



APRIL 2022

# Tech2U

# Impact Report

## Fall Winter 2021-2022



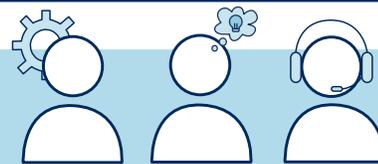
UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO

# What is Tech2U?



**The Tech2U program humanizes classroom technical support to foster excellent and innovative teaching and learning in an increasingly technological classroom.** Through the collaboration of Learning Space Management (LSM) and the Innovation Hub, the program provides real-time, personalized technological support for instructors through a technical support team, moving from a room-based approach to one focused on instructor needs.

## The Tech2U Program



To have the program operational for the Fall 2021 semester has been a significant undertaking with rewarding results. Responding to the changing pandemic situation, the program was approved in August and launched immediately in September. Getting it off-the-ground and operational occurred rapidly, and included hiring the large team, onboarding and training everyone in their role, preparing operational processes and resources, and delivering communications to the instructional community to raise awareness.

The program delivery over the semester faced many challenges; however, the program has been responsive to the complex situation that the pandemic has created. Most notably, the unexpected shift back to remote learning mid-way through required further flexibility. Given that the program was developed with the aim of providing responsive and humanized classroom technical support, it delivered even in these difficult circumstances.

The program's continuation will allow it to reach full operational potential while continuing to build on its successes. **Initially, the goal of the program was focused on removing the technological burden from instructors who were navigating an uncertain and changing learning environment with increasing technical challenges.** Since its launch, we have also found that this humanized classroom technical support fostered healthy classrooms that encouraged the engagement and wellbeing of students.

## Evaluation

Tech2U Fall-Winter 2021-22 implementation was **tracked using weekly surveys sent to the Technical Co-Pilots and Classroom Ambassadors** (response rate was on average 50% for the Technical Co-Pilot survey and about 80% for Classroom Ambassador survey). The **surveys followed-up on the technical support team's impact**, including questions about what tasks were completed, any positive and/or negative interactions during shifts, if any additional support was needed, and more. The insights and instructor and Classroom Ambassador stories provided in the following pages are based on this ongoing program evaluation.

# High-Level Impacts - Fall 2021

The Fall 2021Tech2U program implementation involved a technical Support team comprised of Technical Co-Pilots who supported instructors either directly or through a team of Classroom Ambassadors, who were students from all levels of student and programs employed through the work study program.

**SUPPORTING  
262  
CLASSROOMS**



**3533 COURSES**

Counts of meetings by day of the of the week\*:

MONDAY: 1004

TUESDAY: 974

WEDNESDAY: 1072

THURSDAY: 998

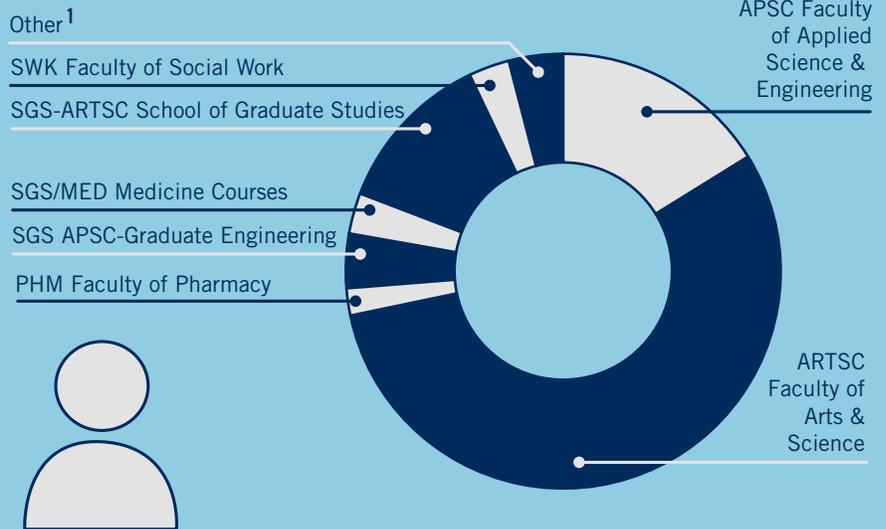
FRIDAY: 761

SATURDAY: 2

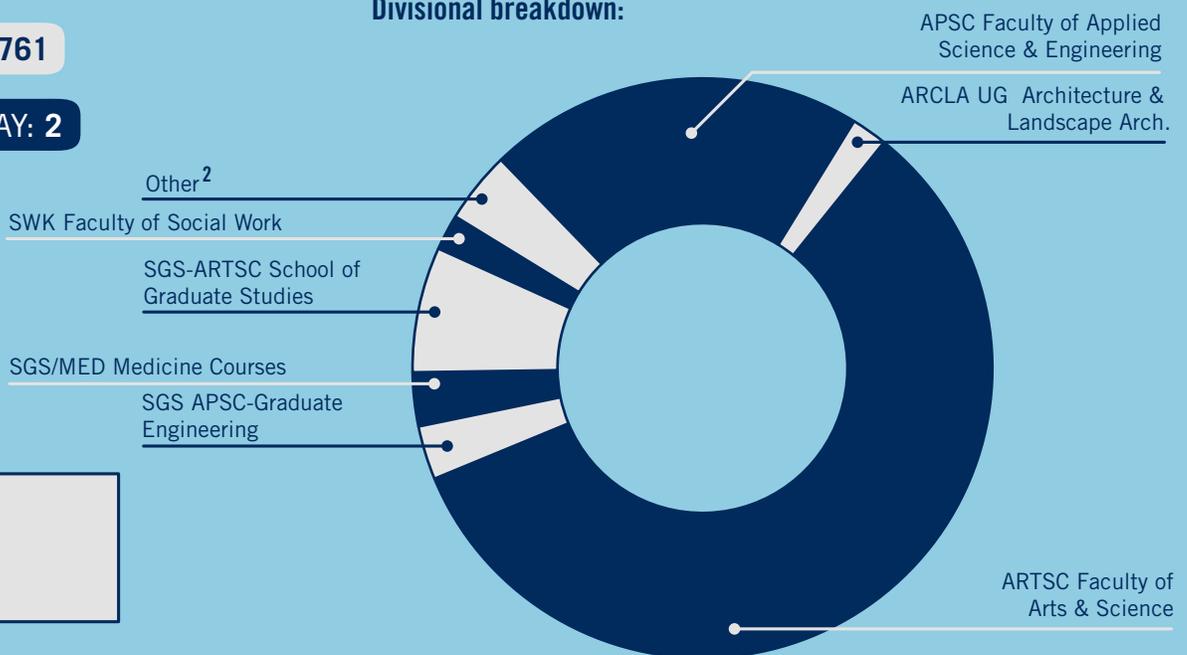


**1453 INSTRUCTORS**

Divisional breakdown:



Divisional breakdown:



\* Data includes courses that meet more than one day per week.

# High-Level Impacts - Winter 2022

**SUPPORTING  
285  
CLASSROOMS**



**4898 COURSES**

Counts of meetings by day of the week:

