

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND DECOLONIZATION REVIEW OF DOCTORAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT

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Own Your Future (OYF) Review Report

Project Purpose/Rationale

In recent years, Western University began multiple projects that seek to prioritize Indigenization, decolonization, anti-racism, accessibility, and anti-oppression across its programming and structures. Four years after the launch of the Own Your Future (OYF) Doctoral Professional Development Program, a review was conducted to assess how graduate professional development supports Indigenization and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (EDI-D).

This included:

- Evaluating existing programming provided through OYF
- Consulting various stakeholder groups to create recommendations that are based in the needs and experiences of stakeholders
- Reviewing new literature and best practices that align with Indigenization and EDI-D
- Providing recommendations on how programming can be improved with an Indigenization and EDI-D lens, as a final report and presentations

Objective

Provide recommendations that prioritize Indigenization and decolonization, and the call for the incorporation of Indigenous and EDI-D practices and content into existing and future OYF programming.

Outcome Goal

Create a report for the SGPS project team which summarizes the findings and outlines areas and suggestions for growth and development OYF program with an Indigenization and EDI-D focus.

Executed Plan

Step 1: Initial Review

- 1) Examined existing OYF program for areas of strength and potential areas of improvement
- 2) Conducted a document review of available OYF resources, including guiding documents, past programming, website, sessions, self-assessment form, etc.
- 3) Attended SOGS listening sessions, ad-hoc meetings, and OYF sessions

Step 2: Consultations

- 1) Established meetings with key stakeholders to assess needs and programming (Office of Indigenous Initiatives, Centre for Teaching and Learning, SOGS Vice-President Advocacy and commissioners)
 - a) Consulted around student professional development needs
 - b) Assessed how session leaders seek to include EDI-D principles into programming
- 2) Reviewed existing campus reports

- a) Indigenous Strategic Plan (2016):
<https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/docs/Indigenous-Strat-Plan---Final.pdf>
- b) Indigenous Strategic Plan Progress Report (2020):
<https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/docs/strat-plan-progress-report.pdf>
- c) President's Anti-Racism Working Group Final Report (2020):
<https://president.uwo.ca/pdf/arwg-final-report-to-president-shepard-fnl.pdf>
- d) Western University Strategic Plan (2021):
<https://strategicplan.uwo.ca/pdf/Western-Strategic-Report.pdf>
- e) ConversAction Anti-Racism Summit Report (2020):
https://uwaterloo.ca/renison/sites/ca.renison/files/uploads/files/conversation_report_aoda.pdf

Step 3: Research

- 1) Established how an Indigenizing and EDI-D lens can be applied to professionalization (e.g., what does EDI-D mean for OYF competencies)
- 2) Researched recent literature that captures information on professionalization and underrepresented groups (e.g. invisible labour and performing whiteness)
 - a) Established best practices or recommendations from these sources
 - b) Research questions:
 - i) What gaps/needs are identified
 - ii) What skills/competencies are important
 - iii) What assumptions underlie this research
 - iv) What recommendations are provided
- 3) Re-evaluate OYF programming against findings
 - a) How does OYF already support this information
 - b) How can OYF better support this information

Step 4: Report

- 1) Drafted one overarching report with subsections for recommendations: Indigenization and Decolonization, EDI-D, General, and Other Discoveries
- 2) Established recommendations that are actionable and manageable
- 3) Present to key stakeholders

Key Stakeholders

- 1) *Own Your Future* coordinators/session leaders
- 2) Western University School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
- 3) SOGS Commissioners, Ad-hoc committees
- 4) Office of Indigenous Initiatives
- 5) Centre for Teaching & Learning
- 6) President's Anti-Racism Working Group
- 7) Graduate programs
- 8) Graduate associate deans

REPORT

Introduction

We recognize the delicate, ever-changing nature of work surrounding Indigenization and EDI-D. We situate ourselves as learners in this process, and as such recognize how our experiences influence our values regarding Indigenization and EDI-D.

