

York University

presents

York University Faculty Association Trust  
with a Funding Request to provide Student  
Financial Support for Access Programs

---

March 2011



## Introduction

YUFA Trust has generously supported important programs at York University that reduce barriers to post-secondary education. For many years, you have directed significant funding to help students in financial need, and you have supported innovative projects that aim to improve access to education such as the Advanced Credit Experience (ACE).

In 2010, YUFA and YUFA Trust collectively committed \$130,000 towards the launch of the Transition Year Program (TYP), the most recent program introduced at York to increase access to post-secondary education for non-traditional students.

**Thank you for your generous support of initiatives that improve access to post-secondary education.**

## Reducing Barriers to Post-Secondary Education

“There are a number of indicators that suggest participating in higher education pays huge dividends for individuals, their communities, and for society at large. At the individual level, attending PSE increases lifetime earnings and allows for more stable employment. At the community level, post-secondary institutions contribute billions to their local economies, and post-secondary graduates are more likely to volunteer and have higher levels of civic engagement. At the societal level, post-secondary graduates pay considerably more taxes, are less likely to receive government transfers, are healthier, and commit fewer crimes.” (College Student Alliance, Ontario Student Trustees’ Association, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance: *Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Equal Access to Higher Education*, 2011)

Access to post-secondary education helps students become better citizens. However, for students from vulnerable populations, the idea of attending university often seems impossible and the barriers insurmountable. A combination of barriers exists for students, particularly first-generation students, including financial, knowledge and personal barriers.

York University has been committed to accessibility and social responsibility since its inception. This commitment was renewed in the York University White Paper *Building a More Engaged University: Strategic Directions for York University 2010-2020*. Access is one of York University’s fundamental values. York has made significant commitments to Access programs and takes a great deal of pride in the efforts made in the pursuit of increasing Access.

York’s interest in Access includes outreach to non-traditional students. ACE and TYP, both of which YUFA and YUFA Trust has been highly supportive of, struggle for funding each year. Funding for these programs has been challenging to secure as they fall outside of the funding guidelines of many granting organizations given the non-traditional background of participants. While there appears to be a shifting tide in society’s interest in Access programs, funding at York University is still cobbled together from enlightened sources: government programs, University monies, and donations from YUFA.

**We ask YUFA Trust to consider providing further funding to support access to York University. We request that you consider a gift of \$500,000 to be split evenly between the Advanced Credit Experience which offers students in high school an opportunity to participate in a first-year course, and the Transition Year Program for young adults who did not complete high school.**

## The Advanced Credit Experience (ACE)

If well-designed and supported, an Advanced Credit Experience (ACE) is a valuable tool for increasing access to post-secondary education for several reasons. Selected students learn to navigate the post secondary experience, viewed by many members of our communities as mysterious and unfriendly. Academic success bolsters confidence in their ability to manage post-secondary expectations and provides the skills and knowledge to continue their success. Beyond this impact is a societal benefit—as post-secondary education becomes more familiar within the community, it becomes a norm rather than an exception.

The Faculty of Education at York University established ACE in 2004 with 20 students and today the program flourishes with 50-60 students enrolled annually. The ACE we have developed involves students who attend a high school in close proximity to York's Keele campus and who live in the neighbourhood. The students who are chosen to take part in the program have academic potential but are also deemed by teachers and counselors to be unlikely to proceed to post-secondary.

While it remains important that York University develop and maintain strong relations with our most immediate neighbours, we must also concern ourselves with the lives and educational opportunities of the many students who live in the GTA for whom access to post-secondary education remains a challenge. These include traditional first generation students, recent immigrant and refugee students, and students living with economic challenges. Suburban areas, once viewed as middle and upper class retreats from urban life, have become increasingly demographically diverse. However, they lag behind urban centres in terms of their capacity to address the social, cultural, educational and economic needs of their new and burgeoning populations.

As such, the Faculty Education proposes to continue its existing successful ACE program while expanding its offerings with an on-line delivery model designed to reach high school students who do not live in the immediate neighbourhood but across the GTA. In order to expand the program, we need to develop, pilot and evaluate a new model.

Existing advanced credit programs offered by other universities feature either a school-based professor-led course or a campus-based course. There are logistical challenges associated with both of these models, particularly if the horizon of the reach of the program is based on on-going expansion that, as resources accumulate, holds the potential for serving a large number of schools in a number of local school boards. Envisioned in this proposal are on-line course experiences with scheduled campus visits. Participating schools would be those identified as 'concurrent site schools', thus allowing for the participation of teacher candidates, faculty site facilitators, and engaged school faculty and administration. Campus visits will include academic skill development, career counselling, student service tutorials as well as tours, events, and conferences.

The York University White Paper states that York University will aim to improve accessibility for students by significantly expanding online delivery of courses and programs as part of its efforts to enhance learning through the use of technology. On-line offering of the ACE program will significantly widen access to university education for non-traditional students by facilitating virtual-mobility of students.

The first two years of the pilot on-line ACE we will seek to enroll 10 students with a maximum of 20 in the following years. As few as five students or as many as twenty could participate from any one school, and the potential for expansion is technically unlimited.

