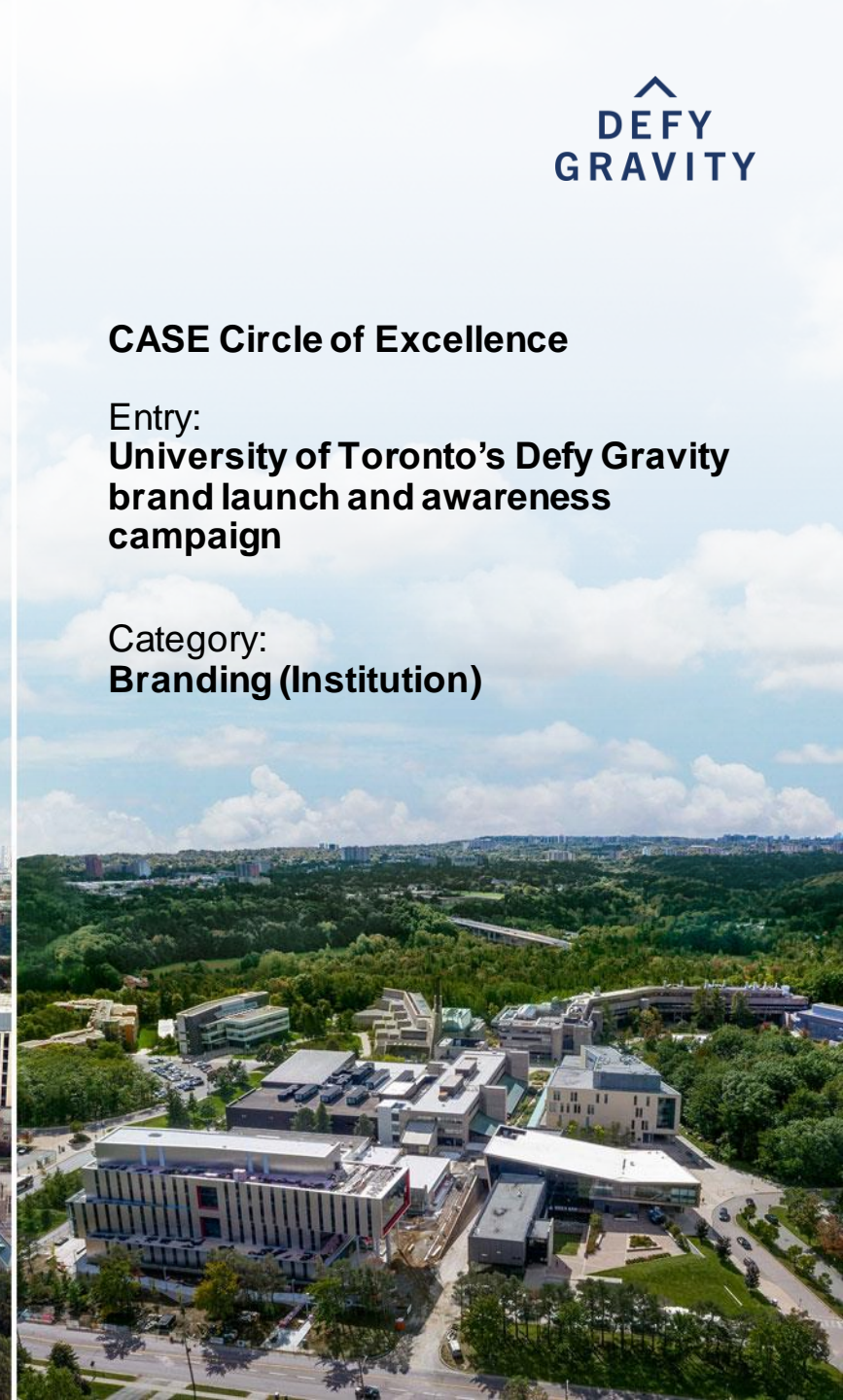


Brand Rollout Highlights

March 2023



CASE Circle of Excellence

Entry:
**University of Toronto's Defy Gravity
brand launch and awareness
campaign**

Category:
Branding (Institution)

Overview

- In 2022, U of T launched a bold new brand – Defy Gravity. This is the first time in the institution's history that a brand has been developed at such scale. It is built on a framework of inclusive excellence, grounded in our values and strengths. It is designed to express what makes U of T unique in the world and showcase how our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters are stepping up to solve intractable global problems, create new knowledge, and effect meaningful change in the world, defying obstacles and expectations along the way.
- The launch of the brand coincided with the launch of the new University-wide advancement campaign, with all communications rooted in the Defy Gravity brand expression. This consistency effectively supports both the brand and campaign goals to drive recognition, recall and understanding of what the University stands for (vision and mission) and vividly expresses how the campaign is fueling everything that enables our community to defy gravity.
- A three-phased approach was developed to roll out this initiative. The University is currently nearing the end of phase 2 and moving into phase 3 of the plan.

Brand and campaign rollout overview

December 2021 to Spring 2022

Brand and Advancement
Campaign launch

Phase 1 Defy Gravity Launch

Brand At Large (starting February 2022)

- ✓ utoronto.ca footer updated with brand
- ✓ Current brand portal updated
 - New brand strategy
 - Creative expression fundamentals
 - Key toolkit materials
 - President's endorsement message (short video)
- ✓ Owned, earned and paid integrated media coverage - TSAs, pole banners and boosted posts
- ✓ Campus digital signage, as applicable
- ✓ Launch of the new President's Office website and supporting templates for TVP (tri-campus vice-presidents) websites development
- ✓ Internal roadshow with divisions, faculties, colleges and campuses

Advancement Campaign (starting December 2021)

- ✓ Announcement event (pre-recorded video)
- ✓ Campaign website
- ✓ Case for Support
- ✓ Owned coverage (organic social media across alumni channels, announcement web story, email communications)
- ✓ Paid media
- ✓ Earned media coverage
- ✓ Event communications
- ✓ Toolkit items on brand portal

