HOW DO WE BETTER UNDERSTAND OUR WORLD AND GAIN INSIGHTS INTO THE FUTURE?

Exploring human experiences — past and present — with peers offers an exciting opportunity for insight into the future. You will find the same enriching dialogue and reflection at the University of Toronto. We are proud to support the global Zoroastrian community at the 7th World Zoroastrian Youth Conference.

Since it was founded in 1827, the University of Toronto has made the world's major civilizations — their rich traditions and extraordinary contributions to human knowledge — an important focus of our research, teaching and intellectual inquiry.

Zoroastrian studies holds an important place in this programming. U of T's introductory course has consistently been the largest class on Zoroastrianism in the world. With a future goal to permanently offer Avestan and Pahlavi courses, U of T aspires to create one of the most comprehensive academic curricula to prepare a new generation of leading scholars of Zoroastrian studies.

Global learning starts here: artsci.utoronto.ca

Program Brochure
October 17, 2019
Program Brochure

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Mission Statement
To establish a permanent place for Zoroastrian studies and the study of Avesta and Pahlavi languages at University of Toronto
Case Statement

- **There is need** of an academic institution offering advanced studies and research in Zoroastrian religion and teaching Avesta, Pahlavi and ancient Iranian languages to perpetuate them and keep from becoming extinct.
- **There still** are many texts in Avesta, Pahlavi and ancient Iranian languages that need to be examined from linguistic point of view. By expanding the global network of scholars and experts leading to research in these languages, old texts could usefully be translated and examined as part of the study of the religion.
- **Currently there is no** endowed position in Zoroastrian studies at an Institution of higher learning in North America.
- **Several proposals** for Zoroastrian studies in North America received by FEZANA were evaluated by a scholastic committee and the recommendation was to pursue the University of Toronto proposal.
- **University of Toronto has a stated objective** “to become a leader in Zoroastrian studies in North America”.
- **A program in perpetuity** will ensure continuity of research and teaching of Zoroastrianism at an institution of higher learning.
- **Professor Tavakoli**, a member of the department of Near and Middle Eastern studies at University of Toronto is very passionate about the religion of Asho Zarathushtra and will champion the program.
- **University of Toronto has already taken the following actions towards its leadership position**
  - Proposed creation of a professorship in Zoroastrian studies with FEZANA investment of US $1.5 million.
  - Has offered matching funds of up to $1.5 million Canadian for this endowed position.
  - Will assist with marketing and promotion of this initiative.
  - Has assembled the largest faculty on Iranian studies through the efforts of Professor Tavakoli.
  - Has already created a new position to teach courses on Introduction to Zoroastrianism.
Needs Statement

- To raise US $1.5 million by April 30, 2020
- University of Toronto matching fund offer of $1.5 million Canadian expires on April 30, 2020
Program Genesis

- **University of Toronto submitted** its first proposal to FEZANA for the extension of Yarshater lectureship for three years in April 2017.

- **A meeting was arranged** at the University with Professor Tavakoli and his associates in August 2017. The discussion evolved to having an endowed position of a Chair or Lectureship for Zoroastrian studies.

- **A revised proposal was submitted** by the University describing the financial endowment for (a) Chair, (b) Lectureship and (c) an expendable grant for extension of Yarshater Lectureship in December 2017.

- **This proposal was circulated** among several scholars and their suggestions were incorporated to generate a revised proposal.

- **This revised proposal was presented** to philanthropists in India for financial support with no success.

- **During this time FEZANA received** other proposals for Zoroastrian studies in North America. It was decided to get all proposals reviewed by a scholastic community.

- **An ad-hoc committee** to evaluate all proposals, was established by the FEZANA President in March 2018.

- **A final collated report** of the ad-hoc committee was submitted to the FEZANA President in February 2019.

- **The evaluations clearly suggested** to pursue the proposal of University of Toronto.