MONDAY: 1358

TUESDAY: 1517

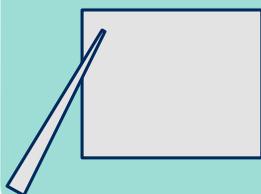
WEDNESDAY: 1568

THURSDAY: 1648

FRIDAY: 1178

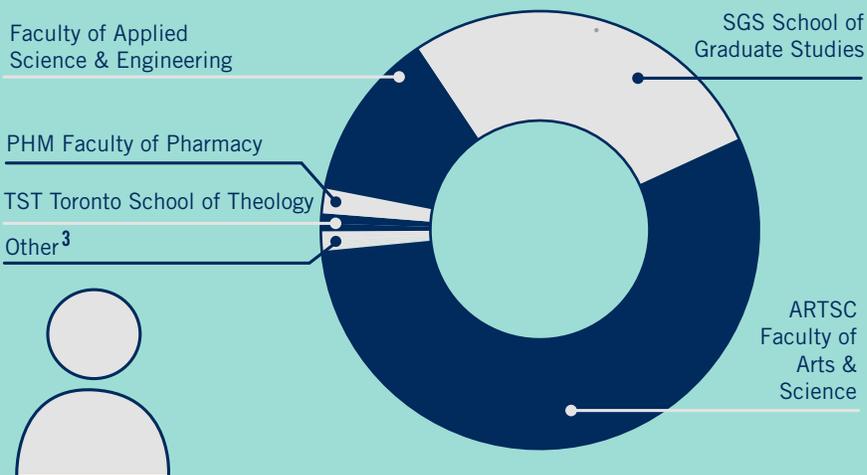
SATURDAY: 33

SUNDAY: 17

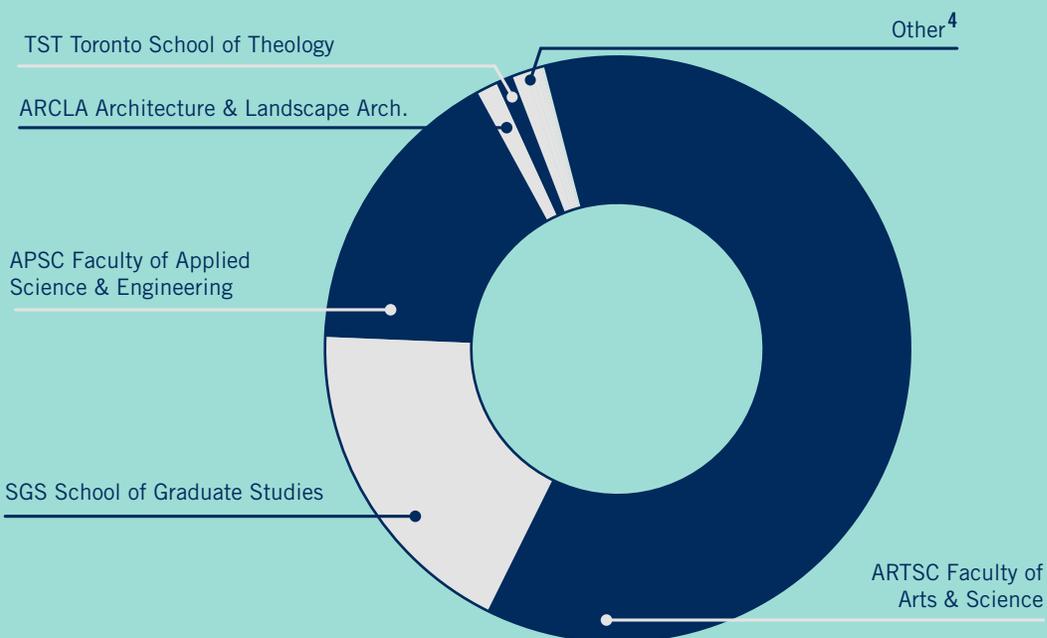


**2419 INSTRUCTORS**

Divisional breakdown:



Divisional breakdown:



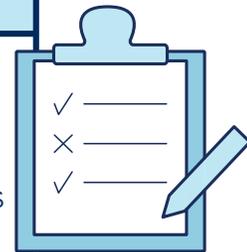
\* Data includes courses that meet more than one day per week.

# Meet the Tech2U Technical Support Team

## Instructional Support Coordinator

*1.0 FTE x 1 position*

- Schedules staff according to demand
- Processes payroll
- Ongoing communication between Co-Pilots & Campus Ambassadors
- Quantitative data collection & program evaluation



## Student Experience Coordinator

*1.0 FTE x 1 position*

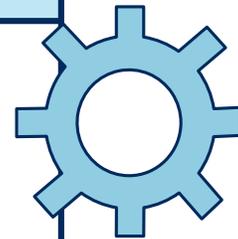
- Leads Campus Ambassador training design & delivery
- Supervises all work study students
- Ensures a positive work-integrated learning experience for students



## Technical Co-Pilot

*1.0 FTE x 14 positions*

- Provides direct technical support & AV tech setup with instructors
- Coaches Student Campus Ambassadors
- Supports instructors in setting up new technology in their classrooms



## Multimedia Support

*1.0 FTE x 2 position*

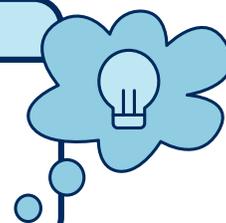
- Provides hardware maintenance, new hardware installation & repair services
- Works behind-the-scenes to support the team and ensure classroom technology is maintained



## Student Classroom Ambassador

*Work study role x 131 student positions*

- Provide direct in-class support to instructors
- Troubleshoot technical issues & provide solutions on-site



# Tech2U - Supporting Access in the Classroom

Tech2U acknowledges that **teaching and learning is personal for both students and instructors** and that technical solutions and support need to be personal too. **We found that the personalized technical support of Tech2U also impacted and improved a number of accessibility needs for both students and instructors.** Tech2U provided technology that adapted and responded to instructors' desired pedagogy while facilitating the individual needs of different learners. Some of the many examples of Tech2U's impact on accessibility needs include:



Tech2U **provided portable audio and video technology to spaces** enabling participation for students who require remote accommodation to participate.



For courses requiring the use of chalkboards for formula development, **video cameras with operators in the room were used to capture the content on the blackboard** and shared with students who were online or at the back of the room, thereby increasing their access to the material.



Instructors were able to have the **flexibility of teaching from home or campus through the provision of a mobile Tech2U teaching station** enabling access for both the instructors and students.

# Leveraging the Work Study Program

**95% RETENTION RATE IN FALL 2021**

Average hours worked per week - work study students: **9.26 hours**

**131**

work study positions at the start of Fall term



**124**

work study positions at the end of Fall term

**93.5% RETENTION RATE IN WINTER 2022**

Average hours worked per week - work study students: **9.26 hours**

**124**

work study positions at the start of Winter term



**116**

work study positions at the end of Winter term

## Student Quotes

*"A winning moment this week was feeling comfortable in my role as a Classroom Ambassador and knowing what to do to help professors. As time progresses and I learn more each day about technical support, I grow more confident in my abilities."*

*"Tech2U has allowed me to meet cool people and make new friends!! I also love the personal/professional development we receive during weekly meetings. Thanks for this experience."*

*"I made two new friends during my shift. It is a great start for me living in a new city. It's the first step I move out of my comfortable zone."*

