

3. Positioning

Another year of remarkable advances and exceptional achievements provided opportunities for our Faculty to increase our visibility and enhance our profile regionally, nationally and internationally. U of T Engineering was once again recognized as the premier engineering school in Canada and among the world's best across all major international rankings. We continued to leverage our innovative undergraduate and graduate programs, our world-leading research and the remarkable accomplishments of our current students, faculty and alumni to attract the most talented domestic and international students, increase the diversity of our research and learning community, and foster relationships with our alumni, friends and industry partners.

Our mandate is to be a global leader among the very top engineering schools and we strive to disseminate and transfer the knowledge created through our groundbreaking teaching and research. In Year 4 of our Academic Plan, this vision informed our strategy to accomplish our goals related to positioning and effectively communicating U of T Engineering's unique messages. In the past year, we further fine-tuned our positioning and communications strategies to support and enhance the Faculty's priorities and seize emerging opportunities through print and media channels.

We continue to utilize a variety of communication vehicles to celebrate the excellence of our diverse U of T Engineering community and ensure we effectively highlight the wealth of stories we have to tell. In 2014–2015, we had a total of 12,985 stories in the media, an increase of 38 per cent over the previous year. Our impressions — the estimated number of people who may have interacted with a story based on circulation (newspaper/magazines), viewers (TV), listeners (radio) and unique monthly visitors (online) — reached 6.6 billion, an increase of 62 per cent over the previous year. Robust media coverage built the Faculty's and University's national and international reputation in strategic areas of focus and raised the profile of several key Faculty initiatives in bioengineering/health, sustainability, engineering experiential learning and entrepreneurship. Our social media presence grew as we enhanced efforts to drive audiences to our online content. We increased our average monthly Twitter impressions by 14 per cent and doubled our engagement to 2 per cent, nearly double from the previous year. Our Facebook followers also doubled, and the Faculty's Instagram account, which gained more than 300 followers in its first six months, continues to grow.

We demonstrated our commitment to effective and transparent communication with two major publications in 2015. Our *Annual Report of Performance Indicators*, now in its seventh edition, measures our progress over the past 10 years in key areas and highlights

major activities from the previous year. While the *Annual Report of Performance Indicators* primarily serves an internal audience, its companion document, *Innovation Lives Here – Year in Review 2015*, is a succinct and strategic piece for alumni, key donors, industry partners and secondary external audiences such as parents, media and the general public. The *Year in Review* distils the more comprehensive performance indicator information found in our Annual Report and provides a snapshot of the Faculty's progress and contributions in education, research, awards, finances and philanthropy. Both publications provided updates on the progress of our new building, the Centre for Engineering Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CEIE), which will open in 2017.

In 2014–2015, we refined our strategic communication foci to support our Academic Plan objectives, alongside the University's strategic priorities. We completed several initiatives this year, including the launch of the new engineering news site, which enables us to better profile our Faculty's innovative and world-leading research. Since the launch of the site, we have gained traction in our local and international readership, with a total of 125,874 pageviews, up nearly 70 per cent from the previous year. Average pageviews per article also increased 70 per cent on the new platform, with a 140 per cent increase in readership from the United States and 57 per cent more readers from outside North America. In 2014–2015, our top stories on the Engineering News and U of T News websites were:

- *Machine learning reveals unexpected genetic roots of cancers, autism and other disorders (December 2014);*
- *New technique offers spray-on solar (November 2014);* and
- *U of T Engineering celebrates record number of female first-year students (February 2015).*

In addition to launching the engineering news site, we also redesigned our Faculty website in May 2015 to enhance our online presence, communicate more effectively with our diverse audiences and provide better integration with social media channels. Our website is often the first point of contact with prospective students and media from around the world and we developed a clean, modern design with improved information architecture that is more user-friendly and easily accessible to the increasing proportion of visitors who interact with our website on tablets and mobile phones. The site also complies with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

Engaging our faculty, staff, students and alumni and fostering a culture of involvement, community and pride continues to be a priority. We redesigned *The Engineering Newsletter* for faculty and staff in January 2015 to increase engagement and share information more effectively across the Faculty. We implemented the new format after a survey of faculty and

staff indicated that internal groups wanted more concise and curated information. Increased open rates, combined with relatively level engagement (measured as average click rate), indicate that these changes were effective in meeting the needs of our internal audience.

As we move forward into the last year of our Academic Plan, our Faculty will improve stakeholder engagement via social media and establish further communication benchmarks, in addition to aligning our message with the core themes identified by U of T Engineering and the University. We will also establish specific recruitment and research communications goals and continue to enhance and strengthen our media relations strategy by developing and promoting stories that profile our research excellence and innovative educational programs.

