



Institute of Medical Science
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021 - 2026

Community, Connections and Impact



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- Cate Creede and Danny Nashman, The Potential Group
- Dr. Lucy Osborne and Ms. Kamila Lear, Co-chairs, Strategic Planning Committee
- IMS students, faculty, staff and alumni
- Inside front cover illustration by Alexander Young, Graduate, MSc Biomedical Communications
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“The IMS is likely one of the strongest graduate training programs of its kind in the world ...”

IMS EXTERNAL REVIEW 2018

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

DEAR IMS COMMUNITY

It is my great honour and pleasure to introduce the Institute of Medical Science (IMS), University of Toronto Strategic Plan 2021 - 2026 – Community, Connections and Impact.

In 2018, IMS celebrated our first 50 years of great history and success, and a year-round celebration was highlighted by an International Conference on Graduate Education in Medical Science: Challenges and Opportunities. The IMS programs were also subject to a five-year review and one of the external reviewers commented, “In terms of scope, the IMS is likely one of the strongest graduate training programs of its kind in the world, taking advantage of the excellence of the researchers and biomedical research facilities in Toronto”.

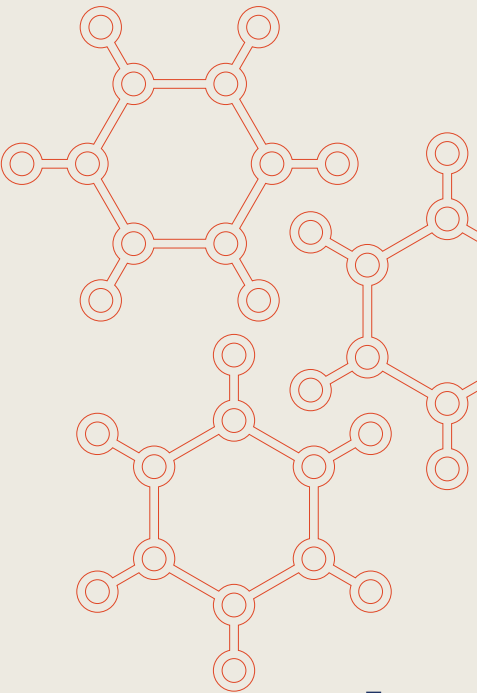
Since 2019, we have worked tirelessly to move toward implementation of the recommendations from the external review. IMS faculty members have been appointed as Chairs of IMS standing committees or Directors of new initiatives. Students have taken a lead in organizing academic activities, including the Summer Undergraduate Research Program Research Day, New Student Orientation, and the Ori Rotstein Lecture in Translational Research panel discussion. We have started to improve our curriculum, notably by re-visiting the content of the MSC1010Y/1011Y seminar core course and developing a new suite of statistical courses. Our staff members and students have taken a lead on developing a new IMS website, which launched at the beginning of this year. We also initiated projects in support of international development and professional career training and alumni engagement. Furthermore, now more than ever, the IMS is committed to ensuring that the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are integrated at every level of graduate education, and we are taking proactive steps to support inclusive excellence in our department. One of the most important activities, of course, was to develop a new Strategic Plan to help steer the IMS toward its goals.

Co-chaired by Dr. Lucy Osborne (Graduate Coordinator at IMS) and Ms. Kamila Lear (Business Officer at IMS), our Strategic Planning Committee worked alongside strategic planning company, The Potential Group, to consult broadly with IMS students, faculty, staff and alumni, decanal leaders in Temerty Faculty of Medicine, clinical chairs and other stakeholders, and develop a new Strategic Plan. The new plan highlights our vision, mission and top three priorities: improving student-driven graduate training, connecting our IMS community of scholars, and attracting and engaging diverse and talented students and faculty.

I encourage all of our faculty, students, staff and alumni to read this document. Together, we will strive to integrate our values (Discovery, Connections, Growth, Diversity, and Excellence) in all that we do. With this Strategic Plan as a guideline, IMS will be able to work together to become an even more successful community that inspires and prepares future leaders in translational medical science.



MINGYAO LIU, MD, MSC
Director, Institute of Medical Science
Professor of Surgery,
Medicine and Physiology





INTRODUCTION

IN 2019, THE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCE AT THE

University of Toronto embarked on a robust strategic planning effort to bring faculty, staff and students together to plan the future. Over the course of eight months, we met with existing committees and working groups, student groups and leadership to uncover some of the core strategic questions for the Institute and its role within the Temerty Faculty of Medicine. This process built off of recent recommendations from an External Review conducted in 2018 and was designed to align with the core priorities of the newly minted Temerty Faculty of Medicine Academic Plan.

It is clear that IMS, as a unique graduate unit that provides a welcoming home for clinician scientists, is highly valued for its diversity of research foci, faculty and students. Our student population is highly engaged with deep involvement in the IMS Student Association (IMSSA), IMS Magazine, Raw Talk podcasts and Peer-to-Peer Mentorship program. Students and faculty are attracted to IMS for the flexibility it offers for graduate education in medical sciences and the opportunity to engage deeply in translational research.

At the same time, it is clear that the student experience at IMS is highly variable, and dependent on sites, supervisors and the extent to which faculty engage with the IMS community. Students today want to be prepared for varied careers in and outside of academia. They are thirsty for deeper connections with faculty within and across fields, and curriculum that reflects the future of translational medical science.

As we look ahead toward 2026, we are committed to building strategic and cohesive community across IMS, developing a more robust orientation and onboarding process for students and faculty, supporting connected experiences at hospital sites and promoting connections with collaborative specializations in order to provide students with opportunities to connect around areas of interest. We will hone our curriculum and support improved navigation and preparation tools to better position our students for success in their future careers and endeavours. We will be even more focused about how we attract and engage students and faculty from across Canada and around the world to create generative academic connections and ensure that diverse voices are amplified in our community.

We are proud to launch our 2021 - 2026 Strategic Plan. It will build on our 50 years legacy of leadership in the training of medical scientists and modernize our approach to student and faculty engagement, education and mentoring. Together we will grow our profile as the graduate unit of choice for Master's and PhD students who seek mentoring from world leading clinician and basic scientists, and who wish to grow skills and connections for diverse careers in the medical sciences, and to be part of a rich community of scholars creating impact from cell to society.



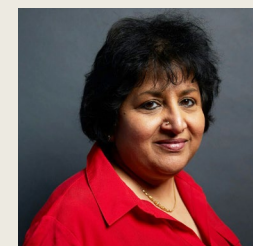
LUCY R. OSBORNE, PHD

Professor, Medicine and
Molecular Genetics

Canada Research Chair in the Genetics
of Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Graduate Coordinator, IMS

“As Graduate Coordinators and co-leads of implementing Strategic Priorities, we aim to provide leadership in graduate education, upholding the 50-year IMS legacy of training, yet modernizing our approach to student and faculty engagement, education, and mentoring. As envisioned by our faculty and students, we will encourage personal and professional growth and provide opportunities to meet individual needs, while helping develop leadership skills. We hope to strengthen relationships within our community by engaging students, faculty, and staff to help achieve our goals, and promote our core values of Discovery, Connections, Growth, Diversity, and Excellence.”

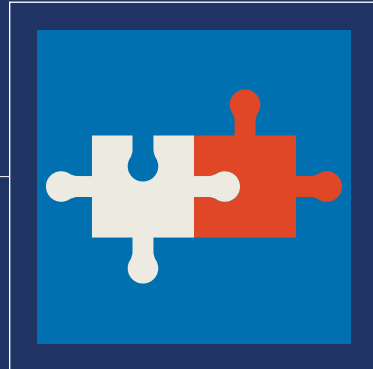


VASUNDARA VENKATESWARAN, PHD

Professor, Department of Surgery

Graduate Coordinator, IMS

Mission • Vision • Values



Our Mission

We connect graduate students in the medical sciences to leading health researchers and an education experience that is inclusive and equips them to be at the forefront of discovery science that has a direct impact on improving human health.



Our Vision

To inspire and prepare future leaders in translational medical science.



Our Values

Discovery, Connections, Growth, Diversity and Excellence.

2021 - 2026

Strategic Priorities



STRATEGIC PRIORITY No.1

Enhance Student Experience



“IMS will create a culture for personal and professional growth to support student community and success. Students will have multiple opportunities to develop curriculum and learning modules, ensuring that programming meets individual needs, while developing leadership skills and enabling students to build collaborative networks. IMS will identify different student pathways for learning and potential future careers and will ensure students are individually supported with the skills and strengths they need. IMS will elevate the value of “non-academic” learning, integrating professional skills into our curriculum where appropriate and connecting students to other resources. Students and faculty will contribute to, and benefit from, a “chain of mentorship” that supports vibrant career pathways. We will draw our alumni network into student life in multiple ways, as mentors, role models and to provide advice about how to shape support for student pathways.”

 VISION FOR THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE GENERATED BY STUDENTS AND FACULTY AT OUR “STRATEGY HIVES”

STRATEGIC PRIORITY No.2

Connected Communities



“The student experience will begin with a robust onboarding process that will include a general orientation to IMS on the UofT campus, and an in-depth orientation at each research site. Faculty and students at each site will meet regularly to help foster connections and discuss how to succeed within IMS and how best to leverage the IMS experience to foster a career. Each site will host yearly IMS sponsored sessions / symposia to bring the community of faculty and students together to network and advance their work.

Students and faculty connected to IMS will have opportunities to be part of thematic groups that bring together students and faculty around focused research topics and enable students and faculty to share the breadth of questions being explored from ‘bench to society,’ multiple aspects of the disease / area, critical questions, and barriers to progress in the field.”

 VISION FOR COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION GENERATED BY STUDENTS AND FACULTY AT OUR “STRATEGY HIVES”

Goal 

Upon graduation, all IMS students will feel equipped as excellent scientists and confident navigators of their future.

Objectives 

- Optimize student connection with IMS across the continuum of their learning journey
- Grow focus on meaningful mentorship
- Continue to modernize the IMS curriculum and infuse student-led academic activities with the principles of diversity and inclusion

Goal 

Students and faculty at IMS will feel connected as communities of scholars at their site and across their areas of study in a way that enriches their experience and advances science and impact.

Objectives 


- Bring the best of site-based experiences to all our graduate students and faculty
- Initiate IMS site-based hubs
- Develop IMS branded site-based academic activities (such as journal clubs, research seminar series and symposia)
- Promote connections with Collaborative Specializations to provide students with opportunities to connect around areas of interest

STRATEGIC PRIORITY No.3

Attract and Engage



“From the first moment of exploration, students will be able to connect with IMS using easily navigable tools to explore options and possible avenues for their graduate studies. Students and faculty will be attracted to IMS because of the rich environment and connections we create. Faculty will engage meaningfully and will be recognized and rewarded for the roles they play for students and for IMS. We will be well known as a prominent leader in graduate medical research education at the University of Toronto, across Canada and globally.”

 VISION FOR IMS’S PROFILE GENERATED BY STUDENTS AND FACULTY AT OUR “STRATEGY HIVES”

Goal

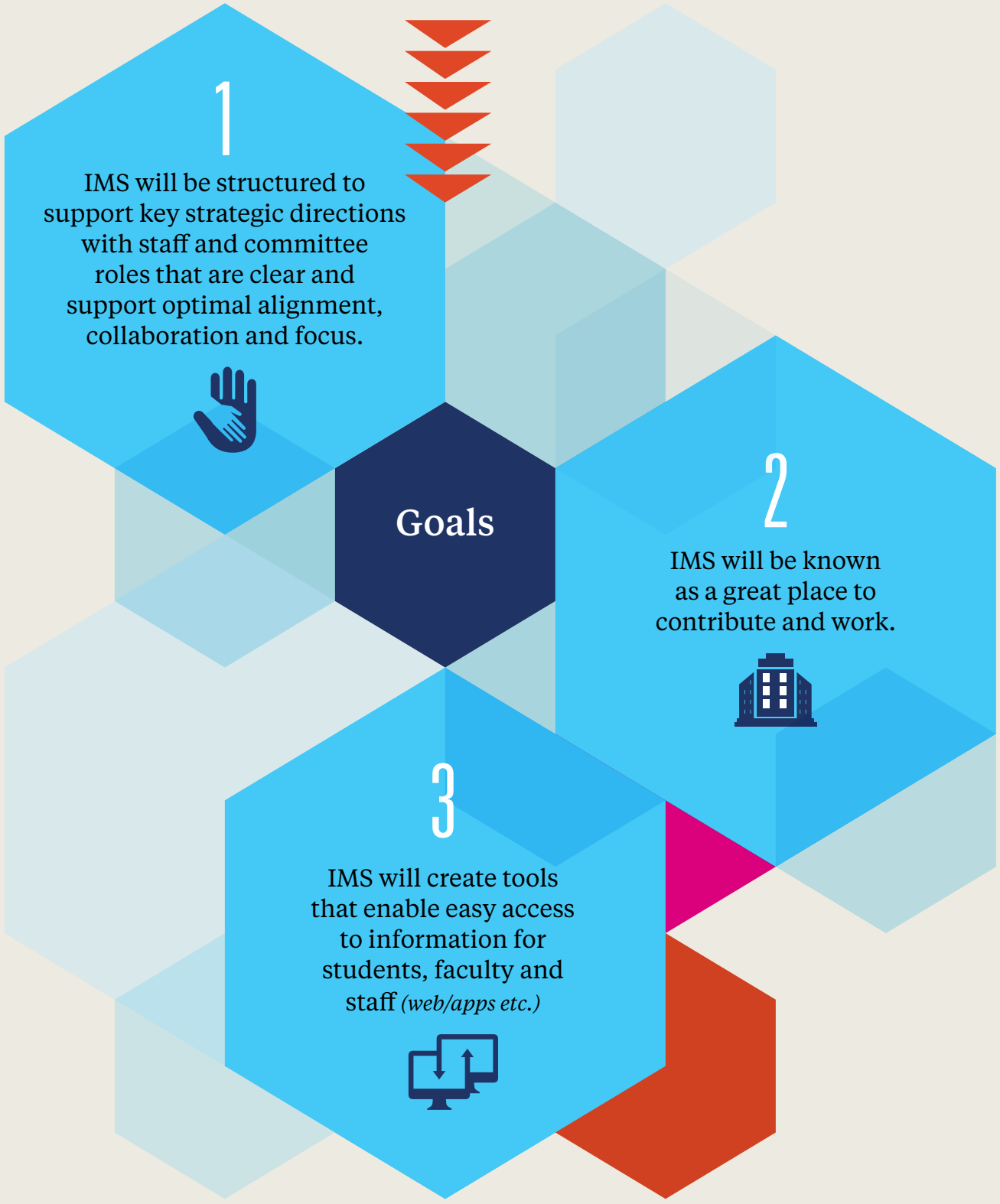
IMS will be a destination of choice for global leaders in medical research, and for outstanding graduate students from across Canada and around the world who seek to work with them. IMS will also create space for diverse voices and talent and aim for inclusive excellence so that every member of the community will flourish.

Objectives

- Formalize faculty value proposition and requirements, and IMS engagement opportunities as part of the expectations for IMS membership
- Support forums for faculty mentorship and advocacy
- Reimagine online presence for IMS
- Actively attract exceptional students locally, nationally and internationally, with an emphasis on those from equity-deserving groups
- Create an environment that welcomes and promotes equity, diversity and inclusion

Key Enablers

Infrastructure, Policies and Technology that Support Strategic Directions and Sustainability



Expected Five Year Outcomes

Big Dot Goals

- Our students will report feeling equipped as excellent scientists, and as confident navigators of their future
- Everyone at IMS will have meaningful connections at their site and across their areas of study in a way that enriches their experience and advances science and impact
- We will attract exceptional graduate students from Canada and internationally
- IMS will be an engaging graduate unit for both clinical and non-clinical faculty
- IMS will be known as a great place to contribute and work



Other Expected Outcomes



- Outstanding students will be actively encouraged to choose IMS for their studies
- Our students will have easy access to all the information they need to match with a supervisor that aligns with their field of interest
- All our students will be satisfied with the support, learning and mentoring they receive from their supervisor, their site, other students and alumni. They will know how to engage with IMS and get their needs met
- Our curriculum will be current and reflective of developments in the medical sciences, diversity and inclusion, and students will feel prepared and supported to get learning in emerging areas of interest
- Diverse faculty with IMS membership will feel valued for and find value in their contributions to students and IMS
- The brand of IMS will be well known at the University of Toronto and across Canada and the globe
- All our students and faculty will highly recommend IMS to their peers and colleagues





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