

Strategic Plan 2019-2024

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A Message from the President

This is both an exciting and challenging time for the University of Toronto Students' Union. First, we are anticipating the opening and subsequent operation of a six-floor student centre, the Student Commons. This move will greatly improve: a) our ability to directly influence student life on campus, b) our position as service providers, and c) our engagement channels with students. Most importantly, it means that we need to develop the operational capacity to handle the most ambitious project the UTSU has ever undertaken.

Second, the [Student Choice Initiative](#) presents novel challenges for the organization. For the first time in the UTSU's history, we will no longer operate on a secured funding model. This means that we will need to apply new processes and approaches when budgeting, and that financial planning must take on a new level of rigour. A shift in the way we approach our organizational needs and growth is necessary in order for us to adapt effectively.

Lastly, while the UTSU looks internally, the organization is establishing the importance of simultaneously looking outward. Any efforts to improve the UTSU are, and always should be, conducted with the intention to improve our members' experience by proxy. As a member-driven organization, we also need to value the student experience. Like a tree falling in an empty forest, any internal improvements seem meaningless without an engaged membership to receive or experience them.

The UTSU 2019-2024 Strategic Plan is our first formal effort in addressing the issues mentioned above, and to set ourselves for a new & improved way of approaching the work we do. The hope is that engaging in a long-term strategic plan vision will offer the UTSU:

- A clear direction
- A shared vision
- An opportunity for continuity in key initiatives, despite annual Board turnover
- The focus the UTSU needs, to generate the greatest positive returns for our membership
- The opportunity to evaluate its work and objectives
- A resource to course correct easily when needed

2019 will be remembered as the year the UTSU pulled itself together--in the face of adversity, and in preparation for great things to come. The Student Commons coupled with the

Student Choice Initiative are about to change the course & nature of our organization. I am excited for the future that I see for the UTSU, and look forward to seeing the work of our present and future Board & staff to deliver on this promising future. So long as we remain transparent, principled, moral, member-driven, and responsive to our membership, we will reach our potential as an organization and as agents of change.

Yours in service,

Anne Boucher

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The Strategic Planning Process

The UTSU Strategic Plan was created with the help of direct student, board, executive, and staff input:

- Surveys addressing the UTSU's student-facing areas were distributed to our membership. Responses were collected over a month-long period in January, and promoted via social media channels and in-person tabling. A comprehensive promotional strategy was developed implementing the use of posters and incentives, however the decision to hold off was made given a change in the campus environment (the provincial government's postsecondary announcements to the Student Choice Initiative, and to OSAP).
- One-on-one consultations between interested Board members & Executives were held throughout January and February with the President. A standardized set of 68 questions was asked to each participant and recorded anonymously. Members had the opportunity to voluntarily expand on areas they were most well-versed in, and to omit those which they ostensibly were the least. An opportunity to speak to any topic or area was given at the end of each consultation.
- A staff-wide consultation was held between our full-time staff members and General Manager. Staff were given the opportunity to speak to areas of improvement and offer strategic planning advice in a group setting.

Enclosed are the UTSU's areas of focus for the next five years. Our vision for each area is outlined, followed by tangible target areas to help turn these visions into realities.

The UTSU

Our Mission

The University of Toronto Students' Union is a student-led nonprofit organization founded in 1901. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life and postsecondary experience of our members and safeguard their rights through the provision of high-quality services, advocacy, events, and programming. We strive to approach each of these facets in an equitable manner.

Vision and Values

We look toward a UTSU that is:

Student-led: to ensure a democratic and representative organization

Transparent: to ensure accountability, and to serve an informed membership

Adaptable: to meet new opportunities or challenges arising from our dynamic environment

Continually improving: to always serve our membership as well as possible

Accessible: to our membership, to serve all members

Results-driven: for clear paths to success

Responsive to our University of Toronto St. George members: to engage in member-specific needs

Diverse and Inclusive: to ensure all ideas and lived experiences are considered in our work

Equity-focused: to lead by working through an anti-oppressive framework

Integrity: to do what is right, not what is easy

Fiscal and fiduciary responsibility: to ensure diligent governance, and to service the students of tomorrow

Student Focus

Communications

Since its founding in 1901, the UTSU, formally known as the Students' Administrative Council (SAC), has been a member-driven organization. As such, it is important that we carry the support of our members in the work that we do. Gaining this support requires effective communications strategies that give us the ability to showcase the UTSU's work, services, initiatives, and values. Our ability to create a meaningful and engaging relationship with our membership diminishes if proper communication channels and strategies aren't established.