- **A follow up meeting was organized** with Professor Tavakoli and his associates at the University of Toronto, on April 5 2019 to determine how we could work together to make this project a reality.

- **On May 8, 2019** the University of Toronto made a breakthrough matching funds proposal to support an endowed Professorship of Zoroastrian Languages and Literature. The university proposed to match $1.5 million CDN if FEZANA raised $1.5 million US by April 30, 2020.
Since its founding in 1827, the University of Toronto (U of T) has made the studies of world civilizations a vital focus of its research, teaching and intellectual inquiry.

As one of the oldest world religions, the study of Zoroastrian languages and literature is a significant component of this educational mission, which is advanced by the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (NMC), faculty of Arts and Science.

U of T’s introductory course in Zoroastrianism has consistently been one of the largest classes of Zoroastrianism in the world.

In this course, students are introduced to the Zoroastrian religion from its origin to contemporary times. It also highlights the foundational impact Zoroastrianism had on the development of Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam.

To enable students to pursue advanced studies in Zoroastrianism, NMC offered courses in Avesta and Pahlavi languages in a pilot project over the last few years.

With the success of this project, U of T now aspires to permanently offer advanced training in these languages of the Zoroastrian scriptures and sacred texts.
Vision and Objectives for the Program at The University of Toronto

- To make University of Toronto the premier institution for establishing the scholarship on Zoroastrianism, unrivaled amongst its peer institutions in Europe and North America.

- To transform the Zoroastrian Studies program at the University of Toronto to international prominence, greatly elevating its significance and contribution to the study of Zoroastrianism.

- To offer a comprehensive academic curriculum involving training in Zoroastrian languages.

- To prepare a new generation of rigorously trained scholars who are dedicated to original research in primary Zoroastrian texts.

- To ensure the wealth of research being conducted by faculty and students, will be sustained over generations.
Capital Campaign Timeline

**MAY 14, 2019** » Create fundraising team (solicitors)

**JULY 20, 2019** » Establish prospect list

**JULY 22, 2019** » Match solicitors to prospects

**SEPTEMBER 1, 2019** » Create donor recognition policy

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2019** » Finalize proposal brochure for prospects

**OCTOBER 17, 2019** » Finish training of solicitors

**OCTOBER 18, 2019** » Initiate prospect cultivation

**NOVEMBER 21, 2019** » Review and consider prospect feedback and input

**DECEMBER 1, 2019** » Initiate prospect solicitation

**APRIL 30, 2020** » Conclude Capital Campaign
Donor Recognition Policy

The University of Toronto and FEZANA are committed to building enduring relationships with our benefactors. A tailored recognition and accountability program will be developed for our donors. Recognition will include:

- **Acknowledgement** of your generosity in various university, faculty and departmental communications channels
- **Invitations** to events
- **A report** of the professors annual activities
- **Announcement** about the inaugural professorship appointment
- **Unique opportunities** developed in consultation with FEZANA and you, the donor.
### Gift Table

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Donation Form

YES, I would like to make a gift to the University of Toronto in support of the FEZANA Professorship of Zoroastrian Languages and Literature!

1. MY INFORMATION
   Name
   Email
   Address
   Phone Number
   May we recognize you by including your name in published donor lists?
   Yes
   No
   Legacy Giving:
   Yes, I have named U of T as a beneficiary in my will.
   No, please send me information.
   This donation is made on behalf of:
   Individual
   Business

2. MY GIFT
   Gift Amount: $
   Designation:
   One-time Gift
   Monthly Gift: please charge my credit card on the first day of each month.

3. PAYMENT DETAILS
   Visa
   Mastercard
   AMEX
   Card Number
   Expiry
   Name on Card
   Signature
   Cheque (payable to University of Toronto)

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
   Please return form to:
   Mr. Gary Kaufman, Treasurer
   The Associates of the University of Toronto, Inc.
   58 West 84th Street, #2F
   New York, NY 10024 USA

For more information on giving to U of T through the Associates, please call toll free 1-800-699-1736 or email associates.ut@utoronto.ca. The Associates is a not-for-profit organization recognized under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c)(3).

