

Profiles of 2013 Recipients of the Excellence Through Innovation Award

Academic Offence Tracking Tool (AOTT)

Team members: Helen Bright, Janice Haugan, Sergei Metropolitansky

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The Academic Offence Tracking Tool (AOTT) was designed to better manage and track cases of alleged academic offences within the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering. Offence cases were previously managed via a Microsoft Access database, a system that was inefficient and time consuming for staff. This centralized database allows instructors to easily report suspected instances of academic offences online, and allows each of the relevant stakeholders to monitor and communicate the status of a case as it progresses through investigation, hearing and decision stages. The AOTT has streamlined the management of academic offence cases, creating a world-class infrastructure for the tracking and administration of such cases.

Campus Room Finder

Team members: Jith Liyanage, Nancy Okada, Jun Shen, Deepika Tayl, Do Anh Vu

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The St. George campus has 537 student groups, plus student societies and course unions with membership numbers in the tens of thousands. Students were dissatisfied with both the process for and access to room bookings for meetings/workshops/conferences, etc. This dissatisfaction, voiced at Governing Council, led to the establishment of an advisory committee on the temporary use of space, chaired by the Vice Provost, Students.

A key recommendation of the Vice-Provost, Student's Advisory Committee on the Temporary Use of Space was to develop a searchable database of temporary space on the St. George campus for campus groups.

The Student Life IT team proposed an in-house solution which involved partnerships with the Office of Space Management and Student Life groups (including Hart House) to create a web and mobile-friendly application that allowed for campus groups to search and compare rooms based on a wide range of criteria, including accessible room features, room availability, costs, and room "ownership". The three month project overcame not only a tight timeline but also thorny issues of data ownership, content control and access levels, while creating better information standardization, comprehension and optimization of data from multiple data sources in the creation of the web and mobile-friendly application.

Campus Services Expo

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The Campus Services Expo was designed as a cost-effective, high-impact "trade show" to advertise and highlight the broad array of campus services available to the University community, provide a forum to feature those who provide unique services and / or competitive pricing, and provide a useful networking opportunity. Over 300 staff attended the event, with representation from all three campuses. Feedback on the event gathered from attendees through a post-event survey was extremely positive. 91% of respondents said that they had learned something new by attending the event, and 98.5% said they would be likely to use the services of at least one of the exhibitors that were in attendance in the future. The first year's focus was on service and service providers to campus event planners, with plans to broaden the focus in future years.

Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) Open

Individual nomination: Danielle Wintrip

The Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) Open is a website that represents a visionary step for the Department of Family and Community Medicine. The website is an online repository of creative professional activities authored in a spectrum of media covering a breadth of topics relevant to primary care. These works are evidence-based and peer-reviewed. The DFCM Open is a forum to exchange ideas and innovations with the world, with the hope that the diversity of our knowledge, skills and experiences can be harnessed to launch primary care to even greater heights. The DFCM Open captures this potential by promoting collaboration amongst its members and with the world. This resource provides support for a very large faculty of over 1500 members, promoting innovation and collaboration to enhance primary care medicine both within the department and beyond.

Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) Team Building Plan

Team members: Cecil Canteenwalla, Caroline Turenko

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In the last five years, the Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) has undergone rapid growth. New clinical teaching sites have been added to the department, faculty has grown rapidly and administrative staff has increased to support the department and its activities. As a result, new structure and processes have been developed to meet the ongoing challenges associated with rapid growth.

A Strategic Team Building Plan was developed to guide the DFCM in clearly defining and meeting its objectives. This ongoing staff development plan was designed to address organizational issues through team development days, lunch and learn sessions, and a strategic focus on leadership development and recruitment goals. Strong leadership development and a culture that supports teams have resulted in cross-program teams working on departmental projects and activities. A culture of assistance has developed where individuals aid staff from other program areas, and have a better understanding of each other's activities and busy times. The level of professionalism continues to grow and the group of administrative staff continues to meet and exceed the expectations and high standards set by the department.

