

MIRANET Annual General Meeting: March 2, 2011

Presentation by Guest Speaker: Professor Deep Saini Principal, University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM)

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you here at the Annual General Meeting of MIRANET.

I want to take this opportunity to talk about the unique relationship that exists between our campus and the community of Mississauga.

Both the city of Mississauga and the U of T Mississauga are relatively young – founded less than 50 years ago – and yet we have come very far together. Both have experienced exponential growth. Mississauga has grown to become Canada's sixth largest city. The City is home to more than 50,000 businesses, including the headquarters of over 60 Fortune 500 companies.

Similarly, U of T Mississauga has grown from the small Erindale College, founded with 155 students, to become a campus of about 12,000 students. As I drive on the Mississauga Road, it often occurs to me that many people must drive by without realizing what lies behind all those trees. So, let me give you some facts to think about when you next drive by:

First, the U of T Mississauga does not stand alone. It is part of a larger and venerable educational institution – the University of Toronto. U of T is consistently ranked amongst world's top 20 or so universities by various ranking agencies. Moreover, it is one of only seven universities that achieve this ranking in all the disciplinary areas. U of T is Canada's largest and most research-intensive university, with 77,000 students, 6,000 faculty, 9,000 staff and nearly 0.5 million living alumni worldwide.

University of Toronto Mississauga is a major part of this U of T enterprise. It is the second largest division and one of the fastest growing parts of U of T, with perhaps the strongest future prospects for growth. It is intimately connected with the community, local business and industry. Nearly \$200,000 are invested every week in new research on our campus. This year, our student body of 12,000 represents over 125 countries. Our focus on experiential learning means that this year, U of T Mississauga students will spend more than 40,000 hours doing volunteer work in our city.

UTM began its journey in 1967 with one building and two tennis courts! Today, it is not only the second-largest division of the University of Toronto, it alone is a mid-size university on the Canadian scale. We offer 148 programs in 89 areas of study. U of T Mississauga is known for its interdisciplinary programs designed to give students an edge in increasingly competitive workplace

Our faculty and researchers are recognized internationally for their innovative work. On a typical day, you could walk around the campus and see nearly 600 research projects underway, worth \$10 million in external grants. We have nearly 40,000 alumni, and they include astronauts, Olympians, award-winning actors and writers, successful entrepreneurs, and leading figures in public service – both here at home and abroad.

Our campus is the home to numerous award-winning buildings. Some examples are: the *Recreation, Athletics and Wellness Centre*, the *Oscar Peterson Hall* and the *Communication, Culture and Technology Building*. One of our landmark award-winning buildings is the *Hazel McCallion Academic Learning Centre*, which, during peak periods of academic activity, averages an astonishing more than 9,000 visits per day!

Within the next couple of months, we will open the doors on two new building: the *Instructional Centre* and the *Health Sciences Complex*. In fact, these buildings promise to become new hubs on the campus.

The Instructional Centre adds nearly 160,000 sq ft of state-of-the-art space and facilities, including 27 classrooms ranging from 30 to 500 seats, for us to deliver education to our burgeoning student population. In keeping with the U of T Mississauga tradition, this building has been constructed to very high environmental sustainability and energy efficiency standards, including geothermal heating and solar energy generation. It is expected to achieve LEED Gold certificate.

The Health Sciences Complex will have the *Mississauga Academy of Medicine* as its lead occupant. In creating this academy, U of T Mississauga has partnered with the Credit Valley Hospital, the Trillium Health Centre, and U of T's Faculty of Medicine. The Academy will graduate 54 new physicians every year. Research tells us that new doctors are more likely to settle where they have studied. Imagine what that means to the families in Mississauga who are struggling to find a family physician! For us, this is a tremendous opportunity — and honor — to give back to the community that has given us so much.

Moreover, the Mississauga Academy of Medicine and the Health Sciences Complex are “game-changers” for this campus. They create new opportunities, the ramifications of which would, in time, be felt across many disciplines well beyond medicine. Our success will have a direct impact on the prosperity of Mississauga. In particular, it will create high-quality jobs in Mississauga and improve the quality of life in our city.