**As we endeavour to develop sustainable funding for the existing ACE and expand to offer an on-line course we ask YUFA Trust to consider further support of the ACE program with a gift of \$250,000, \$25,000 of which would be used on an expendable basis over five years to cover student transportation costs for 10 students annually enrolled in the on-line ACE and a year-end celebration, and \$225,000 of which would be endowed, creating a fund of \$450,000 to generate \$22,500 per year in perpetuity to support students participating in the existing Advanced Credit Experience at York University.**

## The Transition Year Program (TYP)

What bridge back into university exists for the adult who did not complete high school? What path into university is there for the adult with extraordinary academic potential who abandoned his or her high school education because of a struggle with overwhelming family or financial responsibilities, or a hostile peer environment, or an undiagnosed learning disability?

For young adults from low income households, with an incomplete high school education and no family members to mentor them, university rarely sits in the realm of their possibilities. Not only do they face material and personal challenges, but often their earlier experience of schooling has been unsuccessful, frustrating and out of necessity abandoned for financial reasons.

“Transition Year” programs exist in varied forms at many universities. The Transition Year Program at York University is distinct—it has been formatted to provide support so that students can be successful. As the first TYP class has proven, the students who find the courage to commit to come back into the formal education system are both extremely bright and very hungry for an education—much more so than the typical undergraduate student. The purpose of TYP is to shore up their academic competencies, affirm their belief in their own intellectual abilities, provide them the academic skills lost by their earlier abandonment of education, and facilitate their integration into the university culture. Success demands not only a robust set of remedial academic skills but dedicated assistance with helping them to navigate both the “system” and the culture. The combination of dedicated academic, administrative, social and financial support is proven to ensure retention and academic success.

Testimonials from participants in the TYP are indicative of the overwhelming success we’re experiencing:

- *My experience in the first Sociology Lecture was amazing. I said something in class and the whole room was cheering. That just made me feel so good. Thanks to [the TYP team] I have a place at York.* Sharon
- *You do much more than "make university education equitable and accessible." Perfect -- thanks again.* Daniyal
- *Thanks for meeting me tonight. I feel confident that I can finish this year strong and it will be in most part due to [the TYP team's] extensive help.* Dakota
- *TYP gives me a sense of belonging in university, which for me has made the difference in meeting my academic goals.* Ayaz

**As we endeavour to develop sustained funding, we ask YUFA Trust to consider further support of the TYP with a gift of \$250,000, \$50,000 of which would be used on an expendable basis over two years to cover emergency student costs for up to 60 students annually, and \$200,000 of which would be endowed, creating a fund of \$400,000 to generate \$20,000 per year in perpetuity, providing a reliable source of funding for the support of students enrolled in the Transition Year Program.**

## **Conclusion**

Access is a fundamental value at York University. Access programs inherently attract vulnerable and non-traditional populations, and as such we must plan creatively to create conditions that will help participants be successful.

Sustained funding allows for effective programming and long-term planning. YUFA Trust has recognized the value of Access programs, and has provided enlightened support to pilot innovative ideas and to leverage matching opportunities.

**We request that you consider a gift of \$500,000 to be utilized as follows:**

### **\$200,000: Student Support for participants in TYP**

To be endowed and matched by OTSS, creating an endowment of \$400,000. This endowment will generate \$20,000 per year in perpetuity to provide financial support to students in TYP.

### **\$50,000: Emergency Bursary Funding**

\$25,000 per year for two years to cover student emergency costs.

### **\$25,000: Program delivery – ACE on-line pilot project**

\$5,000 per year for five years to cover student transportation costs for the new on-line ACE and an annual end of year celebration for all ACE students.

### **\$225,000: Student Support for existing ACE participants and online participants**

To be endowed and matched by OTSS, creating an endowment of \$450,000. This endowment will generate \$22,500 per year in perpetuity to cover costs related to tuition and materials for:

- 25 students from C.W. Jefferys Collegiate Institute and J. C. McGuigan Catholic High School cohort whose participation was supported by MTCU First Generation funding (now unavailable) and;
- 10 students participating in the expanded on-line ACE.

**In recognition of your support, we welcome the opportunity to work with YUFA Trust to create a customized, meaningful way to recognize your generous investment. Thank you very much for your kind consideration.**

**For more information, please contact:**

Lisa Gleva  
Principal Gifts Officer  
(416) 650-8245 or [gleval@yorkfoundation.yorku.ca](mailto:gleval@yorkfoundation.yorku.ca)  
York University Foundation  
West Office Building  
4700 Keele Street  
Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3  
[www.yorku.ca/foundation](http://www.yorku.ca/foundation)

Or

Sandy Tieman  
Chief Development Officer, Faculties of Education  
and Environmental Studies  
(416) 650-8013 or [tiemans@yorkfoundation.yorku.ca](mailto:tiemans@yorkfoundation.yorku.ca)  
York University Foundation  
West Office Building  
4700 Keele Street  
Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3  
[www.yorku.ca/foundation](http://www.yorku.ca/foundation)

**Business Number (formerly Charitable Registration):** 86383 1616 RR0001