Our communications vision:

- **Member-oriented messaging:**
 - Our principal responsibility is to serve our membership, the students who elect us and trust us to represent them. How we communicate our initiatives should reflect that commitment.
- **Year-to-year consistency:**
 - Brand-recognition is key to the UTSU's success in engaging our members with the meaningful work we do. The UTSU's branding and communications practices must remain consistent over time to build trust and recognition from our membership.
- **Welcoming and approachable style:**
 - In our survey, 21.1% of respondents found the UTSU hard to approach. Genuine and humanized messaging, accessible language, and an engaging public presence must be at the forefront of the UTSU's communications vision.
- **Openness:**

- Openness and accountability begin and end with information sharing. To be successful, the UTSU must commit itself to being reasonably open with information shared with its membership.
- **Providing for engagement:**
 - Relationship building happens through effective communication. We must engage in strategies that foster meaningful conversations with our membership.

Our target goals:

- **Expand our communications capacity:**
 - The UTSU will dedicate human resources to focus on strategic communications to build dependable, engaging and high-quality communications and channels. Devoting resources, both human and material, to communications is essential to maintain an effective presence.
- **Create a clear internal communication policy:**
 - The UTSU will establish internal communications procedures to establish and follow common communications standards, practices, and processes.
- **Reach all relevant channels:**
 - The UTSU will continue to understand and expand its outreach to current channels and platforms used by our membership. Annual evaluations assessing current trends, seeking which mediums our members are engaging with--and responding accordingly--will allow us to reach our membership more effectively.
- **Maintain a constant presence:**
 - The UTSU's Facebook platform currently sees a 92% response rate and 5 hour response time to member inquiries. The UTSU will strive to maintain and improve upon these statistics across all relevant social media platforms used.
- **Ensure accessible language:**
 - Members must be able to wholly understand the UTSU's activities, from its campaigns to its operations. All public-facing communications will use accessible language that speaks to a broad variety of members, and will strive to comply with AODA regulations.
- **Increase in-person interactions:**
 - Most of the UTSU's outreach currently takes place on social media. We will diversify our approach to communications by meeting with and speaking to our members meaningfully through frequent in-person conversation. An in-person outreach strategy will be implemented and executed.

Advocacy

Located just West of Queen's Park and a subway ride away from City Hall, the UTSU finds itself conveniently close to both provincial and municipal governments. We also represent one of the largest postsecondary memberships in the province, at one of the most prestigious universities in the country. As a result, we have unique access to advocacy opportunities. We must take advantage of these opportunities and advocate on behalf of our membership as well as we can. Furthermore, the UTSU must continue its advocacy work on behalf of students at the university level.

Our advocacy vision:

- **Maintaining relevance and credibility:**
 - The UTSU should be seen as reliable voice to consult with when it comes to student issues. This position affords us the ability to amplify the concerns and needs of our members.
- **Fostering meaningful engagement with decision-makers:**
 - While we may at times hold different standpoints, decision-makers must be seen as partners when approaching student issues. We should look to prioritize a partnership-based relationships with key decision-makers, rather than one that is motivated by a sole advocacy priority. This means ensuring stable and consistent dialogues, rather than from a position of convenience.
- **Applying strategies that promote the most successful outcomes:**
 - Advocacy is a results-based field and requires a varied approach. The UTSU must work to be flexible in its advocacy approach, always prioritizing successful outcomes over performative action.
- **Maintaining a high degree of nonpartisanship:**
 - The political climate changes often, and the UTSU should be able to adapt. This requires us to approach advocacy in a nonpartisan manner, approaching all parties equitably whenever multiple parties are to be engaged.
- **Analysis-driven advocacy:**
 - An effective advocacy position is well-assessed and based on facts. The UTSU's advocacy priorities must be supported by strong data, analysis, and quantifiable research.

