



Integrated Academic-Research Plan **Executive Summary / 2021-2023**

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Creating our story, together



Our university has an amazing story to tell—it's been created by the uniquely talented community of faculty, staff and students we have at Ontario Tech. It's a story that's still being created by all of us.

This Integrated Academic-Research Plan provides the arc of our story by aligning our vision, mission and values with the key priorities to guide our collective focus. Together, we're creating the story that we're proud to share with the world.



Lori A Livingston, PhD
Provost and Vice-President, Academic



Vision

Embracing technology with a conscience to advance knowledge and promote sustainability.

Mission

We equip future leaders to solve complex problems.

We respond to the needs of students and the evolving world by providing superior undergraduate, graduate, and lifelong learning experiences. To this end, 'what we do' to achieve our mission and to 'tell our story' is guided by a community-focused approach on our strategic priorities:

- **Tech with a conscience:** Innovating to improve lives and the planet by incorporating technology-enhanced learning strategies and promoting the ethical development and use of technology for good through intensive research and inquiry.
- **Learning re-imagined:** Co-creating knowledge by adapting to the ever-changing educational landscape through the provision of flexible and dynamic learning and research opportunities.
- **Creating a sticky campus:** Cultivating student- and community-centric engagement opportunities by encouraging an inclusive culture for our institution through online and on-campus activities.
- **Partnerships:** Uncovering innovative solutions for their most pressing problems through purposeful research and collaboration with industry, community, government and academic partners especially as it relates to all facets of global sustainability and well-being.



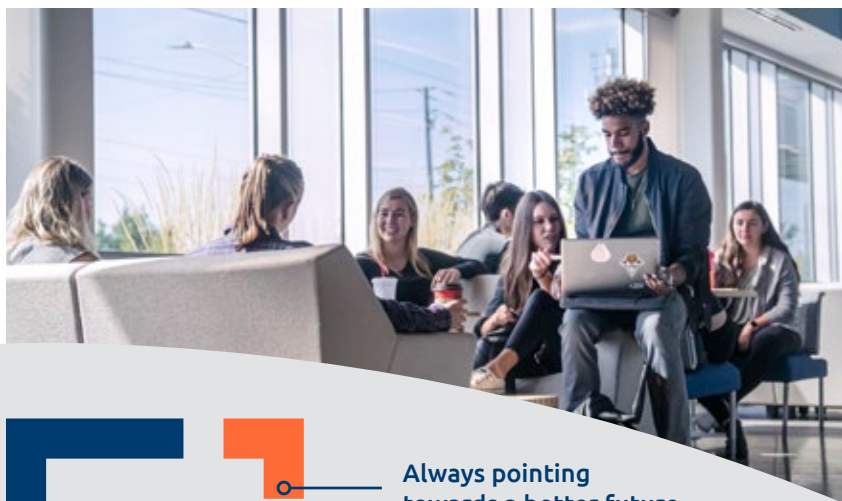


Values

Ontario Tech is a place where every person belongs and is free to grow their skillsets and mindsets.

We cultivate lasting relationships through:

- **Integrity:** Supporting a culture of trust and belonging by consistently promoting equity, fairness, kindness and ethics.
- **Inclusion:** Advancing a learning community where we achieve success by prioritizing reconciliation, valuing diversity and eradicating discrimination and hate.
- **Intellectual resilience:** Pursuing excellence in all that we do by respecting different points of view and engaging constructively when exploring ideas and advancing knowledge.
- **Innovation:** Inspiring world-changing ideas by re-imagining learning and in so doing, fostering an environment that provokes curiosity, creativity, ingenuity and failure while stimulating growth.



Always pointing
towards a better future

Open to new emerging
ideas and possibilities

A modern, forward-
thinking University



The right priorities are key





Our plan, including the goals, objectives, commitments and actions, aligns with our academic-research strategic priorities:

- Tech with a conscience
- Learning re-imagined
- Creating a sticky campus
- Partnerships

Along with our focus on telling our story, these priorities will advance the university to the next level.

Tech with a conscience:

Innovation, impact, and the social and ethical implications of technology



We aim to improve the lives of humans and the planet through the ethical application of technology. It's a key component in our teaching and learning practices, administrative processes, and innovative research projects.