Degree Explorer Project

Team members: Stella Ip, Terrence Lago, Nicky Lai, Sinisa Markovic, Dan Pettigrew, Blair Thompson, Tracy Vandermeer, Gaye Wignall, Laurel Williams

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The Degree Explorer is a powerful web tool to manage students' progress toward program and degree completion, and is now used by four Faculties (FAS, UTSC, FASE, FALD). Degree Explorer allows administrators to catalogue, manage and deploy divisional program and degree rules; manage exceptions and waivers at the individual level; perform live course pre-requisite checks; advise students; and perform reliable assessments of eligibility to graduate. The built-in email notification system signals changes in students' records and confirms their eligibility to graduate. Students, prospectively, can both plan and monitor their progress towards completion by creating hypothetical scenarios for over 500 programs, pre-select courses and chart possible academic pathways. Retrospectively, students can reliably monitor their progress and detect gaps and problems for the first time.

As a newly-developed centrally-managed system, Degree Explorer sets a new benchmark in innovation and "service-oriented" application development. Since its launch, it has been embraced by administrative staff and students. In a recent staff survey about the system, 81% of

respondents have indicated that they found Degree Explorer very helpful and prefer it to the old process. This tool has transformed an essential process, but more importantly it has provided students with a tool to plan and monitor the most critical element in their formal University experience.

Dental Radiology iPad App

Team members: Andrea Cormier, James Fiege

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The “Set up My FMS” Dental Radiology app was produced to make it easier for students to practice loading a standard series of dental x-rays in a full mouth series film mount without the need to acquire a set of patient radiographs and locate a light table that was not in use. The application was originally created for the desktop; however, the team thought it would be an ideal application for portable devices, so they worked to develop a version for the iPad. The resulting “Set up my FMS” iPad app was one of the first apps on the University of Toronto iTunes store, was the first gaming style app on the store, and is believed to be the only educational app of its kind in the world. The app has since been downloaded by individuals in 64 different countries. Aside from creating a simple and useful practice tool for our students, thereby enriching their educational experience, the app gives the Faculty of Dentistry and the University of Toronto a presence in the global educational app market.

Dental Procedure Education System

Team members: Jeff Comber, Andrea Cormier, James Fiege, Christine Nicolau

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The Dental Procedure Education System (DPES), conceived and produced by creative staff in the Media Services department at the Faculty of Dentistry, has proved to be a valuable asset to students and patients alike. Students benefit from a readily available online resource that describes specific dental procedures in precise detail. A patient version that explains the same procedures in plain language and clear imagery gives the students an effective communication tool when describing dental procedures to their patients.

An unexpected beneficial outcome of the DPES project was to the general public. Since making the patient version of the videos available publicly online, our content has been accessed by individuals in over 150 countries, making its reach truly global. These videos are being used by public health units and private clinics, and The Canadian Dental Association will soon be embedding the DPES videos in their public discussions website. This positions the Faculty of Dentistry and the University of Toronto as a leader of public dental education.

DUA New Prospect Management System

Team members: Alexandra Agostino, Richard Kellar, Mila Miller, Gillian Morrison, Al Nausedas, Duyen Pho, Devika Ramcharan

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University Advancement staff and divisional advancement colleagues have collaborated over a 4-year period to develop, deploy and refine a Prospect Management system designed to help build a reinvigorated 'calling culture'. This new system and the 'calling culture' it has enabled are directly related to our collective achievement of record results that have set new benchmarks in Canadian philanthropy. The new system has contributed to a stronger commitment to industry standards for development officer performance, a deeper understanding of our performance strengths and challenges, more robust solicitation pipelines, and a more consistent stream of principal and major gift revenue for the University.

FASanswers for First-Year Students Website

Team members: Donald Boere, Kelly Jay

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Newly-admitted Arts & Science students need a wide array of academic information from a variety of campus offices. Multiple points of contact have caused students some confusion and frustration. *FASanswers* provides a space for reliable, official information from the point when students accept their offer through their first year. The site offers written posts and videos explaining next steps, gives information and advice to first year students, and provides students several mechanisms (email contact, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube comments) to get their questions answered. In its pilot year (June 2012-April 2013), *FASanswers* had nearly 100,000 page views from its first-year audience.

Global Dialogue on the Future of Iran

Team members: Adam Bell, Nina Boric, Daria Dumbadze, Maria Gomes, Thomas Lee, Miriam McTiernan, Sean Willett

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The Global Dialogue for the Future of Iran (GDFI) is a pioneering initiative to create a platform for discussion between Iranian diaspora activists and Iranians in Iran on salient political issues before and after the June 2013 presidential election in Iran.

