

UTS Building – Questions and Answers

1) I have heard rumours that UTS is closing. Is this true? Is U of T shutting us down?

Absolutely not. What you may have heard is that UTS has to vacate its current location at 371 Bloor Street West by 2021. We received formal notification, from the University of Toronto stating that they are not prepared to allow us to proceed with implementing the comprehensive Site Redevelopment Proposal we presented to the University last December.

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We are confident that we'll provide the right home for UTS in the future.

2) What was contained in the UTS Building Proposal?

Our proposal to the University consolidated the School in renovated and new space on the northeast corner of the block that integrated the entire city block that would have met the spaces needs of both UTS and UofT. For more details about the Building Redevelopment Proposal, please go to the UTS website.

3) Why is U of T asking UTS to leave 371 Bloor Street West?

After reviewing our proposal, the University informed us that they require the entire UTS property to meet their own future academic space needs. So, regrettably, we cannot proceed to renovate and build at 371 Bloor Street West as we had hoped and must now vacate our home of over 100 years on or before 2021.

4) Did U of T's decision come as a surprise?

While we are disappointed that UTS is not able to make a new permanent home at 371 Bloor St. West, we knew that this was a possible scenario.

While staying at 371 Bloor was our first choice, the Board, which already had a number of alternate space solutions under consideration will now focus its attention on finding an appropriate alternate site for UTS, with the University's support.

As part of the UTS Strategic Plan "Building the Future", we had already been planning for a future facility with the kind of physical space and facilities that will fully support and help deliver all our learning programs and provide a state of the art learning environment for our students.

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5) How is the UTS community taking the news?

While we are all disappointed that the University is not willing to let us remain at 371 Bloor West, at the same time the prospect of new space and a new permanent home for UTS is very exciting in what it can and will mean for the school and its students.

We see this as a really exciting opportunity to let UTS find and then build a new, permanent home, with the kind of physical space and facilities that can fully support all our learning programs and provide a state of the art learning environment for our students.

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6) So what happens next?

Currently, the Board and the UTS Building Committee is working on a plan of action which includes a comprehensive review of issues, opportunities and options to find a new home for UTS. The previous work done on the UTS Proposal submitted to the University gives us a good head start on this. Our first task will be discussions with the University to assure terms for relocation that maximize our options and minimize disruption and uncertainty. Our focus is a permanent home, with the physical space and facilities to fully support all our learning programs and provide a state of the art learning environment for our students.

We have until 2021 to find and then build a new permanent UTS. But even with 10 years notice, we know we have to move quickly. UTS is an independent entity that is separate from U of T. We are financially stable, have great leadership and a focused strategic direction. We are now focusing our efforts on planning and building a facility that supports our future needs. We are confident that we'll provide the right home for UTS in the future.

7) Has the University of Toronto offered to help UTS?

Yes. UTS and The University of Toronto have had a long, close history and a very strong professional working relationship. They have said that they are willing to help UTS in the building search process and help with the acquisition including financial support.

8) How will UTS pay for the new facility?

A number of financing options are already under consideration. UTS is confident that with the University's assistance, we can secure the necessary funding for a new facility, and look forward to the support of UTS friends in future building and bursary campaigns.

9) Won't a new building cost more than renovating the current school?

Our intent is build a new building project at similar or lower costs to renovating 371 Bloor Street West. The 371 Bloor Site Redevelopment Proposal included a number of costs that will not be incurred in a new location. These include: costs related to required upgrades to electrical and heating systems, which will likely be lower in a new facility or renovation of an existing building with better mechanical systems; the need to pay for interim "swing space" to accommodate the school during renovations; and additional costs to accommodate University facility uses on our site.

10) Has the University treated UTS fairly?

We assume good will and fair treatment will be the case throughout these discussions and that the University is sincere when it says that it will help UTS accomplish its relocation successfully.

UTS and The University of Toronto have had a long, close history and a very strong professional working relationship. Being able to continue this relationship is important to us as we continue our moving negotiations with U of T. The University has said it will assist UTS in the site search process and help with the acquisition, including providing financial and other support. We intend to and need to work cooperatively with the University, on every aspect of our relocation.

11) What are you asking UTS alumni, staff and students to do about the U of T's decision?

We are asking them to continue to support the Board and UTS Building Committee as they take the necessary steps to help ensure the U of T does the right thing by UTS, rather than trying to convince them to change their decision.

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The other very important area where we need the support of the UTS community is to help raise the necessary funds required to build UTS a new permanent home, with the kind of physical space and facilities that can fully support all our learning programs and provide a state of the art learning environment for our students. The Board will be developing and implementing a fundraising and bursary campaign very shortly.

12) You say UTS is old, small, badly outdated and barely meets your needs now. Given you are leaving in the near future what improvements do you plan to make to serve the needs of current and future students through until 2021?

Just because we have to move doesn't mean we aren't committed to maintaining 371 Bloor Street West for our students, faculty and staff. Currently we work and will continue to do so on a daily basis with our landlord, U of T to ensure that the building is fully operational, safe and clean.

Over the past four of years our renovation program has: replaced all the classroom furniture, installed full wireless capacity to support new learning technology as well as renovating office and working space for teachers. By the end of this summer we will have completed the painting of the entire school. Going forward, while our renovation budget is not large, we will continue to do what is necessary to invest in the building to make sure it continues to provide the best possible education for our students.