Our commitments

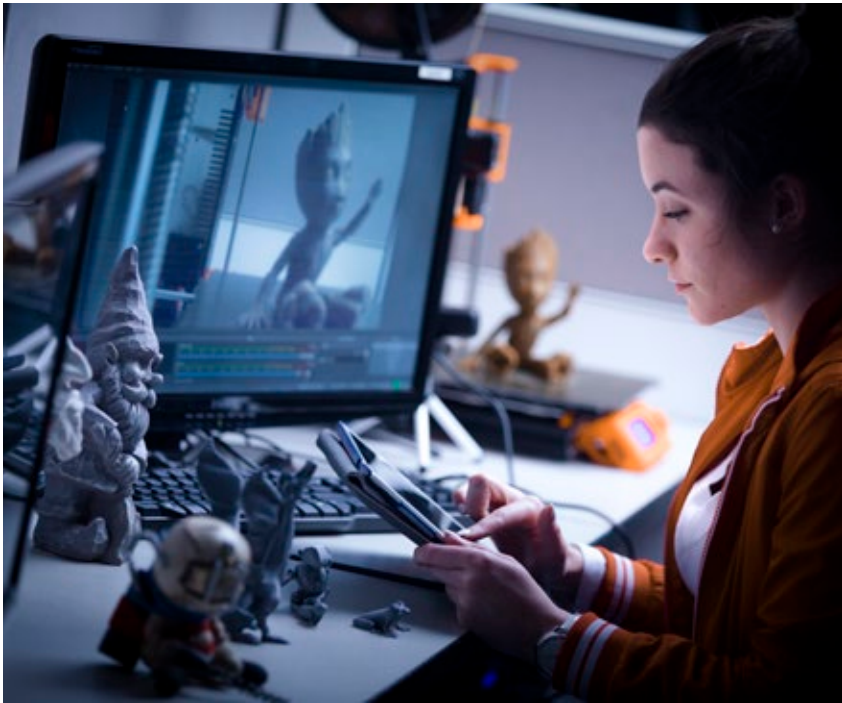
- Establish new research institutes, centres and chairs.
- Be national leaders in the conversation pertaining to the future of energy in Canada.
- Intentionally differentiate ourselves as an institution committed to using technology in all that we do.

Attainment of these goals will be measured against actions that contribute to making Ontario Tech a great place to work, study, and play. We will know if we are on track if by 2023 we have:

- Launched new research institutes, centres, and chairs which examine the use, application, social and ethical implications, and impact of technology on everyday life.
- Built on existing strengths by establishing interdisciplinary research teams in select areas to create innovative and ethical technological solutions for the future.
- Established advisory boards and/or industry consortia to guide complex interdisciplinary conversations and community-based research and experiential learning initiatives pertaining to technology and its promise for the future, as well as its challenges.
- Developed new undergraduate and graduate programs that critically examine the intersections of technology, the environment, societies and local communities (e.g., MA in Social Practice and Innovation, Minor in Indigenous Studies).
- Expanded student, staff, and faculty usage of digital/virtual platforms governed by robust **Future of Learning** and **Future of Work** policies and processes guided by key principles pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusivity.

Learning re-imagined:

Learner-centred educational options



We adapt to the ever changing educational landscape by experimenting with the most effective ways to deliver flexible and dynamic learning, giving more choices to more people.

Our commitments

- Open our doors to all learners and prepare them for life experiences and careers which, contribute to individual, societal, and global solutions and prosperity.
- Re-invent learning by defining and constructing innovative high-quality pedagogical practices specifically designed for use with technological solutions.
- Provide learners with continuous learning/upskilling, experiential-learning and work-integrated learning opportunities including entrepreneurial and research-intensive options domestically and globally.

Attainment of these goals will be measured against actions that contribute to making Ontario Tech a great place to work, study and play. We will know if we are on track if by 2023 we have:

- Increased the quantity of online and hybrid curricular and course offerings, and open-access journals, while simultaneously committing to enhancing the quality of the same.
- Combined the use of virtual technologies and re-imagined physical campus spaces to design and mount dynamic educational programs that are highly engaging, and meeting the needs of traditional and newly emerging student markets.
- Designed and incorporated new approaches to scheduling, structuring and formatting on campus and virtual program offerings.
- Invested in, and utilized, an expanded array of technological platforms and assets while simultaneously exploring and identifying new opportunities in relation to the technology-pedagogy interface.
- Leveraged existing technological assets to offer a greater number of degrees, courses, and other ‘for credit’ offerings (e.g., micro-credentials) via online formats.
- Leveraged existing (e.g., ACE) and emerging technological assets and expertise (e.g., simulation, gaming, AR/VR) to elevate the integration and use of ‘immersive’ learning strategies.
- Increased the development, creation, production, adaptation, adoption and usage of OERs in each of our Faculties.
- Introduced new or re-vamped undergraduate and graduate program offerings via increased collaborations within—and between—Faculties, with external university and/or college partners, and with local communities, municipalities and industry.
- Increased the number, quality and diversity of undergraduate and graduate student engagements in experiential- and/or work-integrated learning and co-op opportunities via enhanced community-, industry-, and partner-sponsored options.
- Increased enrolment in a suite of increasingly diversified Continuous Learning offerings.

Creating a sticky campus:

A place to make lasting connections



We promote positive social change and encourage an accessible, equitable, diverse, and inclusive culture for our campus community.