Our target goals:

- **Have a constant presence:**

- An important aspect of the UTSU's position is our ability to communicate effectively and often with policymakers, rather than merely on a per-need basis. We will maintain our position by meeting with key decision makers at the beginning of each term, keeping an open line of communication with them, and reaching out periodically.
- **Create publicly-accessible policy proposals:**
 - Ideas presented to policymakers are most effective when they are presented as formal written proposals. Lobby documents will be written judiciously and with care, and publicly available for members to view. In addition to the original documents, further background and context of each proposal will be available for members in accessible language.
- **Foster & maintain relationships at all three levels of government:**
 - To successfully advocate as the UTSU for our membership, we need to be heard. Concretely, this presents itself differently at different levels of government. In addition to better communication practices with decision-makers, we will organize and host an annual provincial Lobby Week where Board members can meet with MPPs and present them with official UTSU recommendations in line with our advocacy strategies. We also continue to commit to lobbying MPs in Ottawa through our membership in UCRU.
- **Maintain & foster relationships with the university:**
 - The UTSU is fortunate to have a good working relationship with the university administration and various departments. This relationship is crucial to the UTSU's ability to operate and advocate effectively, and must be committed to year by year. The UTSU must continue its advocacy work on behalf of students in other areas of the university, building upon already-existing relationships and creating new ones.
- **Reflect the needs of our membership:**
 - As shown below, students have demonstrated needs they wish to see the UTSU prioritize. We will evaluate and apply these wherever possible.

Top 5 areas of focus in order of priority, as per UTSU Advocacy Feedback Form results:

1. Tuition
2. Mental Health
3. Healthy and Affordable Food Options on Campus
4. Affordable Housing
5. Accessible Transit/Flexible programs and course offerings (tied)

Campaigns

Campaigns are the student-facing portion of the UTSU's greater advocacy priorities. When successful, they're a great opportunity for students to put thought into action, and serve

as a great way to engage our members. Campaigns also offer the opportunity to gain direct feedback on our advocacy goals.

Our campaigns vision:

- **Reflecting our membership:**
 - Through campaigns, the UTSU can ensure its advocacy goals and priorities resonate with our membership and reflect their needs.
- **Looking beyond the materials:**
 - Many UTSU campaigns involve increasing awareness around a certain issue. Awareness efforts should be in concert with tangible action, directly tackling the issue at hand.
- **Maintaining open dialogue:**
 - Campaigns are often organized in response to a membership issue. We should prioritize engagement and feedback from students throughout the process of each and every campaign.
- **Balancing our members' needs:**
 - Campaigns should always respond to needs from our own membership. A healthy balance must be struck between campaigns that are applicable to all, with those that respond to the needs of a subset of our membership.

Our target goals:

- **Involve our members:**
 - While gaining initial support of a campaign is important, maintaining member involvement throughout its course is equally so. We will introduce meaningful opportunities for membership input and standardize the process, guaranteeing student involvement in all member-facing UTSU campaigns. We will strive to include student groups whenever there are shared causes.
- **Share progress:**
 - Regular updates on campaigns progress, especially when the UTSU is successful, will foster trust and engagement from our general membership, strengthening the UTSU as a whole. Progress will be shared across channels, in line with our communication strategies.
- **Conduct constant monitoring:**
 - In order to respond to relevant issues, the UTSU will continue to monitor our campus environment and issues via social media channels and student engagement strategies.

Programs & Services

Service provision is arguably the most important role we play in the day-to-day lives of our members. From our Health & Dental Plan to our Foodbank, the services we offer are essential to our students' postsecondary experience. Our member-centered approach inspires us to provide impactful, practical, and meaningful services to students.

Our programs & services vision:

- **Valuing the user experience:**
 - Services should be made to be as easy to use as possible, and focused on positive user experience. The user experience should be at the center of any changes to a service.
- **Offering important services while maintaining fiscal responsibility:**
 - While the UTSU has a responsibility to provide high-quality services to its members today, the sustainability of these services is important to service our members tomorrow.
- **Filling the gaps:**
 - As a guiding principle, the UTSU should strive to provide services to members that improve their quality of life or postsecondary experience whenever a similar service doesn't exist elsewhere and whenever reasonable.

Our target goals:

- **Evaluate existing and proposed services:**
 - Implementing new services and continuing to offer existing ones should be considered through formal evaluations. Each will be carefully scrutinized based on criteria such as: financial viability, demonstrable need, member satisfaction, projected outcomes, and alignment with the UTSU's short and long-term goals. All services, both present and future, should be evaluated against these criteria through standardized processes and be adjusted accordingly.
- **Maintain high-quality services essential to student success:**
 - Essential services go beyond those outlined in the province's Student Choice Initiative. We will strive to continue to offer essential services that target areas such as food insecurity, health & wellness, employability, and financial aid.
- **Create a progressive financial aid framework:**
 - The UTSU's current financial aid options can be better optimized to target students' needs. We will evaluate our bursaries, grants, and funds and reform them accordingly.

