

York University

Teaching Commons

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020 -
2023

Land Acknowledgement Statement

We recognize that many indigenous nations have long-standing relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat, and the Métis. It is now home to many Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the current treaty holders the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Teaching Commons (TC) is a central unit that, in a hub-and-spoke model, aims to promote, support, and enhance ‘engaged teaching’ at York University. It promotes and helps sustain a teaching and learning culture where the quality of the student experience lies at the heart of all teaching activities.

VISION

Practice and knowledge about teaching is a living practice that exists and continues to thrive ‘as a community of people who contribute to the continued vitality, application, and evolution of the practice’ (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015: 13).

Indeed, our strongest asset lies in the people that make the fabric of the teaching and learning community at York University. Thus, the Teaching Commons aims to connect in meaningful ways all of those who teach and/or support teaching at York in their pursuit of teaching and learning ideals. Furthermore, the Teaching Commons facilitates the enhancement of teaching and learning practices at the class and programmatic levels through professional development opportunities and support of curriculum development and renewal.



FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

Teaching Commons' vision sits on 4 strategic pillars embodying what constitutes a strong teaching and learning culture, which in turn inform Teaching Commons initiatives, programming, and support available to all who teach at York University.

These 4 pillars are:

- ❖ Strengthened by Community
- ❖ Centred on Learner Experiences
- ❖ Informed by Scholarship, Best Practices, and Policy
- ❖ Focused on Impact

PILLAR #1: STRENGTHENED BY COMMUNITY

A strong teaching and learning culture relies on active engagement with teaching as a professional activity that is open to critical reflection and collegial dialogue.



Principles

Foster collegial and empowering conversations about teaching and learning

Actions to implement principles

- ❖ Support and connect a landscape of practice in and for teaching and learning
- ❖ Create opportunities to reflect, share and discuss teaching and learning issues
- ❖ Have a yearly, campus-wide teaching and learning event that celebrates teaching
- ❖ Structure programming embedding significant peer-based learning
- ❖ Foster community among teaching-stream faculty

Facilitate partnerships with all stakeholders

- ❖ Strengthen the educational developer liaison model to respond to varied contexts and needs
- ❖ Advocate for the inclusion of TC educational developers in key teaching and learning committees (e.g., ADTLC's subcommittees, Faculty-specific committees)
- ❖ Strengthen partnerships with Faculty-specific curriculum support, educational technology units, and experiential education support units
- ❖ Establish an Advisory Council to set and implement emerging campus-wide priorities

PILLAR #2: CENTERED ON LEARNER EXPERIENCES

Impactful learning occurs most effectively when the learners, whether they are students, faculty, or staff, are at the centre of the learning process.



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Principles

Focus on learner-centred pedagogies

Actions to implement principles

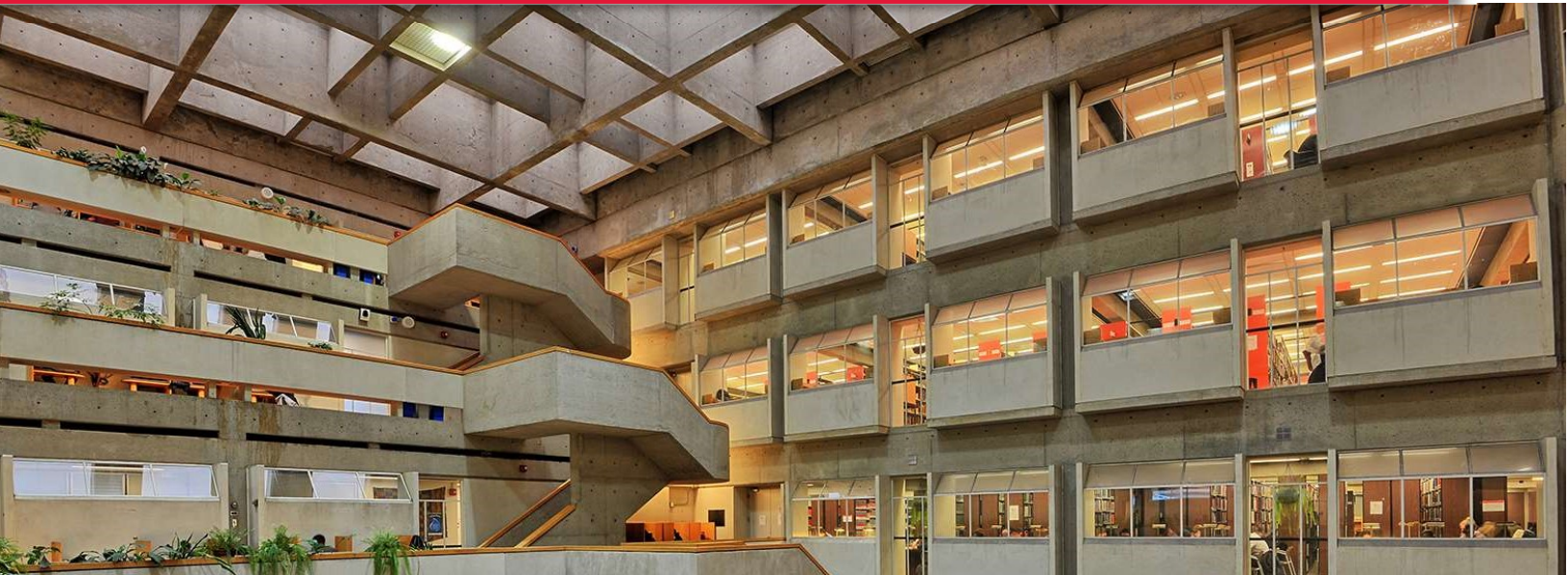
- ❖ Develop and continually offer robust professional development opportunities about learner-centred pedagogies (e.g., Experiential Education, eLearning, inclusive course design)
- ❖ Incorporate the learner perspective in program development/delivery whenever possible