Spring 2022 to late-Winter 2023

Brand: Domestic & International

Phase 2 Brand Building

Brand At Large

- ✓ Defy Gravity video for about page on utoronto.ca
- ✓ Owned media to support brand storytelling
- ✓ Brand awareness campaign
- ✓ Branded merchandise
- ✓ Brand event banner collateral
- ✓ Brand photography
- Brand Portal 2.0 – a comprehensive new brand portal to serve brand building needs of the entire UofT community
 - Build and launch a new platform with optimized functionality and user experience
 - Comprehensive strategic and creative guidelines, templates, and tools meeting central and divisional needs
- ✓ Updated university-wide impact presentation and supporting materials
- ✓ Ongoing marketing communications work with divisions and faculties
- ✓ Welcome back campus signage
- ✓ Convocation signage

Advancement Campaign

- ✓ Advancement campaign paid, owned, earned communications and special activities and events will continue, as applicable to achieve business goals
- ✓ Campaign website content refreshed and updated on an ongoing basis
- ✓ Organic social media support on alumni channels
- ✓ Coverage in the Spring issue of U of T Magazine

Spring 2023 and onward

Phase 3 Brand Building Cont'd

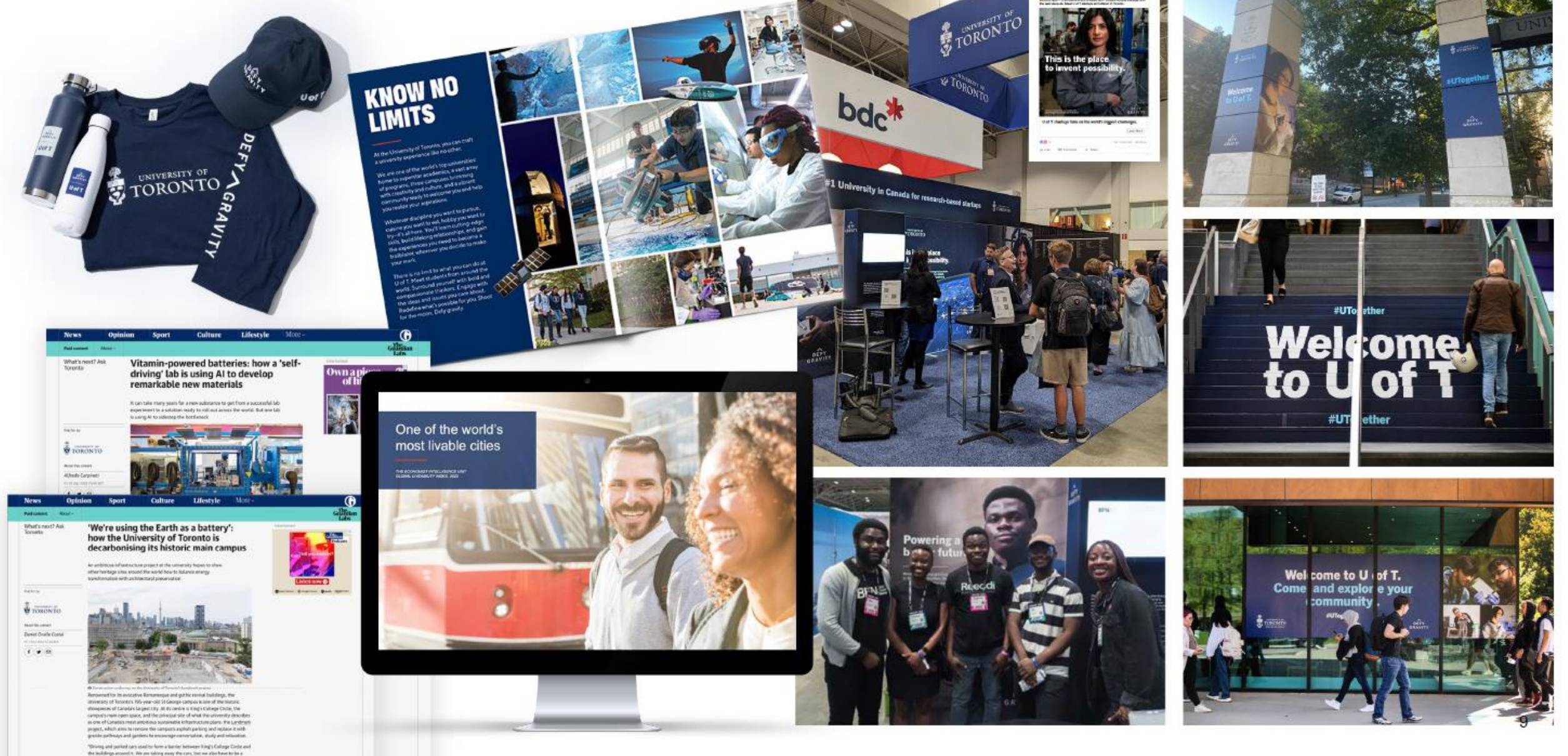
Brand At Large

- Defy Gravity Manifesto video
- Develop and launch the new global reputation campaign - TBD based on priorities and objectives identified in consultations with the President's Office and TVP
- Ongoing brand building, consulting and support of key strategic initiatives (divisions and faculties).
- New tools and resources to ease brand adoption based on community consultation
- Build on branded merchandise offering in consultation with students for students

Advancement Campaign

- Advancement campaign owned communications and special activities and events will continue, as applicable to achieve business goals
- Campaign website content refreshed and updated on an ongoing basis
- Organic social media support on alumni channels
- Ongoing alumni and fundraising activities support