Within the recommendations included in this report, we recognize several guiding principles that have influenced our recommendations:

- 1) Stronger recognition for that, while these efforts each contribute to a more equitable and inclusive institution, the work of Indigenization and EDI-D each contain their own sets of needs, knowledges, and practices that warrant specific attention and should not be pared down. These efforts can work in partnership, given the intersections and similarities of such work, but grouping these all as “equity work” erases the unique challenges faced by Indigenous people seeking sovereignty of their own traditional lands and ways-of-living, the needs of other equity-deserving groups, and maintains “colonial forms of violence” (ConversAction, p. 13)
- 2) The need to create space that centres the experiences and professional development of Indigenous, Black, racialized, and equity-deserving PhDs without essentializing
 - The need “to create campuses where all voices can be heard equally, and where everyone can be fully themselves with the expectation of safety and belonging” (ConverAction, p. 5)
 - Acknowledge that “barriers to entering post-secondary institutions for Indigenous students begin well before they even reach the point of facing the existing application processes . . . that hostile campus climates and colonized academic curricula are additive in their impacts” (ConversAction, p. 12)
 - Indigenization and EDI-D efforts are at risk of short-term, superficial treatment, and existing policies can compound barriers that Indigenous students experience in the university. Furthermore, “by refusing to display or empower Indigenous scholarship, Indigenous ways of knowing, and Indigenous-led student support services, institutions create distrust about whether they are actually listening and actually willing to make changes, particularly with regards to their public messages around ‘Indigenization’ or their desire to ‘Indigenize the academy.’” (ConversAction, p. 12)
- 3) We also recognise the intersections of identities and the wide net that EDI-D work inherently casts. Indigenization, equity, diversity, inclusivity, and decolonization involve creating accessible, non-heteronormative spaces, and the recognition of the relationship between factors such as citizenship status or financial conditions and professional development and success.
- 4) We seek to dismantle the assumptions made about doctoral students, including their locations, identities, abilities, and needs.

Indigenization and Decolonization Recommendations

Introduction

Historically, educational institutions have been sites of generational trauma for the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island; however, due to the resiliency of Indigenous Peoples, increasing numbers are seeking higher education. These Indigenous people enter the academy with experiences, values, and priorities, which frequently differ from their non-Indigenous counterparts. These differing experiences, values, and priorities require differing supports that do not force Indigenous students to conform to Eurocentric, western ideals of success. Additionally, non-Indigenous students require education on the historic and continuing place of Indigenous Peoples within Canada in order to support Indigenous peoples and confront settler privileges.

With the creation of the Western University Indigenous Strategic Plan in 2016, multiple strategic directions were created to support Indigenous students, faculty, and staff while also supporting Indigenization and decolonization across all Western University structures. The strategic directions that guide the Indigenous Strategic Plan (Western University Indigenous Strategic Plan 2016, p. 6; Western University Indigenous Strategic Plan Annual Progress Report Fall 2020, p. 9) are the following:

- 1) Strengthen and build relationships with Indigenous communities
- 2) Nurture an inclusive campus culture that values Indigenous Peoples, perspectives and ways of knowing
- 3) Enhance Indigenous students' experiences
- 4) Achieve excellence in Indigenous research and scholarship
- 5) Excel in Indigenous teaching and learning
- 6) Indigenize Western's institutional practices and spaces
- 7) Become a university of choice for Indigenous students
- 8) Increase representation of Indigenous staff and faculty members

These strategic directions prioritize needs and seek to dismantle embedded assumptions.

In addition, the Progress Report details three continued priorities that OYF can support:

- Dismantle “assumed Euro-western disciplinary constructs and traditions” “in order to create equitable space for Indigenous Peoples, perspectives and ways of knowing to emerge” (p. 25)
- Foster attraction and retention of Indigenous scholars, attending to the “highly competitive academic hiring contexts” they must navigate (p. 25)
- Ease the burden and load on “small number of Indigenous employees and units” (p. 25)

Recommendations

1) Integrate Indigenization and Decolonization as Foundational across the Own Your Future Program

- a) Centre the notion that, what is good for Indigenous students is good for all students