Deliver flexible programming for faculty and TAs

- ❖ Lower barriers and incentivize engagement through a variety of means, including:
 - ⇒ the development of just-in-time and flexible programming by leveraging technology
 - ⇒ the external accreditation of programming and certificates through EDC
- ❖ Ensure that all programming is, at a minimum, AODA compliant, and ideally accessible in multiple formats

PILLAR #3: INFORMED BY SCHOLARSHIP, BEST PRACTICES, AND POLICY

As a form of scholarship, teaching and learning practices seek to systematically and methodically observe student learning with the aim of enhancing it and sharing these observations broadly for critique and collaboration.



Principles

Engage faculty with scholarly teaching

Actions to implement principles

- ❖ Disseminate the framework of 'Engaged Teaching' at York
- ❖ Disseminate and engage faculty with teaching and learning best practices
- ❖ Create professional development opportunities around evidence-based teaching practices
- ❖ Incorporate findings from post-doctoral and other internal research in TC activities

Principles

Engage faculty with the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)

Actions to implement principles

- ❖ Encourage and participate in collaborative SoTL with faculty across campus
- ❖ Develop and continually offer programming to encourage and support engagement with SoTL
- ❖ Support the dissemination of SoTL work done at York through campus-wide initiatives and participation in external opportunities (e.g., conferences, articles and essays in various outlets)

Stay current with educational development and higher education trends

- ❖ Engage with external bodies (e.g., EDC, COED, STLHE) and colleagues from other institutions to share best practices in educational development
- ❖ Develop and update a professional development plan for TC employees
- ❖ Stay informed and disseminate trends and policies affecting higher education
- ❖ When appropriate, engage with HE stakeholders, regulatory bodies, and policy makers (e.g., Ontario University Council on Quality Assurance, MAESD, eCampus Ontario)

Contribute to scholarship related to teaching and learning

- ❖ Create and disseminate scholarship about educational development, teaching and learning that informs practice within the Teaching Commons, York University, and beyond
- ❖ Present at external teaching and learning conferences to build relationships, establish expertise

PILLAR #4: FOCUSED ON IMPACT

Answering the question ‘how do we know what we think we know’ is at the heart evidence-based practice.

Observing, measuring, and recognizing the impact that instructors and programs have on their student learning is an important facet of York’s educational mission. The Teaching Commons supports whole system initiatives aimed at enhancing the student experience. It also strives to evaluate its own impact on individuals and groups on our campus.

Principles

Provide program-level support

Actions to implement principles

- ❖ Create and lead a community of practice of all who support curriculum on campus
- ❖ Offer robust support for curriculum development and cyclical program review

Support teaching awards and recognition

- ❖ Create and offer a two-tiered certificate program for faculty to stagger their growth and leadership development in the area of teaching and learning
- ❖ Develop and roll out a strategy for identifying/supporting nominees to external teaching awards

Implement an evaluation strategy for the Teaching Commons

- ❖ Develop and implement a strategy to evaluation and continually enhance TC program offerings
- ❖ Develop and implement process for a yearly review of TC activities



*Recognizing that
building a teaching and learning culture
that places the student experience at the heart of the
teaching process is an ambitious goal,
the TC is optimistic that its impact will be compounded
over time.*



teaching commons

DELIVER

assist
advise
design

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