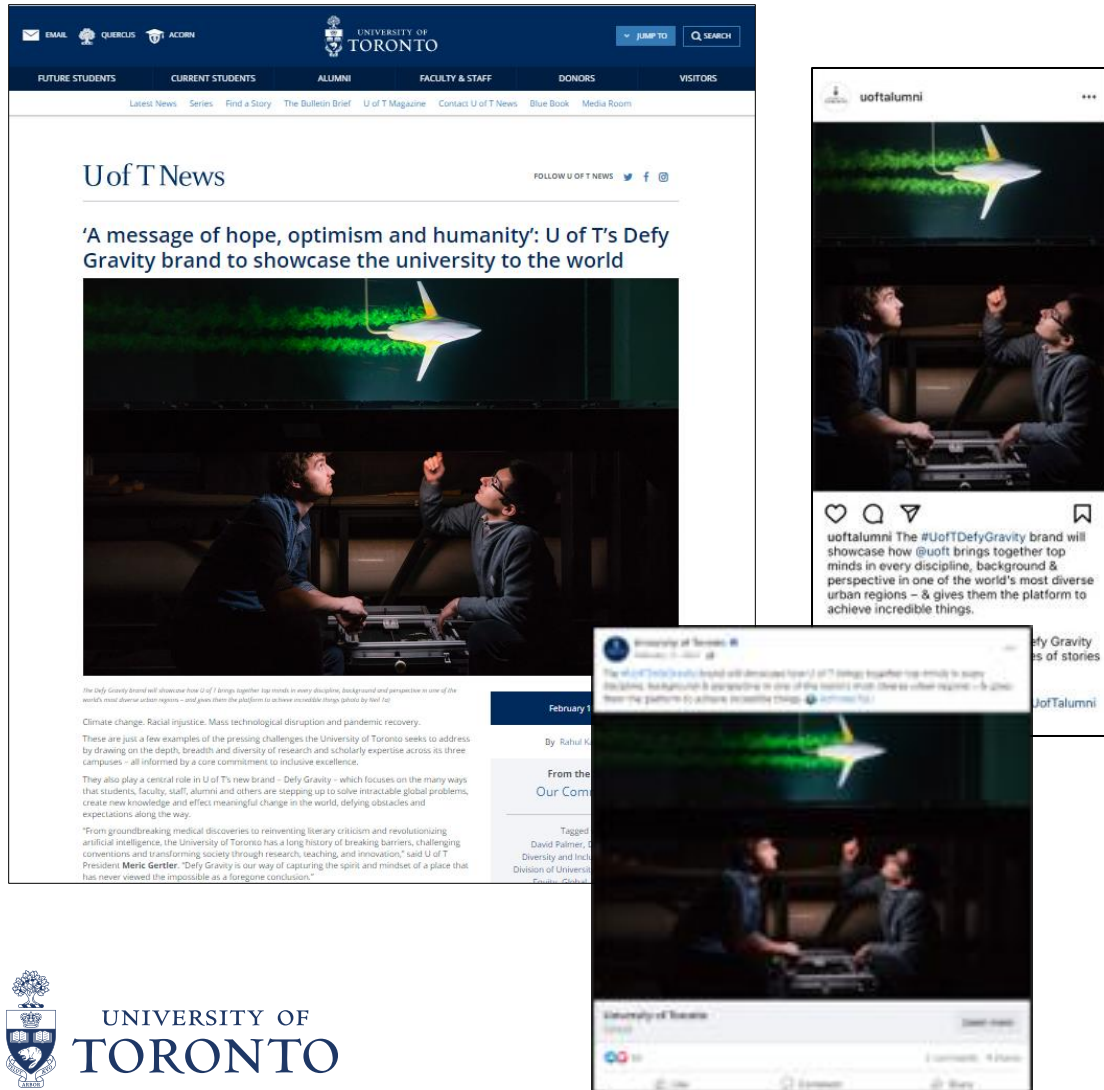
University-wide brand launch and rollout



Collision Conference 2022:

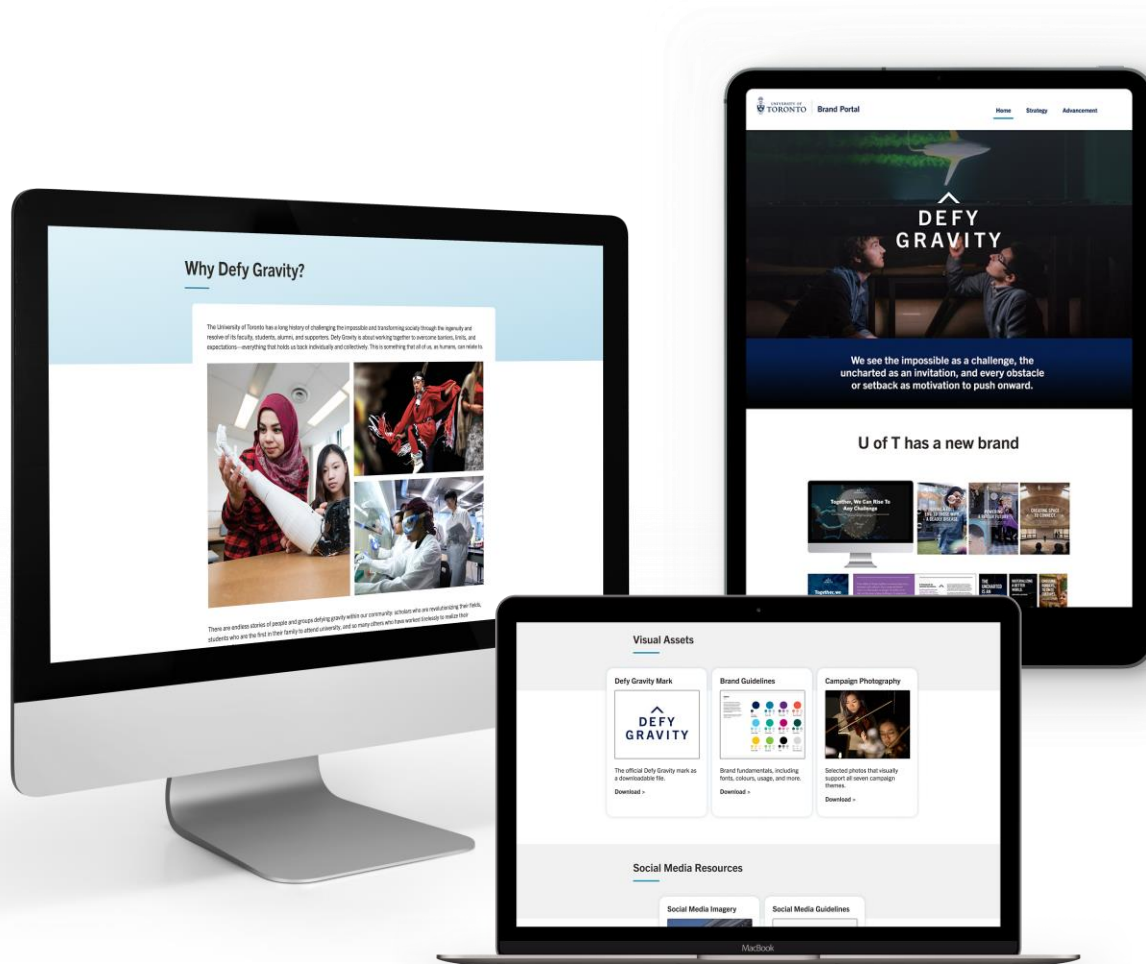
Campus Welcome Signage:

U of T News and social promotion



- The cornerstone of our communications for the brand launch was a [U of T News](#) story that included a Q&A with VP Communications, David Estok and AVP Brand Strategy and Integrated Marketing, Tanya Kreinin.
- The story was promoted on central and alumni social channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn and internal newsletters the Bulletin Brief and Provost's Digest.
- The brand launch story has received 5,835 unique page views to date with 209 clicks through the Bulletin Brief.