- b) Incorporate Indigenous knowledges in every session
 - i) Ensure that Indigenization is a foundational aspect of professional development
 - e.g., How can we apply land acknowledgements to our daily and professional lives?
 - Provide information and training on how to craft land acknowledgements and when to include land acknowledgements
 - Not just land acknowledgements, but provide support for Indigenous students in every session and teaching/supporting all students to support Indigenous people
 - ii) Integrate Indigenous knowledges across all sessions
 - iii) Ensure that Indigenization is not sidelined or marginalized
 - iv) Empower students to reflect on the knowledge that they take for granted or normalize within their professional lives
 - e.g., How do we benefit from colonialism? What does it mean to be an ally? What assumptions do we have about success? What cultural capital is needed for professional success?
 - e.g., What types of knowledges do we include in our research? Which authors are included in our research? Why do we value particular knowledges or sources? What type of participants do we include in research and why did we choose that group?

2) Strengthen the Intercultural and Social Fluency Competency Area

- a) Create varied resources to support Indigenous student professional development
- b) Create resources to support the Indigenization and decolonization processes of non-Indigenous students at multiple levels of complexity
- c) Evaluate the workshop format to consider alternate avenues of an Indigenized and decolonized professional development program
 - i) The desired outcomes of students vary in the attainment of a doctoral degree; therefore, the manner in which support is delivered should vary to better support those desired outcomes held by students
 - ii) Recognize how professional lenses encouraged by universities may maintain Euro-western norms and consider ways to support students in their use of their own cultural lenses
 - iii) Create space and alternative experiences for students to connect with one another to further their processes of Indigenization and decolonization
 - iv) Evaluate the potential usability of integrating open courses from other institutions (e.g., Indigenous Canada – University of Alberta; Reconciliation through Indigenous Education – University of British Columbia)

3) Recognize the Differentiation of Needs in the Indigenization and Decolonization Process

- a) Attend to the differing professional development and educational needs of Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students
 - i) Ensure the dignity of Indigenous students is maintained through strength-based or resilience-focused strategies.
 - ii) Consider the danger of overexplaining or retraumatizing Indigenous students through the inclusion of certain topics
 - iii) Balance the need for those same topics to be introduced to non-Indigenous students, so that they can support Indigenous peers in and outside of the university
 - b) Embrace the cultural capital that is held by Indigenous students, faculty, and staff
 - i) Prioritize community-based, Indigenous paths to spiritual and emotional wellness, leadership, and success
 - c) Acknowledge the emotional and physical labour expended by Indigenous students, faculty, and staff
 - i) “The increased workload of Indigenization is often placed on a small number of Indigenous employees and units with limited time and resources. To achieve true progress, a shared responsibility across the university along with partnerships with Indigenous Initiatives is needed.” (Western University Indigenous Strategic Plan Annual Progress Report Fall 2020, p. 25)
 - ii) “Indigenous staff and faculty reported feeling their labour as being undervalued and exploited, due in part to high and sometimes intolerable workloads connected to the increased demands of reconciliation along with the chronic shortage of Indigenous colleagues on campus.” (President's Anti-Racism Working Group Final Report, 2020)
 - iii) Support both the students that attend the sessions and the knowledge-keepers that lead the sessions
 - d) Shift conceptions of leadership
 - i) Acknowledge that dominant leadership norms have embedded cultural assumptions that promote individualism, and may not align with Indigenous approaches based on accountability and collectivism
 - ii) Prioritize Indigenous teachings of leadership, such as through the inclusion of Elders as session leaders
- 4) Center the Needs of Students as Determined by the Students**
- a) Embrace the personal voice and agency of students in the professional development process
 - b) Provide space for Indigenous students to engage in reclamation, should they choose to do so
 - i) Provide space for students to direct and operationalize this
 - ii) “Work together as a collective community to build partnerships that increase Indigenous voices and agency, and promoting the reclamation of Indigenous peoples’ personal and professional decision-making capacities.” (Western University Indigenous Strategic Plan 2016, p 5)

- c) Consult with students to understand how best to support the professional development of those same students
 - i) Acknowledge that students know the areas in which they need more information

5) Allocate Dedicated, Ongoing Resources to Support the Indigenization and Decolonization of the Own Your Future Program

