



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

**Committee on the Environment,
Climate Change & Sustainability**

CECCS Terms of Reference

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Background & Mandate

The President's Advisory Committee on the Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability (CECCS) was established in 2017 to advance the University's contributions, objectives and impact on climate change and sustainability. The CECCS reports to the President.

The CECCS delivers its mandate through a range of activities addressing research, education, internal and external community engagement, and university operations. In 2024, after three successful mandate periods, the President approved an ongoing role for CECCS at the University of Toronto.

Goals

- Sustainability as key component of U of T identity
- Local and international leadership in operational and academic sustainability; and
- Recognition, sharing and scaling good sustainability practices towards meaningful impact across and beyond the university

Overarching principles

- **Regenerative Sustainability** looks for net positive ways to increase both human and environmental wellbeing, instead of simply focusing on reducing environmental damage.
- **Integration of Operational and Academic Sustainability** looks at ways to combine research, teaching, partnerships, and operations.

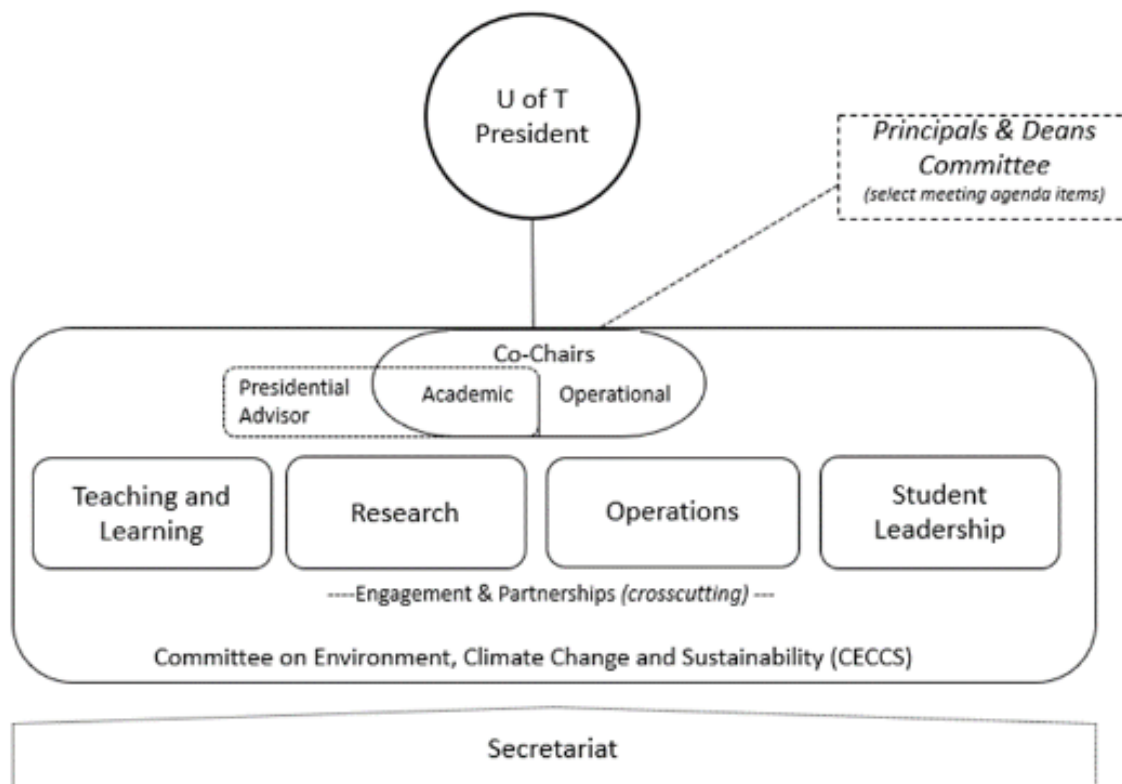
Cross-cutting Themes

- **Campus as a Living Lab (CLL)** involves addressing operational sustainability issues by connecting students, faculty, staff, and potentially external partners, on CLL projects. CLL works to create opportunities for students to use the campus as a test bed for sustainability by connecting academic and operational activities.
- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, which CECCS uses to orient our understanding, across all of our activities, of the many dimensions of sustainability across the campus, and to develop all of our sustainability inventories.
- **Engagement and Partnerships** and the principles of co-production and embedding sustainability in the core activities and functions of the university.