Events

Events bring people together, facilitate meaningful connections, are fun, and help build a sense of community on campus. Effective event planning requires clear, shared goals and attention to detail by all parties involved. Our ability to host meaningful and engaging events for our membership diminishes if goals aren't strategic and shared.

Our events vision:

- **Building a shared sense of community:**
 - The University of Toronto St. George is a community of communities. When we create the opportunity to bring people together, it serves to make a campus that is more open and welcoming as a whole.
- **Sharing a purpose:**
 - Events should be consistent with our strategic priorities, seeking to fulfill a common goal. Events should be meaningful not only to attendees, but to the organizers as well.
- **Openness and Collaboration:**
 - Our membership serves to benefit when we are able to recognize when we lack expertise and require assistance, or when we collaborate with other parties in general. Keeping an open and collaborative approach to event organizing can help ensure our members have access to diverse options.
- **Increasing students' trust:**
 - Whenever the UTSU can host meaningful or entertaining events, we engage with our membership and strengthen our relationship with each and every student.

Our target goals:

- **Create lasting relationships:**
 - The UTSU will seek to foster collaborative relationships with community members, clubs, campus groups and external parties who are willing and able to contribute, in line with our relationship building strategies.
- **Evaluate recurring and proposed events:**
 - Hosting new events and continuing to offer existing ones will be considered internally through standardized evaluations. Each will be carefully scrutinized based on criteria such as: financial viability, demonstrable need, member satisfaction, projected outcomes, and alignment with the UTSU's short and long-term goals. All events should be evaluated against these criteria through standardized processes and be adjusted accordingly. Past events will be recorded internally, tracking attendance and other relevant information.

- **Balanced programming:**
 - A reasonable balance between social, entertainment, educational, cultural, and equity-based events will be struck. Performance metrics will be developed and applied. On average, event attendees should proportionately reflect our membership at large.

Student Commons

The Student Commons, operated by the UTSU, will be the first student centre to operate on our campus. Student centres play a vital role in centralizing the student experience. The move to the Student Commons will considerably change and improve our opportunities to engage with and serve our members.

Our Student Commons vision:

- **For and by students:**
 - The Student Commons has been a student-led initiative from its inception. It is important to remember that the building should reflect our membership's needs, and that students are in the best position to identify these needs.
- **Creating a sense of community:**
 - A successful Student Commons acts as a centralized hub for our students to enjoy themselves, to build community, and to create lasting memories.
- **Animating a space:**
 - The Student Commons should inspire innovation, thought, and imaginative collaboration through exceptional service delivery, programming, and by fostering a welcoming atmosphere.
- **Creating an accessible space:**
 - The Student Commons should be accessible to all members from our membership. We should always maintain and strive to provide physically accessible space, and accessibility & affordability of programming & services. Coupled with this, we should constantly be assessing and responding to barriers.
- **Centralizing the UTSU:**
 - The Student Commons will become a one-stop-shop to access our services and get involved with the UTSU.

Our target goals:

- **Maintain student leadership:**
 - Operating the Student Commons will require the development and use of decision-making structures to ensure the success of the building. We will create

and implement operating and governance models that ensure student leadership in the long term.

- **Draw our members:**
 - The success of the Student Commons is dependent on the levels of traffic it experiences. We will create attractive promotions and programming to attract students to the space while setting a fun, inviting, and collaborative tone. We will also seek to engage student groups in the building, who may assist in driving traffic in the Student Commons through their own programming.
- **Engage external parties:**
 - We recognize the need to engage external users in order to develop healthy business growth. We will create and implement strategies to create meaningful relationships with potential tenants and business clients.
- **Maintain community shared spaces:**
 - While animating the building with interactive channels are important, there is value in designing for community shared space. The UTSU will prioritize our members' need to satisfy their own goals and to apply their own creative energy by maintaining spaces to study, lounge, and innovate.
- **Create student jobs:**
 - The Student Commons presents exciting work opportunities. Priority will be given to students when hiring for part-time roles wherever and whenever possible.
- **Create inviting environment for tenants:**
 - Housing a variety of tenants gives us the opportunity to bring different groups and stakeholders together. We will work to create communication channels between building tenants and the UTSU, and between building tenants themselves to spark meaningful collaboration.
- **Continual improvement:**
 - The Student Commons necessitates the continual evaluation and improvement of operational and financial processes to ensure sustainability of the building itself and services provided, especially in its formative years. The UTSU will perform periodic evaluations of the building and seek membership feedback in order to continually evolve toward the best possible version of the building as possible.