Designation:

Thank you for your generous support, Your Canadian charitable tax receipt will be mailed to you.

Thank you for your generous support, Your U.S. charitable tax receipt will be mailed to you.
FAQs

How will this Professorship benefit the Zoroastrian Community?
Growing the Zoroastrian Studies program at the University of Toronto will result in,

› More students able to read and understand the ancient languages of Avesta and Pahlavi.
› More research and publications on the translated texts and their context in history.

When a series of materials is periodically released into the mainstream media, it is likely to raise awareness of Zoroastrianism worldwide. For Zoroastrians, the stream of such discoveries can be very affirming, helping adults to better understand their historical roots, and helping youth build their identity as part of an ancient and well respected past.

Will this professorship replace the current Zoroastrian Studies program offered by Professor Enrico Raffaelli at University of Toronto?
Professor Enrico Raffaelli is the Professor of the History of Zoroastrianism. The proposed endowed Professorship of Zoroastrian Languages and Literature is a new faculty line in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations that will further enhance the existing research and teaching of the Zoroastrian Studies program offered by Professor Enrico Raffaelli. The two faculty positions will complement each other and advance a rich curriculum. The Professor of Zoroastrian Languages and Literature will teach courses on Avesta and Pahlavi. These languages will also allow students to take classes focused on primary Zoroastrian texts and gain access to the meaning of the Avesta textual corpus and the main Pahlavi religious treatises.

What will happen to the funds raised if the goal of $1.5 million is not accomplished by April 30, 2020?
The University will evaluate the full situation with FEZANA and establish the best course of action at that time. We may explore alternative opportunities for the teaching of Avesta and Pahlavi, such as an endowed lectureship that supports the hiring of sessional instructors or supporting an annual symposium on Zoroastrian Studies. Our decisions will always be in line with the original spirit of the donations. All donors will be kept fully informed.
FAQs

In case of US donors, is this donation tax deductible since the money is going to Canada?

US donors may choose to direct their giving to FEZANA and receive a US tax receipt. Other Donors wishing to donate directly to the University of Toronto will receive a Canadian tax receipt, or to the Associates of the University of Toronto Inc. for a US tax receipt. Similarly, donors wish to make a gift of securities may give to U of T or the Associates of the University of Toronto Inc. for either a Canadian or US tax receipt.

Why don’t we teach students Gathas so it can be of use to Zoroastrians?

We will. As the oldest Zoroastrian texts, the Gathas are an essential part in the history of Zoroastrianism, and its importance from a religious, linguistic and literary point of view must be always emphasized. In language and linguistic courses worldwide, it is best practice to teach the Gathas as well as other texts (e.g. the Yatha Ahu Vairyo and Ahem Vohu prayers) in the Old Avesta language, mainly to students who have completed a previous course on Young Avesta, because the Gathas and other Old Avesta texts have a more archaic, and therefore more complex, phonology, morphology and syntax.

What is the selection process for the professorship?

The job description will be widely disseminated in diverse and recognized international academic venues. In addition to University Affairs, the job announcement will appear on job sites of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the American Academy of Religion, the American Historical Association, the British Association for South Asian Studies, the Middle East Studies Association, the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, and all pertinent social media outlets. Additionally, the job description will be posted on various Zoroastrian and Religious Studies discussion lists. Members of the Search Committee (made up of Faculty members in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations and potentially members of other departments) will also send the advertisement to colleagues and potential candidates.

These applications are assessed and judged by the Search Committee, and a “short list” of approximately three to five candidates is produced and the candidates then come to campus for interviews. The chair of the department consults with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science after a candidate has been selected and if satisfied that an effective search has been made, they shall then seek the Provost’s approval to authorize the departmental chair to proceed with making of a formal offer to the selected candidate.
Can you provide examples of material and deliverables that will be generated by this position?

