



## TORONTO SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Affiliated with the University of Toronto

March 18, 2025

Prof. Nicholas Rule  
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs  
University of Toronto

Dear Vice-Provost Rule,

I am pleased to submit this UTQAP Interim Monitoring Report as a follow up to the TST's One Year Follow-Up Report 2023. This report demonstrates that the TST is on schedule in the implementation plan to address the recommendations outlined in the UTQAP External Review as well as in ongoing program assessment.

1. At its March 13, 2023 meeting, the Academic Council (AC) decided to maintain the minimum entrance CGPA of 2.7 for SEUG programs. Considering the solid reputation of the TST SEUG programs and satisfaction with our graduates amongst various publics and stakeholders, the AC does not feel the current entrance CGPA negatively impacts the reputation of the programs for academic excellence. TST registrars determined that students who enter with a GPA of 2.7 are as successful in the programs as students who enter with a 3.0 or higher. Further, students in the SEUG programs are often second-career, mature students with some distance from their undergraduate program but who come with significant life experience.
2. In response to recommendations to consider reducing the number of SEUG programs the TST has embarked on a two-pronged strategy. First, the AC clarified and standardized language around requirements for streams and focuses. Second, the TST is expanding the capacity of its most popular SEUG degree program by adding three colleges to the delivery of the program. Once these colleges are added (expected Spring 2025), then there will be a concrete possibility of closing one (or more) program(s) and having a stream that meets the DLEs of those programs (Academic Year 2025-2026).

With regard to the communication to students about the differentiations in the various SEUG degree programs, through the development of Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM), the TST has become much more intentional about counselling and advising students about each program and fit. Further, a website update is scheduled for Summer 2025 where degree program offerings will be displayed on a dashboard with differences in programs clearly presented.

3. In Fall 2024 discussions resumed around the establishment of a Professional Doctorate. A small committee consisting of the Executive Director (ED), Associate Director of Graduate Programs (ADGP), and Prof. Sarah Travis (former DMin program Director) has been established and will report to AC about the progress of this item in Spring 2025. The ADGP will be

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responsible for examining the implications of closing the DMin program while Prof. Travis will be responsible for drafting a new program proposal in the 2025-2026 academic year.

4. Levels of graduate student funding and consistency of funding across colleges remains a vexing issue; however, progress has been made in addressing them. In Spring 2023 the ED struck the Graduate Student Funding Committee to address multiple funding issues. The disparity between college funding packages will remain as each college has its own financial situation and SEM. Three colleges now offer the same funding for domestic PhD students and relatively similar funding for international doctoral students. A fourth college offers 60% of the funding amount of those three colleges. A fifth college recently decided to offer very high funding levels (comparable to the recent announcement of the UofT) but will admit fewer students. A sixth college continues to have relatively low levels of funding, but the has highest enrolments in the PhD program. A discussion on Master level funding is slated to take place in Fall 2025. The issue of funding, and creative ways to address this ongoing challenge, continues to be monitored by the newly established TST Strategic Enrolment Management Group.
5. TST is included with the UofT in the QS rankings for theology, religion, and divinity. The most recent ranking placed TST/UofT first in Canada, sixth in North America, and tenth internationally. In the research that is counted in the rankings (peer refereed articles from leading journals) 10 of the 15 top researchers counted are TST faculty; TST faculty account for 28% of the total articles counted.

To encourage and celebrate faculty contributions to research and scholarship, TST held a very successful Faculty Research Showcase in January 2023 through the TST Library Committee. A similar research showcase for doctoral students in the form of poster presentations is being planned for 2025. TST will alternate between faculty and doctoral student showcases each year.

Since Spring 2023 TST has had access to a Research Officer employed by St Michael's and Victoria Colleges. The creation of this position has benefitted individual faculty and TST institutionally and encouraged grant applications.

