

**University of Windsor
Senate**

5.2.2: **Office of Open Learning Annual Report (2022-2023)**

Item for: **Information**

Forwarded by: **Academic Policy Committee**

See attached.

Office of Open Learning 2022-23 Annual Report

Introduction

The [Office of Open Learning](#) (OOL) provides strategic leadership in the design, development, and delivery of accessible, equitable, and inclusive digital and open learning opportunities for all learners. OOL works with partners across campus to empower educators to explore emerging digital pedagogies and technologies, recognising and utilising the power of today's highly connected digital world to provide transformational learning that prepares graduates for a complex and uncertain world. OOL provides a wide range of services including digital pedagogy consultation, developing interactive digital learning resources, instructional design, educational media development, open educational resource development, digital accessibility support, professional development on digital pedagogies and practice including workshops and mini-courses, funding for digital pedagogical innovation, and support for evaluating, selecting, and implementing local and institution-wide educational technology.

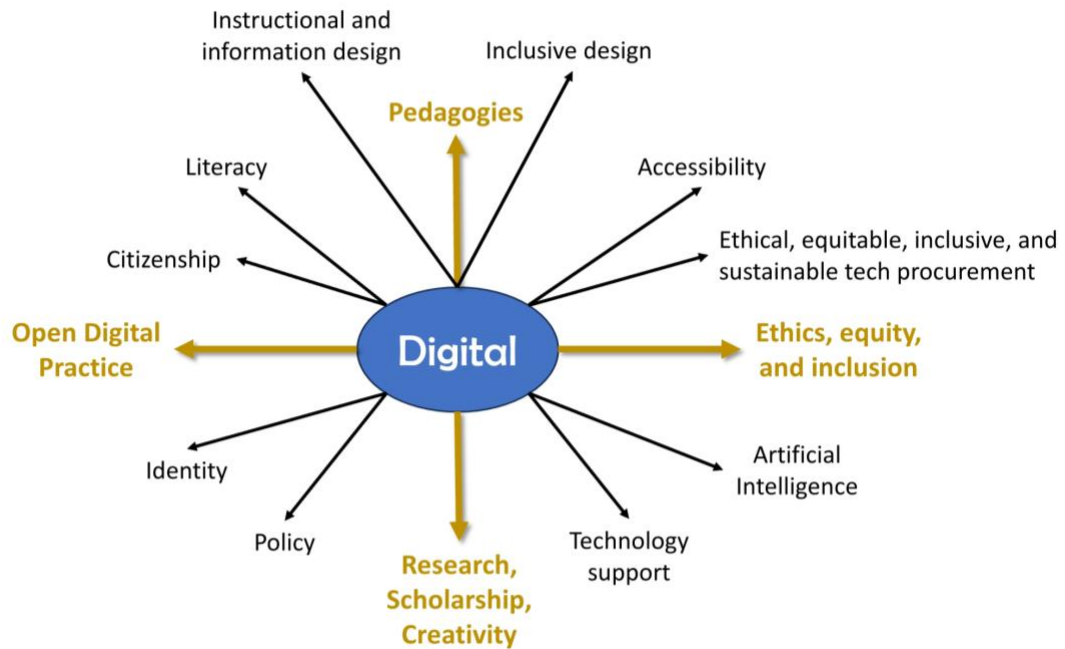


Figure 1. Office of Open Learning responsibilities and expertise

The following report summarises OOL's activities for the reporting year July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

I. Addressing Foundational Commitments:

1. Establishing and Implementing an Institutional Data Strategy

The OOL has long advocated for evidence-informed decision-making as the foundation for enhancing the student experience and outcomes, and as a critical business practice that can shape the institutional teaching and learning culture. Activities contributing to a culture of data-informed practice included:

- Bringing together and chairing a working group from across campus to develop recommendations on digital media management, storage and archiving best practices.
- Demonstrating a proof of concept for including faculty and student input to classroom design and renovation.
- Encouraging the use of digital pedagogies that lead to richer and more nuanced data about student activities, and which uses appropriate storage locations for digital resources.
- Contributing to the ongoing critical conversation about digital content storage and data management in campus educational technology systems, such as Brightspace and YuJa.