- a) Run workshops centered on Indigenization and Decolonization, even if only one person is registered for that workshop
- b) Allocate funds to have Indigenous knowledge-keepers and Elders direct professional development experiences for Indigenization and decolonization
 - i) Allow flexibility in what knowledge-keepers and Elders would like to share within these professional development experiences
- c) Seek ongoing advisement from Indigenous knowledge-keepers, Elders, staff, faculty, and students for ways to improve the professional development of all students
 - i) Provide financial remuneration for those advising this process
- d) Acknowledge the Indigenous teaching that learning takes time, and that time is our most important resource
 - i) Examine how to provide extra time through more or alternate sessions for those sessions which need more time for the participants

Recommendations for Partnerships

- 1) The Office of Indigenous Initiatives
 - a) The Office of Indigenous Initiatives is establishing a four-year project to create Learning Bundles – the first seven will be created by Spring 2022
 - i) The bundles will have graduate and undergraduate components and are open to the university
 - ii) Each bundle will consist of a three-hour lecture with components
 - ☐ (e.g., Lecture followed by knowledge-keeper speaker)
 - iii) The research bundle will focus on ceremony
 - iv) Program should overlap with aims of OYF, and there may be room for incorporating these modules into the program
- 2) SAGE (Supporting Aboriginal Student Enhancement)
- 3) Head and Heart Indigenous Research Fellowship Program
- 4) Indigenous Post-secondary Education Council
- 5) Indigenous Faculty Advisory Council
- 6) Local Elders

Recommended Resources

1. The Path by Nvision:
 - https://www.indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/learning/the_path_by_nvision.html
2. Guide for Working with Indigenous Students:
 - <https://teaching.uwo.ca/teaching/indigenousguide.html>

3. What I wish my professors knew about me...:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8h1cODvA9g>
4. Empowering Indigenous students and advancing reconciliation:
<https://www.univcan.ca/media-room/publications/empowering-indigenous-students-and-advancing-reconciliation/>
5. 100 ways to Indigenize and decolonize academic programs and courses (Shauneen Pete, University of Regina): https://www.coastmountaincollege.ca/docs/default-source/about/colt/indigenization/indigenize_curriculum.pdf

Alejandro, A.J., Fong, C.J., & De La Rosa, Y.M. (2020). Indigenous Graduate and Professional Students Decolonizing, Reconciling, and Indigenizing Belongingness in Higher Education. *Journal of College Student Development* 61(6), 679-696.

Cote-Meek, S., & Moeke-Pickering, T. (2020). *Decolonizing and Indigenizing education in Canada*. Canadian Scholars.

Kearns, L.-L., Tompkins, J. & Lunney Borden, L. (2018). Transforming graduate studies through decolonization: Sharing the learning journey of a specialized cohort. *McGill Journal of Education / Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill*, 53(2).
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1058396ar>

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (2nd Ed.). Zed Books.

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society*, 1(1), 1–40.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood Publishing

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization Recommendations

Introduction

This document relies on definitions provided by the Congress Advisory Committee on EDI-D to the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (Smith et al., 2021). Accordingly, an equitable, diverse, inclusive, and decolonized OYF program is possible when all doctoral students can easily participate, feel safe to be their authentic self on campus, and feel a sense of belonging. It requires actively dismantling institutional and social practices that maintain the legacies of colonialism, racism, the privileging of whiteness, western normative thinking, and heteronormativity. Instead, it fosters agency and well-being by validating and valuing the range of identities, locations, and the wide variety of needs that doctoral students arrive with. It also helps counter barriers to success by confronting what success looks like and expanding the paths to success to acknowledge these identities, locations, and needs.

This document operationalizes “equity-deserving groups” as including, but not limited to persons who are Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, persons with disabilities or physically- and neurologically- divergent needs, women, adult learners, persons from low-income families and neighbourhoods, first-generation post-secondary students, or persons who do not hold

Canadian citizenship. This document acknowledges the multi-layered, compounding, and inseparable nature of these locations. Although white, male-centred, heteronormative, Eurocentric constructs have long been the status quo within academia, these constructs exclude far more people than they include – and therefore fail all people.