Working in cooperation with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the National Democratic Institute NGO, Munk School of Global Affairs staff convened an inaugural conference, established an election monitoring centre, and developed a secure

multi-lingual (English and Farsi) website capable of transmitting content to and from citizens in Iran in real time. Since its launch in May 2013, over 360,000 people from inside Iran logged-on to view GDFI content and participate in discussions. This project remains ongoing and in the second phase, will monitor and track election promises against actions of the Iranian regime in the post-election period.

International Portal

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The International Portal is an innovative way of providing excellent service and information to the Deans across the entire university.

With the launch of the International Portal, quality, vetted, timely, consistent information and materials are available in a 'one-stop shop' any time at the user's convenience. This reduces duplication of efforts, as individual units no longer need to produce this information themselves. This increases productivity and saves time and resources as peoples' time is freed up when they know where to go, who to go to, what they get, and access is 24/7. The potential for inconsistent messaging and embarrassment in the international arena is greatly reduced. It also offers the opportunity for input by users themselves which saves time in communicating by more traditional methods. This portal has a transformative impact on quality, productivity, service, and information sharing.

Job Shadow Program - Rotman full-time MBA

Team members: Margaret Charles, Cynthia Chong, Sheldon Dookeran, Leigh Gauthier, Kelly Heggie, Sarah Pinckard, Jeff Quinlan

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The Job Shadow Program was created out of a Town Hall meeting with Recruitment & Admissions, the Program Service Office, and Career Centre staff. The program was designed to improve the integration of full-time Masters of Business Administration (MBA) departments and provide professional development of staff. Those who participated gained a better understanding of what others do in the student lifecycle and are more equipped to support students and one another in a timely fashion.

This program increases both staff effectiveness and satisfaction of services delivered. A better understanding of roles allows us to help identify quickly who is the person readily able to resolve a need or issue. Internally, there is a heightened awareness and patience of other's workloads and constraints when servicing an internal stakeholder. From a professional development perspective, it gave individuals an idea of where they might want to take their career next and the skills required. Innovation and transferability have been demonstrated through positive feedback and interest from other departments at Rotman seeking to expand the program.

Lab Glass and Plastic Recycling Program

Team members: Reno Strano, Stan Szwagiel

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The non-hazardous laboratory glass and plastic recycling program is the first program of its kind in Canada. For 2011-2012, approximately 7 metric tonnes of material was recycled and approximately 2500 plastic buckets – about another 2 tonnes – were kept out of landfill. Laboratories are closely associated with research, one of the University's core missions. However, historically, it has been difficult to implement sustainability/recycling initiatives in laboratories because of the presence of hazardous chemicals and the associated protocols required in handling them. The non-hazardous laboratory glass and recycling program was able to break through this barrier.

By advancing this pioneering recycling initiative into one of the University's core operations, the Lab Glass and Plastic Recycling Program offers another testament to the culture of sustainability that has been embedded deep within the operating culture of the institution for over a hundred years. This new recycling initiative is another testament to University of Toronto's pioneering efforts in terms of implementing initiatives that further embed the culture of sustainability in the institution. Through ongoing recycling initiatives, the St. George Campus has reduced its carbon footprint more than a million metric tonnes since 1973.

Learner Systems Integration

Individual nomination: Alison Pattern

The Learner Systems Integration project has brought about the positive implementation of several changes in the undergraduate and postgraduate Faculty of Medicine evaluation systems. The integration of the two systems allows undergraduate and postgraduate learners more streamlined access to important information and a consistent interface and functionality (recognizing that 60% of undergraduate learners go on to postgraduate medical education at U of T). It also recognizes that many postgraduate trainees are also teachers of undergraduate students, and allows for the exchange of rating and evaluation information which enriches the student experience.

The University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine was unique in Canada for its medical education registration and evaluation systems even before the integration project. In the last two years, two more Canadian medical schools have signed on to use these systems. The web-based nature of the registration and evaluations systems are ideal for the "field-based" nature of clinical education. The integration project has been met with resounding support and approval by both University of Toronto faculty, staff and learners as well as hospital staff. Most importantly, the integration project contributes to world class infrastructure through administrative innovation.

Magellan

Team members: Linda Espeut, Karen Irving, Jayne Leake, Jaro Pristupa, Joe Wong

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The Faculty of Applied Science's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering's (ECE) flexible undergraduate curriculum required a method to allow students and staff to ensure that students' degree and professional certification requirements are met upon graduation. Existing systems were unable to track rigorous accreditation requirements. Magellan is a web-based graphical user interface with an underlying database developed to combine information from ROSI / NGSIS, ECE's database of certified professional instructors, and faculty teaching loads.

