management, and other core skills to support individual success.

Since the inception of this program in the Fall, 2020 term, a total of 663 undergraduate students

from the six cognate Faculties have enrolled in the program. As of December, 2023 7.1% (n=46) have graduated while 56.2% (n=376) continue to be actively enrolled in their programs of study.

## **IN SUMMARY**

To understand the effectiveness of our efforts, a commitment to routine program evaluation is a must. We must also commit to continuous improvement in all that we do including challenging ourselves to think about what other existing resources might be leveraged or adapted to support our students.

In terms of student retention, Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) data show that our Year 1 to Year 2 retention rate<sup>2</sup> has improved from 81% in 2019 to 84% in 2023. CSRDE Year 2 to Year 3 retention rates also improved from 91% to 95% from 2018 to 2022, respectively. Our efforts are producing positive results.

## **NEXT STEPS**

From a strategic perspective, our efforts to recruit and retain students must continue to be:

1. Multi-pronged in nature and responsive to the needs of the Ontario Tech student population.
2. Guided by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement year-over-year, including effective integration of common activities across the multiple units contributing to such initiatives.
3. Committed to a student-centric approach and the use of data to drive our decision making. Most importantly, this includes gathering input and direction from our students.

The grand challenge for the coming year is:

How do we identify and strategically manage the rapid adoption and use of AI tools for the purposes of recruiting and retaining students?

How do we strive for seamless integration of these AI tools across these multiple, often interrelated, activities?

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<sup>2</sup> CSRDE Year 1 to Year 2 retention rates are based on first-time, full-time undergraduate students who commenced studies in the previous year and have continued to study at the same institution in the reporting year.

## COMMITTEE REPORT

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**SESSION:**

Public   
Non-Public

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Decision   
Discussion/Direction   
Information

**TO:** Strategy & Planning Committee

**DATE:** February 6, 2025

**FROM:** Brad Maclsaac, Vice-President, Administration

**SUBJECT:** Strategic Discussion: Campus Master Plan (CMP) Update and Discussion

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**COMMITTEE MANDATE:**

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.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR S&P:**

Ontario Tech and Durham College (DC) are reviewing the 2015 Joint Campus Master Plan and seek the Committee's feedback on the general direction for the process.

At this starting point a key question is:

- Does the Committee have feedback on the 2015 vision and planning principles?

**CONTEXT:**

Ontario Tech is currently working with DC to update the [Joint CMP 2015](#). We have engaged [Urban Land Advisors](#), who provide strategic land-use planning advice to help the institutions achieve their development goals and support their core mission in ways that also builds community - leveraging public land for public good. This team worked with the University on the Real Estate Strategy and the selection of the new Residence plan. The design work has been subcontracted to [Brook McIlroy](#) which is a planning practice fusing the fields of architecture, landscape and Indigenous place-making to create a holistic contemporary practice that advances the potential of Canada's lands, peoples and communities. The CMP Update will be prepared in three phases:

Phase 1: Background, Analysis, and Framework Development: November 2024 – April 2025.

Phase 1 will set the foundation for the CMP Update and will develop a thorough understanding of Durham College and Ontario Tech University's campus context through extensive background review, analysis, and through meetings with the College and University. Team members will prepare campus opportunities and constraints and a draft design framework which will inform updates to the campus vision and guiding principles.



### *Phase 1 Activities and Milestones:*

- Project kick-off meeting with Ontario Tech University and Durham College
- Site visit
- Background and policy review
- Summary of campus changes and updates since the 2015 CMP
- Campus opportunities and constraints
- Draft campus design framework and strategies

### Phase 2: Vision, Master Plan Development, and Implementation Plan: April 2025 – August 2025.

The primary objectives of Phase 2 are to refine the campus framework, design strategies, vision and will be informed by the outcomes from Phase 1 and meetings. Phase 2 will include a campus implementation and phasing plan, design strategies, illustrative diagrams, and other relevant material. This CMP Update will incorporate the work currently underway on the non-core lands to ensure that the updated CMP addresses both campuses.