POSITIONING: YEAR 4 PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

3.1 Deliver a plan that articulates our communication goals, maintains consistency of our branding and products, keeps on top of markets, and clearly outlines methods so that we can remain competitive and set the Faculty apart.

- Completed in early 2013; refined strategic communications foci in 2014–2015
- Updated plan to align editorial content with the Faculty’s Academic Plan, the Boundless Campaign and the University’s strategic priorities, including the following areas of focus for the foundation of our media outreach, news stories and overall Faculty messaging including:
 - world-class research;
 - entrepreneurship and innovation;
 - student experience; and
 - enriching engineering education.

3.2 Strengthen the Faculty’s key messages and customize them for target audiences.

- Assessed metrics in key areas and published our seventh *Annual Report of Performance Indicators*
- Launched our new Faculty website to further enhance our online presence, communicate more effectively with our diverse audiences and provide better integration with social media channels
- Executed our first targeted media campaign to celebrate women in engineering and build on our successful efforts to recruit more women to U of T Engineering, including a microsite, online news stories, social media and focused media relations efforts; campaign highlights included 12,500+ reads and a 653,000-impression social media reach on a web story celebrating record-high female enrolment, as well as 120 media stories with more than 23 million impressions over four months in mainstream, industry

and peer publications; campaign won a 2015 Silver Leaf Award of Excellence in Marketing Communication from the International Association of Business Communicators

- Conducted a readership survey for our *Skulematters* alumni magazine, following the completion of the issue on entrepreneurship and commercialization, to ensure we are meeting the interests of our alumni; feedback gathered was used to enhance the content and layout in the fall 2015 *Skulematters* highlighting “Women in Engineering: A Tradition of Excellence”
- Published the second *Innovation Lives Here – Year in Review 2015*, a 20-page publication highlighting key accomplishments within the Faculty and targeted toward alumni, key donors, industry partners and secondary external audiences such as parents, media and the general public
- Enhanced the e-newsletter for faculty and staff with a new design and content strategy to share information more effectively across the Faculty, with the average open rate increasing by five percentage points
- Supported the Engineering Student e-News, a monthly publication from the Registrar’s Office
- Produced several new research inserts on water, advanced manufacturing, healthcare engineering, nanoengineering and sustainable mining to support corporate outreach activities and industry partnerships
- Launched a number of strategic initiatives, including proactive media outreach, an enhanced online presence and improved marketing materials, aimed at strengthening our visibility and our reputation for excellence
- Completed and executed a comprehensive communications strategy for the Centre for Engineering Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CEIE) groundbreaking ceremony in June 2015
- Completed a foreword for a book by Dr. Lynnette Madsen of the U.S. National Science Foundation, entitled *Successful Women Ceramic and Glass Scientists and Engineers: 100 Inspirational Profiles*, for The American Ceramic Society on the topic of women glass scientists and engineers
- Partnered with U of T Alumni Relations and Advancement Communications to refresh the Engineering Alumni Association’s word mark; the renewed design will be launched after consultation with the U of T Engineering alumni community and will reflect the Association’s new identity as the U of T Engineering Alumni Network

3.3 Establish the Faculty as the go-to resource for media looking for comments and engineering expertise on breaking news issues.

- Continued to build the Faculty’s national and international reputation in strategic areas of focus by securing significant media coverage in 2014–2015, including 12,985 media stories (38 per cent increase over 2013–2014) with 6.6 billion impressions (62 per cent increase over 2013–2014)
- Increased proactive pitching tied to breaking news and current affairs and secured media stories along strategic communications themes by proactively offering our professors as

experts for media; examples include senior administrative leaders commenting on recent nation-wide reports about the lack of diversity in STEM (*Globe and Mail, Maclean's*) and a U of T civil engineering professor commenting in national media coverage on the urban-related Toronto Mystery Tunnel (*National Post, CBC The National, Ottawa Citizen, Montreal Gazette*)

- Grew international media presence and secured ongoing regional, national and international media coverage through proactive pitching, with stories in non-Canadian outlets increasing proportionately to 60 per cent (from 47 per cent in 2013–2014)

Highlights included:

- **Bioengineering/Health**
 - ECE researchers published a paper in *Science* on decoding the human genome using machine learning (*Globe and Mail, Scientific American, WIRED Magazine, National Post, Ottawa Citizen, Vancouver Sun*).
 - Two IBBME PhD students won the Canadian James Dyson Award for a 3D skin bio-printer (*CBS News, Fast Company, Huffington Post, CBC News Online*).
- **Sustainability (including Sustainable Cities)**
 - A CivE researcher published two different papers, one in *Nature Climate Change* that demonstrated how electricity must come from low-carbon sources for green technologies to lower emissions, and another in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences that tracked resource use in megacities (*BBC World Service, Quartz, NBC News, The Atlantic CityLab, NU.nl, Tendencias21, Globe and Mail, CBC Radio One, Smithsonian Magazine, Discovery News*).
 - ChemE researchers demonstrated that air pollution from vehicles travels farther than thought (*CBC The National, VICE Motherboard, Toronto Star, CP24, 680 News, Huffington Post Canada*).
 - ECE postdoctoral fellow designs technology that could enable spray-on solar cells (*UK Daily Mail, Popular Science, Fast Company, GigaOm, Futurism, Gizmag, CBC News, Discovery Channel, Space Channel*).
- **Engineering Experiential Learning**
 - Engineering students design fuel-efficient car and win international Eco-Marathon (*Fast Company, About.com, CBC News, FOX News Online*).
 - U of T breaks ground on new Centre for Engineering Innovation & Entrepreneurship (*680 News Toronto, Canadian Architect*).
 - Engineering students design, build and race concrete canoes across Toronto's waterfront in the 2015 Canadian National Concrete Canoe Competition (*Global News National, CTV News National, CBC Radio One, CP24 Toronto, Fairchild TV*).
 - U of T joins U.S. engineering education initiative announced at White House (*Metro Toronto, Daily Commercial News, Yonge Street Media*).
- **Entrepreneurship**

- U of T Engineering startup OTI Lumionics expands with organic LED manufacturing (*Financial Post, TreeHugger, Forbes, Canadian Manufacturing, Ottawa Business Journal, Gizmag*).
- Engineering alumni startup Bionym continues to develop and expand Nymi, its wearable, encrypted, bracelet-like device (*Forbes, Business Insider, Tech Crunch, Denver Post, CNET, Globe and Mail, BC's The Province*).

3.4 Continue to increase the quality of our storytelling, journalism and communications processes and tools to make our practices best-in-class and in pace with emerging technologies and their uses by our target audiences.

- Increased pageviews on our Engineering News site to 125,874 (up nearly 70 per cent from 74,661 in 2013–2014), by posting more engaging, shareable, strategic and mobile-friendly content; also contributed to an increase in average pageviews per story of more than 70 per cent
- Attracted more international interest in our stories, with pageviews from the United States reaching 14,106 (up more than 140 per cent from a year earlier) and pageviews from outside North America reaching 17,554 (up 57 per cent from a year earlier)
- Continued to integrate more multimedia components, such as photo galleries, infographics, illustrations and animated GIFs, into web communications to enhance our storytelling
- Explored new methods of news storytelling, such as leveraging events with large visual opportunities and interview prospects to tell news stories using video only, such as for the Multidisciplinary Capstone Design Projects showcase
- Hosted several professional development sessions in web writing, editing and news writing for the more than 30 Faculty communicators who make up the Engineering Communications Network
- Continued to improve stakeholder engagement via social media and establishing communication benchmarks
- Set specific recruitment and research communications goals through special media campaigns
- Continued to use social media during events to increase engagement and public awareness

3.5 Remain flexible to changing media and technologies, nurture blogger and social media relationships, and build relationships and communications with traditional media.

- Created and shared new multimedia assets, such as illustrations, animated GIFs and videos, for use when pitching online media outlets, which resulted in Faculty-created visual assets being distributed across significant news sites, such as *Gizmodo, VICE Motherboard, WIRED Magazine, the Toronto Star* and others
- Regularly updated our social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Flickr

- Improved reach in online coverage, with almost 86 per cent of overall media articles coming from online news outlets, blogs and websites, up almost three quarters from the previous year

3.6 Increase the Faculty's presence, visibility and reputation on modern social media platforms.

- Enhanced social media engagement across each of our social media feeds (Twitter, Facebook and YouTube), providing additional opportunities to steer traffic to our comprehensive online content, with Twitter monthly impressions and engagement up 14 per cent and 82 per cent over the previous year and Facebook followers increasing by 105 per cent over the previous year
- Launched an Instagram account and scaled our use of social photos to reach current and prospective students with engaging multimedia content
- Created concise YouTube videos to share on social media and drive engagement, such as a 16-second YouTube video to accompany our spray-on solar story that secured more than 50,000 views in three months
- Secured more clickthrus to our new stories from social channels, with a web story celebrating high female enrolment breaking a new record of more than 2,000 clickthrus on Twitter and Facebook