

University of Toronto's Student Environmental Resource Network Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference, approved by the **January 18, 2024** UTERN Board of Directors, and modified with suggestions on **Saturday April 27, 2024**, and ratified at the **April 29, 2024** UTERN General Members Meeting, replaces the UTERN Constitution and is meant to address the problems UTERN has faced over the last twenty years and provide simple, realistic, and effective solutions going forward.

University of Toronto's Student Environmental Resource Network Terms of Reference

Article 1: Name

The official name shall be University of Toronto's Student Environmental Resource Network. The abbreviation of the name shall be UTERN.

Article 2: Purpose

UTERN will operate as an arms-length, independent body under the auspices of Regenesis Toronto (Regenes UofT), where Regenesis Toronto shall provide administrative support and help ensure UTERN functions regularly and effectively.

The mandate of UTERN shall be to:

- 1) Maintain the UTERN fee levy as a fund that provides funding to [1] University of Toronto student environmental organizations, [2] University of Toronto student-led or student-involved environmental projects, [3] broader community environmental movements, organizations or projects that involve University of Toronto students, and [4] other University of Toronto student organizations seeking support for an environmental-themed event or project, as guided by the Financial Policy.
- 2) Aid in the natural formation of a sustainable community at the University of Toronto through facilitating networking, communications and annual events that bring together students and student groups interested in environmental sustainability and justice at the University of Toronto that supports networking and collaboration.
- 3) Work in collaboration with U of T sustainability offices, student union(s), and student environmental organizations at each campus, to co-organize events at each University of Toronto Campus (St. George, Mississauga, Scarborough) and online.

Article 3: Membership

In order to access funding, one must be a fee-paying member of the UTERN levy.

1) Individual membership is open to all students at the University of Toronto.

a. An individual is considered a member in good standing if they are an undergraduate or graduate student at the University of Toronto and have paid the levy membership fee for at least one semester for the year.

Article 4: Structure

1) UTERN shall operate as an independent body with an executive, under the legal auspices of Regenesi Toronto (UofT), who will be responsible for providing administrative support for the operations of UTERN, which aims to help maintain the institutional knowledge of UTERN and ease the annual transition process between executives.

2) The executive shall be two (2) co-chairs, an Executive Secretary, a Financial and Projects Manager, a Marketing Director, a UTSG Network Executive Liaison, a UTSC Network Executive Liaison and a UTM Network Executive Liaison. **Except for the Financial and Projects Manager**, these positions will be elected annually by the membership of UTERN from the University of Toronto student body and will serve in these positions as paid work-study positions. See *Article 5* for details on the elections and hiring process.

3) In addition, UTERN shall be made up of one representative of each University of Toronto student organization that has a primary environmental focus, as determined by the UTERN Executive in accordance with this constitution. These representatives, in addition to the UTERN Executive, shall attend meetings and aid in reviewing and voting on funding applications that are received.

4) Together, the UTERN Executive and the UTERN representatives from each environmental organization, shall be known as the UTERN board.

5) University of Toronto student organizations advocating for a particular political party or ideology are not eligible to have a representative sit on UTERN.

6) University of Toronto student organizations whose primary purpose is not environmental sustainability are not eligible to have a representative sit on UTERN.

7) University of Toronto student organizations that have a primary environmental focus, but are not registered with ULife, are still eligible to have a representative sit on UTERN as a representative, if they have an established presence at the University of Toronto and/or have been provided with some kind of recognition, official or otherwise, from a faculty, department or student union, as determined by the UTERN Executive.

8) Groups which are eligible to have a representative and receive funding based upon their purposes are listed in the appendix. Groups may be added or removed by a decision at a UTERN meeting.

9) Groups may be added (or removed from this list should they cease to exist) upon a decision of the Executive with a simple majority quorum. Additional groups should be considered at the start of each term and added from the UofT's Student Organization Portal (SOP) that have a core focus in environment and sustainability https://sop.utoronto.ca/groups/?areas_of_interest=environment-sustainability. UTERN reserves the right to reject groups that it does not feel align with the UTERN mission, including

groups it might see as greenwashing. Any rejection must be provided in writing outlining the reasons if the organization wishes to appeal.

10) The Co-Chairs shall be responsible for:

Ensuring that the obligations of the UTERN mission are met. This includes ensuring UTERN maintains its roots of acting as a model of an ENGO.

Chairing meetings (each co-chair shall rotate chairing meetings).

Liaising with the administrative staff from Regenesi on all UTERN matters.

Determining what is on the agenda and what agenda items take priority over others.