This document also builds on two critical anti-racism pathways identified in The President’s Anti-Racism Working Group Final Report (2020). First, to “formally acknowledge and address the anger, frustration, confusion, disappointment and sadness... due to... experiences of racism in our campus community” (p. 9). Secondly, to incorporate principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion as a campus-wide practice. Through an external evaluation of Canadian universities and an internal campus evaluation, the Final Report also offers several recommendations that the Own Your Future program can support. This includes “structural work to implement EDI”; enabling financial, human, and material resources that enable institutional change; the recruitment, retention, and success of equity-deserving groups; ensuring greater representation at multiple levels; supporting and expanding opportunities for racialized people to pursue leadership; and bolstering limited and optional EDI-D training on campus (p. 17).

Recommendations

1) Address Power Dynamics That Create and Maintain Inequalities among Equity-Deserving Graduate Students

- a) Acknowledge the financial barriers and time constraints to professional development
 - i) Provide financial compensation for session leaders
 - ii) Incentivize OYF program, following other university programming that offers a certification process for different areas of EDI-D work
 - e.g., Similar to the Teaching Assistant program through CTL
 - iii) Address the invisible labour of EDI-D efforts in which equity-deserving graduate students often engage or are expected to engage outside of traditional student work
- b) Evaluate areas of inaccessibility that exist in current structures and maintain power imbalances
- c) Foster agency or self-advocacy
 - i) Incorporate specific guidance on navigating power imbalances between supervisor/mentorship relationships
 - ii) Counter the assumption that students arrived with fully formed agency and can identify all of their needs and how to meet these, how to manage their professional and personal lives, or how to reach out for support
 - iii) Empower students to establish boundaries, seek credit for work they’ve done, and navigate intellectual data ownership practices
- d) Support new paths toward success, outside the traditional markers of teaching, publications, service work, etc.

2) Create Additional Avenues of Mentorship to Support Graduate Students While Also Providing Additional Leadership Opportunities

- a) Shift how we deliver education, the information that is provided, and the assumptions we make about professionalisation, and the cultural capital needed to be seen as professional
- b) Expand and incorporate modes of authentic mentorship and leadership
 - i) Prioritize non-Eurocentric/non-Western conceptions of leadership, while still recognising that students need western leadership qualities to succeed
 - ii) Provide mentorship to equity-deserving groups
 - iii) Prepare all PhDs to become leaders who can advocate for themselves and can provide mentorship to foster agency in others
 - iv) Provide mentorship on the realities of how expected work-life balance may differ to actual experiences of being in the workforce
- c) Counter assumptions that may exist about what an ideal graduate student is, such as obedient, always productive, in a state of neediness for more work, or independently proactive
- d) Bring in experts to talk about the realities of mentorship and leadership
 - i) Offer formal and informal sessions where speakers can generate discussion or speak about the invisible labour involved in academia, etc.

3) Decenter Western Ideas of Professionalism That Require Students to Set Aside Traditional Ways-of-Being and Ways-of-Knowing, in Order to Adopt Eurocentric Values

- a) Encourage students to think using their own traditional and cultural lenses
 - i) Acknowledge that individualist vs. collectivist social norms shape student expectations
 - ii) Acknowledge that students carry cultural capital(s) which are needed for achieving success according to their own expectations, but that may be disrupted by people in power-over positions
 - e.g., Students are expected to write, speak, publish, present in Euro-western ways and may experience language-specific imposter syndrome
 - e.g., Racialized and International students may feel compelled to hide their authentic whole self in classroom settings to appear more like an ideal graduate student, or posture by adopting mannerisms and speech to feel more understood, validated, or appear neutral or objective”
- b) Foster critical voice so that students can reevaluate norms, expectations, or “things that go without saying” within a discipline
 - i) e.g., Turn degree outcomes on their heads; learning to challenge and disrupt their disciplinary discourse; empowering students to ask questions about the ideas, content, or discourses that are taken for granted within their field of study
- c) Acknowledge how cultural diversity impacts multiple tiers of engagement by graduate students in the academy

- i) e.g., How differing understandings of humility or respect for Indigenous and non-Indigenous community Elders might impact the encounters students have in the academy such as defending their work
- d) Provide more targeted support for equity-deserving students as they search for careers (resume, CV, portfolio) and set these students up for success as they enter their respective desired careers