The Professor of Zoroastrian Languages and Literature will be conducting original research that will result in many deliverables, such as monographs (including critical editions of Avesta and Pahlavi texts), scientific articles published in top journals, and papers presented at international conferences on the most relevant texts transmitted in these languages. Moreover, this research will attract international collaborations between scholars of Zoroastrian studies and related fields, consolidate already established scientific networks and help to create new ones.

In addition, the researcher can also promote outreach initiatives. For example, lectures on concrete topics of his/her current research, addressed to the Zoroastrian community and general public.

Can you provide examples of original texts that will be examined and researched in this curriculum?

Several scholars have conducted deep studies of Avesta and Pahlavi texts during the last two centuries; however, most of these texts still lack critical editions that fulfil modern scientific standards. This is especially needed in the case of Pahlavi translations of Avesta texts, and more concretely of the Pahlavi Widēwdād, the Pahlavi Yasna, and the Pahlavi Wīsperad, mainly due to the difficulty of understanding the technical language of the Pahlavi translations, and to the fact that few scholars have enough proficiency in both Avesta and Pahlavi.

A position which prioritizes Avesta and Pahlavi languages and literature will substantially improve the research on these texts and eventually produce new critical editions that help scholars and general public understand these difficult texts. From a didactic point of view, these are some examples of texts that especially interest and motivate the students:

- **Old Avesta:** the Ahunauaitī Gāϑā.
- **Young Avesta:** Widēwdād 2 (the legend of Yima); Yašt 19; Yasna 9 (the beginning of the hymn to Haoma).
- **Classical Pahlavi:** Mādayān i Jōšt i Friyān; Kārnāmag i Ardaxšīr i Pābagān ("Deeds of Ardaxšīr i Pābagān", a good example of epic literature about the founder of the Sasanian Empire)
- **Pahlavi Zand literature** (a specialized course recommended for students who already took a course on Avesta or Pahlavi): the Pahlavi translations of the Avesta texts of Widēwdād 2, Yasna 9, and Widēwdād 13.
FAQs

Can you compare this initiative with initiatives for the study of Jewish foundational texts?

There are several positions in Jewish Studies at international universities that lead innovative research on the Jewish foundational texts. All of them are rooted in the necessity of a deep knowledge of the Biblical languages, as the only secure means to produce this innovative research as well as to train top students in the rigorous scientific standards required to properly understand those texts. A similar approach is needed in the field of Zoroastrian studies, where only the research and teaching of the languages in which the Zoroastrian foundational texts (the Avesta, the Pahlavi and and the Pahlavi texts derived therefrom) were transmitted will provide the solid basis for excellent research and successful teaching results for understanding the history and theology of Zoroastrian communities up to the seventh century.

Will this program offer online classes and summer seminars on Zoroastrian studies?

Yes. Online classes in Avesta and Pahlavi languages and literatures will be made available through progressive and guided online lessons, accompanied by online tasks that allow the students to evaluate their own progress. Summer seminars may also be arranged in collaboration with international universities and libraries where Zoroastrian manuscripts are preserved, in order to attract a higher number of potential students.

Will FEZANA be able to influence this program in any way?

The University will continue building a strong relationship with FEZANA and engage in ongoing communications, such an annual financial reports on the endowment and activity reports from the professor. However, the selection of the professor, the focus of his/her research and curriculum offerings are the sole responsibility of the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations and the University of Toronto. We support the rights of freedom of speech, academic freedom, and freedom of research.

The University will continue to promote high quality research and strive to ensure that its graduates are educated in the broadest sense of the term, with the ability to think clearly, judge objectively, and contribute constructively to society. Academia working in partnership with community will produce more effective and interesting results than working in isolation. Therefore FEZANA welcomes university students and professors to showcase their research in community forums, generating excitement and interest which will further energize the academic team.