2. Foster Resilience and Institutional Learning through Connection, Reconnection and Collaboration

The OOL team are committed to fostering a resilient, engaged learning organisation, demonstrated through our own programming and active presence in campus-wide initiatives, including:

- Hosting Communities of Practice in Digital Learning and Artificial Intelligence.
- Coordinating and hosting the annual Open Education Week with 10 events offered through online, hybrid, and in-person modalities (some open to a global audience).
- Facilitating and co-facilitating Senate information sessions and presentations on topics including accessibility, microcredentials, SET Taskforce, artificial intelligence, and the new course modalities.
- Actively participating in institutional events including Accessibility Awareness Days, the Indigenous Research and Scholarship Forum, UWindsor Pride, and New Faculty Orientation.
- As a team primarily composed of AAS faculty members with service requirements, OOL team members chaired, co-chaired, or were active members of 66 University of Windsor committees primarily associated with our mandate and university governance.
- Contributing to the development and launch of the new *Aspire* strategic plan, through engagement in committees, sub-committees, facilitating consultations, and reviewing drafts.
- Supporting the Associate Vice-President, Academic in professional development activities for Heads and Directors.

3. Continue to Foster and Build Welcoming, Inclusive and Engaging Physical and Virtual Spaces

The OOL continues to advocate for, and support the development and adoption of inclusive, accessible, welcoming and engaging physical and digital spaces for teaching and learning. Activities in the reporting period included:

- Provincial Training Equipment Renewal Fund (TERF): OOL co-led with ITS and partners in facilities and finance the development of successful proposals for funding from the TERF program in 2021/2, and 2022/3, with an additional application prepared for the 2023/4 funding round (all three are mentioned here as work is ongoing in the reporting period). These projects address needs that were identified as high priorities for faculties and the institution, and which support pedagogical flexibility, and enhance the learning experience of many students. High level outcomes include:
 - \$2,299,605 in provincial funding (approximate 8% of the total funding available for the province), matched by UWindsor (central, faculty and departments contributions); total project costs \$4,636,608 over 3 years.
 - Transformation of 4 small classrooms into low tech flexible, active learning classrooms (Dillon Hall 365 and 367, and Erie Hall 1114 and 1115).
 - Development of a digitally enabled, active and collaborative learning lab (CHN G100).
 - Nursing upgrades including: hyflex equipment in simulation labs, renovation of the Nurse Practitioner lab to support hyflex and bi-modal teaching modalities, and a non-white simulation mannequin.
 - Virtual anatomy dissection tables in Biomedical Science, nursing, and HK.
 - Upgrades to AV equipment in classrooms with existing hyflex equipment, based on faculty feedback, including ceiling mics, cameras and large confidence monitors in 4 rooms.
 - Development of a community/industry collaboration space with the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.
 - AV upgrades in 3 classrooms in HK.
 - Renovation and upgrade of the Odette Finance Lab.
- Active engagement in creating more functional, inclusive, and diverse teaching spaces through membership on the institutional Classroom Prioritization Committee, which reviews classrooms for renovation and renewal. Advocated for the inclusion of pedagogical considerations and end-user input in the current prioritisation criteria, as well as different approaches to get the greatest value out of the budget.
- Funding, implementing, and supporting a wide range of digital systems including:
 - **Funded systems**
 - Yuja Enterprise Video Platform.
 - Panorama accessibility support platform (highlighting accessibility needs in Brightspace and creating alternative, accessible file formats for students).