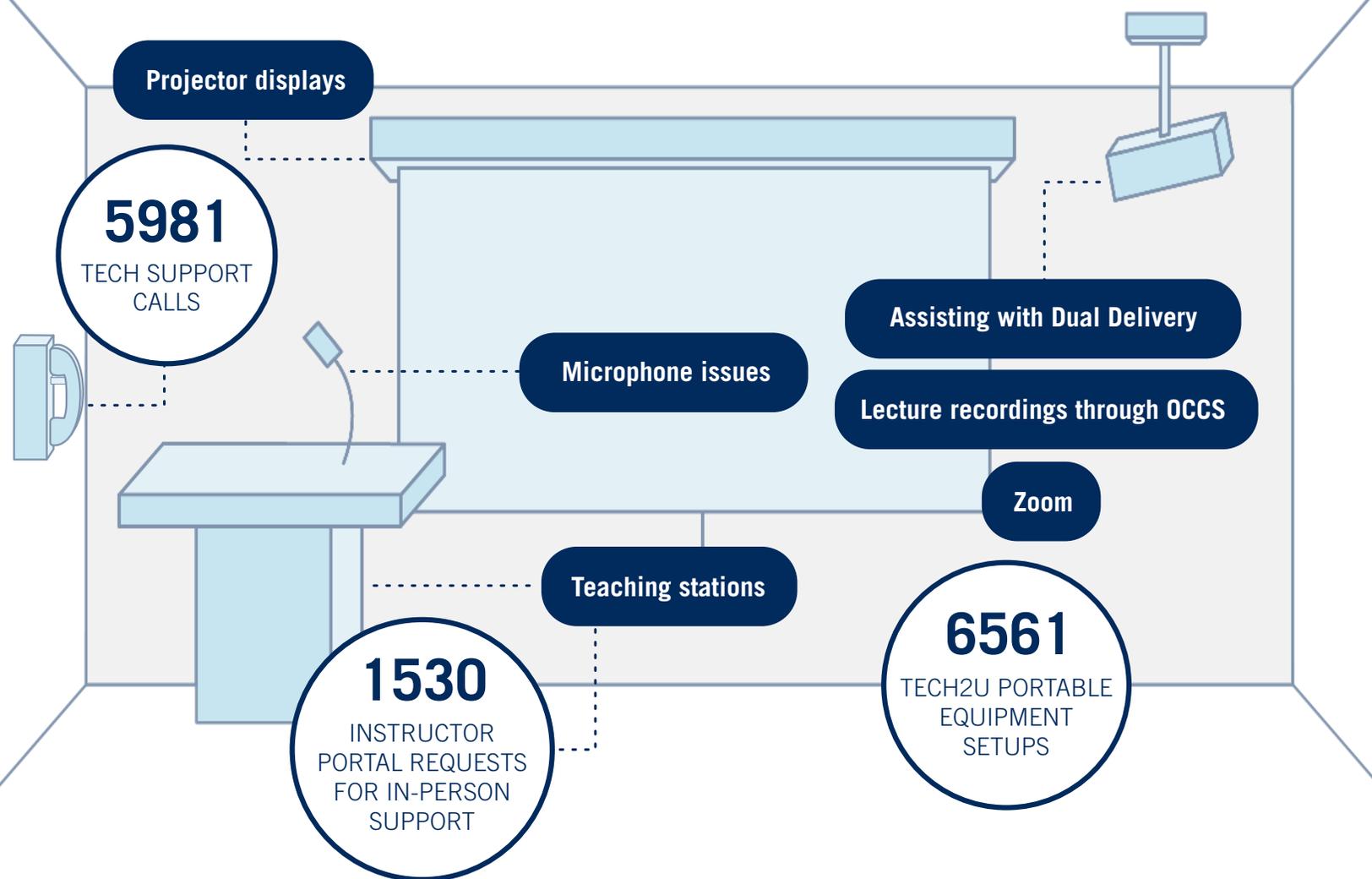
## Reasons Why Work Study Students Left Tech2U:

Busy schedules, inability to return to Canada, accepted a different position, and personal reasons.

# On-The-Ground Supports

Tech2U provides instructors with hands-on, in-the-moment, technical support before, during, and after teaching so they can focus on creating an excellent learning experience for students.

## Examples of Technical Support Provided:



This direct human support gives instructors reassurance that their tech is set-up and functioning properly. It also removes stress and worry that classroom tech often causes. As a result of this support, instructors are able to create healthy classroom environments with fewer technical disruptions in learning and foster the wellbeing of students.

*“Before I received support, I spent much time and endured many anxiety peaks as the classroom equipment was far from what I had expected. I [struggled] to improve both the live delivery and online recording of the classes. [With Tech2U] I was able to focus [on] teaching and engagement.”*

# Benefits to Instructors



## Reassurance and Success

Instructors found it invaluable to have a team of people working alongside them to achieve their technological goals. With a team of support, instructors did not feel isolated but instead connected with help that understood their individual needs and teaching goals.