Engagement

We need our members to be aware, and to care. An engaged membership means well-utilized services, well-attended events, a bustling Student Commons, a healthy governance process, and the ability to promote our advocacy goals. Without membership engagement, our core objectives lose their meaning. None of the aforementioned strategic goals are possible without student buy-in.

Our engagement vision:

- **Valuing feedback:**
 - Students are the experts when it comes to their interests and wants. We need to not only solicit feedback regularly, but evaluate and apply that feedback wherever possible.
- **Keeping a genuine presence:**
 - People value people. While the UTSU is a nonprofit organization, we must ensure that internal processes and governance styles do not translate over when interacting with our membership so as to make ourselves as approachable and accessible as possible.
- **Creating meaningful opportunities:**
 - The UTSU must commit to engaging our members on a diverse and meaningful range of platforms, supporting their desire and ability to be involved with the UTSU as a long-term goal.
- **Engaging members on governance:**
 - The UTSU's governance process can be, at times, difficult to navigate. While our priority should be to promote member-focused information, we need to commit to making our governance processes effective, accessible, and approachable to general members.

Our target goals:

- **Standardize feedback:**
 - While keeping an informal open line of communication important, we must prioritize soliciting concrete, measurable feedback from our membership to ensure our work evolves correspondingly. This includes implementing a strategy across our work to gain consistent and effective student feedback.
- **Humanize the UTSU:**
 - The UTSU is held up by countless dedicated, hardworking individuals who work toward meaningful change. While maintaining a sense of collectivity, the UTSU will continue to showcase our efforts and people behind the scenes whenever beneficial, and engage its elected members in this process whenever possible.
- **Increase social media engagement:**
 - The UTSU has seen a near 100% increase in Instagram followers over the 2018-19 term by creating consistent and engaging content. We will begin tracking across social media platforms and set tangible periodical targets for social media engagement, coupled with effective targeting strategies and practices. We aim to increase engagement with our existing social media followers while continuing to attract new followers.
- **Increase voter turnout:**

- Voter turnout is currently averaging at 8.94% since spring 2016, meaning that the great majority of our membership does not vote in our elections. We will work to increase voter turnout to 20% by our fifth year, looking toward further improvements in the long-term. The UTSU will implement strategies to pursue this goal, with a special focus on incoming student cohorts. The UTSU needs to demonstrate to its membership the impact that elected members have on their day-to-day.
- **Increase candidate turnout:**
 - Elections have been made more accessible than ever by providing online voting, and campaign funding. The UTSU will commit itself to maintaining those standards in every election. The UTSU will also conduct a comprehensive evaluation of which faculties are least engaged, and implement engagement strategies to increase their participation in our elections.

Organizational Focus

Governance

The UTSU Board of Directors is elected by different subsets of our membership. A well-functioning Board consists of fiduciaries supervising the activities of an organization. They must remain well-informed, and exercise a high level of care for the organization. However, the current structure of the UTSU Board of Directors does not support these goals.

Our board governance vision:

- **Establishing structures that encourage success & participation:**
 - The governance structures of a Board are critical for its success. Structures shape an organization's processes, expectations, interests, rules, and norms that either foster meaningful and effective dialogue, or don't. The UTSU should ensure our structures are constructed to keep Board members engaged, and to conduct our business as effectively as possible.
- **Providing for a well-informed board:**
 - A new cohort of Board members every year means steep learning curves. While the ambition must come from the Board member to an extent, the UTSU has a duty to ensure its fiduciaries are educated early on and throughout their terms about both the UTSU and their responsibilities. This allows for decision-making that is well-informed and productive.
- **Focusing on strategy:**

- The purpose of the board is to oversee high-level decision-making for the benefit of the organization. It is often easy to fall into small, time-consuming affairs that bring us off-track from our priorities. The board should always be mindful of overarching goals and strategic priorities.
- **Arranging for effective meetings:**
 - Meetings of the Board are where Board decisions are made. It's important that meetings be structure in a way that is conducive to productive decision-making.
- **Evaluating performance:**
 - We should always strive for improvement. Evaluating our performance and areas of improvement makes for an organization that is not only accountable to its membership but to itself.