### *Phase 2 Activities and Milestones:*

- Development and refinement of campus design framework and strategies
- Development and refinement of campus and non-core land plans
- Development and refinement of campus phasing and strategic implementation plan
- Assumes up to four renderings and visualizations (2D base mapping and 3D model preparation)

### Phase 3: CMP Finalization: September 2025 – November 2025.

This time will be used for final consultation with the campus community and a final report for both institutions' Board of Governors.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Ontario Tech and DC share a campus in north Oshawa as well as many campus spaces and facilities. In 2013 MMM Group Limited, in association with Greenberg Consultants Inc. and Educational Consulting Services, was retained to undertake the development of a CMP. The CMP intended to proactively address land use and infrastructure development to meet evolving academic and student needs. Most important, the CMP was to be realistic and implementable. It describes the steps that will translate the joint vision into a vibrant institutional area that appropriately integrates with Durham Region, City of Oshawa and Town of Whitby.

To address the future expansion and needs of both institutions, the University and College completed a joint CMP that includes a land use plan for the shared Oshawa campus.

The CMP is a visionary, forward thinking document that provides the framework, strategy and collection of tools needed to guide campus development in keeping with space requirements established to meet the projected enrolment growth. The CMP is a coordinated development solution that will guide the character, scale, facilities and layout of the shared Oshawa campus to address the academic, research, student life, athletic and community partnership needs as both institutions evolve and grow. The Campus Master Plan:

- Creates a mixed-use hub for activity that encourages appropriate integration of the two academic institutions with the surrounding community;
- Sets the framework for transition to a compact, well-connected and walkable campus that will accommodate future growth and expansion and provide opportunities for greater integration with the surrounding community, local industries and strategic partners;
- Leverages the critical mass generated by both institutions in order to support ongoing development of north Oshawa as a complete community with enhanced transit opportunities, natural heritage linkages and the infrastructure needed to accommodate sustainable development;

- Sets the vision and associated guidelines for the future campus and provide more detailed, area-specific guidelines as established through a combination of built form, architecture, land uses, landscaping, open spaces, pedestrian connections and movement patterns; and
- Provides implementation and monitoring guidelines that include the steps needed to translate the joint vision into a vibrant institutional precinct that addresses the future academic, research, student life, athletic and community partnership needs;
- Incorporates sustainability in terms of building design but also walkability, active transportation and respect for the natural environment and the rich cultural heritage; and
- Utilizes efficient and innovative use of assets and resources in order to ensure a business case that can support implementation.

**CMP VISION & PRINCIPLES**

In addition to sharing a campus Ontario Tech and DC share a commitment to provide students with innovative and rewarding post-secondary education.

The CMP Vision and principles were the foundation of the CMP. The CMP Vision was established during Phase 1 of the 2015 planning cycle and outlines the future aspirations for the campus to 2030 and beyond. The CMP Vision Statement is:

**The joint Campus Master Plan for Durham College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology addresses land use and infrastructure development with a realistic, solutions-oriented implementation plan. The Master Plan acknowledges space needs across all institutional categories and the desire for a vibrant, integrated and sustainable campus community. A compelling Master Plan concept to promote a compact, walkable, mixed-use and green campus that offers opportunity for appropriate collaboration with the community, business partners, and all levels of government.**

The CMP includes guidelines and recommendations that are aligned with and will implement the Vision and ensure that the campus is a vibrant space for faculty, students and the community, into the future. The Vision is further supported by seventeen (17) Master Plan principles. The principles were established through consultation with the CMP Core Team, Senior Management Teams, Board of Governors, students, faculty, staff and the community. The Master Plan principles that were established are:

1	Student Focused Institutions	The Master Plan will address the needs of students and enhance the student’s experience of the campus environment as an integral part of their life while enrolled in the College and/or the University.
2	Research, Experiential Learning and Scholarship	The Master Plan will take full account of the distinctive infrastructure needs to support research, experiential learning and scholarship and the application thereof.
3	Contemporary Planning	Campus design, built form, student services, pedestrian connectivity and parking cannot continue to be planned and developed as they are currently. A contemporary approach to campus planning and design that shifts the current paradigm is required. The paradigm shift will enhance the existing campus and develop the future campus spaces in a way that encourages walkability, the creation of vibrant streetscapes, establishes strong connections, and responds to the needs of students and faculty.
4	Vision based in Practicality	The Master Plan will create an implementable and practical vision for the campuses. Phasing will address the immediate facility needs while being flexible to respond to the evolving nature of the academic environment and funding opportunities.
5	Walkability	The Master Plan will prioritize pedestrians and create strong links both through

		and surrounding the campus. Especially important are the links across Simcoe Street North and Conlin Road for future campus expansion into the Windfields Farm north of Conlin Road and to enhance integration between the campus and the broader community.
6	Transportation and Transit	Pedestrians and cyclists as well as public transit will be given priority in terms of long-term planning and facilities. The provision of public transit to and from campus will improve over time, and will, in turn, reduce reliance on personal vehicles. The Master Plan will be positioned to leverage future transit investment.
7	Green Connections	The surrounding natural landscape should be considered as key to the future Master Plan. Buildings and pedestrian walkways will address and interact with natural spaces and provide walking and cycling connections to the broader community.
8	Interactions and Long-Term Connections	The Master Plan will promote interaction and integration with the surrounding community and land uses. New campus facilities should include spaces that can be used by a broad range of people within and outside of the academic community.
9	Identity	The Master Plan will strengthen the physical relationship between Durham College and UOIT whilst providing a means for both institutions to reinforce their own identities. The shared Oshawa campus will be defined as a place that is unique and distinguishable from the surrounding areas, but that is integrated with and inviting to the broader community.
10	Use Land Efficiently	The Master Plan development concept will be structured to meet the future academic, faculty, athletic and student space needs of the institutions while providing the tools and framework to be adaptable to leverage funding opportunities as well as development opportunities with the private sector.
11	Partnerships	The Master Plan will provide guidance to the institutions on how they should position themselves, in terms of organization and design to take advantage of partnership opportunities (government and non-government).
12	Enrolment Growth and Diverse Student Needs	The Master Plan will accommodate the future academic space needs for both the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and Durham College. The Master Plan will acknowledge the demographic profile and needs of the student population as being unique from other colleges and universities and will address residence, housing, activity, social and cultural needs.
13	Sustainability	The Master Plan will incorporate sustainability principles that are measurable, holistic and applicable at different scales (building to neighbourhood). Where possible, sustainability features will form key areas of interest within the campus, such as the existing stormwater ponds and green roofs.
14	Innovation and Technology	The Master Plan will accommodate spaces for innovative start-ups, technology and manufacturing. The innovation and technology park space will provide spaces that can be used by both institutions and that can be integrated with academic spaces.
15	Decision Making Processes	The Master Plan will articulate and directly inform a decision-making process with respect to physical form, space utilization and partnership with moving forward for both institutions, ensuring the continued success and growth of both.
16	Cultural Heritage and Diversity	The campus has a rich history and a bright future as well as a diverse student population which should be reflected in the Master Plan. The legacy of E.P Taylor, Windfields Farm and the horse racing history associated with the lands north of Conlin Road, as well as the Aboriginal heritage, should be expressed in the Master Plan in an innovative and relevant way.

17	A Plan that works for the Short, Medium and Long term	The Master Plan will be adaptable over the short, medium and long term, as opportunities arise.
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**SPACE NEEDS ANALYSIS**

In the 2015 plan, a high-level space needs analysis was completed for the shared Oshawa campus, Ontario Tech’s downtown Oshawa location and DC’s Whitby campus to determine the space needs until 2030 for both institutions. To fulfil their strategic objectives and meet commitments ranging from academic and social space to opportunities for community and business partnerships, additional buildings and infrastructure will be required to keep pace with projected student enrolment. The following recommendations were provided:

- Future student enrolment at the shared Oshawa campus was projected to be nearly 28,000 FTEs by the year 2030; 14,058 (4,428 downtown) for Ontario Tech and 13,251 (2,624 Whitby) for DC.
- The CMP was built to accommodate the space to meet the projected total shortfall of 2.4 million gsf and provide residences at a rate of 0.1 bed to every FTE.

