



# Education Portfolio Annual Report 2022-2023





# MESSAGE FROM OUR VICE PRESIDENT:



BEVERLY BULMER,  
VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION

## Reimagining teaching and learning.

At Unity Health Toronto our ultimate goal is to create the best care experiences together. To achieve this goal we need learning environments where learners, staff, physicians and patients feel valued and empowered to challenge the status quo and share their knowledge and perspectives.

Through evidence based, collaborative education that is responsive to system needs, we are preparing our staff and physicians to not only perform as they were taught, but to take action and innovate when faced with new challenges. We are educating our current and future healthcare professionals to interact with new technologies and ever changing environments while maintaining compassionate and reflexive human connections. Shifting the way we teach and learn about equity, ways of knowing and evidence helps ensure our staff and physicians are able to provide personalized care experiences that consider both best practices in health care and the social location of the patient and family directly in front of them.

Creating safer, inclusive learning environments where learners are able to focus on their training, integrate their knowledge, fail fast and move forward, ensures they have the best experience at Unity Health. We do this in part by engaging our patients in our education programs and teaching them how to share their stories and experiences in a way that will allow our staff and students to learn with a holistic lens. We also do this by developing our staff and physicians as teachers who are nimble and able to integrate current social, political, and scientific evidence into their teaching. Our world has shifted around us and we endeavour to continuously anticipate and create the environment that readies us for the future.

# CREATING THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE THROUGH EDUCATION

To cultivate a health care system that is both compassionate and effective, we need to transform our teaching and learning culture. Fostering compassion requires us to provide just and brave learning environments. Instilling effective practices requires us to provide high-quality and collaborative education.

Our 2019-2024 Education Strategic Plan is underpinned by two strategic pillars, and includes six strategic goals as we strive to reimagine teaching and learning across Unity Health Toronto.

## Just & Brave Learning Environment

Our teaching and learning environments encourage the acknowledgement, interrogation, and dismantling of structural/system inequities, to ultimately transform education and the care we provide.

### Strategic Goals:

We will advocate for the dismantling of structural/systemic inequities.

We will create teaching and learning environments that are brave and accessible.

We will create teaching and learning environments that value every member of the team, including students, patients and families.

## High-Quality & Collaborative Education

Our teaching and learning environments ensure that both our organizational systems and community members are supported through evidence-informed, responsive and sustainable practices.

### Strategic Goals:

We will discover and deliver collaborative, innovative and evidence-informed education.

We will have sustainable education resources and practices.

We will deliver technology-enabled learning opportunities that are responsive to the needs of individuals, teams and systems.

## Highlights of our Strategy in Action, 2022-2023:

- Supporting our Learners' Experience
- Strengthening Health Literacy
- Engaging Patients in Education, and Embedding their Voices and Experiences
- Partnering with Office of Anti-Racism, Equity & Social Accountability (ARESA) on Foundational Education and Training
- Enhancing the Quality and Accessibility of Digital Education Assets
- Preserving Born-digital Records of Archival Value
- Utilizing Translational Simulation to Enhance Healthcare Delivery and Systems
- Bridging Education Research, Health Professions Teaching and Healthcare Practice



# Student Centre and Academic Affairs

## Supporting our Learners' Experience

Our **Student Centre and Academic Affairs** supports and enhances our learners' experiences across all Unity Health Toronto sites. The Student Centres are a welcoming environment that supports over 6,000 learners annually from all student types, including Health Disciplines, Nursing and Medicine. In addition to supporting clinical placements, the Student Centre teams support 4000+ hours of in-class curriculum.

**6141** Learners

**53** Disciplines

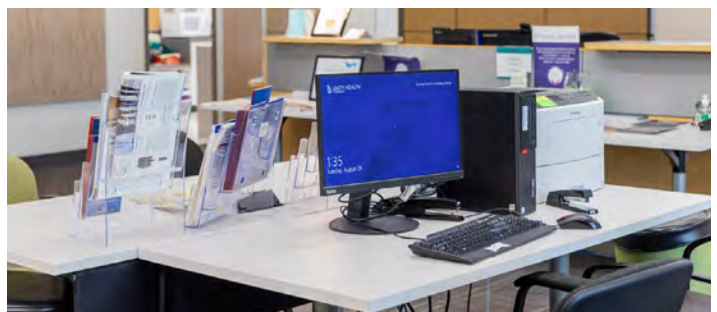
**88%** of Learners Recommend a Placement @ Unity

In collaboration with the Student Centre teams, the Student Experience Committee (SEC) supports our learners and teachers across Unity Health. Cultivating an excellent learner experience and supportive learning environments is the core mandate of the Centre and Committee. A key approach of the SEC's collaborative work is to be responsive to feedback from our learners and teachers. In 2022-2023, these important actions were undertaken:

- Developed and implemented a stay/exit interview process to hear from our learners about their experiences at Unity Health. This new process helps to understand why our learners would recommend a placement at Unity and opportunities for improvement.

- Implemented action plans to improve our learners' awareness of how to report mistreatment. This year's Learner Experience Survey data demonstrates a noteworthy improvement (+10%), with ~85% of our learners now reporting they are aware of the channels and resources to report mistreatment.
- Our preceptors play a critical role in our learners' success. In response to opportunities highlighted for further development, the SEC created new tools to support Unity Health's preceptor community that offer guidance in preventing and addressing challenging educational situations

The SEC and Student Centre teams look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to seek opportunities for timely feedback to enable them to better understand and support our learners and teachers across Unity Health.



# Patient & Family Education Program

## Strengthening Health Literacy across Unity Health

Our goal at Unity Health Toronto is to be a health literate organization—an organization that equitably enables patients and families to access, understand and use information to support them in taking care of their health. The **Patient & Family Education Program** supports this goal to create a health literate organization by helping patients feel welcomed, empowered, and included their care decisions.

**211** Patient Facing Materials Reviewed

**19,723** Online Health Library Sessions

**15,850** Online Health Library Unique Users

Making Unity Health a health literate organization involves removing barriers in our systems and practices. Last year, we reopened the Robert Howard and Brenda McDowell Patient Family Learning Centre in its new home in the Peter Gilgan Patient Care Tower at St. Michael's Hospital. The centre works with patients and families to help them find information, resources and community supports that can help them better understand their health.

In partnership with the Patient Experience Team, we completed a health literacy assessment at each of our

three sites and involved physicians, staff and patient and family partners. What we learned helped us to set improvement priorities, including the introduction of an Ask-Build-Check model that will improve communication with our patients and their families, and also inform the design of our new Electronic Patient Record at Unity Health.

BY CREATING SYSTEMS THAT ENABLE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH PATIENTS AND FAMILIES, WE ARE CONTRIBUTING TO BRAVER SPACES AND GREATER EQUITY FOR ALL.



# Collaborative Learning Program

Embedding Patient's Voices and Experiences



The **Collaborative Learning Program** at Unity Health supports learners, and staff, in the development of team competencies. Using the Interprofessional Collaboration Competency framework, participants learn with, from and about each other as they explore a topic area.

**567** Learners

**18** Health Disciplines

**8** Academic Institutions

Collaborative Learning activities (CLA) are interactive and interprofessional education sessions for entry-to-practice learners at Unity Health. Topics are variable and aligned with Unity Health's values (e.g. Human Dignity–Person Centred Language) and/or its clinical areas (e.g. stroke, wound care).

THEY LINK TO THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO'S STRATEGIC PLAN TO PROMOTE AND FOSTER INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION AND ENGAGE WITH PATIENTS FAMILY PARTNERS TO LEARN FROM THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES.

In 2023, we adapted a CLA for staff education focusing on empathy. Working in collaboration with a Patient Family Partner and a nurse educator, we created a new 60-minute session about empathy and de-escalation. During this session, participants were also introduced to Unity's new Code White policy.

# Centre for Faculty Development

## Engaging Patients in Health Professions Education

Founded in 2002 as a partnership between Unity Health Toronto and the University of Toronto's Temerty Faculty of Medicine, the **Centre for Faculty Development (CFD)** supports health professionals in their multiple education, leadership, and advocacy roles through programming that is responsive to emerging and evolving needs. The Centre values multiple forms of expertise and invites diverse perspectives, including partnering with patients in their roles in education.

**813** Unique Participants from  
22 Academic Institutions

**34** Healthcare Organizations

Patient and Family Partner (PFP) stories are a valuable educational tool in health professions education (HPE). In a grant-funded scholarly project, CFD researchers Drs. Latika Nirula and Qian Wu collaborated with Helen Sklarz (Unity Health PFP), Dr. Brett Diaz (postdoctoral fellow at CFD and University of Toronto) and Dr. Sacha Agrawal (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) explores what PFP storytellers take into consideration when writing and telling their healthcare stories for HPE.

This study is part of CFD's efforts to bring in PFPs as partners and educators into the space of faculty development. The field of faculty development, where educators learn to teach, has yet to recognize PFPs as faculty. Insights from the study revealed the complexity of PFP storytelling and how it can deliver "teachable moments." It is imperative that HPE recognizes PFPs as educators, and intentionally engages PFPs throughout the entire process of designing, implementing, and evaluating programs and supports.



# Partnering with Office of ARESA to Implement Education

## Foundational ARESA Education and Training

The Council on Anti-Racism, Equity and Social Accountability (CARESA) Education Working Group (co-chaired by Allison Needham, Director, Anti-Racism, Equity and Social Accountability, and Latika Nirula Director, Centre for Faculty Development) is a multi-disciplinary group whose purpose is to uphold Unity Health Toronto's vision for embedding anti-racism, equity, and social accountability (ARESA) into the culture of the organization through education and training.

In 2022-2023, members of the Education Portfolio, in partnership with the Office of ARESA and in collaboration with the members of the CARESA Education Working Group:

- Developed and disseminated key principles of anti-oppressive education at Unity Health. The document developed includes a description of the 7 guiding principles and reflexive questions for those developing or delivering educational resources, activities or offerings to work through before, during, and after educational initiative development.
- Customized for Unity Health, the Introduction to Anti-Black Racism eLearning module developed by Dr. Notisha Massaquoi and Women's College Hospital, and adopted by the Toronto Academic Health Science Network (TAHSN). The module is intended as a starting point on a learning journey and was launched in April 2024 for all Unity staff, physicians, learners and volunteers.

The Education Portfolio, Office of ARESA and the CARESA Education Working Group look forward to continuing to partner in the coming year, and to support the implementation of the Introduction to Anti-Black Racism module across Unity Health and to pilot the Let's Talk About Race virtual reality training.

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IT HAS BEEN GRATIFYING FOR US TO WORK WITH THIS ENGAGED SUBCOMMITTEE AROUND TAKING OUR COMMITMENTS TO ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY BEYOND AN IDEA OF SOMETHING WE SHOULD DO, TO NOW AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE FABRIC OF UNITY HEALTH TORONTO. WE HAVE DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF TOOLS, RESOURCES, AND TRAINING TO ENABLE FOLKS TO EXPLORE CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES MORE DEEPLY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, BEGIN THE WORK OF INTEGRATION INTO ACTION.

— ALLISON NEEDHAM & LATIKA NIRULA,  
CO-CHAIRS, CARESA EDUCATION WORKING  
GROUP



# Digital Education Program

Enhancing the Quality and Accessibility of Digital Education



Unity Health's **Digital Education Program** helps healthcare professionals design and produce high-quality educational content and resources to enhance knowledge, skills, and practice. Our resources accommodate different learning needs and preferences and cover a wide range of topics related to healthcare, including clinical practice, patient care, research, and leadership. Our Digital Education Specialists help design and deliver technology-enabled learning opportunities that are responsive to the needs of individuals, teams and systems.

Based on the results of the recent Digital Literacy assessment, we created a Digital Education Guide that establishes a standardized approach to digital education asset development and management. This guide provides our staff, educators and leaders with information in one place on how to effectively create digital education resources—from creating a plan to start a new project; to connecting with technical resources to help create a digital education resource; to storing and sharing the resource safely and effectively.

The Digital Education Guide, available on UnityNet, is an educator's one stop shop to find all the relevant information they need, and supports our strategic goal of sustainable education resources and practices. This guide helps increase digital literacy and build capacity across the organization, while also preparing us for success for major digital improvements, such as Unity Health's new Electronic Patient Record (EPR).

**544** eLearning Modules

**36** Virtual Education Events

**3810** Virtual Education Events' Participants

# Library Services and Archives Program

## Preserving Born-digital Records of Archival Value

Over the last year, the **Library Services and Archives Programs** experienced significant preliminary changes to service delivery and quality improvement. Each fulfilled distinct strategic objectives to strengthen their role and contributions to the health network, and the strategic goal of supporting sustainable education resources and practices.

Library Services provides access to workshops, databases, clinical decision tools, e-journals and e-books. We support education, research, and evidence-based decision-making in patient care for all physicians, staff, and learners at Unity Health. This year, the Library Services team broke-ground reimagining its program and service model. For more service accomplishments from Library Services, visit the **“2022 Year In Review” infographic**

The Archives program laid the foundation of a new initiative establishing its Digital Archive to preserve the memory of Unity Health by curating “born-digital” records of archival value. To ensure findability, preservation and access, these born-digital records of archival value (e.g. annual reports, milestone celebrations, strategic plans, etc.) must be captured, organized, and described according to archival best practice and industry standards. Roxanne Wildenstein was hired as the Digital Preservation Archivist to lead this work fulfilling the year-1 strategic objective to establish the foundation of a digital archive, which involved policy creation, stakeholder engagement and defining the scope and framework of a digital archive program.

**160+** Literature Searches

**60+** Workshops

**3500+** Workshop Participants



# Simulation Program

## Translational Simulation to Enhance Healthcare Delivery and Systems

The **Simulation Program's** mission is to improve patient safety and quality of care and we achieve this by offering excellent simulation education, quality improvement and research opportunities. Unity Health's state-of-the-art Simulation Program allows student and staff learners to practice skills using high-fidelity human patient simulators, virtual reality and task trainers.

**2487** Simulation Hours

**4293** Learners

An area of strategic focus in 2022-23 is our translational simulation (TS) activities. This type of simulation aims to improve the healthcare system and patient outcomes through its innovative methodology. Returns on investment of TS include cost and time savings, enhanced decision-making, improved patient safety/outcomes and workplace culture.

This past year, the Simulation Program completed nine TS projects. The diverse projects included:

- clinical and incident management team tabletop simulations focused on cybersecurity and organizational resiliency, which informed the basis of the 2023-24 Emergency Preparedness and IT departments' action plans
- supporting the implementation of the new harmonized Code Silver policy at Providence leading to identification of priority capital projects

- working with St. Michael's Stroke team to improve processes and pathways. This last multi-pronged project has resulted in a 50% improvement in time from door to CT, and a 34% improvement in time from door to arterial puncture.

This TS work is in addition to the thousands of simulation participants, 18 research publications and the 14 University of Toronto Undergraduate and Post Graduate Medical training programs we ran to support healthcare education.

[Visit the Simulation Annual Report 2022-23](#)



# Applied Education Research Operatives

## Bridging Education Research, Health Professions Teaching and Healthcare Practice

The **Applied Education Research Operatives** (AERO) bridges education research, health professions teaching, and healthcare practice to advance high-quality, compassionate care experiences. AERO connects healthcare educators with AERO scientists and investigators, supporting them to design studies that test new and better methods of teaching, learning, and assessment in clinical practice. In 2022-23 our work included:

- **Community Forum for Education and Evaluation Scholars (CoFEES):** AERO leads monthly Safe Pitch Series for scholars to share early-stage projects to solicit feedback from their colleagues. CoFEES discussion themes have been purposefully diverse, creating scholarly exchanges about research methodologies, novel educational curricula and health education policies. CoFEES has brought together ~200 scholars over seven virtual sessions.
- **Mentorship in Academic Surgery:** Partnering with Dr. Marisa Louridas, AERO addressed a gap in mentorship at Unity Health Toronto's Department of Surgery. We explored and profiled how mentors and mentees initiate, maintain, and grow their relationships toward mutual investment, learning, and success (more here). Our team is now applying our learning to develop and evaluate new surgeon-to-surgeon coaching programs aimed at protecting junior surgeons against burnout and fostering their overall wellness.
- **Digital Literacy at Unity Health:** In support of the Technology-Enabled Education Committee (TEEC), AERO analyzed over 1900 Digital Literacy Assessment

(DLA) surveys from staff and volunteers at Unity Health Toronto. The DLA survey examined how respondents access digital tools/resources, how they seek and receive communications and information at work, as well as training and learning opportunities.

- **Preparing Physicians for their Future:** In response to a clinical need for frontline trainees to be better prepared to perform invasive procedures on patients, AERO is leading a nationally-funded project: Prepared to Learn: Training Tomorrow's Physicians Today. Using simulation technologies, the team has designed novel assessments of how well simulation prepares trainees for their future learning. The study aims to systematically develop trainees into procedural experts who can adaptively provide care no matter the changes and stresses impacting future healthcare systems.

~90

Peer-reviewed  
journal publications

13

Affiliated  
Investigators/Scientists





# LOOKING FORWARD

## A closing message from Beverly Bulmer, Vice President, Education

As I reflect on the year past, I must start with a heartfelt THANK YOU! To all of our teachers and learners who have continued to show resilience, strength, and commitment to our important education mandate at Unity Health. As we look to the future, our priorities will continue to strengthen our partnerships within and outside of our walls.

Aligning with our Office of ARESA, we will endeavor to provide our teachers and learners a safer space to embed principles of anti-racism, equity, and social accountability into their approaches and practice challenging conversations through the use of simulation and faculty development. We look forward to launching a new learning management system that will be responsive to our staff, physicians, and learners' interests and needs by curating personalized learning opportunities to provide the best care experiences and contribute to their own growth and development. We will prepare our staff, physicians, learners and patients for the seamless transition to a new Electronic Patient Record by ensuring high standards of health literacy, digital literacy and just in time training are incorporated in the roll out.

We look forward to embarking on the planning for an education strategy that will bridge our current vision through 2024/25 and engage with our internal and external partners to develop a new education strategy to begin in 2025. We will strive for it to be even further integrated, inspired, and inclusive so we can continue to equip our staff, physicians and learners with the skills and supports they need to cultivate equitable care experiences for the communities we serve.