Our commitments

- Create new campus spaces and experiences at our downtown and north locations while expanding our virtual campus assets.
- Leverage social networks to engage our university stakeholders and to build connections with alumni and community.
- Broaden and diversify our university community demographics while at the same time celebrating and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in all that we do.

Attainment of these goals will be measured against actions that contribute to making Ontario Tech a great place to work, study, and play. We will know if we are on track if by 2023 we have:

- Opened our new academic building to support faculty, staff, student, and community educational, research and service needs.
- Repurposed existing physical spaces to support growing teaching, research and service needs while at the same time investing in our information technology systems to create new virtual platforms, 'collision' spaces, and social hubs where innovative ideas can thrive.
- Supported the mental and physical health needs of our students, staff, and faculty via the provision of enhanced programmatic supports.
- Supported student recruitment, persistence and success through investment in the Registrar's Office, the use of AI driven analytics (e.g., early alert systems), and dedicated student support programming (e.g., UPREP, LEAP).
- Committed to student success and persistence via enhanced and adaptive experiences, new investments in student advising and mental-health supports, and cost reductions via OERs and other digital delivery strategies.
- Increased our overall student enrolment numbers, including the number of international students, scholars and visitors to our university.
- Acted on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action in support of Indigenous students and the local Indigenous communities.
- Welcomed greater participation from members of our local communities and region via age-specific programming and community-specific needs.
- Enacted a comprehensive equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) plan for the university, including forward-thinking student admission and employee recruitment policies.
- Embraced and gained, with intention, a better understanding of the diversity of our university demographics through robust employee and student data collection methods.
- Introduced and implemented new orientation, mentorship and leadership programs for our faculty, staff and students.
- Expanded our commitment to sustainability through energy and waste-reduction initiatives.

Partnerships:

Meaningful connections with our local and global communities



We help industry, community, government, and academic partners be more effective by bringing them together with students and researchers to uncover innovative solutions for our partners' most pressing problems.

Our commitments

- Strengthen existing and cultivate new, external industry, community, and government relationships within the Durham Region, Northumberland County and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).
- Strengthen and add to our existing academic partnerships—regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Broaden our impact and reach beyond the Durham Region and Northumberland County.

Attainment of these goals will be measured against actions that contribute to making Ontario Tech a great place to work, study and play. We will know if we are on track if by 2023 we have:

- Engaged a greater number of students in Brilliant Catalyst, Brilliant Solutions, and other ‘upskilling’ activities.
- Successfully started up Ontario Tech Talent Inc. in conjunction with corporate partners and developed a business model to help our students and all employees upskill or reskill to ensure or enhance job-readiness.
- Increased the number of faculty, staff, and students in City of Oshawa’s Teaching City and CityStudio Durham initiatives.
- Established respectful, collaborative connections with local and regional Indigenous communities.
- Increased the number of faculty, staff, and student engagements with other municipalities within the Region of Durham, Northumberland County and beyond.
- Increased the number of students enrolled in collaborative programs offered between Ontario Tech and other universities and colleges.
- Established up to five new international partnerships (including within the United States) with universities renowned for their technologically-oriented research and academic programs.
- Increased the number of university-industry research chairs and institutes.
- Increased the number of Ontario Tech-lead pan-university partnership agreements with industry, new startup companies, employers, community partners and collaborative international research teams.
- Experienced an increase in research granting success from funding sources both within and from outside Canada.
- Completed our first community engagement survey to benchmark Ontario Tech’s engagement within community.
- Set up satellite research and partnerships offices.

Conclusion

Ontario Tech continues to grow, expand, and mature into the promise its founders envisioned when it was established in 2002. It has always been a technologically forward-looking institution characterized by innovation, entrepreneurship, and a strong commitment to the betterment of society and the planet.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, this plan builds on the Ontario Tech's established position as a dynamic, conscientious and innovative technological leader in the province's higher education sector. We are young, yet with intention, we now more than ever welcome faculty, staff, students, and the greater community to engage in strategic education and research initiatives with the aim of building a better and brighter future for all. Importantly, Ontario Tech is growing and diversifying to include students, staff and faculty from around the world. Together, through an overt appreciation of our differences, products of our individual backgrounds, world views, and choices we aspire for excellence in all that we do.

We are motivated to find solutions to complex societal problems that can serve as catalysts for improvement and change within our local and global communities. Within this planning cycle, we are confident that we will realize our goals through hard work and the implementation of the commitments articulated herein.

Resources

Members of the Ontario Tech community are annually invited to contribute to our planning exercises. Using a rolling plan approach, this Integrated Academic-Research Plan is supported by its complementary five-year *Driving the Future with Research Excellence: Strategic Research Plan 2020-2025* as well as annual budgeting and capital planning exercises. Together, these instruments comprise an integrated university-wide planning approach that will support our efforts through 2023 and beyond.



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