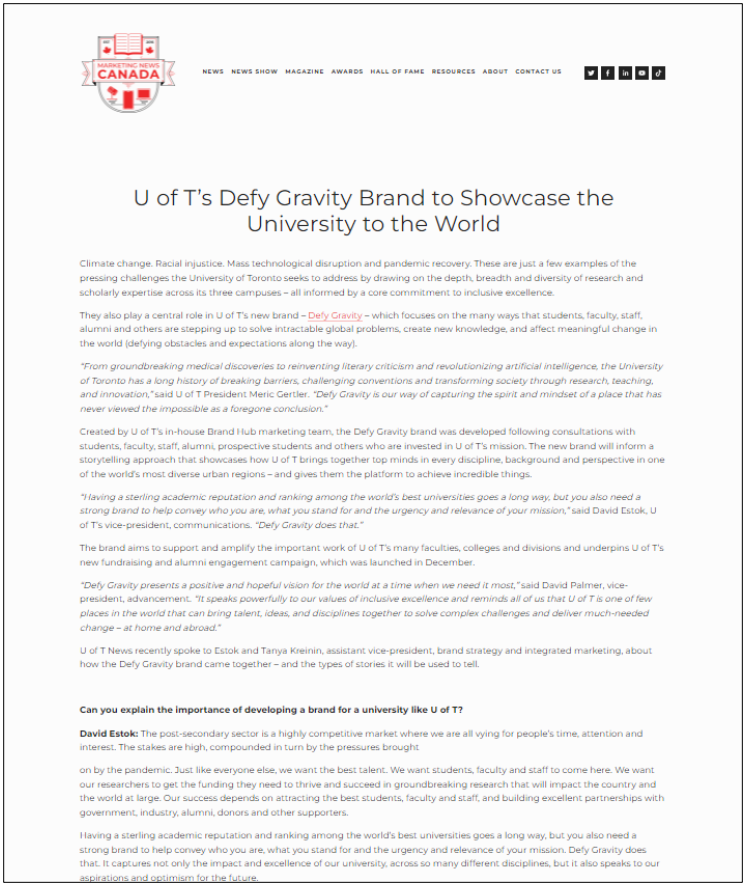
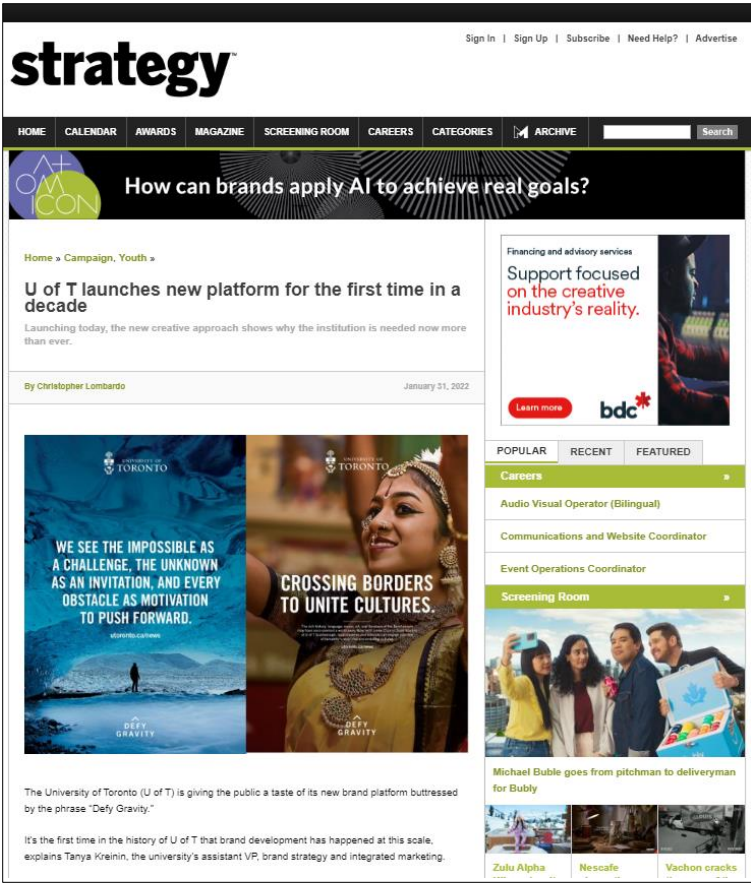
Brand portal and current resources



- To help ease adoption of the new brand, we launched a comprehensive [brand portal](#), which includes [strategy](#), [guidelines](#), [tools](#) and [templates](#).
- Throughout the year, U of T's Brand Hub team has continued to add new assets to the portal based on community consultations, including:
 - E-signature templates
 - PPT and word templates
 - Merchandise
 - Event signage and collateral
 - Video bumpers
- The brand portal has had over **3,800 visitors** since it launched in February 2022 and over **1,066 template downloads**.
- More robust sets of guidelines, tools and templates based on comprehensive consultations with tri-campus communications colleagues and other central and divisional stakeholders will launch later this year.