Magellan helps audit each student's progress, track faculty's professional certification, assists with undergraduate teaching assignments and generates offer letters to stipend instructors and teaching assistants, as well as teaching assignment letters to faculty as required by the workload policy. The Magellan team's work has impacted quality and productivity by enabling students to navigate through various areas of interest to determine whether a selected path meets certification requirements, and if not, how best to improve their selections; while keeping a primary profile, they may also explore "what-if" scenarios by modifying and saving alternate profiles. Staff members can spend more time counseling students when necessary, instead of spending time on verification of student profiles.

Management Consulting Alumni Program

Individual nomination: Robert Ste Croix

Traditionally, the Commerce program at University of Toronto's St George Campus has been recognized for its strength in accounting, and as a result, has long been known primarily as an accounting program. However, over the last decade, significant resources have been devoted to developing expertise in other areas of business education – most notably in finance, economics, and management. While the academic curriculum for these streams is as rigorous and comprehensive as that of our accounting specialist, students in the management specialist in particular have lacked the benefit of a strong network of Rotman Commerce graduates in the consulting industry from whom they can learn.

Robert Ste-Croix of the Rotman Commerce Career Centre and a group of successful Rotman Commerce alumni spearheaded the Management Consulting Alumni Program (MCAP). MCAP is an intensive four-month program that offers students a program of participatory learning experiences that prepares them to succeed in the highly competitive profession of management consulting. Moreover, because it does so with the help of Rotman Commerce alumni, MCAP fosters a sense of community that encompasses both current students and graduates that greatly enriches the student experience of participants.

MoveU: Active Healthy Living at U of T

Team members: Althea Blackburn-Evans, Michelle Brownrigg, Jillian Cressy, Adrienne Harry, Valerie Iancovich, Chad Jankowski, Will Kopplin, Jenifer Newcombe, Janine Robb, Sammy Saad, Rachel Tennant, Ayana Webb, Laurie Wright

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MoveU is focused on supporting wellness opportunities that will help students successfully transition to the post-secondary setting - contributing to their growth, development and success over the course of their University of Toronto experience. MoveU is a broad engagement strategy involving a unique collaborative of on- and off-campus partners. Community engagement strategies include visual and social media, as well as a student-led team involving strategic outreach to typically underserved populations. This initiative embeds the fundamental role of student engagement as decision-makers and designers of wellness initiatives. The program addresses a key gap in post-secondary institutions: that of cross-departmental initiatives that leverage and share resources with outside partners and students to reach mutual objectives.

MoveU is an interesting study in what can be accomplished when linkages are fostered across health services, campus recreation, campus arts and culture organizations, faculty interested in the academic and research interests of healthy living, as well as national charitable and philanthropic organizations that want to play a role. It also explores the fundamental role of youth leadership and student engagement as decision-makers, designers and evaluators of initiatives that are created to support their interests.

Multidiscipline Energy Laboratory

Individual nomination: Tomas Bernreiter

The Multidiscipline Energy Laboratory project applied careful analysis to the execution of activities, layout and specified individual experiments which have achieved several objectives. There was an identified need to upgrade and modernize an aging Heat Engines Laboratory (circa 1907) to provide efficient space usage and to encourage multidisciplinary usage. Factors to consider were environmental issues, safety matters, and efficient space usage. Tomas Bernreiter designed a laboratory layout which permits up to eight different experiments to be running simultaneously. His plan evolved through visiting other institutions and specifying new and modern equipment.

The experiments were selected to have relevance to other engineering departments, including Engineering Science, Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Material Science, and Civil Engineering. By introducing equipment relating to solar panels and fuel cells, for example, the objectives of modernization and interdisciplinary usage were addressed. Another key issue was the acquisition of funding. This issue was resolved through funding from multiple departmental areas and by encouraging other departments to purchase equipment which is relevant to their interests.

Navigating the World of Work (NWOW) Program, University of Toronto Scarborough Arts & Science Co-op Programs

Team members: Dallas Boyer, Cynthia Jairam-Persaud

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The Navigating the World of Work (NWOW) program arose out of an identified need to develop effective programming to engage the entire Co-op student cohort in a manner that accommodated a first year enrollment that had almost doubled. Before the dramatic increase in enrollment, there was a demand for market awareness programming that positioned students to have a clear view of their success trajectory during and beyond their undergraduate experience. The answer came in the form of a redesigned program called Navigating the World of Work (NWOW), a market facing program that engages students in the research, reflection and pursuit of the careers and professions they are preparing for. Innovation arose from the program's ability to leverage industry experts and the employer market participation.

