Summary Report of Campus Consultations: Research and Creative Activity

The Design and Discussion sessions were undertaken using a facilitated discussion framework called ORID. The ORID framework breaks complicated conversations into four specific segments (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive and Decisional) which allow for participants to engage key conversation components. In many cases, additional prompting questions were used by facilitators to draw out additional insights from participants. The data presented prior to discussions was, in part, based on the information sheets that were hosted on engageuwindsor.ca.

Each of the design and discussion sessions that were held in June of 2022 leveraged this framework. The responses below represent the strongest or more common responses as captured at those sessions. Clustering of responses to general statements did occur to assist in compiling this document. Underlined headers were the core questions that were asked at the session while bolded headers represent some of the prompting questions that were used for each section to generate discussion.

The data presented to focus group participants focused on research, creative activity and innovation; publications and scholarly contributions; Institutes, Centres and Chairs; research revenue; student research experience; rankings and reputation; and regional demographics.

Objective – What does the shared data tell you objectively about the topic?
What does this information tell us?

- The University of Windsor is seeing growth in funding but so are other Universities
- Some participants connected the increase in funding to the growing number of interdisciplinary research collaborations – interdisciplinary research should be strongly encouraged on campus.
- Research revenue of $37 million in 2022 includes a significant amount of COVID-19 funding
- Each department has their own priorities of what is important to research. The institution needs a united priority and intersections between faculties in order to truly be a research university.
- Performance reviews are essential. Higher education programs are reviewed every 5 years but these reviews do not go into detail on research.
- Greater student support is needed; paying students to do research reduces financial stress
- Student research experiences at UWindsor are comparably better than at peer institutions

- There is a lack of modern equipment on campus; technology is moving so rapidly that researchers are getting forced out of their fields based on lack of equipment. The University needs to keep up with changes and equipment maintenance.
- We should be paying attention to our aging population – there is growth potential for geriatric research opportunities in our region.

What is missing?

- Research funding growth in comparison to other universities in Ontario and Canada.
- Budget for research as a percentage of the total budget at UWindsor.
- Focus on EDI should be at the center of research discussions
- Missing research data on Law, Education and Creative Arts
- Missing data about research supports for faculty members and attitudes toward writing
- Disaggregated data from different disciplines may help explain conflicting data – may also have intersection points in research and teaching roles
- We're only measuring the impact of research in terms of funding, not the impact of research funding
- More data is needed to understand professor quality at the University and ways to improve course quality and student experiences
- The topic of research security and patents is missing from discussions
- Proportion of faculty receiving funding from NSERC, CIHR, etc.

Reflective – How does that data make you feel?

What do you find worrisome?

- Our rankings are mid to low level compared to other Universities
- Citation impact and number of publications is lower than peer institutions
- The University does not have a unified purpose in terms of how we do research
- We do not understand EDI well - EDI and Internationalization are not the same thing.
- Leadership makes decisions about large investments when there are basic needs for programs that should be addressed first
- The research process creates burnout as it takes time to apply for grants, track spending, REB review (not part of the service workload). Aspects of processes could improve.
- Budgeting requires numerous check-ins, but no help with budgeting. Finance is not designed for researchers
- Too much time and energy spent on paperwork. This red tape reduces efficiencies.
- The success rate of applications from ORIS are high and this is not sustainable with current staffing levels
- Lack of communication and collaboration between departments

What do you find hopeful?

- The increase in grants at the University shows new opportunity and presents hope

- Opportunities for small scale funding that is accessible for faculties and the process to apply for them is straightforward. It's a good opportunity for early/new faculty to establish more of a research agenda.
- A lot of opportunity for graduate students to do research and they respond positively
- The University's commitments to certain values (equity, diversity and inclusion) that are important to students, staff and faculty
- Newer institutes on campus such as the Health Institute. This should be used as a model.
- Communication is key. We are doing a better job now than in the past.
- Transition in leadership that a very strong VPRI comes in with a clear vision and goals so we can start being more aggressive
- Hopeful that Indigenization will be a priority and be advanced in a meaningful way

Interpretive – What does it mean?

What have we learned?