4) Center the Needs of Students as Determined by the Students

- a) Embrace the personal voice and agency of students in the professional development process
- b) Consult with students to understand how best to support the professional development of those same students
 - i) Acknowledging that students know the areas in which they need more information

5) Integrate EDI-D in a More Comprehensive Manner during Session Planning

- a) Evaluate ways that EDI-D is and can be incorporated in every session, including but not limited to the following questions
 - i) How am I incorporating equity?
 - What power imbalances contribute to graduate student success? What barriers to success am I facilitating by what I talk about, how I talk about it, and I exclude? How am I empowering students? Can we discuss any structural and social processes that maintain a status quo in the university?
 - ii) How am I incorporating diversity?
 - Whose perspectives am I presenting? Am I allowing diverse voices to expand/explain the content? Am I creating space for all students to speak and formulate content in every session?
 - iii) How am I incorporating inclusivity?
 - What barriers might attendees experience during this session or related to the topic at hand? How can I ensure that attendees are able to fully participate in this session? Does the content reflect the needs of multiple equity-deserving groups?
 - iv) How am I incorporating decolonization (the reclamation of Indigenous land and life, Tuck & Yang, 2012)?
 - How do I talk about the land? What structures of colonization am I maintaining in what I talk about and the way that I talk about it? How am I including Indigenous Peoples, students, voices? Am I reinforcing or countering assumptions about academia, success, and professionalization that are rooted in western colonial systems?

6) Ensure Accessibility and Inclusivity Are Core to Every Professional Development Session

- a) Provide a range of learning platforms or modes (see USC Accessibility Committee’s Western Accessibility Handbook for Undergraduate students, 2021 edition)
 - i) Maintain virtual learning options post-pandemic
 - ii) Require synchronous and asynchronous formats so that students can work at their own pace and come back to these resources, as needed
 - iii) Record and post all sessions online
 - iv) Encourage multiple forms of providing information, such as videos, descriptive videos, and podcasts
- b) Implement protocols that foster inclusive participation in sessions
 - i) Provide working microphones to instructors
 - ii) Send out session resources or materials before and after meetings, as links may not be accessible via online platforms
 - iii) Ask attendees to remain on mute when not speaking, state their names before speaking, and indicate when they have completed voicing their thoughts. This ensures that people “who cannot interpret visual cues” know who speakers are, when they have completed, and are better included in the conversation (SOGS stakeholder)
 - iv) Enable live transcription and chat functions. This includes allowing attendees to chat with each other and asking attendees to avoid long text blocks in public chat. This is because “screen-reader[s] will read this out loud over top of the individual speaking, making it difficult to discern who is saying what” (SOGS stakeholder)
 - v) Ask attendees to include their pronouns, which indicates how they would like to be addressed and fosters recognition that identities will be validated
- c) Prioritize wellness
 - i) Mandate screen and stretching break times for virtual sessions

Recommendations for Partnerships

- 1) Western Student Experience
- 2) University networks such as The Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion (CRHESI), Migration and Ethnic Relations
- 3) Grad Life
- 4) EDI Action Network: <https://equity.ubc.ca/get-involved/edi-action-network/>

Recommended Resources

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- Thurber, A., & Bandy, J. (2018). *Creating Accessible Learning Environments*. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Retrieved from <http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/creating-accessible-learning-environments/>

General Recommendations for the Own Your Future Program

1) Examine the Competency Areas

- a) Incorporate Indigenization and decolonization throughout every session and every competency area
 - i) Avoid integrating Indigenization and decolonization in a marginalized manner (it will be important to not just mention Indigenization and decolonization, but to meaningfully discuss how this impacts every topic area and how it directly impacts graduate students)
- b) Establish a Research competency
 - i) Include community Elders to teach about cultural humility, and ways in which to conduct ethical research
 - ii) Foster discussion around better research practices to encourage reflexive thinking
 - e.g., Unpack our responsibility as researchers beyond research for the sake of publishing; moral use of participant stories/data; what do we do with our knowledge, how is knowledge decontextualised; what are the impacts and benefits on communities not returning to that community/incorporating their voice, preparing to produce work that fosters social change
 - iii) Offer discipline-specific guidance, advanced research design, or transitioning research practices/project management skills outside of academic contexts
 - iv) Encourage ethical research practices, such as not overlooking topics when there are few obvious “objective”/quantitative ways to examine
- c) Reframe the Thriving competency to have a stronger direct focus on Mental Health and Well-being
 - i) Incorporate practical guidance on general motivation, navigating self-directed work, and reaffirming intrinsic value of students