As we look to refresh the 2015 CMP Ontario Tech continues to grow, expand and mature into the promise its founders envisioned when it was established in 2002. The [2023-2028 Integrated Academic-Research Plan](#) (IARP) charts our course towards our goal of being a preeminent institution. It works in tandem with the existing [Strategic Research Plan 2020-2025](#) and it drives our year-over-year budgeting and capital planning processes. As the University moves forward with the implementation of these plans it is anticipated that the bold transformation set out will result in significant differentiated enrolment growth to 18,000 students by 2030, to meet the needs of the growing Greater Toronto Area university-aged population and international demand for STEM and professional programs offered by Ontario Tech. We will see corresponding expansion in our research and support services.

There are several different strategic enrolment plans that could get us to 18,000 students. Each of these could have multiple space scenarios depending on the type of program (i.e. engineering verse business), course offerings (i.e. lab based verses executive style on weekends), the type of researcher hired and even the location of the building as one may connect well with existing utilities while another may consume a large portion of the building if it needs to service the full future location. Using simple averages to start the high-level planning process, if we had 15,000 traditional students and 3,000 continuing learning students who could fit more into online, nights and weekends, we would need 300,000 gross square feet (gsf) to maintain our current ratios of space.

Using 2023 construction costs for a general academic building (i.e. classrooms, offices, light labs) a 100,000 gsf building would be above \$70 million. Unless another large-scale government infrastructure fund was released and/or major increases to our donations it is not prudent to tie infrastructure phases just to enrolment. We will use that as a guide but realize the buildings will likely come later.

In February 2021 management opened consultations on a Re-imagining Space Paper: **The proposed grand challenge discussed was: how can we work together to reduce our total office and traditional lecture theatre space to allow us to reallocate more space for dynamic learning and research activities, whilst at the same time reduce our reliance on leased spaces?**

Ontario Tech currently has about 75% of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) guideline for space so we are already running very efficiently. We are going to look at how we can maximize this; but as we grow, we know we will need to invest more in space and technology.

**SUMMARY:**

The IARP is the anchoring planning document that guides the initiatives in place or underway at the University to drive us towards being a preeminent global institution. As we aspire to grow to 18,000

students there is a corresponding need to outline the enabling plans. The Campus Master Plan is a visionary, forward thinking document that provides the framework, strategy and collection of tools needed to guide campus development in keeping with space requirements.

To deliver on the strategic academic objectives, Ontario Tech is facing increased pressures to provide dynamic on-campus space. The University also needs to balance reductions in public funding and concerns about overall affordability with the need for high-quality facilities. For this reason, we must be laser focused on what the most efficient and effective use of our limited resources might be.

Using current metrics, the University aims to add at least 300,000 gsf of core teaching, research, study space to support our growth plans. This varies depending on the type of program, the type of researcher hired and even the location of the building. In 2023 dollars this equates to over \$210 million dollars in construction. In addition, with this core space we will need ancillary services such as student housing. For that reason, we know we will need to implement a phased in approach that corresponds with our offerings.

We will need to examine how we can do things differently now to accommodate growth in the space we have while looking to the future offerings. It is with our collective efforts that we will succeed and build on the solid foundation that we have already created and push Ontario Tech towards a bright, sustainable future.

## COMMITTEE REPORT

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**SESSION:**

Public   
 Non-Public

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Decision   
 Discussion/Direction   
 Information

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

**DATE:** February 6, 2025

**FROM:** Nicola Crow, University Secretary

**SUBJECT:** Board of Governors Retreat – April 3, 2025

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**COMMITTEE MANDATE:**

- In accordance with [S&P Terms of Reference](#), S&P “is responsible for overseeing the strategic planning for all aspects of the University and assessment of the implementation of the University’s plans in the context of the University’s Vision, Mission and Values
- As part of this mandate, it is responsible for planning the annual Board of Governors Retreat