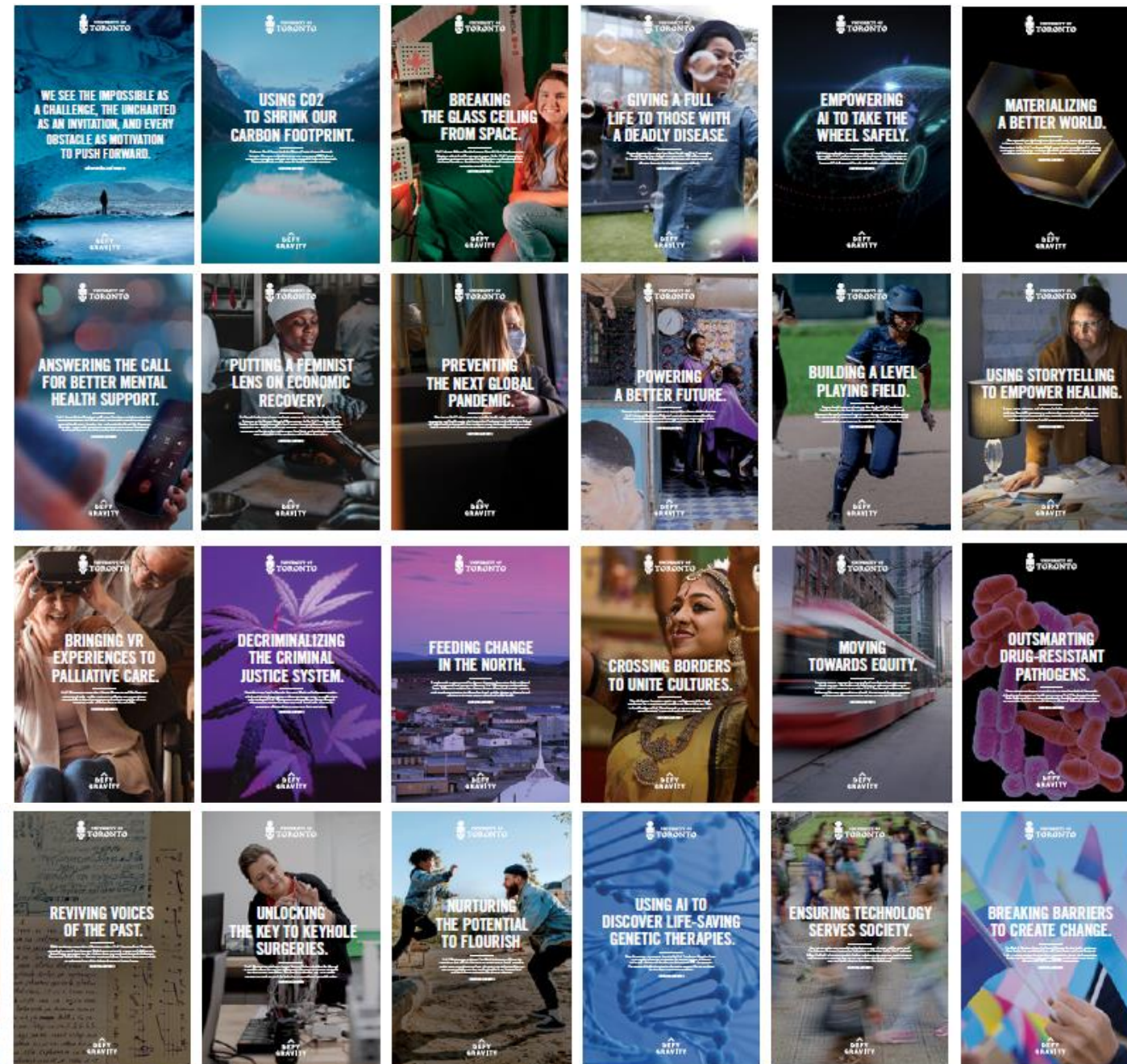
Earned media coverage

- The launch of the new brand attracted earned media mentions in [Strategy Magazine](#) and [Marketing News Canada](#)



Tri-campus stories

- To support the rollout of the Defy Gravity campaign, we reached out to our tri-campus colleagues to collect stories that reflect the breadth and depth of expertise at the university.
- From an initial list of 50 stories, we chose 25 stories to feature on transit shelters and pole banners across campuses that debuted alongside the launch of the campaign.
- Stories were evaluated based on the below criteria to ensure we were representing our diverse community:
 - Stories from all 3 campuses
 - Stories from all faculties
 - Stories that represented the breadth and depth of disciplines and research at U of T (humanities, social sciences, engineering, sciences, etc.)
 - Stories that were aligned to our brand promise of Inclusive Excellence and represented our seven campaign themes.



Campus advertising

- To promote brand awareness, pole banners, transit shelter ads and digital screens were installed across our three campuses, highlighting our incredible community of researchers, students and alumni who are defying gravity in their fields.



Brand information sessions

- The Brand Hub hosted virtual brand information sessions to inform staff of the new brand strategy, share the process of developing the brand platform, showcase the brand portal and highlight tools and templates available to enable adoption of the new brand.
- The sessions were met with great enthusiasm with over 150 attendees over two dates (March 23 and April 5, 2022).
- We learned from surveys that attendees found the sessions very helpful with an overall satisfaction score of 9 out 10.

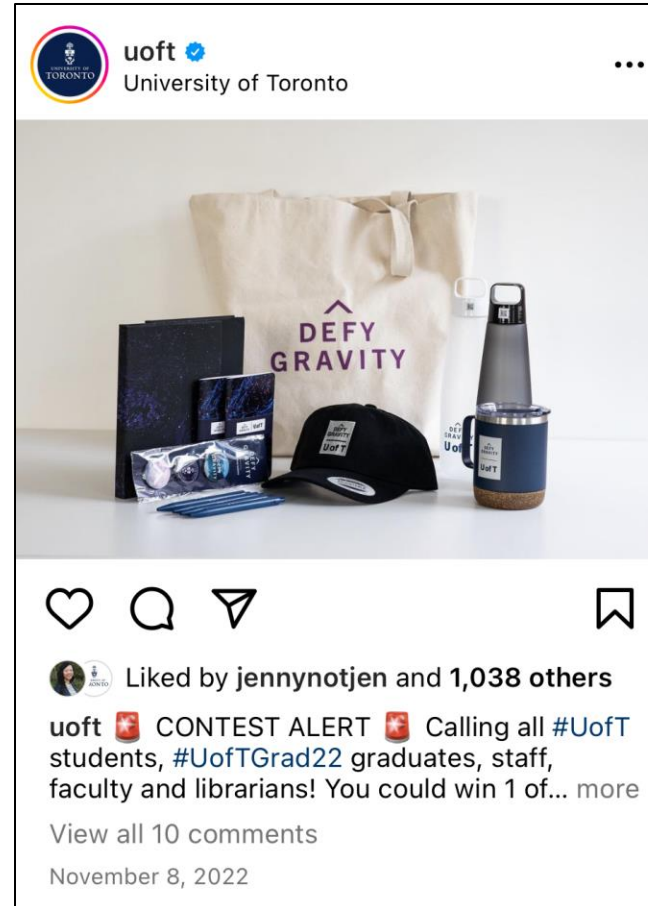


Terrific session. Very well-organized, clearly presented, and relevant to the audience. I appreciated the time devoted to Q&A at the end.”