Research and Teaching Areas (RTAs) are interdisciplinary groupings that bring together faculty and doctoral students in a common research and teaching area and commenced meeting in Fall 2024. The four RTAs are: climate change and ecology; vulnerability and disability; ecumenism; decolonial homiletics. They meet twice a semester.

As of Fall 2023, TST colleges are generally in synch with peer institutions, including the UofT, on workload distribution, research leaves, and PERA. The specific amounts and practices have been collated and are available for periodic review by Deans, Principals, and Presidents.

The TST continues to have impactful conversations around EDI. The 2023 TST Board Retreat was facilitated by Paul Okoye from Credence and Co. entitled, "Transforming Power, Prejudice & Privilege: Building Equitable, Diverse & Inclusive Organizations." In 2024 the TST Board sponsored a TST wide education day entitled "Indigenous Education and Theology" With Prof. Niigaan Sinclair, University of Manitoba. EDI remains a standing item on the Senior Executive Council (SEC) agenda.

TST has made significant progress in this area as of the nine tenure or teaching stream hires since 2022, seven (representing 78%) of the new hires come from underrecognized/underrepresented groups.<sup>1</sup>

6. The GRATE formula is the mechanism used to allocate the Ministry funding grant (G); reimbursable costs of UofT services (R); TST operating assessment (A); and teaching

<sup>1</sup> This would mean people "Indigenous Identity, Racial/Ethnocultural Identity, Religious or Spiritual Affiliation, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, Disability" The Division of People Strategy, Equity and Culture, UofT <https://people.utoronto.ca/inclusion/employment>.

equalization (TE). A full review of the GRATE formula is currently underway. The review committee will make recommendations to the SEC for implementation in the 2026-27 academic year. Thus far, items for review include rolling averages, updating cost centers according to new operational structures, and teaching equalization. Additionally, the committee will consider financial aspects that currently fall outside of the scope of the GRATE formula but have financial impact on the colleges and TST such as tuition revenue and contributed services. All of these considerations will impact budgeting processes toward a more stable, predictable, and realistic model.

An independent TST budget would require a significant injection of capital. A proposal that the TST schools are exploring is the possibility of creating an endowment fund to cover some administrative common costs through a grant from an outside funding agency. If successful, the outside agency would fund up to 2.5 to 3 times every dollar raised by the TST colleges for an endowment.

7. As a service and administrative hub, the TST is embarking on a multi-year plan that necessarily takes into account the strategic plans of each individual college. In the academic year 2024-2025, the strategic plans of the colleges have been collected and reviewed by the ED and the ADGP. In the same year they will visit all the faculty councils (or equivalent) of the member colleges for an open discussion around two questions: (i) what is your vision of TST/theology at the University of Toronto in 4-6 years from now? (ii) What are the top 3 priorities for the TST. A longer-term plan for the TST will be developed for Spring 2026.

Following the directions suggested by the UTQAP External Review process and furthered by data-driven studies and discussions, 4 items are emerging as key strategic areas in planning: course rationalization and scheduling; SEM; faculty complement planning; shared administrative support in the SEUG programs.

8. The Academic Council approved a 5-year cycle of assessment for graduate degree programs: PhD program every year and the ThM and MA programs every two or three years depending on the size of the pool. The assessment of all graduate programs was successfully conducted in 2023. In 2024, the PhD was assessed to measure the degree to which specific learning outcomes were being met. The assessment involved students, graduates, and faculty. The ThM and MA will be assessed in 2025 or 2026.

This brief report has been developed in consultation with the ADGP, Registrar, and Director of Finance. It reflects the ongoing and regular monitoring of the implementation plan by the SEC and the AC as well as those councils and committees that report to the AC: Graduate Studies and Basic Degree Councils; TST Registrars' Committee; Library Committee; and SEM Group.

We trust that this report provides information and evidence of TST's considered and ongoing response to the UTQAP reviewers.

Sincerely,



Darren Dias, PhD

Executive Director

Associate Professor, University of St. Michael's College