- Research needs to become more embedded into the governance of the institution
- Trust, respect, communication is the foundation which helps to improve things like workload, collaboration, and partnerships
- Research is too segmented across campus. Not a lot of interdisciplinary partnerships on campus, likely due to silos. There is a lot of potential to work together on proposals and joint projects, but we are rarely tying them together.
- Engaging in more international partnerships in research (could engage international students as one pathway to more global connections). Global challenges require global responses from researchers, requiring interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Mentorship is needed to assist students in writing grants and so forth
- Faculty needs greater support in infrastructure including more support for the administration piece of funding. Forms and accounting are difficult and take time.
- We need to compare what we are doing in research with other countries
- We need to start acknowledging our strengths - Cross-border, manufacturing, agriculture, etc. We need to recognize our strengths such as manufacturing and innovations. The clear processes and so forth are strengths within the university.
- We need to get messages out there or others won't know what we are doing. Online presence is needed as well as proactive engagement.
    - We should promote what is being done and make this information more visible
    - Better communication of successes. Both internally and externally.
- There needs to be incentive and recognition of those doing good quality research
- Need to start documenting how much money goes into the economy as a part of community research – assess how much value we are adding through our work.

What potential opportunities can we further develop?

- Focus on collaboration, communication, and community impact for the University's longevity. It goes back to the impact of research on the University and community at large. We benefit as a whole when we collaborate with the community.

- With the new battery plant coming to Windsor, there's apprehension about a research bubble. This may have a direct impact on hiring practices at the University, and in Windsor.
- Need to think better about EDI and how that overlaps with research. Not just about international but the traditionally underserved areas.
- Need to be better focused about mentoring and student recruitment
- External communications –we are not good at doing this ourselves to showcase cutting edge research. We need more communications support in research. It brings pride to the researchers and also the community.
- We need more space for research offices
- Establishing best practice information and building in Indigenous knowledge and thinking about impact of research in a different way
- We need support in general for master's and PhD students. Improving the quality of experience will produce higher sophistication levels in master's and PhD students that will as a result enhance the university.
- There should be a way to measure the impact. It all comes back to the vision of the University

What information is needed to move this priority forward?

- Are we an R1 institution or an undergraduate institution?
- What is the local impact of research? Some faculty may find no local impact, but it does not mean it's not important.
- Assessment of hiring practices. Different departments hiring priorities are different, for all kinds of reasons. How do you assess whether hiring practices are effective and in line with goals you're trying to achieve?
- Need to rediscover loss in experiential learning because the colleges are granting degrees and catching up, province is pushing it, but most because it's so important for the student experience
- More community consultation specifically for research. Are they happy with the research that has been provided? Will they come back for new contracts?
- We need to think about the local needs, our role in the region, and how we position ourselves globally in order to create actionable steps

<u>Decisional – What should we do with this data? Now what?</u>

What is the university's untapped potential in research and creative activity?

- Creating partnerships with Indigenous communities
- We need a more focused plan on how to create and incentivize community partnerships instead of relying on faculty to create these relationships
- De-silo and connectivity throughout the University. Collaboration departmentally and externally.
- Better marketing and awareness of what the University of Windsor does
- Recognizing regional strengths in research. Move away from only automotive. Focus on retirees, immigrants, wine industry- anything specific to southwestern Ontario.

- Tuition is a huge handicap. Increase scholarships to get good quality students who are passionate but may not be able to afford opportunities.
- Lack of credentials and lack of certificates. Customize more courses that are research intensive that can offer credentials and attract students.
- If we can support students more from our funding, we can build great opportunity to build a research culture and get them involved in conferences. Supporting them more can go a long way.
- Recognition of our contributions. We have journals and things published, but we should recognize different forms of contribution as well.

What are key strategic directions for enhancing research and creative activity?

- Strategic approach to how we recruit, retain and fund graduate students
- Develop a clear vision and clarity of why the university conducts research
    - Determine why the university is conducting research. What is the purpose? What is the impact of this research?
- Recognize ways of evaluating our impact on our local and global communities
- Given our untapped potential is our people, we need support and mentorship. Invest in and incentivize research.
- Environmental research, cleaner air, transportation and so forth, that better support the community are needed. This also includes environmental justice.
- Telling our stories and better knowledge mobilization of the impacts have come from the University of Windsor
- Build on international engagement and increase the local and international reputation of our university. We recruit many international students. We can talk with them and engage in international partnerships.
- Collaboration is key to enhancing research and faculty culture. Encourage and facilitate collaboration through infrastructure and enhanced communication of what people are currently working on and opportunities for collaboration.
- Awards and recognition programs/internal grants could recognize these projects. Create spaces to communicate what other faculties are working on at the U – a research summit even within our own University.
- Increased administration support. We're demanding faculty become more and more research active while also continuing to cut resources. Restoring the support systems that go into research (which would be measured by research quality and quantity).