

[Home](#)

World-renowned urban expert to become next U of T president

Merik Gertler 16th president in university's history

Merik Gertler, a world-renowned expert on urban issues, will be the next President of the [University of Toronto](#), **Richard Nunn**, Chair of the University's Governing Council, announced today.

The appointment, confirmed by the Council this morning, is for a five-year term and is the result of an international search that began in June of 2012.

Professor Gertler will become the [16th president](#) in the 186-year history of the University. He will succeed

Professor **David Naylor**, president since 2005.



Professor Merik Gertler (photo by Brian Summers)

[Gertler](#) has been dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science – U of T's largest and most diverse academic division – since December 1, 2008. He joined the faculty in the Department of Geography in 1983 after receiving his doctorate from Harvard University. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and a member of the Academy of Social Sciences in the United Kingdom, he is the author, co-author or co-editor of more than 80 scholarly publications and six books. His academic work focuses on the economies of cities, the urban foundations of innovation, and the role of creativity, culture and diversity in urban life.

"Dean Gertler has an outstanding track record at the University for academic excellence and strong administrative leadership," said Nunn. "We are pleased those qualities will now be put to use in a new role as President."

"After an extensive international search, the fact we were able to find someone of Professor Gertler's stature right here is a testament to the depth of this great University," added **David Wilson**, chair of the [Presidential Search](#) Committee.

Gertler said he is deeply honoured to be appointed to this position.

"Over the years, the University of Toronto has, time and again, proven to be a place of unparalleled learning and discovery, for the best students and the best faculty," he said. "To be chosen to lead U of T during a time of great change in our sector is both challenging and exhilarating."

"I am following in the footsteps of President Naylor – a leader who has combined vision, hard work and dedication to propel the University to compete with the best institutions in the world. This is a tremendous foundation upon which to build."

Gertler's appointment will ensure the University can build upon its reputation as a world leader in research, innovation and academic achievement, said Naylor.

"Professor Gertler is a gifted scholar, teacher, mentor, and administrator whose advice on urban issues has been sought by governments around the world," Naylor said. "Along with an extraordinary breadth of knowledge and experience, Merik Gertler brings to the presidency an unwavering dedication to excellence in post-secondary education and advanced research."

Internationally renowned as a distinguished academic, Gertler's research focuses on the geography of innovative activity and the economies of city-regions. He has been a frequent advisor to government agencies at all levels, both in Canada and abroad, as well as to multilateral organizations such as the European Union and the OECD. His research has attracted \$8.4 million in external funding.

"Over the past few months, I have been impressed by Professor Gertler's leadership at the Faculty of Arts and

Science,” said **Michael Wilson**, who was installed as the 33rd Chancellor of the University of Toronto on November 12th, 2012. “As Dean, he has worked to ensure the highest quality academic experience for students. I look forward to working with him in his new role.”

Since 1999, Gertler has held the Goldring Chair in Canadian Studies in University College and the Department of Geography. He was also the founding co-director of the Program on Globalization and Regional Innovation Systems (PROGRIS) at the Munk School of Global Affairs and has also served as director of the Department of Geography’s Program in Planning.

Gertler holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts from McMaster University, a master’s degree in city planning from the University of California, Berkeley, and a PhD from Harvard University.

In May 2012, he was awarded an honorary doctor of philosophy from Lund University, Sweden for his exceptional contributions to the fields of economic geography and regional development. In the same year, he was made an Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences (UK).

He has held visiting appointments at Oxford University, University College London, UCLA, and the University of Oslo. He won the 2007 Award for Scholarly Distinction from the Canadian Association of Geographers.

Gertler was also a member of the Expert Panel on Business Innovation established by the Council of Canadian Academies, which published its landmark report *Innovation and Business Strategy: Why Canada Falls Short* to wide acclaim in 2009.

[See photos of the announcement.](#)

Posted Monday, March 4, 2013

[Arts & Science](#) [Global](#) [President](#) [Top Stories](#)