Feedback from session attendee

Branded merchandise

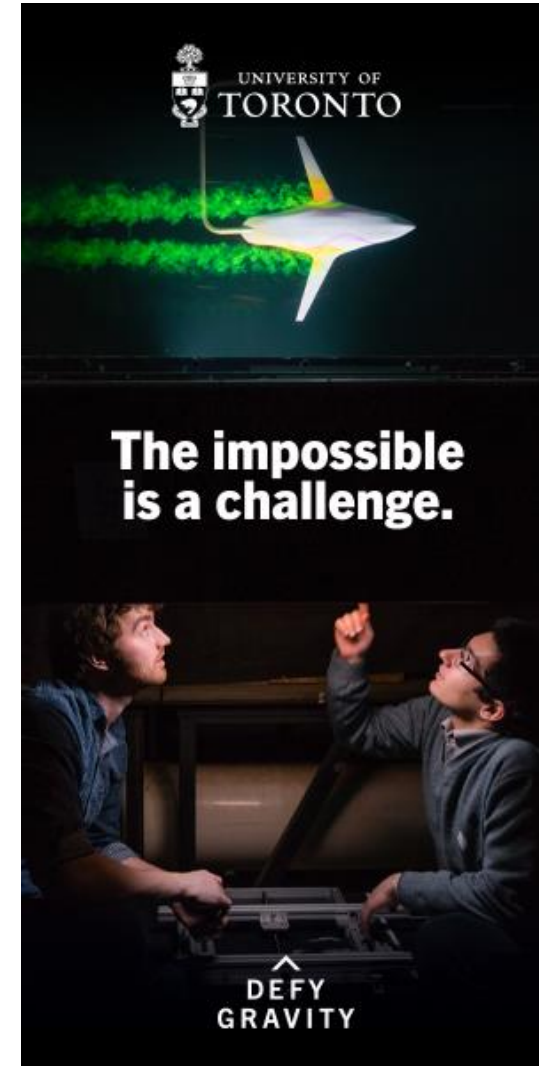
- A new merchandise catalogue was launched as part of the brand rollout.
- The merchandise has been well received by our community and we are now working on special lines of merchandise for our students, alumni and high-end gifts for global VIP events and meetings in collaboration with Advancement, President's Office portfolio and our tri-campus Bookstore.
- The merchandise has also been used for online contests by central, alumni, UTSC (University of Toronto Scarborough) and UTM (University of Toronto Mississauga) social channels.



Global Brand Awareness Campaign

Global brand awareness campaign

- As part of the Defy Gravity rollout, U of T launched a global brand awareness campaign to help lift the University's profile and reputation in key markets.
- The campaign included paid and earned media coverage, with content appearing in The Guardian, The Hill Times, Pearson and Billy Bishop airports, The Globe and Mail, and digital and social media.
- The brand awareness campaign also featured banners and transit shelter ads around our three campuses in downtown Toronto, Mississauga and Scarborough promoting our incredible community of researchers, students and alumni who are defying gravity in their fields.
- **Campaign timing: June 2022 – January 2023**



Creative showcase



Objectives & audiences

Objectives

- **Marketing Objective:** Drive brand awareness and engagement through the storytelling lens of the new brand platform, promoting U of T's value and impact in a vivid, human and relatable way while building profile and reputation among target audiences in key local and global markets.
- **Media Objective:** Brand awareness building - KPIs include impressions and reach, organic search, likes and shares of social content – where applicable.

Audiences

- Prospective students and parents
- Prospective faculty and staff (faculty, senior staff, leadership and peers from other institutions in Canada, U.S. and globally, based on key markets)
- Government employees
- Current and prospective partners, business leaders, investors

Markets

- Primary: Ontario/GTA and Ottawa/Parliament Hill
- Secondary: New York, San Francisco Bay Area, Boston, London (U.K.)
- Additional Canadian markets: Montreal, Vancouver

Key message & outcomes

Key Message

- Through outstanding global education and student experience, life-changing research and innovation, ingenuity, fearless thinking, empathy and inclusion, U of T advances human potential, promoting social well-being, prosperity, and vitality, addressing issues that matter the most locally and globally

Desired Outcome

- Our audiences should:
 - Notice and recognize U of T's Defy Gravity messages
 - Perceive U of T as a world-class institution that delivers tangible impact on issues that matter the most locally and globally
- See the value of U of T's promise of inclusive excellence

KPIs

- Impressions, CPM
 - Where possible, we set tactic-specific KPI goals to help give an understandable measure of success.