Structure & Operations

The CECCS refers to the following:

1. The Committee of Presidential appointees representing key University of Toronto communities and its Co-Chairs
2. The CECCS standing subcommittees (below) and, from time to time, shorter term working and advisory groups
 - Teaching & Learning
 - Research
 - Operations
 - Student Leadership (see Appendix A)
3. The CECCS Secretariat and its staff



Roles & Responsibilities

CECCS Co-Chairs

The CECCS Co-Chairs are responsible for providing guidance to the President on U of T matters relating to sustainability and climate change. The Co-Chairs oversee the work of the Committee and normally make annual presentations on the Committee's activities on request to the Governing Council. They also provide reports to the Principals & Deans Committee (P&D) meetings and in other internal and external interactions.

The Committee

The Committee is made up of regular members appointed by the President and ex-officio or standing members appointed by the relevant Vice-President or Provost. The Committee is responsible for setting strategic direction, highlighting, and approving priorities for the CECCS. Committee members also sit on the CECCS subcommittees, support cross-subcommittee coordination, and facilitate sustainability in select constituents, units, or divisions on campus. Committee meetings are convened by the Co-Chairs at least once a term. Any member of the committee may bring agenda items to the CECCS Co-Chairs for consideration.

Individual members will be expected to provide expertise, guidance, and support to outreach in relation to the activities and priorities of the CECCS outside of meeting times. In addition, members are encouraged to identify ways to extend and further advance the work of the CECCS in their individual capacity and in dialogue with the CECCS Co-Chairs, Subcommittee Co-Chairs and Secretariat. Secretariat support for such activities will be made available where possible.

CECCS Subcommittees

The subcommittees are standing working groups of the CECCS responsible for the identification, development, and delivery of sustainability activities with the support of the Secretariat and relevant partners. Subcommittees meet as regularly as necessary to deliver on identified objectives and at least once a term. Subcommittees are expected to regularly make recommendations to the Committee (and Co-Chairs) on how to enhance the impact of the University and CECCS on issues of climate and sustainability.

Current subcommittees include Research, Teaching & Learning, Operations, and Student Leadership. One CECCS Co-chair sits in each of the first three and attends the fourth by invitation.

Subcommittee Co-Chairs

Each subcommittee is expected to be co-chaired by one regular and one ex-officio member of CECCS or, in the case of Student Leadership, one graduate and one undergraduate student, who share responsibility and accountability for overseeing the development and progress on relevant sustainability priorities and activities. Subcommittee Co-Chairs will be expected to identify and review subcommittee priorities annually and, where possible, outline the expected approach, implementation requirements and intended impacts of progress for each.

In addition to CECCS Members, Subcommittee Co-Chairs will also be responsible for identifying and appointing additional subcommittee-only members to help advance these identified priorities. CECCS Co-Chair approval for subcommittee-only appointments is expected.

Secretariat

The CECCS Secretariat is the administrative arm of the CECCS. Through the leadership and support of the Secretariat Director, Project Managers and other staff, the Secretariat is responsible for interpreting, planning, and implementing the direction provided by the CECCS Co-Chairs, the CECCS, and the Subcommittee Co-Chairs. The Secretariat will offer orientation to new members, provide advance information to members ahead of meetings, and follow up on action items identified and agreed upon in meetings. The Secretariat is also responsible for leading cross-CECCS initiatives and maintaining communications with members between meetings.

In general, CECCS and Subcommittee meetings will be closed and attended only by CECCS Committee and Subcommittee members, Secretariat staff and members invited with the approval of meeting chairs.

Member Appointments & Attendance

The CECCS is currently co-chaired by Professor John Robinson, Presidential Advisor on the Environment, Climate Change, and Sustainability, and Ron Saporta, Chief Operating Officer, Property Services & Sustainability.