- ii) Provide additional support for students who may be dealing with “imposter syndrome” and fostering confidence
- iii) Acknowledge that students do not arrive with the same level of discipline and that some students are not intrinsically motivated
- iv) Acknowledge that international students want to feel at home at the university but do not always know what that can look like or what they might need
- v) Foster community-building, opportunities for networking within OYF
- d) Reevaluate the Intercultural and Social Fluency pillar to have stronger focus on EDI-D, or even renaming this pillar to EDI-D
- e) Examine the Career Engagement pillar
 - i) Provide additional or differentiated resume/CV support and general support for people who are entering graduate studies after being out of academia for longer periods of time, or for the students who are not entering graduate studies directly from undergraduate studies
 - ii) Counter the assumption that students want to stay in academia, or that this is the best fit for everyone
 - iii) Offer more workshops for students leaving academia
 - E.g., how to exit and enter non-academic settings, skills needed for success, navigating workplace expectations, how to network outside of academia, where to search for jobs

2) Evaluate the Power Skills Intake Form and Rework the Included Questions

- a) Evaluate the Intercultural and Social Fluency section of questions on the OYF self-assessment form
 - i) Create more specific questions that pertain to EDI-D
 - ii) Create more specific questions that pertain to EDI-D for each pillar
 - e.g., ability to incorporate Indigeneity into leadership/communication styles)
 - iii) Examine why each question is included in the OYF self-assessment form, and how those questions can support the students who participate in the OYF program

3) Evaluate the OYF Website, Calendar, and Enrolment Systems

- a) Examine the program access points to make information more accessible considering the following concerns:
 - i) Find information is not intuitive; it is difficult to find information unless you know for what you are searching
 - ii) There is little detail provided for the sessions provided for some competency areas, including the Intercultural & Social Fluency pillar
 - iii) There are too many steps of links to get one page of information to the information that is needed that is hosted on another page
 - iv) It is unclear where to go or understand when information is linked
 - v) It is unclear when the workshops will be held or were held
 - vi) It is difficult to find video links
 - vii) The processes for signing up for sessions is unclear and overwhelming

- viii) Students are unaware of the competencies that are covered by OYF
- ix) It is difficult to understand how the program works

4) Create Levels of Competency Complexities

- a) Offer various levels of sessions and more specificity in the offered sessions, to create programming that meets the needs of individuals with beginner, intermediate, and advanced understandings

5) Evaluate Session Formatting to Support Diverse Participants and Learning Strategies

- a) Include diverse session structures and lengths to better support participants
 - i) Expand beyond the currently used “sage on stage” workshop structure to foster open-ended dialogue
 - ii) Incorporate talking sessions, talking circles, providing space for students to support each other, informal learning sessions, and other non-formal learning/support activities
 - iii) Include multi-part topic series

6) Diversify Session Leaders and Included Knowledges

7) Review All Graduate Faculties That Have Professional Development or EDI-D Initiatives to Understand How OYF Can Partner with or Support These Faculties

- a) Create a pilot partnership between OYF and a few faculties or departments for professional development specific to the needs of those faculties or departments
 - i) Formulate more directed programming that supports specific learning outcomes or competencies

8) Re-iterate the Roll-Out and Advertisement of the OYF Program

- a) Create more recruitment opportunities for OYF throughout the year, to address feeling overwhelmed with new information at start of term
 - i) Reach out to students throughout the year via various departments, emails, OYF information sessions
 - ii) Target upper-year PhD students/candidates in order to support students at various points of their program
- b) Provide targeted professional development recruitment and support for equity-deserving groups, as some students are experiencing compounded effects of settlement and adapting to graduate life

Other Discoveries During the Consultation Process

Our meetings with stakeholders and research of existing literature unveiled a need for additional changes or supports that can support EDI-D efforts across the university, which are not specific to the Own Your Future program