Paid advertising highlights

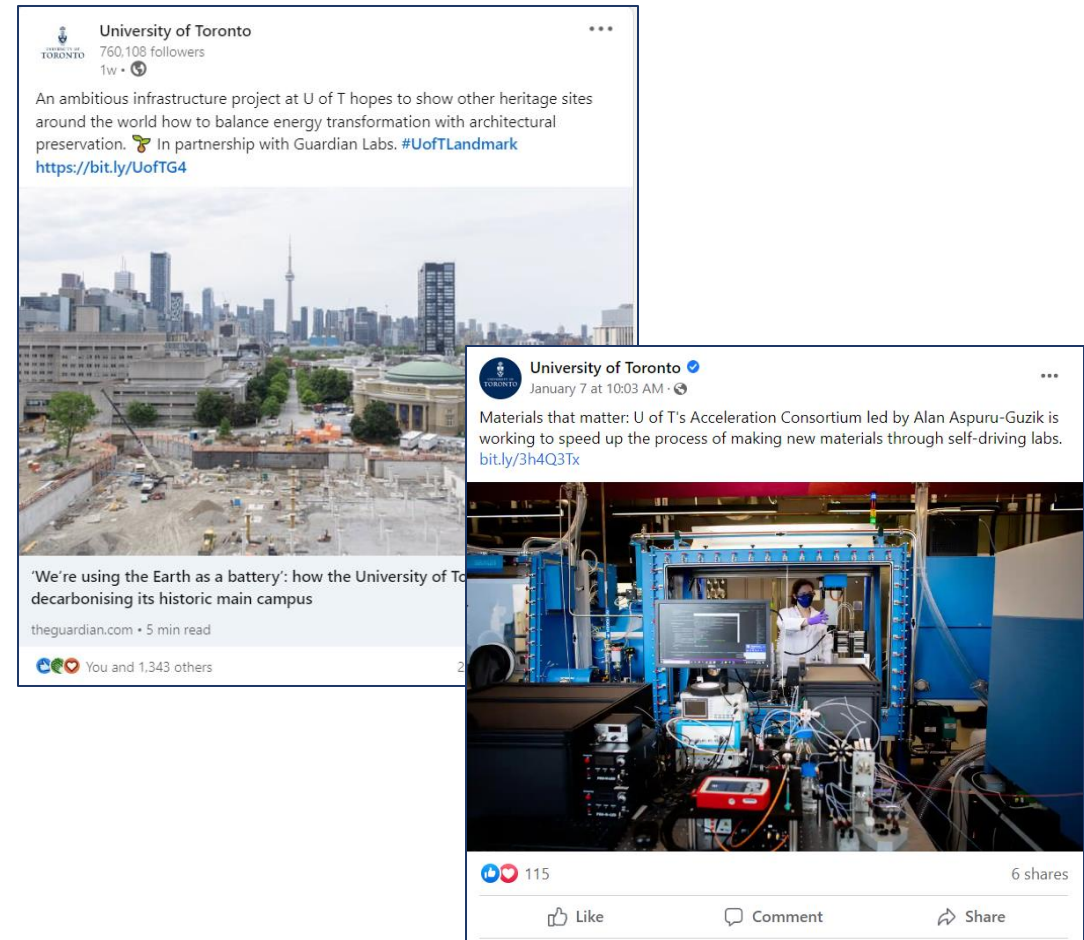
Strategically focused on driving awareness, the paid awareness campaign has gained close to 80 million local and global impressions. Highlights include:

- 39,000,000 targeted impressions across digital and social channels including: The Guardian, Globe and Mail, Yahoo, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- To target attendees of the Collision Conference, business and summer leisure travelers, ads were placed on strategically selected digital screens in Toronto's Pearson International and Billy Bishop airports, contributing to over 7.9 million impressions.
- Transit shelter ads around the three campuses captured over 33 million impressions.

- In partnership with *The Guardian*, a four-article digital content series was developed, expanding reach of the campaign to a global audience, earning 33.6k views and an average session duration of over 3 minutes and 25 seconds from global audiences.
- The Guardian campaign also showed an average 6.3% uplift in levels of brand awareness, consideration, preference and action intent from the digital campaign.
- The campaign generated meaningful results and met the objectives. The collective results of the campaign confirm that the content was engaging and resonated with our audiences.

Organic social

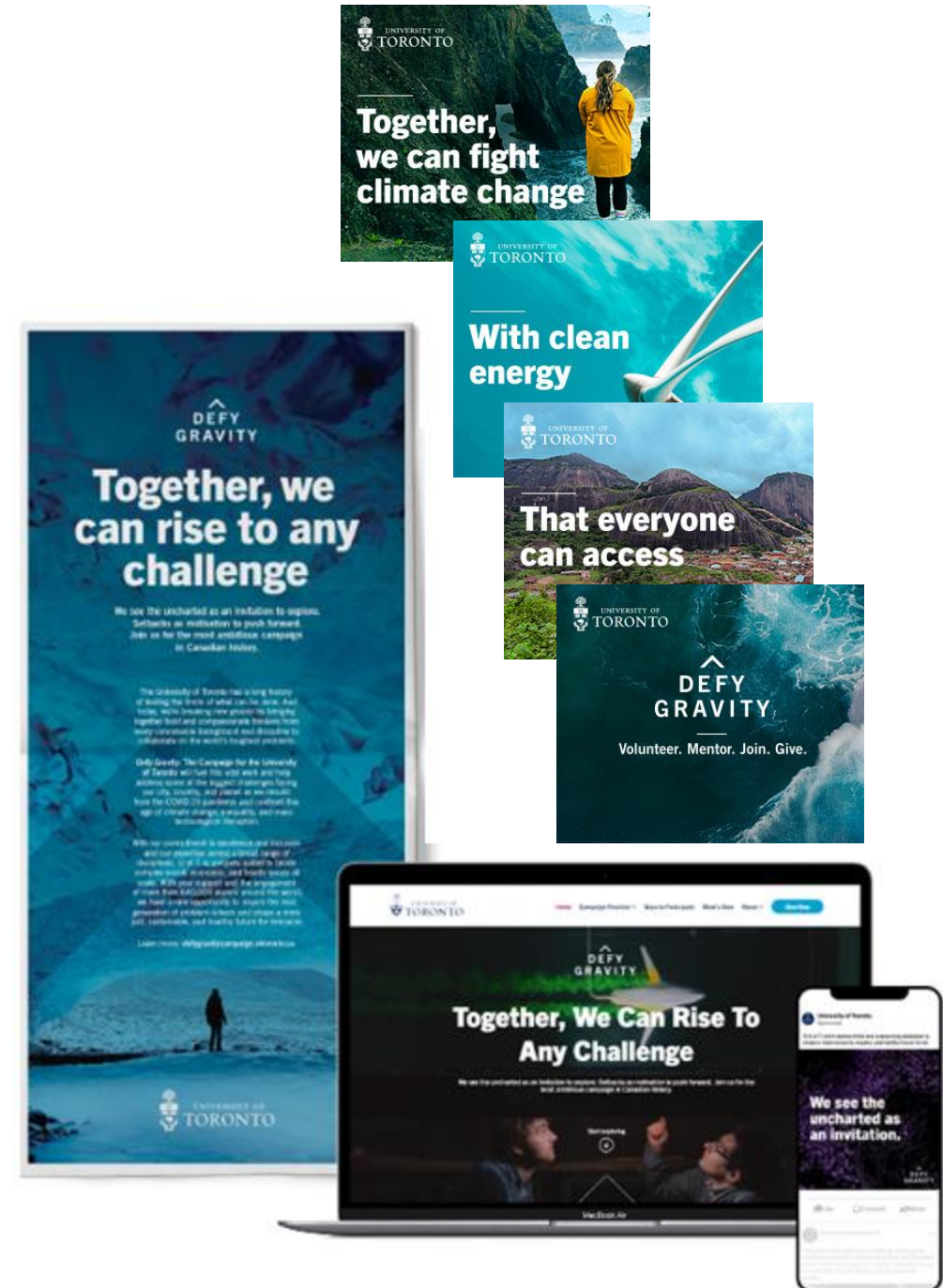
- UTC (University of Toronto Communications) and DUA (Division of University Advancement) social channels supported the campaign via organic posts, amplifying the Guardian and Globe and Mail content to help increase awareness about the stories being promoted through the initiative.
- The organic posts on UTC and DUA social channels garnered over 288k impressions and more than 9,615 engagements across 25 posts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
 - Alumni channels brought in 188k impressions, 3,836 reach, 6,739 engagements and a 3.6% total average engagement rate across Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.
 - Central channels brought over 100k impressions, 92.6k reach, 2.8k engagements and a 2.24% total average engagement rate across Facebook and Twitter.