Filling in for the Executive Secretary when they are absent.

From time to time, review the UTERN mission and Terms of Reference, to ensure relevance to the current needs of students, and propose changes if necessary.

Facilitating an anonymous feedback survey on the UTERN experience from UTERN applicants and outgoing executives for the incoming Executive — a form that they themselves will also fill out; the upcoming executive team shall review the notes from previous executives. Feedback directed to the co-chairs shall be solicited by the advisors.

Acting as UTERN's Chief Returning Officer during the election process, and overseeing the hiring for the Financial and Projects Manager position, as well as hiring if any vacancies occur.

Running on-boarding training and ensuring the Executive are providing transition documents for their successors.

Ensure timesheets for work study are submitted for approval in a timely manner.

Developing, submitting and hosting a presentation for the Annual General Meeting of their work.

Developing a transition document for and hosting a meeting with their successor at the end of the academic year.

11) Executive Secretary shall be responsible for:

Providing notice and reminders of all meetings, including circulating the agenda.

Circulating the meetings minutes after each meeting.

Preparing the agenda, in consultation with the Co-Chairs.

Keeping minutes during meetings.

Ensure up to date meeting minutes, budgets, transition documents, changes to policy are updated on the UTERN website and social media.

Maintaining the website of UTERN. This includes adding and updating resources included on <https://uterntoronto.com/get-involved/resources/>

Developing, submitting and hosting a presentation for the Annual General Meeting of their work.

Developing a transition document for and hosting a meeting with their successor at the end of the academic year.

12) Financial and Projects Manager shall be responsible for:

Working with Regenesi to prepare an annual budget each year

Working with Regenesi to prepare financials for each meeting.

Working with Regenesi on the annual audit.

Presenting all financials, budgets, and audits, alongside the administrator, to the UTERN executive..

Presenting and managing funding applications to the UTERN Executive in the absence of the administrator.

Maintaining communication with all funding applicants.

Managing and keeping up to date financial records including receipts.

Ensuring that the levies of all previous years have been sent to and deposited by UTERN.

Developing, submitting and hosting a presentation for the Annual General Meeting of their work.
 Developing a transition document for and hosting a meeting with their successor at the end of the academic year.

13) The Marketing Director shall be responsible for:

Designing social media posts and stories.

Managing the social media accounts of UTERN.

Amplifying and sharing campus environmental events, news, awards, funding, jobs and research, including and not limited to UTERN and UofT department listservs and newsletters, external newsletters and community partners.

Developing, submitting, and hosting a presentation for the Annual General Meeting of their work.

Developing a transition document for and hosting a meeting with their successor at the end of the academic year.

14) The Network Executive Liaisons shall be responsible for:

Co-coordinating with UofT/UTSC/UTM Sustainability Office, CECCS, and UofT/UTSC/UTM student environmental groups for tri-campus sustainability week(s) (previously known as Eco-Week).

Hosting one Environmental Working Group per semester (Fall, Winter) — though Network Executive Liaisons are at liberty to host more — that includes workshops and panel discussions run by Advisors, alumni, ENGOs beyond U of T, environmental professionals, etc. to heighten interest and attendance, followed by networking.

Maintaining an up-to-date list of University of Toronto student organizations at their campus that have a primary environmental focus eligible to hold a UTERN representative seat and receive additional funding.

Adding events to [the Tri-Campus sustainability calendar](#).

Organizing the annual UTERN spring retreat, with the goals of providing quality educational opportunities to help make more effective eco-leaders, and encouraging networking between student environmental organizations and student eco-leaders.

Facilitate collaboration, networking and co-hosted events with student environmental organizations at their campus.

Managing and disseminating physical resources including UTERN's dishware, in collaboration with Regenesis and their Borrowing Centre initiatives at UTSG, UTM and UTSC. This includes storing dishware in secured cabinets, where individuals receive the key code upon submitting their security deposit, checking the dishware condition periodically, and updating the key code each term.

UTSC and UTM Network Executive Liaisons shall support the work of the UTSG Network Executive Liaison.

Developing, submitting and hosting a presentation for the Annual General Meeting of their work.

Developing a transition document for and hosting a meeting with their successor at the end of the academic year.

15) All Executive Members must be University of Toronto students.

16) All Executive Members must attend all meetings if possible. Executives shall remain in office for a term of one (1) year, or until the next Annual General Meeting is held, or until their resignation or removal. Members of the Executive who fail to provide written or electronic regrets for two (2) consecutive meetings may have their position terminated at the discretion of the Executive. Members of the Executive who fail to attend four (4) consecutive meetings may have their

position terminated at the discretion of the Executive. In the event of a vacancy, the Executive may appoint someone to fill the remainder of the term.

17) The Co-Chair is responsible for calling all meetings; meetings shall be held as regularly as seen fit by the Co-Chairs, monthly at minimum. Representatives from campus environmental organizations are encouraged to attend and participate in all UTERN board meetings.

18) Ex-officio members (e.g., advisor, administrative staff, auditor) shall have the right to attend and speak, but not vote, at all UTERN meetings.

19) The Co-Chairs are responsible for reviewing the current finances of the organization at the start of each meeting and conducting a discussion of funding applications as per the financial policy, ensuring that all funding allocated is reasonable given the budget and the remaining months left until the end of the fiscal year (April 30).

20) UTERN shall have work-study positions – of whom the Co-Chairs [2], Executive Secretary [1], Financial and Project Manager [1], Marketing Director [1] and the Network Executive Liaisons [3] shall also be UTERN Executive members (see Article 5); an administrator (see Article 6); and one or more advisor(s) from the staff or faculty of the University of Toronto (see Article 7).

Article 5: Executive Positions

UTERN Co-Chairs, with assistance as needed from the administrator, will apply for and maintain fall/winter work-study positions for the following roles. UTERN may apply and maintain additional summer work-study positions for the Co-Chairs, Financial and Projects Manager, general administrator, and/or any additional role to bridge the gap between April and September.

UTERN Executive

Co-Chairs (2)

Executive Secretary

Financial and Projects Manager

Marketing Director

UTSG Network Executive Liaison

UTSC Network Executive Liaison

UTM Network Executive Liaison

Total: 8 positions (7 elected, 1 hired)

Outgoing executive members will solicit and review applications for the new UTERN Executive. Selection of eligible candidates will be done by the outgoing UTERN Executive in consultation with the advisor(s). Students must have demonstrated interest and volunteer experience related to environmental sustainability. All selections shall be done through an open and transparent process, which includes posting all positions at least one month (30 days) in advance of any deadline on CLNx and social media. All candidates who apply and are University of Toronto students who qualify for the position shall be interviewed by the outgoing executive members to determine eligibility. Eligible candidates will then be forwarded for May elections to be held in-person at the Annual General Meeting. Given the breadth and depth of financial knowledge required by the Financial and Projects Manager, the Financial and Projects Manager position shall not be included in the elections.

Supervision of work-study positions will be done by the Co-Chairs, with assistance as needed from the administrator.

Article 6: Organization and Administration

- 1) UTERN will operate under Regenesis Toronto as an independent body governed by students, with Regenesis providing all necessary administrative services to support UTERN's mission.
- 2) All UTERN funds will be maintained in a separate Alterna bank account to ensure that all UTERN funds are spent on the mission of UTERN, as outlined in these terms of reference.
- 3) Regenesis is at no point eligible to request salaries from UTERN and/or UTERN's funds for Regenesis' support of UTERN.
 - a) In such a case, UTERN maintains the authority to sever all ties with Regenesis, thereby becoming an entirely sovereign levy organization.
- 4) The expectation is that Regenesis will:
 - a) Provide one person that will act as the main contact and administrative support person for UTERN; Bookkeeping, record keeping and financial dispensation services, web/email hosting and software; Process project funding applications according to the policies of UTERN;
 - b) Ensure UTERN maintain all records and policies in order to pass an annual audit that includes the UTERN levy funds received;
 - c) Work alongside the auditor to prepare an audit that includes the UTERN levy funds received;
 - d) Ensure all payments for funded projects and expenses are issued within seven (7) days of receipts being received, either automatically according to the policies, or approved by the Executive at a meeting (with an understanding for compassionate exceptions to this rule, such as illness or a death in the family);
 - e) Have the administrative staff person attend all UTERN meetings;
 - f) Aide with supervision of UTERN work-study positions, and aide with work-study applications;
 - g) Assist the UTERN Executive, as needed, to ensure the Executive remains well-functioning and has all work-study positions filled each year;
 - h) Provide support to the UTERN Executive to ensure it remains democratic and student-run;
 - i) Ensure UTERN is governed in accordance with these Terms of Reference and act as an agent of the organization in the unusual event of a governance failure (e.g. failure to hold elections) to bring UTERN back into compliance with all University of Toronto regulations and any obligations of Memorandums of Understandings with the respective UofT students unions (UTSU, UTGSU, UTMSU, SCSU).
 - j) In addition, Regenesis shall provide other support to the Executive as needed, to support activities, including any annual events and/or eco-weeks.
- 5) The expectation is that UTERN will provide:
 - a) Funding to cover all costs associated with UTERN work-study positions, administrative support costs, including audit fee, banking fees, and bookkeeping related costs (e.g. software and payroll service fees).
- 6) In the event that any of the administrative duties are not fulfilled, or if any disputes arise, UTERN Executive shall raise their concerns with the advisor(s) of UTERN and aim to seek an amicable solution. Should the concerns not be addressed in a timely and satisfactory manner, any concerned UTERN Executives can approach the University of Toronto, Office of VP Students, and the respective student

unions to help address the matter through meditation. UTERN Board reserves the right to decide to re-establishing UTERN as an entirely separate entity at any time, upon which said request shall be submitted to the Office of VP Students. Regensis Toronto also reserves the right to exit this agreement, upon which it provides assistance to ensure a proper transition to whatever UTERN decides to become post-agreement

Article 7: Advisors

- 1) Advisors are staff, faculty or alumni at the University of Toronto appointed by the Executive and are non-voting members with speaking rights.
- 2) UTERN must maintain at least two (2) advisors at all times. While it is up to the UTERN Executive to determine their chosen advisor(s), it is recommended that one or more individuals in the following roles should be approached to be advisors if they aren't currently an advisor: [A] School of the Environment's Undergraduate Student Advisor; [B] Project Manager, Committee on the Environment, Climate Change, and Sustainability ; [C] A staff member of the Sustainability Office at the University of Toronto, UTM or UTSC. Additionally, retired professors, staff, post-docs, PhD students or alumni that are connected to the environmental sector are additional persons that can be considered for an advisor role.
- 3) The primary function of an Advisor is to provide guidance to the students on the Executive. This may include contributing meaningfully to discussion about proposals, administrative decisions, and finances. Advisors must attend UTERN events run by the Network Executive Liaisons.

Article 8: Meetings

- 1) Meetings shall be held regularly to ensure funding is quickly approved and allocated. The only exception to this rule shall be if no funding applications that are to be brought forward to UTERN are submitted that month and there are no other UTERN matters to be heard.
- 2) The minimum quorum shall be 2/3rd of the Executive. Additionally, no meeting will be considered valid unless the administrative staff person (or a substitute), or at least one (1) advisor are present.
- 3) All meetings will be held virtually.

Article 9: Conflict of Interest

- 1) Any member with a conflict of interest shall declare the conflict, and it shall be recorded in the meeting minutes, and they shall abstain from voting. A conflict of interest includes [1] applying and receiving funding for an organization that you, a family member, or current (or past) romantic/sexual partner is an executive member of; [2] Any funding application where you, a family member, or a current (or past) romantic/sexual partner, may benefit financially from (e.g. being hired to cater an event, hiring for a work-study position).
- 2) Anyone caught not declaring a conflict of interest shall immediately have the funding revoked, and if already issued, the Executive may require any funding received to be paid back. Further, they shall resign their status as a representative of their environmental student organization. The environmental student organization may appoint a replacement representative.

Article 10: Amendments

Any changes to this Terms of Reference shall require the consensus and approval of the UTERN Board, including the sign-off in writing of a majority of advisors.

Article 11: Approach to Decision Making

- 1) The rules contained in the current edition of The Guide to Consensus Building (by Lawrence Susskind, Sarah McKernan, and Jennifer Thomas Larmer) shall govern the University of Toronto's Student Environmental Resource Network
- 2) Decisions will generally be made under a Consensus Decision Making Model.

Article 12: Unified Sustainability Fund

1) The penultimate goal of UTERN should be the establishment of a unified sustainability fund on campus, with the University of Toronto providing matching or greater funding than that provided by the UTERN levies themselves. Should the University of Toronto be open to future discussions on establishing a unified fund, the UTERN executive and Regenesys shall negotiate with the University of Toronto to enter into an agreement upon which the following points are essential for any UTERN fund merger to occur:

- [1] Any funding for student environmental projects is at least doubled with the support of non-levy funds from the University of Toronto;
- [2] That students should have the majority vote on any funding being allocated to student projects;
- [3] That none of the current UTERN levies will fund any non-student involved environmental projects (e.g. UofT building improvements, sustainability research lead by the UofT professor, etc.);
- [4] That the funding policy of any future fund will continue to be made accessible to non-UofT community environmental groups and movements, including climate justice and divestment, that involve UofT students.

Appendix A

Please refer to the document, *UTERN Historical Context and Restructuring*, for background.

Appendix B

Please refer to the document, *List of currently eligible groups*.