Urged on by what they see happening here, our supporters are making investments at levels that we have never seen before. For example, Carlo Fidani gave a \$10 million gift to the Health Sciences Complex last summer, which was matched a month ago by Terrence Donnelly with his \$12 million gift to name our new building the *Terrence Donnelly Health Sciences Complex*. The total amount of private donations to this complex are already in the vicinity of \$25 million – and the building hasn't even opened its doors yet! These record levels of philanthropy signal a quantum jump in the recognition of U of T Mississauga as an institution of rapidly rising excellence in teaching and research.

UTM partners with our community in so many ways. Our members, including myself, serve on several City bodies. For example the Mississauga Board of Trade, Economic Development Advisory Council, Healthy City Stewardship Centre, Stepping up for United Way, Safe City Mississauga, and Research Innovation Commercialization Centre, to name a few. The past summer we hosted the Run for the Cure, which attracted over 4,000 participants, and we intend to continue doing so in the future. A number of our faculty are involved in the Pathways to Education program, helping highly trained immigrants find quality work.

There are many other ways we are connected with the community of Mississauga; for example:

83 per cent of our nearly 40,000 alumni are settled in the GTA; nearly 11,000 of them are living in Mississauga. They buy homes here. Their children go to school here. They learn from our volunteer faculty who participate in the activities of the city institutions such as the Riverwood Conservancy and Dixie Bloor Neighborhood Centre. U of T Mississauga has played a pivotal role as a contributing member of the Mississauga Summit. As part of the Higher Education Task Force, U of T Mississauga is uniquely positioned to help align education, the City, and the industry. This will help differentiate Mississauga as a leading **smart** City that is a strong and diverse centre for business, and has tremendous capacity for growth.

Now, let's consider some other statistics: The population of 18-year-olds in the Peel Region will increase by 26 per cent by 2021. The City's diverse immigrant population already comprises over 51 per cent of the community. And by 2015, two-thirds of all job openings will require post-secondary education.

To appreciate the impact of education and training on the economy of a city, let me illustrate with an example from another community on this continent that is known to all: *the Silicon Valley*:

50% of all the new high-tech ventures in this community are started by immigrants, and 50% of all these entrepreneurial immigrants initially came to the United States as students, and stayed on.

The parallels between that community and Mississauga are unmistakable. Ours is also an increasingly high-tech and knowledge-based economy. Canada is a magnet for highly qualified immigrants, and fully one third of them settle in GTA, with a lion's share settling in the western parts of the GTA.

UTM is that key educational institution in our midst that **is playing** and **will play** a pivotal role in translating knowledge, education and training into direct economic benefits to this community.

In closing, let me say that at U of T Mississauga, our motto is: ***Tantum Nobis Creditum***, which means, "So much has been entrusted to us."

Every day, we are entrusted with the potential of our students, and it is our aim to give them the knowledge and tools they need to flourish. We are entrusted with the ingenuity and brilliance of our researchers, and it is our aim to improve the world through their research. We are entrusted with the support of our community, and it is our aim to give back to our community.

Ahead of us lies an exciting new era, and opportunities for growth, innovation, and success. The Peel Region – with Mississauga as its largest and leading city – is home to nearly 1.3 million inhabitants, whose numbers are growing rapidly. With this, the demand for higher education and its direct impact on the local economy are growing. This is a region with a burning need for a full-service, comprehensive university of national and international repute.

How well is U of T Mississauga meeting these expectations?

As one of the leading parts of U of T, UTM is already there in terms of its global reputation. We are also almost there in terms of our comprehensiveness, but there are some significant missing pieces. We are working very hard to add these pieces so that we can serve this community's needs and aspirations in a comprehensive way. With the founding of the Mississauga Academy of Medicine this year, we are adding one big piece that has been missing to date. More are on their way — please stay tuned.

As you know, I have just recently arrived here from the University of Waterloo, and let me assure you that I have personally dedicated myself to turning the U of T Mississauga into an academic and research powerhouse on the national and international scene.

I look forward to working with our community to transform the opportunities and dreams that lie in front of us into reality

Thank you.