Advancement Campaign

Advancement campaign

- The launch of the University's new [advancement campaign](#) provided a prominent opportunity to express the brand and its powerful storytelling to a wide audience.
- Working closely with University Development and Alumni Relations, the Brand Hub team played a key role in helping strategize, plan, and execute the [campaign's groundbreaking virtual launch event](#).
- The team also created a [campaign website](#) and implemented an integrated paid, owned and earned media coverage plan to support the launch of the campaign.
- In partnership with the U of T Communications and tri-campus teams, marketing and communications campaign launch efforts garnered more than **9,835** total video views (live and post-event) **122,303** website impressions, and **5,895,936** impressions through social channels—a result of effective strategic planning, strong and compelling creative content, proper targeting and optimization, as well as thoughtful and co-ordinated implementation.

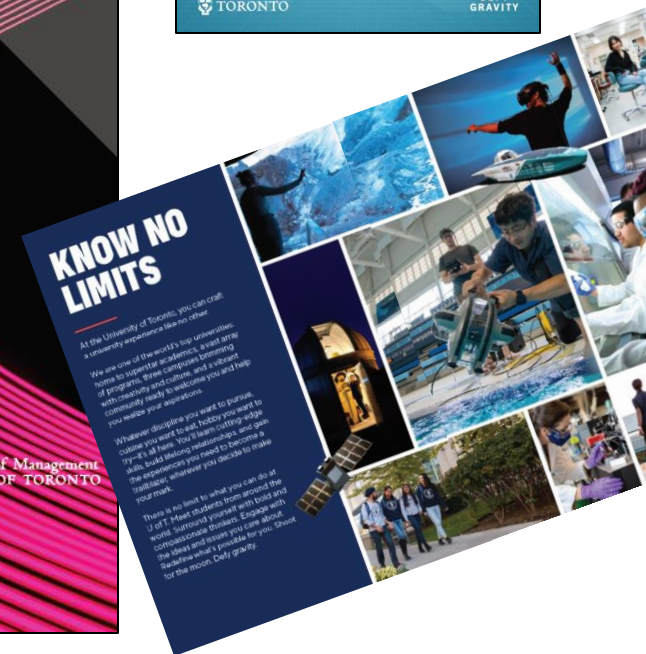
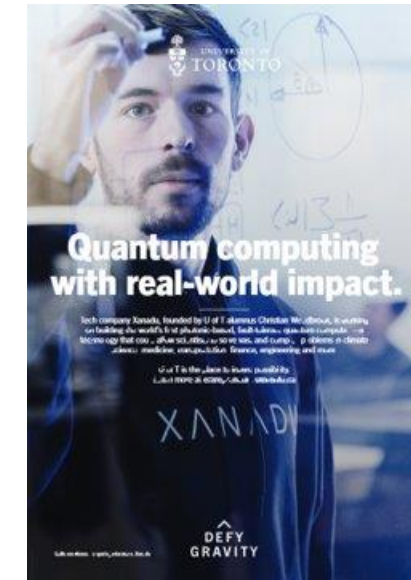
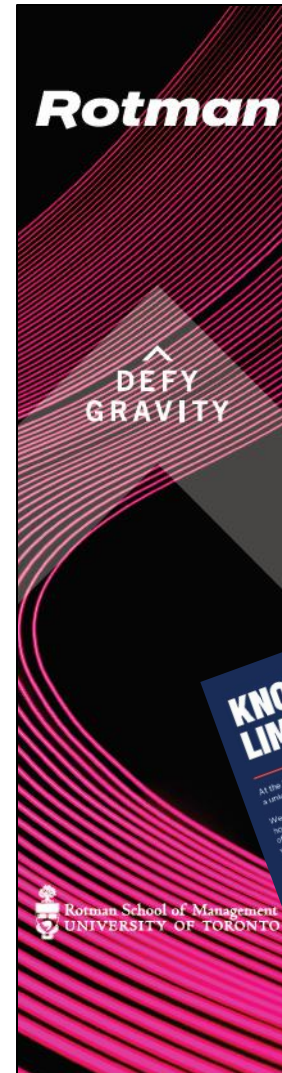


Divisional Application of Defy Gravity

Divisional adoption and application

Throughout 2022, the U of T community has embraced the new brand, and divisions from across the University are working closely with the Brand Hub to strategically apply the Defy Gravity narrative and visual approach to their marketing and reputation-building efforts.

This work reflects our objective to foster the University's brand and its vision at large while supporting the unique strengths of our many divisions.



Divisional adoption and application