Our target goals:

- **Define responsibilities**
 - Bylaws and policies currently do not define the responsibility of Board members well. They're out of date, and fragmented. These will be redefined and clarified.
- **Improve board training:**
 - There is a lot of information board members need to know in order to do their job well--the finances, operations, policies and procedures, membership needs, organizational needs, different stakeholders, political climate, etc. In addition, Board members need to understand their responsibilities, internal processes, reporting structures, expectations, and internal relationships. We'll ensure that all information about their responsibilities is well-communicated to new members in a centralized manner when they start their terms. In addition, we will host periodic board training sessions a minimum of two times a year, and as need is determined.
- **Performance evaluations**
 - Currently no metrics to fully evaluate the performance of Executive members, unless they're being impeached or disciplined. We will establish measurable performance targets for Executives, against which we can regularly evaluate their performance. We will strive to conduct evaluations biannually.
- **Conduct a governance review:**
 - A governance review process is underway to comprehensively evaluate and make improvements upon the UTSU's policies and procedures. Though the structure of this review may shift, the UTSU will continue to engage in the process over the course of these next five years. This governance review will reflect the changing nature of the UTSU's operations.
- **Improve board transitions:**
 - An annual turnover in elected representatives presents a unique set of issues for an organization. It means that information gets lost, and a steep learning curve

for newly elected members. We will create a standardized, structured mandatory transition between an outgoing and incoming Board. We will also maintain a month-long Executive transition period and continually improve the experience by introducing standardized processes.

- **Moving away from a one-board system:**

- UTSU's current board governance processes do not currently support our growing needs and scope, nor does it support Board engagement or effective dialogue. In line with consultations, research, and recommendations, we will implement and operate two boards, UTSU and SAC Commercial, along with a third governing body. The UTSU will thoroughly evaluate and implement the most effective ways to apportion and operate them to maximize potential for productive decision-making.

- **Recognizing and understanding why members get involved:**

- While some members get involved with internal functions due to an interest in internal operations, we recognize a majority are driven by advocacy. Board members hold fiduciary and legal responsibilities to the organization, but these often aren't the drivers--and are often unknown--for many of the members who engage with us. Members would therefore benefit from clear avenues of engagement with clearer roles that offer better flexibility.

- **Clear reporting systems:**

- We will create clear reporting systems and approval pathways between all UTSU governing bodies. These will be codified into our policies and procedures.

- **Improve information-sharing strategies**

- Board members currently have to read through a multitude of documents and minutes and materials to stay up to date. We need to evaluate and apply improved and diversified strategies to share information relevant to Board members

- **Include at-large opinions**

- Though Executives are elected by members at-large, board members are currently elected by a specified constituency. We benefit by hearing from, and engaging with, general members who may not identify with a particular faculty or college. We will evaluate and put in effort to engage at-large members in our governance by creating space for them.

Relationship Building

The UTSU is in a unique position on campus with a considerable amount of influence. We reach multiple clubs, groups, and stakeholders who have an interest in our organizations, and us in theirs. Due to the mass of organizational responsibilities we face, it is easy to neglect these important relationships, and important to recognize their value. While there are some efforts we can point to, progress is easily undone when relationship-building responsibilities rest within

elected members who can be involved one year and gone the next. Given the changing nature of the UTSU, we need to find better ways to engage with other groups and stakeholders to foster partnerships and collaboration.

Our relationship building vision

- **Engaging genuinely:**
 - We need to work towards engaging with collaborators not only when it is convenient for us or when we need something. Meeting our partners in meaningful ways only serves to strengthen our ever important relationships.
- **Open dialogue:**
 - Establishing an open line of communication with collaborators allows for a maximum opportunity window to welcome collaboration on vital projects.
- **Seeking out opportunities:**
 - We must be open to partnering with groups we may not have currently considered or pursued, which may lead to mutually beneficial partnerships. This means collaborating without compromising or weakening our resolve to follow our convictions.
- **Becoming a sought-after partner:**
 - By doing meaningful work and by implementing our communications strategies, the UTSU can become an attractive partner for organizations to work with on everything from large-scale to small projects.

Our relationship building targets

- **Campus-wide evaluation:**
 - We currently do not hold meaningful relationships with as many campus groups as we could. We will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of which campus groups' relationships with us need our attention and remediation, and will implement better engagement strategies in both the short and long term. These include but are not limited to clubs, student societies, and levy groups.
- **Engage & collaborate early:**
 - True partnerships exist when we collaborate meaningfully, rather than for a single narrow purpose. We will ensure that we thoroughly communicate and solicit ideas from groups with which we are partnering with early in our planning processes.
- **Grow capacity to build meaningful relationships:**
 - We will devote human resources to increase the UTSU's capacity to seek out and maintain vital relationships with different parties.
- **Engage sponsors year-long:**