*“When things with technology go wrong, it can be frustrating to try to troubleshoot on your own or deal with print resources. It’s a relief to just talk to a person.”*

## Empowered Instruction

Instructors felt less anxious and overwhelmed when using technology in the classroom, knowing that they had a support system when they need it. Their empowerment led to the empowerment of the students and Classroom Ambassadors.



*“I’m able to show students both in the classroom and attending online the main lecture material, field online and in-person questions, carry out experimental demonstrations, engage in zoom polling, and accommodate student needs. There is no way this could have been achieved without the Tech2U program.”*



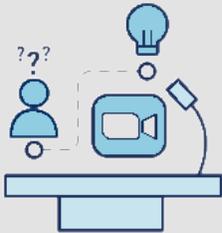
## Rebuilding Connections

The program has played an important role in rebuilding trust between the technical team and instructors. With renewed trust and infectious positivity, instructors fostered classroom environments that supported student wellbeing as well.

*“A Co-Pilot describes building a relationship with a frustrated professor who was initially reluctant to accept support: “His attitude and comfort has made a complete 180. He’s signing off his emails with saying things like ‘you’re the best,’ ‘thank you for the help.’ It’s been a beautiful shift in positivity, ease, and trust.”*

# Instructor Stories:

## PROFESSOR KENJI'S STORY



**Assistant Professor, Engineering**

*“Having the team set up, provide guidance on how to use the equipment, and as a general resource for my questions and teaching concerns has really eased my transition into first-year (pandemic) instruction.”*

This is my first year of teaching and I really struggled at the start. I was teaching an in-person course with options to join online. I was unfamiliar with a lot of the classroom equipment for in-person delivery, so I brought my own instead. But using so many devices became overwhelming. Also, I hadn't used Zoom for teaching before, and so I had a lot of difficulties adding the online option. Honestly, I felt pretty bad about myself and for my students. I found myself getting nervous before teaching. Every class seemed to have a new tech problem that I needed to solve while my students watched on frustrated.

**Tech2U took away all my worries by simplifying and familiarizing me with classroom technology and with Zoom.** One co-pilot guided me on how to use the available classroom equipment, so I could focus on a few devices to deliver content. A Classroom Ambassador helped me troubleshoot Zoom issues, so I was able to engage with my students. **Now, I felt less anxious and more confident, so I could fully focus on teaching and creating a great classroom environment.**



# Instructor Stories:

## PROFESSOR TAN'S STORY



**Associate Professor, Sociology**

*"I did not realize that she or someone would 'check in on me' every week, and that is much appreciated..."*

I have over 10 years of teaching experience. Throughout the pandemic I became comfortable teaching online, but I was unprepared for dual delivery. I can figure out my way around everyday technology but I'm by no means an expert. I wanted to test out some equipment before the start of the term, but I wasn't sure who to contact to make this happen. At the start, it seemed like every class had an issue, which was a frustrating experience for both me and my students. Online students often didn't see what I was sharing on my screen, and audio output issues were a consistent problem.

**I was very happy to find out about Tech2U support** – I just wish I had known about it sooner. I received one-on-one support from a co-pilot to figure out the ideal tech setup based on my teaching plan. I was also pleasantly surprised to have a Classroom Ambassador "check in" every week in case any unexpected issues arose. The Ambassadors resolved these tech problems efficiently, so the class wasn't stalled. **I felt more comfortable using tech in my classroom and less worried about unexpected tech failure.** I could work on making sure both students online and in-person felt engaged even if issues came up – and I was able to translate what I learned into my other courses too.



# Instructor Stories:

## PROFESSOR MIA'S STORY

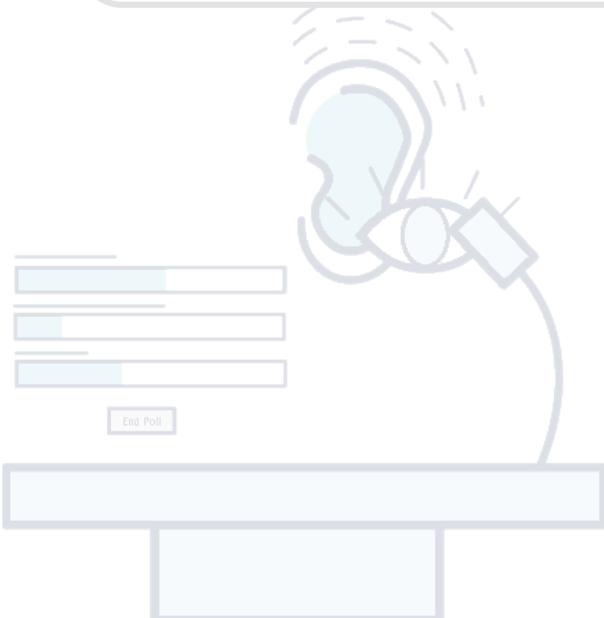


Professor, Linguistics

*"My experience has been only positive. I'm recording tutorials where I do some demonstrations on the board, so the typical recording didn't work for me. I contacted tech support and [a co-pilot] brought me a nice widescreen camera with a great microphone, which does a great job at capturing the board and my voice. Now one of the Tech2U students brings the camera to class each day and makes sure it is working."*

I don't need much help when it comes to technology, but I'm interested in experimenting with technology and trying new things to make the most of my lectures in this strange time. I wanted to connect with a community of technical experts to help me make my ideas a reality and confidently guide me through this exploration.