- WordPress ePortfolios.
- CanCred digital badging platform.
- Co-funded (with CTL) 15 Mentimeter licences for campus.
- **Support for provincially funded systems**
- Read&Write and EquatIO (grant-funded accessibility support tools for reading, writing, and math).
- Pressbooks open textbook publishing system (hosted by eCampusOntario).
- H5P interactive lesson/activity platform (hosted by eCampusOntario).
- Facilitated three eCampus Ontario Digital Sandbox Pilots (Kahoot, Miro, and Hypothes.is).
- Brightspace Project: Co-chaired and co-led, with partners in CTL and ITS, the selection, rapid implementation and transition to D2L's Brightspace Learning Management system to replace Blackboard. Activities included:
 - Leading drafting of the RFP documentation and evaluation criteria, including developing robust evaluation of criteria for accessibility, EDI, and Indigenous perspectives on potential LMS partners (a first in Ontario higher education, ultimately leading to securing funding from D2L to support Indigenous students).
 - Co-funded the initial implementation costs of Brightspace with CTL and ITS.
 - Following Blackboard's refusal to extend UWindsor's contract to allow for an extended implementation period, 75% of the OOL team reassigned part of their time to supporting the transition, which was led by CTL.
 - Three OOL team members piloted Brightspace in credit courses and all OOL non-credit programming moved to Brightspace.
 - Advocated for and co-developed a business case and funding strategy for D2L's virtual assistant for after hours support.
 - Supported Virtual Drop-in sessions with CTL.
 - Co-developed needs analyses, business cases, and procurement strategies for replacements for SafeAssign and Blackboard Collaborate (which needed to be replaced with the end of the Bb licence).
- Membership in committees including LMS Advisory and LMS Steering Committee and contributing to the development of policy governing LMS use, access, data retention, etc.
- Supporting campus with emergency teaching transition and restoration of service during the cybersecurity incident.

4. Ensuring that Faculty and Staff Have the Skills and Support to Maximize Impact, Growth, and Engagement

OOL offers a wide range of programming and support services to faculty, staff, and students. Some key activities included:

- Hosting a Generative AI Community of Inquiry approximately monthly.
- Developing and facilitating 11 bespoke presentations and workshops on AI for committees, departments, and student groups across campus.
- Facilitating 3 Propel sessions for the Office of Career Development & Experiential Learning (130 attendees).
- ePortfolios: Facilitated 19 in-person sessions and offered 94 drop-in sessions supporting students in developing their ePortfolios.
- Facilitated 3 general staff development workshops on accessible digital content and facilitating hybrid meetings.
- OOL provides training for instructors on hyflex pedagogies through both formal workshops (one workshop offered this year) and by request as per the WUFA collective agreement requirements that training be available at least 6 months prior to teaching a hyflex course.
- In collaboration with our partners in CTL, co-facilitated 35 Brightspace workshops to 409 participants.
- Working with the FISHCast team in the Faculty of Science to design a microcredential series, (funded by NSERC) for graduate students to develop complementary and specialised skills that prepare them for future work with communities and industry.

5. Telling Our Stories and Sharing Our Knowledge

OOL is committed to open practices, which seek to share knowledge freely, and which raise the profile of UWindsor faculty, staff, and students who contribute to open educational resources (OERs). We support the development and

adaptation of OERs, publishing in open and alternative formats, and the UN's Declaration on OERs and its contribution to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). OOL initiatives in storytelling and knowledge sharing include:

- Open textbook production: Open textbooks can have significant reach and impact. OOL team members support the whole production process for faculty who wish to create, adopt, or adapt open textbooks (particularly in the provincial Pressbooks open publishing platform) or other forms of OERs, as well as authoring openly licenced resources for faculty and students. The 38 OOL-supported Pressbooks were visited 551,314 times by 343,972 individuals in the reporting period.
 - Open textbooks save students considerable money. One example is the open Astronomy textbook adopted in UWindsor's two astronomy classes, replacing a commercial textbook that went from \$97 in 2018 to \$218 in 2024. A conservative estimate of student savings since 2018 is \$1.6m. This approach provides students with a free, accessible digital resource from day one of class.
- H5P is a tool for creating interactive digital learning activities that can be embedded in websites and linked from Brightspace courses to help engage learners. The 24 interactive H5P resources developed by OOL during the reporting period were visited, 3,956 times during the reporting period. These are all openly licenced and shared in the provincial [h5PStudio](#) library.
- OOL-supported open resources have been nominated as finalists for global awards by Open Education Global in both 2022 and 2023, winning best OER in 2022, and nominated in the Pressbooks top 10 list globally for 2022.
- Participating in the community roundtable events with municipal leaders.
- Producing a monthly newsletter delivered digitally to 1,041 UWindsor and external subscribers.
- OOL's [Open Educational Practices Hub](#), which averages 600 visitors per month since it was created, had a total of 41,666 page visits by 3,730 unique users in the reporting period. Over half (55%) of visits came from the US, with Canada, the UK, Japan and the Russian Federation rounding out the top 5 locations. The hub includes faculty guest blog posts, information about emerging technologies, open pedagogies, open scholarship.
- The Open Learning [website](#) (currently undergoing a comprehensive re-design) was accessed 13,000 times and had 775 new visitors in 2022-23. The OOL Twitter/X account had 1,703 impressions and gained 21 new followers (994 followers in total) in 2022/23.
- OOL team members were interviewed by local, national and international media, as well as for international podcasts on a range of topics related to our work.