- Historically the UTSU has engaged with sponsors once a year. Now, we're moving in the Student Commons where channels of engagement are consistent and more diverse. We will engage sponsors year-long through advertising opportunities in the Student Commons, and by evaluating and applying other opportunities that are beneficial to our members.
- **Engage alumni:**
 - There is a major untouched opportunity to build meaningful relationships with members post-graduation. We will work to create meaningful dialogue with alumni, implement an alumni donation program, and include a permanent member of staff as an ongoing contact.
- **Engage university partners:**
 - While the UTSU maintains a healthy relationship with some university partners, those who fall outside of our advocacy priorities are often not being engaged. We will evaluate and apply engagement strategies and include a permanent member of staff as an ongoing contact.
- **Engage student groups:**
 - We will continue to maintain working relationships with other elected bodies by meeting with them early, seeking potential areas of collaboration, and facilitating opportunities for dialogue between ourselves.
- **Engage with decision-makers:**
 - In line with our Advocacy strategic priorities, we will evaluate and apply engagement strategies to engage with decision-makers both at the university level and government levels.

Finance & Operations

The UTSU is incorporated under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. These are pillars that form the foundation of our organization. Without good finance and operational strategies, the meaningful work we do for students would not be possible. Critically engaging with and improving upon our finance and operations practices will set up the UTSU for a successful present and future.

Our finance & operations vision:

- **Clean, process-driven:**
 - Both high-level planning and the day-to-day of our operations and finances should be clear, concise, and standardized. This helps ensure consistent and honest governance from year-to-year.
- **Looking toward new revenue:**

- The UTSU members are currently asked to pay one of the lowest student union levies across the country. While we take pride in offering our members exceptional services at a low price, the Student Choice Initiative coupled with growing organizational needs mean the UTSU needs to respond effectively. A diversified approach to revenue generation ensures that we don't depend fully on our membership for our evolving needs.
- **Ethically-conscious approach:**
 - We need to approach revenue generation ethically, investing in areas aligning with our mission & values, and engaging with players that don't impede on our duty to our membership.
- **Applying long-term thinking & strategies:**
 - The UTSU currently plans on a year-to-year basis. Our entire way of thinking about our budgeting and finances needs to shift to engage in effective risk management and promote financial health for the organization for years to come.
- **Adapting to change:**
 - We need to respond and adapt to changes that aren't always in our control, and safeguard against any potential volatility in years to come. A principle priority is ensuring the UTSU's financial viability for the long term. Plans need to be made for the present and future to ensure its sustainability.

Our target goals:

- **Develop and expand non-student revenue sources:**
 - Through an alumni donation program, space renting, advertising, sponsorship, and other business ventures, the UTSU can increase its ability to bring in revenue and secure a more diverse financial portfolio. We will work to develop each area as effectively as possible, and in the best interest of both our organization and membership.
- **Explore business ventures:**
 - We will continuously seek to develop healthy business endeavours that steadily improve our organizational health. Our priorities in these ventures are to improve efficiencies, and conceive creative marketing strategies and drive volumes. We will balance these priorities with our mission, values and vision as a student-facing organization.
- **Financial forecasting:**
 - The opening of the Student Commons and emerging uncertainty of the Student Choice Initiative necessitates a long-term review of our finances and operations. We will engage in long-term financial forecasting in order to remain financially viable in the long-term.
- **Evaluate our student revenue sources:**

- As the UTSU is increasing its capacity and responsibilities, we seek to minimize impact on student fees contingent on the success of the aforementioned non-student revenue sources. If necessary, critical research will be conducted to determine to which degree the fee must be raised and when.
- **More financial reporting and oversight:**
 - The Board needs to remain informed on the UTSU's financial health on a regular basis. We will provide financial reports on a regular basis beyond the budgeting process and throughout the year.
- **Long-term Student Commons financial planning:**
 - The Student Commons agreement dictates that if the building runs an operating deficit for any two year-period after the third anniversary of its opening, the University can reclaim the building and take over its management. Our financial planning for the Student Commons will aim to build a surplus before the 7 year mark in 2025-26.

Human Resources

Our staff work hard to improve the student experience at U of T and at the UTSU. Working for the UTSU presents an interesting and challenging work environment for our staff given our annual leadership turnover. We should ensure a positive and meaningful experience for staff, as they are key players in the success of the organization.