**I had a specific vision for what I want to accomplish for my lectures, and I couldn't have achieved it without Tech2U.** The team helped me with a specialized recording request I had by providing audio and visual equipment that allowed me to present content for my tutorial session in a more visually accommodating manner for students. Classroom Ambassadors went out of their way to find me the necessary equipment and test it for each session. They also helped me innovate for my online lectures, bringing in different interactive activities, such as Zoom polling and demonstrations. I had a great experience with Tech2U. **In the future, I hope to continue partnering with Technical Co-Pilots and Ambassadors to give my students an exciting learning experience wherever they are.**



# Benefits to Student Classroom Ambassadors

## Sense of Belonging

Classroom Ambassadors gained a sense of belonging, as they made new friends and met new people through their weekly meetings and shifts. Ambassadors gained assurance and confidence for their future success as they interacted with this community of staff, instructors and students.



*"It's a small community for us but I met five new friends in the Tech2U program ...It gives me a chance to talk to people and communicate and show how I feel and what I've learned."*



## Making a Difference

Classroom Ambassadors reported many positive experiences where instructors and Technical Co-Pilots voiced their appreciation for their support. Feeling appreciated helped Ambassadors feel motivated and their wellbeing supported. They felt confident in their abilities to provide meaningful technical support.

*"I helped this prof with recording his lecture, he was very happy with the service and support that I provided, this made me feel meaningful!"*

## Growing Strengths

Classroom Ambassadors explained that they felt empowered through their training in technical supports as well as workplace skills, in helping instructors, and witnessing the impact of their efforts. They learned about their strengths, and were able to put skills into practice, gaining a sense of their own efficacy and empowerment.



*"I feel way more confident helping professors now. I get a rush when I come across a professor that needs my help in the classroom."*

# Student Classroom Ambassador Stories:

## MARYAM'S STORY



**Second-year international student; Tech2U has helped her build confidence and a sense of community**

*"I met five new friends in the Tech2U program which helps me a lot because I'm not a talkative person and I have to practice my English because I'm not a native speaker. "*

I'm a 2nd year international student studying Biology. With my first year at U of T being fully remote, this was my first time in Canada. I was anxious about starting school in-person as I hadn't managed to develop connections with other students online. Moving to Toronto by myself and being unfamiliar with the city and the campus was very overwhelming and scary for me.

I was really hesitant to work for Tech2U as I don't have much technological experience, but **the program has really helped me by pushing me out of my comfort zone.** Working for Tech2U allowed me to make new friends, get familiarized with campus, and even practice my English. Before this, I couldn't imagine myself having the confidence to approach a professor, but every week I became more comfortable making my role known in classrooms. Professors recognized me and asked me for advice for their tech setups. **As an introvert, I don't think I could have made these connections so quickly if I wasn't part of Tech2U, and I really value the support, appreciation, and sense of community the program has provided me.**



# Student Classroom Ambassador Stories:

## CASSIE'S STORY



**Graduate student; Tech2U has made her feel enjoyment and connection with other students**

*"I feel more and more comfortable while interacting with professors since I've accumulated a good deal of experience with the solution of technical problems."*

I'm a graduate student, studying Mathematics. I've worked some similar jobs involving technology before, but I enjoyed Tech2U because it was both challenging and fulfilling to solve problems on the go and make a real impact in the learning environment for instructors and students. Even though I had learned some of these skills before, every shift was fun because there was always a new and surprising way to apply what I knew to different situations.

I'd say that I felt very confident while I was on the job. I take pride in being efficient. Every time I was tasked to work in a new building, I made notes about the classrooms and the instructors so that I could be even more prepared for the next shift and make decisions in uncertain situations. This familiarity with the buildings helped me establish a rapport with instructors, which I really enjoyed! Lastly, **Ambassador meetings were an opportunity to connect with other students and share our experiences on the job, which has helped me connect beyond my graduate program.**



# Student Classroom Ambassador Stories:

## KAI'S STORY



**Third-year domestic student; has found Tech2 beneficial for his personal development and wellbeing**

*"I honestly like the CA meetings because I am an engineer and previously a CS student, so I only focus on the technology things. In this meeting I can learn a lot of things a lot outside of my area like how I should communicate with other people, how I should schedule my timetable, how can I relax."*

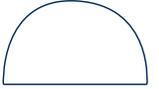
I'm a third-year undergraduate student, studying engineering. I applied to Tech2U because I had a lot of tech skills and I thought these would be useful. At the start I thought weekly Classroom Ambassador meetings would consist of purely technical training, in which case I could use that time to just zone out.