6. Improving Institutional Processes and Coordination of Services

OOL engaged in several institutional initiatives to improve processes, policies, and guidelines, as well as our own internal review and alignment of activities, including:

- As a member of the APC Sub-committee on Course Modalities, advocated for the development of official definitions of course modalities, provided a desktop review of equivalent policy across the province and Canada, proposed initial draft definitions (based on preliminary definitions OOL created during the pandemic), and supported the refinement of UWindsor's first ever definitions of course modalities.
- Reviewing and making recommendations on senate bylaws, policies, and the Student Code of Conduct in relation to generative Artificial Intelligence.
- Participating as active members of the Student Evaluations (Perceptions) of Teaching Task Force to develop a new, validated *Student Perceptions of Teaching Survey* instrument for piloting and further refinement. The taskforce also worked on a process to ensure the instrument could be expanded and updated to provide meaningful feedback on teaching from a student perspective, recognising contextual factors such as delivery modality, whether it was a new course, experimental approaches etc. Existing policy and guidance was adapted to ensure that SPTs are useful formative feedback tools.
- Piloting the new RPP tracking process and forms.
- Internally, OOL held a series of retreats and working sessions to re-examine our offerings in the post-pandemic environment, streamline and update resources, and map strategic alignment of services with the Aspire strategic plan.

II. Advancing Strategic Priorities:

1. Advancing Bold, Impactful Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

The OOL's AAS LS members support and engage in scholarship and creative activity in their roles, collaborating with faculty and students on scholarly activities, including publishing (both traditional and open) and conference presentations, alternative scholarly dissemination including blog posts, podcasts and videos, and providing funding to support exploration of digital pedagogies. Activities in the reporting year included:

- Awarded \$50,000 in funding to 18 faculty-led projects across 7 faculties through the Digital, Open and Online Learning Strategic Development Grants. These grants support scholarship, development, and dissemination of digital teaching practices.
- Consulting with, collaborating, mentoring, and supporting instructors and students in researching digital pedagogies.
- Funded and facilitated a pilot project in the Faculty of Education working with four undergraduate education students to support exploration of scholarship in technology-enabled teaching.
- Two of the OOL team are members of the REB.
- Engaged in research, scholarly, and creative dissemination, with 2 peer-reviewed journal articles and 5 blog posts published, and an additional 3 journal articles, two edited books, 3 book chapters, and one monograph all due for publication in 2023-24. The team also presented 6 peer-reviewed conference presentations and workshops, two conference keynotes, and approximately 15 invited workshops.
- Collaborated on ongoing and new grants worth \$452,673, including a CIHR Grant with Nursing and Psychology, as well as two SSHRC grant submissions (one led by OOL).

2. Advancing the Journey toward Truth and Reconciliation

The OOL as a unit is in the early phase of exploring Indigenization and decolonisation in our work and our areas of expertise. We continue to work towards Indigenizing digital learning environments and curriculums, and our own work, as well as beginning to build relationships with local communities and seek opportunities for reciprocity. In the reporting period, key activities included:

- Securing external funding, matched with OOL funds, to hire our first Indigenous Digital Learning Specialist, who is a member of 18 institutional and external committees, including the REB as an Indigenous Member, the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee, the Faculty of Law's Truth and Reconciliation Steering Committee, the Indigenous Education Council, and the Council of Ontario Universities Reference Group on Aboriginal Education.
- Presenting at the University's first Indigenous Research and Scholarship Forum, and at two Indigenous conferences, including the *Building Reconciliation Forum 2023* hosted by Western University, with additional presentations approved for the next reporting period.
- The OOL team visiting Walpole Island and meeting with Knowledge Holders to begin building relationships.
- Development of a video series on Land Acknowledgements (and associated workshops), supported by an institutional EDI grant.
- Co-hosting *Gikinoo amaaadiwag Cross-cultural Instructional Skills Workshop (GCCISW)*, adapted from the Western ISW model to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing, funded by an ongoing Nanadagikenim: Seek to Know Grant, and continuing to co-facilitate events with the community that support digital capacity.
- Developing a new course, *Practicing Accessibility, EDI, Decolonization and Indigenization in Digital Teaching: An Introduction* (10 participants), with a future course planned to focus solely on Indigenizing digital teaching.
- Consulting with departments and faculties on Indigenization of digital pedagogies and practices.
- Collaborating and advising for the *Indigenous Workways* research project led by Dr. Cathy Kwantes and collaborators from University of Windsor, University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Conestoga College.
- Consulting on the Ojibway Park Indigenous Installation Research Advisory.
- Taking steps to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and content in our own courses, particularly in the *Humanizing Digital Learning* program.
- Began working with external consultants Dwight Powless and Linda Manning (CultureScapes Consulting and Training) on Indigenizing our work and incorporating the i-DRAFT continuous improvement model through an Indigenous lens.

3. Becoming an Increasingly Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive and Just University

Striving to rise to the challenge of becoming a more equitable, diverse, inclusive, just, and accessible university is a thread that runs through all of OOL's work. In 2022-23, some key activities include:

- Co-chairing the Accessible Post-secondary Education Committee (with Erika Kustra), tasked with working towards operationalising the proposed new Accessible Post-secondary Education Standards.
- Delivering information sessions on the recommendations in the proposed Accessible Post-Secondary Education Standards (with Cherie Gagnon (OHREA) and Erika Kustra (CTL)) to Senate and the President's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, and the broader campus community.
- Acting as members of the UWindsor Pride Committee, Accessibility Coordinating Committee (ACC), the Accessible Information and Communications Committee (AICC), the Classroom Prioritization Committee, the Employment Equity Coordinating Committee Training and Education Subcommittee, the Training Advisory Committee, the WUFA Racial Justice Committee, and the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership.
- Working to develop a culture that considers equity, accessibility, and sustainability as critical values in selecting educational technologies at the individual and institutional levels; co-leading a project (funded by eCampus Ontario and in collaboration with colleagues across the province) to develop a guide to ethical, equitable, accessible and decolonial procurement of educational technologies. The progress and concept has been presented at two international conferences, as well as to groups from the University of Manchester, and University of Toronto.
- Membership of eCampus Ontario's Accessibility Advisory Group and the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP).
- Consulting with provincial groups on accessibility, including the Council of Ontario Universities, HEQCO, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility, and the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council.
- Presenting a workshop on tips for making Brightspace sites more accessible as part of the University's Accessibility Awareness Days, as well as 21 other workshops on accessibility, accessibility support technologies, and equity, diversity and inclusion in digital teaching to 96 participants.
- Co-facilitated 4 workshops on Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Students and Inclusive language, gender-neutral pronouns, and accent sensitivity to 158 participants.
- Providing one-on-one consultations with instructors on digital accessibility, inclusive practices in online and digital spaces, Universal Design for Learning, accessible multimedia design, and accessibility review of open educational resources.
- Modelling accessibility and inclusion in all our workshops, courses, and resources.

4. Ensuring High Quality, Relevant, and Just Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience for Everyone

The OOL focuses on transforming digital teaching and learning through professional development (individual consultation, workshops and courses), digital learning design and development, educational media production, funding, and policy. Highlights for 2022-23 include:

- Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI): Provided critical exploration, policy, campus updates, workshops, consultations, and practical advice on the emerging impact of GenAI in academic practice.
- Fostered a focus on inclusion, accessibility, equity and anti-racism, particularly in technology-enabled learning environments, through consultation with instructors, workshops and courses, OER development, and grants.
- Working to create a more accessible, inclusive, and just learning environment across campus through implementation of the AODA Accessible Post-Secondary Education Standards.
- Offered 121 courses and workshops for faculty, staff, and students with a total of 1,042 attendees from across all faculties and several service units.
- Launched the first two courses of the new online [Humanizing Digital Learning](#) microprogram (24 participants), with the remainder of the program rolling out in the next reporting period.
- Provided over 2,500 hours of consultations to campus.
- Promoted and supported ethical and critical use of educational technologies in teaching that respect privacy, safety, accessibility, and sound, evidence-informed pedagogies. OOL directly supports and/or funds 14 institutional learning technologies, and provides regular consultation and workshops to support

instructors and others learning about these technologies.