Our human resources vision

- **Valuing our staff:**
 - Staff members serve as the backbone of the UTSU. As they support and implement the high-level planning and strategic priorities of our elected members, they should feel valued while doing it.
- **Sharing a common goal:**
 - Staff are a vital part of realizing the UTSU's goals. Their day-to-day duties should be clearly presented in the context of the UTSU's strategic priorities, in order to showcase the importance of their work and maintain staff engagement.
- **Offering a solid foundation:**
 - The UTSU experiences leadership turnover year to year, of which the impacts can be felt substantially in the office environment. Despite this, staff should be given a sense of consistency and clarity on the day-to-day.
- **Being an attractive employer:**
 - By applying high workplace standards, fair wages, and encouraging a healthy work-life balance, we should strive to be an attractive workplace for professionals and students.

- **Fostering a collaborative and adaptive environment**
 - Keeping staff engaged is of utmost importance, especially in an organization with a rapidly-changing landscape. Providing opportunities to meaningfully collaborate and adapt to new environments will foster resilience within our staff.

Our target goals

- **Build capacity to support strategic priorities:**
 - The UTSU's current staff structure is a small cohort of dedicated individuals. Given the UTSU's strategic goals and move to the Student Commons, the UTSU must continue to build a strong staff team to help it reach its organizational goals while remaining cognizant of the financial constraints imposed by the Student Choice Initiative.
- **Offer growth opportunities:**
 - The UTSU benefits when staff members can apply new knowledge to the organization. Whenever possible, staff will be given opportunities to learn skills applicable to their roles through professional development initiatives.
- **Improve cross-departmental communication & information-sharing:**
 - We will evaluate and apply better communication practices across staff departments to encourage collaboration with each other on strategic priorities, and to support our collective vision.
- **Improve staff-exec communication & information-sharing:**
 - We will implement more effective channels and processes for executives and staff to collaborate and share ideas. This will serve to promote unity and teamwork within the organization.
- **Increase student opportunities within the UTSU:**
 - The move to the Student Commons will present the opportunity to engage our members in a diversity of paid and volunteer opportunities. Wherever possible, priority will be given to hiring students for our part-time roles.

Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures codify and enforce the standards & processes of an organization. These are essential for successful and consistent decision making & activities. It is therefore important that policies and procedures are implemented thoughtfully.

Our policies and procedures vision:

- **Ensuring a focus on student governance:**
 - We must continually ensure that our organization is principally overseen and guided by students. This should be reflected both in language and processes.

- **Ensuring smooth, clear, refined processes:**
 - To be an effective tool, policies and procedures should be easy to follow. We need to ensure they are clear and polished, both in language and processes.
- **Evolving with our needs:**
 - The Student Commons and Student Choice Initiative are changing the way the UTSU will operate. Our policies and procedures need to be continuously improved to keep up with the rapidly-changing landscape of our organization.
- **Thoughtful policymaking:**
 - Some of the UTSU's policies have been created as a reaction to singular events--with good intentions, but little foresight. We must ensure that our policymaking practices prioritize longevity and effective, sustainable, and positive change.
- **Governing our day-to-day:**
 - We must continue being an organization members can trust and have faith in, which means implementing internal checks and balances on our everyday activities to ensure consistency and accountability.

Our target goals:

- **Standardize accessible language:**
 - Part of our governance review will include an overall assessment of the language used in our governing documents and practices. This aspect of the review will prioritize consistency and accessibility.
- **House policies and procedures efficiently:**
 - While effective governance tools in theory, the UTSU's Bylaws and Policy Manual have become places where procedures are piled on and disordered. We will create and implement better ways of housing our policies and procedures so that they can be meaningfully engaged with on an annual basis.
- **Strengthen internal policies:**
 - Most of the UTSU's policies and procedures are board-facing, emphasizing good governance and accountability for Executives and Directors. In order to effectively govern itself, the UTSU will evaluate its internal policies and procedures, with particular attention to finances and human resources.

Annual Review

The most essential aspect of this Strategic Plan is the need for accountability and a comprehensive review process to ensure we are on track to meet our goals. To that end, the UTSU board will be:

- 1) Mandated to review the Strategic Plan on an annual basis to identify organizational strengths and specify areas of concern.
- 2) Required to engage with the Strategic Plan and consult with it on future projects and initiatives to ensure consistency and provide guidance for the UTSU's overall direction. All of the UTSU's endeavours should work in harmony.
- 3) Able to contribute to the Strategic Plan year after year by making adjustments based on organizational needs, acknowledging the evolving challenges and landscapes year-to-year. These adjustments will take place once per year midway through the Board's term to ensure proper engagement with the goals laid out on the Strategic Plan.