**After attending several meetings, I realized I was actually learning a lot of new things that were surprisingly helpful for my personal development and wellbeing.** For instance, in one meeting we learned about tips for time management, which was useful for someone like me who tends to leave things to the last minute. In another meeting, we talked about the importance of taking care of ourselves and discussed self-care strategies. Balancing school and work can be stressful but learning about resilience and familiarizing myself with the mental health support available has been extremely useful. I now know that I can rely on the folks at Tech2U to be there for me when I need it.



# End-of-Year Reflections

Below we provide final reflections from the Classroom Ambassador team that underscores the impact of the program on the students involved.



## The Power of Communication

Classroom Ambassadors repeatedly pointed out that by being a part of the Tech2U program, they enhanced their communication skills. They expressed that communication was significant for addressing issues in the classroom with instructors in a timely manner. Communication helped them develop an open relationship with each other and the co-pilots.

“Communicating with co-pilots & addressing issues helps a lot.”

“Communication is #1”

## Sense of Belonging and Community

Classroom Ambassadors expressed that through their work study experience, they made friends, met new people, and interacted with different professors. They felt that the program was a great opportunity for networking and building a range of connections.

“Tech2U has been a great experience for me - Meeting new people and interacting with the professors.”

“Explore campus, meet fellow students, great opportunity to interact with instructors & super easy job to do!”

## Failure is not Fatal

Classroom Ambassadors felt that this program provided them with a non-judgmental space where they could learn from their mistakes. They did not feel afraid to experience failure because of the support they received from the leadership team.

“I am grateful for the copilots for always being there to help whenever we run into any issues.”

“Don't feel upset when you make a mistake during your shift. The program is all about learning from mistakes.”

## A Learning Opportunity

Classroom Ambassadors explained that they were continually learning new skills over the course of their work study term. Each shift and weekly meeting provided them with the opportunity to enhance their soft interpersonal skills and hard skills related to technology.

“I learned more about conflict management, networking, and self-confidence. Also, I learned how to set up and operate teaching stations and Tech2U stations.”

“I really appreciate Anna's presentations and I feel like I always learn something from them.”

“Best way for me to learn the campus and the classrooms.”

“Weekly team meetings on personal growth is my biggest takeaway with Tech2U along with a bunch of friends and cool people I've known!”

## Other Reflections to Think About...

“This is the best work study position to take up!”

“Tech2U taught me the ways of working in Canada! So, thank you! <3”

# The Value of Tech2U

## WHAT CLASSROOM SUPPORT LOOKS LIKE

### WITH TECH2U:

- ✓ In-person support and direct hands-on troubleshooting
- ✓ No fees for services
- ✓ Individualized support
- ✓ Equipment delivery and setup
- ✓ On-site support for dual delivery
- ✓ Focus on teaching, not technology
- ✓ Enable new teaching and teaching innovation
- ✓ Backup intercom support

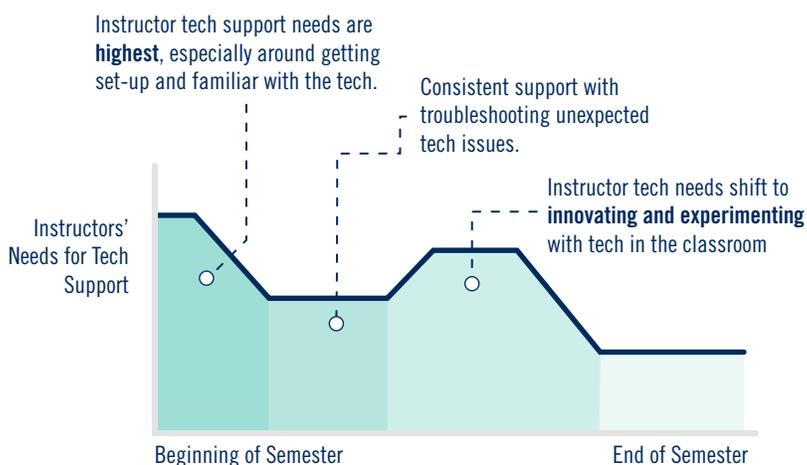
### WITHOUT TECH2U:

- ✓ Remote troubleshooting
- ✓ Fees for services

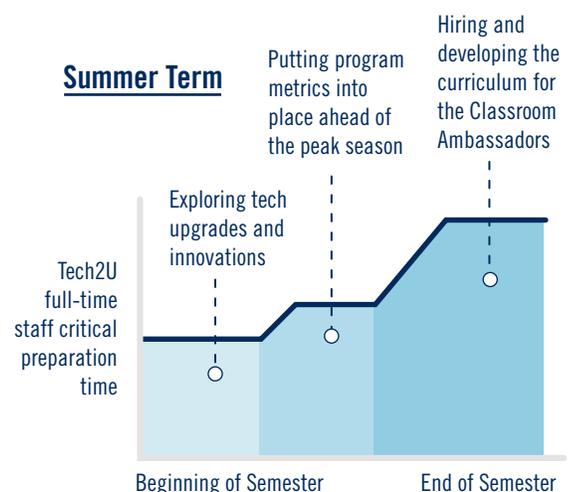
## Annual Timing of Support

The program has generated findings concerning the annual peaks and off-season of tech support needs. Notably, the peak aligned well with the use of the work study program, making it possible to address the higher needs at these critical times.