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR S&P:**

- The focus of this year’s Board Retreat is on Artificial Intelligence and Governance
- The Board Retreat date is April 3 from 9-12 noon followed by the S&P meeting in the afternoon
- S&P feedback is sought on the focus/planning of the Retreat
- S&P feedback is also sought on the change of the title from Board Retreat to Board Advance to promote and emphasise a forward thinking, strategic intent for this session aligned with the University’s progressive, visionary approach in all that it does

**BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:**

Board Retreat Focus and Content:

- Each year the Board holds an Annual Retreat
- The Retreat aligns with the Board’s Professional Development goals
- The Board’s Professional Development topics take into consideration:
  - The results of the Board and Committee Practice Assessments
  - The Board of Governors Skills Matrix
  - The University’s strategic priorities

- The Board’s professional development and in turn the Retreat for this year will have regard to the above.
- The Retreat’s purpose is as follows:
  - Provide a foundational understanding of AI potential and the role of the Board
  - Support learning objectives including: insight into AI projects underway at the University; understand governance/ethical considerations; learn how the Board can engage in this work, including what questions to ask within a governance context
  - Inter-connect with prior Strategic Discussions facilitated with the Board so far this year
  - Identify action items to include in 25-26 workplans
- The format for the Retreat is also under consideration to promote interactive, strategic and generative dialogue, including:
  - Showcasing project(s)/work currently underway at the University
  - Facilitating a strategic conversation on what does AI mean for the Board as it fulfills its governance role within the University context

**Board Retreat or Board Advance:**

- Ontario Tech University is a visionary institution with inspirational strategic priorities
- The Board coming together in an annual session outside the regularly scheduled Board/Committee meetings is an opportunity to build relationships, proactively advance the University’s strategic priorities within a governance context, engage in more in depth strategic and generative conversation, and look forward to/plan for the year(s) ahead
- Rather than “retreating” the Board is in fact “advancing”, hence the term Board Advance

**NEXT STEPS:**

- The Board Retreat/Advance focus, format and planning will be finalized in consultation with the Board Chair, S&P, President and Senior Leadership Team.
- University Secretary will provide progress reports and seek feedback from S&P on the planning of the Retreat

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**SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:**

- None



## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### Strategy & Planning Committee (S&P)

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

**Members:** Eric Agius (Chair), Laura Elliott, Matthew Mackenzie, Peter Marchut, Michael Rencheck, Hannah Scott, Emily Whetung-MacInnes

**Regrets:** Ahmad Barari, Mitch Frazer, Lisa McBride, Steven Murphy

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

#### 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the public session of the S&P meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. and read aloud the land acknowledgment.

#### 2. Agenda

*Upon a motion duly made by M. Mackenzie and seconded by M. Rencheck, the Agenda including the Consent Agenda items were approved as presented.*

#### 3. Conflict of Interest Declaration

No conflicts were declared.

#### 4. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed attendees to the first meeting of the academic year, expressing gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Lynn Zucker, for her leadership. He noted the Committee's expansive role and key agenda items, including strategic enrollment and planning. Additionally, he highlighted the successful launch of the 'Tech with a Conscience' fundraising campaign, which aims to raise \$250 million to support students and the University's vision.



## **5. Review of Strategy and Planning Terms of Reference\* (D)**

N. Crow presented the S&P Terms of Reference for annual review, noting their last comprehensive update in 2021, which introduced the Vice-Chair role. She emphasized that the review helps clarify the Committee's responsibilities and underscores its broad mandate.

In response to a question raised, N. Crow confirmed that the Chair and Vice-Chair position appointment process is detailed within By-law No. 1.