The members include:

- **Ex-officio members** whose membership is connected to a particular role, area of expertise or institutional office, and who can name designates for meetings. Ex-officio members are appointed by the President and may be identified in consultation with the relevant Vice-Presidents or Provost and/or identified through the open call process.
- **Regular members** are appointed by the President of U of T and serve for 1–2-year renewable terms. Regular members are generally identified through an open call process for a set number of positions for U of T students, faculty, staff, or alumni.
- **Appointed members** serve in their individual capacity, as students, faculty, or staff.
- An equal number of faculty, students, and staff members (7, 7, 7) plus a representative from the alumni community.

The CECCS is committed to building a culture of belonging that reflects the diversity of our local and global community. We value members that share and demonstrate a commitment to equity, inclusion, and reconciliation and recognize that diverse perspectives, experiences, and expertise are essential to strengthening our sustainability mission.

Conflict of Interest

CECCS members will be asked to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest resulting from personal or family affiliation with organizations relevant to the work of the Committee.

Annual Report

The Secretariat submits an annual report to the President, describing CECCS activities over the previous year and the progress of the University in implementing the commitments. The annual report is normally presented annually upon request to the Governing Council and is developed by the Secretariat staff with input from the CECCS Co-Chairs, Subcommittee Chairs and others.

Appendix A

Student Leadership has been a CECCS cross-cutting theme since 2021. In 2024, a new Student Leadership Subcommittee (SLS) was created to give students a stronger voice in CECCS, enhance student collaboration, and drive student-led initiatives aligned with the broader CECCS mandate.

As with the other CECCS subcommittees, the SLS is a standing working group of the CECCS responsible for the identification, development, and delivery of sustainability activities with the support of the Secretariat and relevant partners.

Membership

Members of SLS will lead and collaborate on initiatives through active participation in CECCS governance and programming that directly impacts students, for example the Sustainability Summer Internship Program, the Sustainability Pathways Program, and Campus as Living Lab initiatives.

Seven members of SLS will be determined through an open call appointment process for CECCS. An additional three subcommittee-only members will be appointed annually through a separate open call. One-year terms for subcommittee-only members will be from September to August.

Reappointments of existing student members will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

SLS members will be appointed based on demonstrated commitment to sustainability leadership at the University of Toronto and/or their communities, particularly on U of T student groups whose mandates align with any of the [United Nations' \(UN\) Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

To be successful, students on SLS will have the following attributes:

- Collaboration and teamwork
- Strong organization, communication, and interpersonal skills
- Positive attitude
- Goal oriented and problem-solving skills

SLS members are expected to:

- Be available for and actively participate in (at least two) CECCS and subcommittee meetings each term
- Advise the CECCS Secretariat on student leadership opportunities and areas of mutual interest in CECCS programming for graduate and undergraduate students (e.g. Sustainability Pathways, Campus as Living Labs, CECCS internship programs)
- Participate in SLS dialogue and meetings to identify and support progress on annual SLS and relevant CECCS priorities
- Champion CECCS activities and priorities within their relative communities and networks
- Follow up on action items emerging from Committee or subcommittee discussions
- Liaise with CECCS Project Manager(s) and Secretariat team on meeting scheduling, documentation review, subcommittee activities and project progress.

Operation

The SLS should meet as regularly as necessary to deliver on identified priorities and at least once a term. As with other CECCS subcommittees, the SLS is expected to regularly make recommendations to CECCS on how to enhance the impact of the University and CECCS on issues of climate and sustainability.

SLS meetings will be 1.5-2 hours in length and will be held virtually via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. In-person meetings may also be held, if desired, but must have an online option to ensure inclusion of tri-campus SLS members.

A Project Manager from the CECCS Secretariat will be assigned to support the work of the SLS. This includes scheduling meetings, taking notes, providing logistical support for SLS initiatives, and inviting CECCS members, Subcommittee Chairs, or other U of T stakeholders to attend SLS meetings as requested. CECCS work-study students may also provide administrative and logistical support as may be requested.

Students will receive a small honorarium equivalent to \$30 per hour of meetings attended, and the option of receiving Co-Curricular Record recognition, and/or letters of reference.