1) Create a Visible, Accessible Guide and Library of EDI-D Resources

- a) Improve clarity of university actions to address structural racism by compiling campus EDI-D initiatives and resources in a central virtual location
 - i) e.g., key literature such as TRC documents; OII resources, The Path modules, OYF and CTL programming
 - ii) e.g., policy updates, funding opportunities, training opportunities, events

- b) Cite and partner with other institutions that offer training, guides and reading lists - this helps counter isolation of EDI-D work, and supports areas Western University may lack resources in
 - i) e.g., Canadian Sociological Association; UVic; McGill reading lists
 - ii) e.g., Queens University Human Rights 101
 - iii) e.g., UAlberta Indigenous Canada
 - iv) e.g., UBC Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education

2) Formalize EDI-D and Treat It as Essential, Career-Advancing Work

- a) Provide general professional development opportunities that legitimize and recognize EDI-D work as qualifying skills for employment. This is pertinent as universities begin to incorporate EDI-D efforts in graduate program applications and paths to tenure (Flaherty, 2021)
 - i) Offer rigorous and formal cultural competency or EDI-D training at multiple levels of familiarity
 - ii) Consider this as mandatory training
 - ☐ This training is necessary for all members of the university (including students, faculty, and staff) so that students can obtain training and feel safe in the entirety of the university
 - iii) Provide financial support to cover certification costs or access programming at other institutions when unavailable through university resources, addressing financial barriers to professionalization and upward mobility
 - iv) Expand awards, events, expanding criteria for current awards to include decolonization efforts, community-based work, or non-traditional forms of data collection and knowledge transmission (Smith et al., 2021)

3) Support Invisible Labour

- a) Acknowledge that racialized faculty and staff disproportionately participate in EDI-D efforts and support and guide students; this work is often unrecognized and can impact time needed for other components of their career trajectories
- b) Bolster EDI-D work that is often conducted by small teams, subject to precarious, short-term funding, and focuses on optional, surface-level programming or events
 - i) Establish more funding to hire equity-seeking faculty and staff in order to establish teams that can support existing EDI-D work

4) Explore the Role of the University and Its Members

- a) Evaluate our responsibilities in and outside of academia, such as our relationship to lands and our responsibilities to local and global Indigenous peoples, application of local knowledges and treaties
- b) Establish a framework that fosters reciprocity and accountability beyond the institution
- c) Confront our historical and contemporary university practices that contribute to racism and violence towards Indigenous peoples and racialized groups

- i) Unpack how the university maintains a system of whiteness (See recommended resources and ConversAction report for discussions on whiteness, invisible labour, and merit)
 - ii) Unpack resistance to EDI-D work, such as assumptions that talking about racism reifies racism, or that racism is a special interest topic, not relevant to one's life, or someone else's problem
 - d) Guide students to navigate university policies, structures, and resources, especially where governance feels convoluted, inaccessible, and hierarchical
- 5) Establish General Mentorship Spaces**
- a) Establish mentorship avenues for Indigenous and racialized students to help navigate the graduate school process and non-tenure track trajectories
 - b) Create space where students can establish relationships with each other
 - c) Prioritize mentorship at multiple levels (PhD, post-docs, early-stage faculty)
 - d) Offer representative programming with unique lenses, where academics and non-academics from equity-deserving groups can provide insight into their particular locations and their workplace experiences
 - e) Provide formal and informal mentorship avenues where students can be matched based on needs
 - i) e.g., Space where groups can generate ideas to navigate accessibility in the classroom, such as "How would I stand up in a classroom and see hands" or how to navigate conferences

Recommended Resources/Citations:

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www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/05/14/iupui-creates-path-promotion-and-tenure-based-dei-work
- Hamblin, L., Barker, D., & Arghode, V. (2020). A Phenomenological Approach to Explore Faculty Perceptions about Invisible Labor. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 44(10-12), 804–818. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2020.1716874>
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- Tate, S. A., & Page, D. (2018). Whiteness and institutional racism: Hiding behind (un)conscious bias. *Ethics and Education*, 13(1), 141–155.
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