A number of industry settings were used as classrooms to facilitate the sharing of knowledge that spoke both to that industry and the academic programs. This enabled accommodation of student numbers that would have been impossible on campus. In terms of impact, a problem turned into a wonderful exercise of experiential learning as students witnessed their areas of academic interests at play in the market. As a result of excellent project management and feedback recording, this programming is poised to be shared with other areas of the university.

New Course Evaluation Framework and System

Team members: Emily Greenleaf, Jeremy Graham, Pamela Gravestock, Marden Paul, Cherie Werhun

Course evaluation data serves an important function in supporting effective teaching and learning at the University of Toronto. In the past, the University of Toronto had over 30 different forms for collecting student feedback on teaching in courses resulting in inconsistencies in student access, variability in quality of instruments and analysis, difficulties in making comparisons across departments and divisions, and inefficient use of university resources. A new evidence-based framework for course evaluations and an online course evaluation system to be used across the university was designed, proposed and implemented.

To date, the system has been implemented at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC), Faculty of Arts & Science (FAS), the Faculty of Nursing and the Faculty of Social Work. Other divisions will come online in the next two years. This innovation has provided an opportunity to significantly impact the culture of teaching at the University of Toronto. For example, the new framework and broad consultation allows divisions, departments and faculty members to customize evaluations to meet their own needs and to engage in productive discussions regarding effective teaching within their contexts. As well, strategic directions and priorities will be impacted as data are collected and analyzed both at the institutional and division/department levels.

OISE Teaching Assistant Database System

Team members: Ai-Ri Brown, Joseph Cataudella, Susan Hall, Wendy Mauzeroll, Carol Oblak

OISE's Teaching Assistant (TA) database system is an innovative solution to assist the university in managing the hiring, tracking, and reporting of its Teaching Assistants. This database replaces a lengthy and largely paper based process with an online system. It enhances the student experience by allowing them to view and respond to job opportunities online. It increases staff productivity as the entire process is now managed online within the system. It allows academic leadership team to have access to the relevant data, in real time, for data analysis and informed decision making.

Many central and divisional offices see the value of the system and look to adopt this system in its operations. With the new system, most, if not all, paper is eliminated. Contracts and forms are generated online and sent to approvers via email notifications to log in and confirm authorization. It is also important to note that the system is designed to comply with relevant collective agreement provisions. OISE designed the Teaching Assistantship (TA) database system to be highly transferable across all 3 campuses. The database was presented at University of Toronto's TechKnowFile 2013 conference where it received great interest from several faculties eager to adopt this system.

Registrarial Professional Development Day

Team members: Elizabeth Bruno, Tammy Chan, Victoria Hurlihay, Douglas Ullrich, Thomas Nault, Agnieszka Mroz

The Registrarial Professional Development Day was designed as an opportunity for registrarial and related staff from across all three campuses to come together to share best practices in registrarial fields such as Admissions, Recruitment, Student Awards, Records Management and Academic Advising. Individuals had the chance to network with colleagues from across the University, many of whom they may have spoken to but never met in person. The day was a great success, with over 300 registrants.

Best practices from various areas of the University were shared among staff performing similar roles. This promotes consistency in registrarial services across all three campuses, and a general improvement in the student experience as a result. By sharing best practices and examples of operational efficiency, as well as providing networking opportunities, the Registrarial Professional Development Day discourages units with similar mandates from "reinventing the wheel" when they encounter complex issues, and instead allows them to turn to their colleagues across the University for advice and existing systems and frameworks. One specific example is the sharing of the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering's Online Petition Administration System. The afternoon presentation on the Petition System led representatives from other Faculties to approach colleagues from Engineering to discuss implementing similar systems of their own.

Rise Youth Small Business Program

Team members: Narinder Dhami, Mark Leung

Meaningful employment is a key element in an individual's economic, social and personal life. Those who have faced a mental health or addiction challenge (one in five Ontarians) face barriers to find or maintain employment due to the lack of opportunity and stigma. By April 2013 the unemployment rate for youth 15-24 in Ontario was 17.1%, 11% higher than for workers over 25. Entrepreneurship offers a stigma-free workplace environment where the individual can craft their own job and refocus their identity from “patient” to that of “entrepreneur”.