## **6. Strategy**

### **6.1. Strategic Discussion: Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan (D)**

L. Livingston highlighted the challenges and significance of strategic enrollment planning, noting Ontario Tech's growing reliance on enrollment revenue amid unpredictable externally imposed factors such as provincially legislated tuition freezes and recently imposed federal caps on international student study permits. To address these issues, the University launched efforts to expand enrollments through differentiated growth, a central priority of the 2023-2028 Integrated Academic-Research Plan, supported by interconnected strategies, including the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

S. Thrush explained that the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan is a dynamic process, aligning Ontario Tech's academic and research goals with program offerings, student mix, and outcomes like degree completion and career readiness. SEM covers the entire student life cycle, from recruitment to retention, and involves a community-wide effort to enhance the student experience. She highlighted the importance of graduation and alumni mentorship, as well as enrollment plans that support differentiated growth strategies, and balancing undergraduate and graduate programs. She also discussed expanding learning options, such as micro-credentials and pilot programs, and initiatives like the Early Alert System and Learning Engagement Academic Program (LEAP) program to support student success. She noted that enrollment planning focuses on projections and budget impact, factoring in scenarios related to domestic and international students, while aiming for flexible, long-term growth.

She continued by explaining that the University uses conservative projections to prevent financial over-extension and that the reduced growth outlook stems from difficulties in filling the gap left by limited international student intake. Efforts are underway to increase the University's market share of domestic students through innovative program options and new programs. She noted that government funding for domestic growth remains limited and domestic tuition alone is not financially sustainable. B. Maclsaac added that scenarios are carefully monitored, and some fund allocations may be delayed until actual student enrollments are realized.

In response to a question regarding changes to programs or courses that are no longer yielding the number of students required, S. Thrush explained that the University gathers input from various sources, such as recruitment events, student surveys and feedback from students who leave programs to assess what students want and identify potential mismatches. She noted when an enrollment issue arises, or a program is not meeting targets, discussions are held with the Deans and faculty members to understand challenges, including factors like prerequisites or course difficulties. The data received from these discussions helps inform decisions to modify or discontinue programs. L. Livingston noted that the ultimate decision to add or discontinue academic programs falls within the purview of Academic Council.

S. Thrush acknowledged concerns raised that highlighted the challenges for the downtown campus, including travel burdens and student disconnection. She suggested that ideas from Student Life and other areas help improve engagement and bridge the geographical divide.

## **7. Planning**

### **7.1 Enrollment Update\* (U)**

L. Livingston invited S. Thrush to present the Enrollment Update based on Day 10 numbers, highlighting that these preliminary numbers are accurate but subject to change as they are earlier than the fall official count and students drop out during the early weeks of the fall term.

S. Thrush provided an update on undergraduate and graduate admissions, highlighting positive outcomes despite challenges. Undergraduate applications rose by 8.6% year-over-year, with strong domestic interest, though international student registrations declined due to federal policy changes and delays. This resulted in a 2.9% overall increase in fall registrations, though the target was not fully met. Graduate registrations increased, but the University fell short of intake targets for some programs, particularly research and course-based masters, due to impacts from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) policies. Enrollment projections, including conservative assumptions for international students, were integrated into the budget, with retention tracked using a three-year average. She also noted that Ontario Tech rated No. 1 in the Mitacs program.

### **7.2 Integrated Academic-Research Plan Timelines and Milestones\* (U)**

S. Thrush outlined the University's progress towards its goals, emphasizing the Committee's role in evaluating this progress. She highlighted the importance of the Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP), which focuses on tech with a conscience, reimagining the campus, and partnerships. She detailed the planning process, which includes multiple strategic documents, such as the IARP, the Strategic Research Plan, and the government's strategic mandate agreement (SMA3) which is in its final annual

evaluation phase. She explained that departmental strategies drive implementation, guide budgeting and resource allocation. S. Thrush further advised the Committee that they will review a summarized qualitative report on strategy outcomes, including successes, challenges, and funding implications, as well as a quantitative dashboard linked to the IARP and SMA3 performance at year-end.

### **7.3 Board Retreat Planning**

N. Crow updated the committee on the upcoming board retreat planned for April 2025, focusing on the University's AI strategic priority. The retreat will address AI's potential, its governance and ethical considerations, helping the Board understand its role in AI governance. She highlighted that the format will promote strategic discussion to support informed decision-making and governance responsibilities.

Further updates and feedback will be provided as planning progresses.

### **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 June 20, 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 S&P meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.*

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary