

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

UTS SEEKS NEW HOME

Forced to move, but not to change

U of T-based school must leave the campus within the next decade

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

After more than 100 years of operating out of a building belonging to the University of Toronto, the affiliated University of Toronto Schools has been asked to vacate.

But students and UTS officials are confident the relocation won't affect the school's respected reputation as a private school that caters to high achievers.

"It was bound to happen," says Richard Liu, 18, who graduated from UTS in June. "It's very valuable space — and we need to get a better building."

"But in the end, change is not necessarily a bad thing. Right now, our building is pretty crummy. Space is often overbooked. We have to share a lot of things with the university."

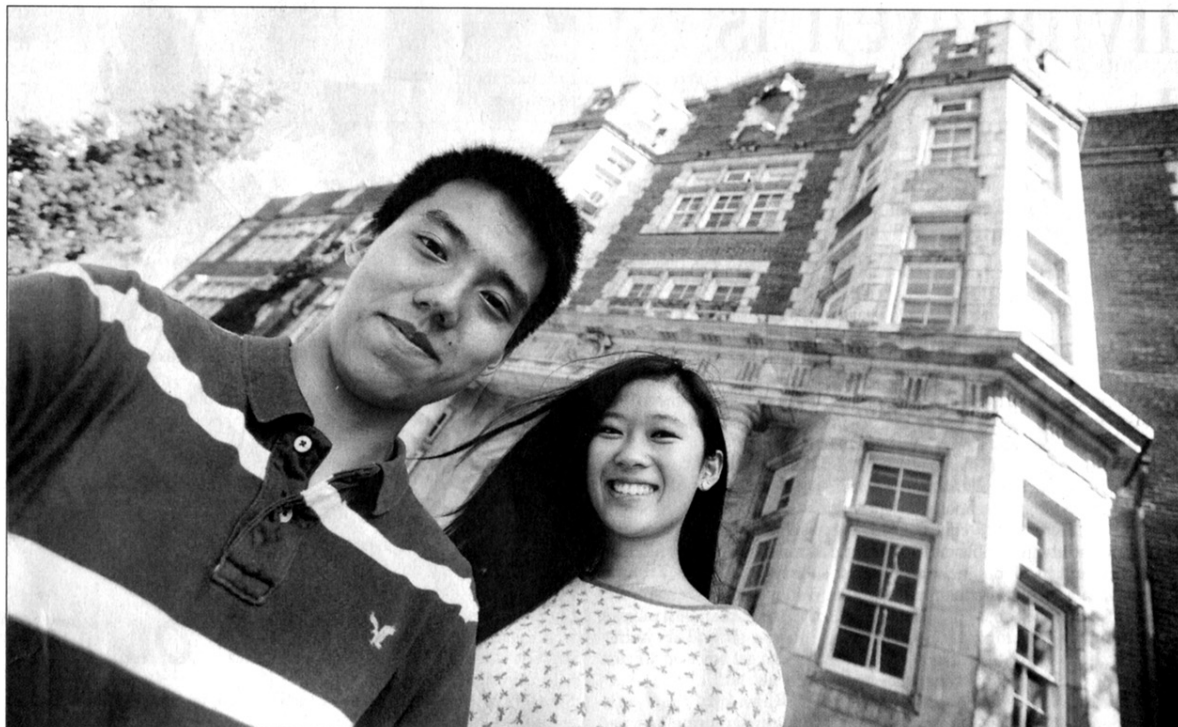
UTS was told earlier this year that its \$48-million proposal to refurbish the building at 371 Bloor St. W., which it shares with the U of T's sociology faculty, had been rejected. It has 10 years to relocate.

Principal Rosemary Evans says the school has been preparing for the possibility for several years, and has plenty of time to find a new home. A new facility, she suggests, will only solidify its future.

UTS provides accelerated courses and a specialized curriculum focussed on liberal arts and sciences. It describes itself as an environment that encourages creative interests, physical activity and a sense of social responsibility. Alumni include 22 Rhodes Scholars and two Nobel Laureates.

Both Liu and Rachel Park, 18 and also a recent graduate, are typical UTS students. Both are now enrolled at Harvard — Liu is studying chemistry, with a minor in music or the classics, while Park's interests are in law, international politics and social sciences.

What impresses, however, is the



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Recent UTS grads Richard Liu and Rachel Park say the school challenges students academically, but also encourages extra-curricular interests.

list of extra-curricular achievements both students earned in addition to grades good enough to get them into the Ivy League school.

Park served as secretary-general for Southern Ontario's model United Nations assembly, the largest in North America and run entirely by secondary school students.

She also volunteered with Because I Am a Girl, going from school to school to talk about human rights for girls and women around the world. Because of that work, Park attended a gathering earlier this year of the UN commission on the status of women in New York, one of only two Canadian delegates.

"(UTS) allowed me a week off and helped me arrange things so I could go to New York," says Park. "The

school is very understanding when you want to pursue interests or passions outside of school."

Liu served as co-captain of the student council. He chaired council meetings, worked with school administrators to find better ways of working together, addressed meetings of the parents' association and kept the board of directors up to speed about student issues.

"UTS has lots of student government," he says. "We're one of the only schools that has student constitution. All the clubs are run by students and all the initiatives are from students. The teachers are there for support."

The admissions process for UTS starts with the Secondary School Admissions Test. Scores alone, not

ability to pay, determine which applicants move to the interview stage, which includes an additional test in math and English.

During her interview in Grade 7, Park says the questions focussed on her passions, not academics.

"What's different about my school is, yes, you have to pass an academic test. Academics are rigorous but the environment is: are you able to balance your academic studies, your passion and your extra curricular activities?"

Sujit Choudhry, who graduated from UTS in 1988, refers to his beloved school as a "meritocracy."

"What gets you in is how smart you are. It's not about who you know but about who you are," says Choudhry, a University of Toronto

professor and an associate dean.

Tuition fees are substantial, almost \$20,000, but Choudhry points out the school provides annual bursaries of almost \$1 million. This year, 20 per cent of its students will receive an average of \$7,200 each.

Choudhry, a Rhodes scholar, says post-secondary studies took him to some of the best universities in the world, including Harvard and Oxford. But they didn't come close to the intellectually exciting experience at UTS.

"I love the school. I tell you it changed my life," says Choudhry. "I'd never been in a school before where everyone was that intelligent. It taught me that it was okay to be smart, okay to be intellectual, and that excellence was important."