Entrepreneurship leverages the abilities of a population with untapped potential. The Rise Youth Small Business Program allows U of T to reach out to youth (16 to 29) who have experienced a mental health or addiction challenge, and offer meaningful growth over a short period. The program fosters a cultural change of acceptance towards people living with mental health or addiction challenges both within the school and the broader community. Powered by a customer-centric, hands-on Rotman DesignWorks™ curriculum, the course integrates the students into the Rotman community and provides them with the tools to translate their business idea to a business plan in way that is both sophisticated and accessible to diverse educational backgrounds. The program both enriches the student experience and builds the University's leadership in equity and diversity.

Sakia Process Management Software Tool for Academic QA

Team members: Alexandra Agostino, Diana Avon, Frank Boshoff, Jane Harrison, Marden Paul, Louise Tardif

Sakia is an innovative process management software tool that tracks the processes by which academic units and programs are created, modified, or closed at University of Toronto. Before Sakia, no single tool had existed to systematically and rigorously track academic QA processes such as governance approvals or internal and external reviews.

The software has become the definitive data source for many other University activities, such as the University of Toronto homepage's program listings and Next Generation Student Information System NGSIS. Other Ontario universities have shown interest in licensing the tool. Internally, Sakia has already been adopted beyond the Provost's Office by several administrative departments. The Office of Strategic Communications & Marketing (in the Office of the Vice-President, University Relations) has chosen Sakia to be its data source for the U of T homepage for undergraduate and graduate programs as well as academic units. Previously, data was collected and updated manually, leading to errors and out-dated information. Now, because of Sakia, the University of Toronto homepage updates nightly and always holds the most accurate information about our academic units and programs. The Chief Information Offices' team is currently connecting Sakia to the Next Generation Student Information System (NGSIS). In the future, the Office of the Vice-President & Provost hopes to expand Sakia's functionality to track the process of appointing academic administrators, and the Faculties of Arts & Science and Medicine are hoping to modify Sakia for use at the divisional level.

Smart Irrigation

Team members: Peter Johnston, Stan Szwagiel

Students expect the campus grounds to be colourful, lush and vibrant so that they can have spaces to play outdoor sports, quiet places to study and reflect, an opportunity to “get away from it all”, and a place to meet and engage with other students. The Smart Irrigation Program consists of a number of initiatives designed to reduce water consumption in the irrigation systems on the St. George Campus while maintaining the beauty of the campus grounds. With the installation of the centralized irrigation control system, 82+ irrigation systems across campus are adjusted automatically for weather conditions, soil type and plant species, saving over 50% of the amount of water previously consumed. Installation of rain harvesters, permeable paving, French Drains, and perennials has improved ground water retention, thereby reducing water consumption even further. The Smart Irrigation Program will generate significant savings to annual water expenses.

The University of Toronto St. George Campus is one of the first institutions to use these cutting-edge technologies to the extent that Facilities and Services – Grounds Services has, and the program serves as another testament to the commitment to innovation, sustainability and conservation. While the centralized irrigation control system is important, the program does not rely solely on high-tech solutions. Some of the more innovative solutions are often those that are the simplest, yet are often overlooked. Over the past few years, Grounds Services has implemented a number of initiatives that have reduced storm water runoff, leading to greater ground water retention and reduced watering demand.

Staff IMPACT Awards Program Recognition Event

Team members: Jennifer Holland, Jessica Lee, Jean Robertson, Julie Verduci

As part of the implementation of the 2011-2015 Strategic Academic Plan, the Faculty of Medicine wanted to find a way to more formally recognize the significant contributions of the Faculty’s 900 administrative, technical and research appointed staff. The Staff IMPACT Awards Program and the Staff Barbeque support several of the University’s and Faculty of Medicine’s strategic objectives. The initiative was designed to engage and recognize employees, and thereby assist to portray the University and specifically the Faculty of Medicine as an “employer of choice”. The awards program was innovative in that the categories included awards for an employee in a laboratory research environment, an employee new to the University, and an employee or team that demonstrates the Faculty’s commitment to social responsibility through volunteer activities. The program also included an award for fostering an environment and culture of diversity and inclusion. A simple online application process was implemented, along with regular email correspondence, to encourage nominations. Messages were also distributed to encourage departments to allow their staff the time off to attend the barbeque. A similar employee recognition program could easily be transferred to other areas of the University where time and resources permit. The feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive and the plan is to make both the awards program and staff barbeque an annual event.