### Fall or Winter Term



### Summer Term

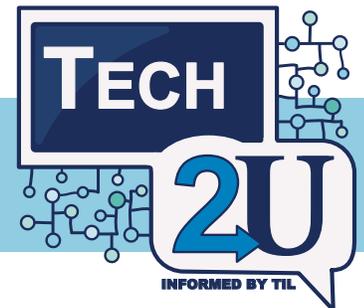


# Next Steps

This first year has allowed the program to get off-the-ground and operational with initial success. A next year will allow for both improving and strengthening delivery. It will also allow it to reach a more fulsome operational capacity, supporting the University's investment in technological and instructional innovation. More specifically, these improvements will include:

- 1 **COORDINATE AND COLLABORATE WITH THE EDTECH COMMUNITY**
- 2 **FOCUS ON COMMUNICATIONS WITH INSTRUCTORS ABOUT THE PROGRAM, ITS SUPPORT OFFERINGS, AND RESOURCES**
- 3 **IMPROVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY, CREATING A REGULAR REPORT-BACK STRUCTURE, CURRICULUM FOR THE WORK STUDY STUDENTS, ALONG WITH OTHER PROVISIONS OF SUPPORT**
- 4 **ESTABLISH A DASHBOARD OF KEY PROGRAM METRICS TO MEASURE AND EVALUATE SUCCESS**
- 5 **CONSULT WITH DIVISIONS TO ENSURE TECH2U MEETS THEIR NEEDS**
- 6 **DEVELOP A TRAINING CURRICULUM AND HIRE A FULL SUITE OF STUDENTS IN SUMMER 2022 TO BE FULLY PREPARED FOR A BUSY FALL LAUNCH**

## In Summary



Initial implementation of Tech2U has not come without its challenges, navigating a continually uncertain pandemic environment, including most notably the unexpected campus closure in December. At the same time, **the program provides the proactive and just-in-time technical support precisely needed at such times and as the classroom learning environment continues to become more technological.**

Throughout, the program impact has been felt most on a human level: people involved support each other and are supported, thereby humanizing the technological classroom experience. The engaged and changing classroom environment is well-supported by the Classroom Ambassador work study students, who can respond to instructors quickly and in a personal manner. The Classroom Ambassador encourages connections between students, technical staff and instructors while developing the student technical skills. Co-pilots provide improved and personalized service to instructors while mentoring Ambassadors to harness their personal and professional development. Working in partnership, this support team and program supports instructors to foster healthy classrooms where students feel engaged.

# END NOTES

1. For Fall 2021, divisions with less than 1% of total count of instructors, including; ARCLA UG Architecture & Landscape Arch., DENT Faculty of Dentistry, FPEH Kinesiology and Physical Ed, INF Faculty of Information Science, Joseph Rotman School of Management, NUR Faculty of Nursing-Year 1, SGS ARCLA Architecture Grad Courses, SGS DALLA Dalla Lana School of Pub Hlth, SGS NURS Nursing, Graduate, SGS OISUT Education Graduate OISE, and SGS PHM Pharmacy
2. For Fall 2021, divisions with less than 1% of total count of courses, including; DENT Faculty of Dentistry, FPEH Kinesiology and Physical Ed, General, INF Faculty of Information Science, Joseph Rotman School of Management, NUR Faculty of Nursing-Year 1, SCS School of Continuing Studies, SGS ARCLA Architecture Grad Courses, SGS DALLA Dalla Lana School of Pub Hlth, SGS NURS Nursing, Graduate, SGS OISUT Education Graduate OISE, SGS PHM Pharmacy Graduate, SGS SGS Graduate Studies Academic Comm, TYP Transitional Year Programme, Undergraduate Medicine, WDW Woodsworth College Programmes, and PHM Faculty of Pharmacy.
3. For Winter 2022, divisions with less than 1% of total count of courses, including; Faculty of Dentistry, Faculty of Information, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Music, Faculty of Nursing, Transitional Year Programme.
4. For Winter 2022, divisions with less than 1% of total count of courses, including; Woodsworth College Programmes, Faculty of Dentistry, Faculty of Music, Faculty of Nursing, Faculty of Pharmacy, Transitional Year Programme, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, Faculty of Information.



For more information about Tech2U please visit [ism.utoronto.ca](https://ism.utoronto.ca) or contact [innovationhub@utoronto.ca](mailto:innovationhub@utoronto.ca).