- Continue to provide access to and support for flexible Wordpress ePortfolios for students and faculty to create their personal digital identities. In the reporting year, 538 new sites were created with 548 new users; the system has 6,675 sites and 7,289 users; provided 94 drop-in sessions and 19 bespoke workshops for students on ePortfolios across Nursing, Education, Translational Health, Music Education, and Computer Science.
- Supported the development, updating and adaptation of over 30 open educational resources.
- Continued to engage the Microcredentials Working Group and stakeholders in the development of a framework for microcredentials at UWindsor. Microcredentials support alternative approaches to learning and teaching, and often have a focus on adult learners who need to develop targeted new or updated skills and knowledge.
- As noted in FC3 above, the highly successful procurement and implementation of the new Brightspace Learning Management System was the result of a deep collaboration between OOL, CTL and ITS, along with partners in finance and other units across campus. The new system provides enhanced functionality, accessibility, and significant improvements in both reliability and scalability.

5. Fostering an Engaged, Healthy, Safe, and Environmentally Sustainable Campus

Since 2017 (with the exception of 2020/21 during the pandemic), the OOL has recognised exemplary digital teaching with an annual award, named in honour of Dr. Alan Wright, founder of the OOL and Canada's first Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning. We support recognition of learning through non-traditional means such as digital badges and Microcredentials. OOL is also committed to sustainability in teaching and learning, especially in the choice and use of technologies, and facilitating low-carbon pedagogical approaches that also enhance accessibility and flexibility for learners. Work in 2022-23 includes:

- Awarding the Dr. Alan Wright Award for Exemplary Digital Teaching jointly to two recipients in 2022/23 – Professor Gemma Smyth (Law) and Dr. Tranum Kaur (Science).
- Working with the UWindsor Sustainability Officer to develop an online training course on sustainability for UWindsor.
- Ensuring sustainability criteria were included in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the new LMS, providing a model for similar RFPs going forward.
- Developing a proof of concept for digital badging (non-assessed) and microcredentials (assessed completion or competence) issuance to recognise participation in a range of non-traditional learning opportunities.
- Developing and beginning implementation of a plan in response to the Employee Engagement Survey, including a reading group, social events, communication strategies, and review of preferences for one-on-one employee meetings.

6. Generating Local and Global Impact through Partnership and Community Engagement

As a team committed to open practices, sharing our work openly to a global audience is crucial, contributing to sustainability, knowledge equity, engagement with the community, and reputation of the institution. Efforts contributing to this strategic goal included:

- Offering 4 open webinars to participants globally, enhancing the reputation and reach of the Office of Open Learning and UWindsor as leaders in educational technologies and open practice.
- OERs authored by or collaboratively developed with OOL continue to have significant impact. The 38 Pressbooks created so far were viewed over 551,000 times by 344,000 visitors from all around the world in 2022/23.
- Members of 30 external committees and boards and 15 professional societies and organisations.
- With the leadership of Russell Nahdee, beginning the process of building relationships with local Indigenous communities.
- Supporting the Windsor-Essex community: Worked with [Bike Windsor-Essex](#) on a grant-funded project to develop open digital resources and build capacity in the organisation to manage their digital presence, supporting their work in the community.
- OOL offered their first [visiting fellowships in digital and open learning](#), with visitors scheduled from Ireland and Australia in the second half of 2023.
- Providing consultations to Universite Teluq on retention and success for online learners, and working with

artificial intelligence.

- Continuing to engage with provincial, national, and international groups in developing shared understanding of microcredentials.
 - Dave Cormier co-authored the microcredential toolkits for both eCampus Ontario and BC Campus with colleagues from across these provinces.
- Since Feb 2020, OOL has hosted a weekly meeting of Ontario centre directors, senior staff and leaders in online learning, innovation, and educational technology to support provincial planning, sharing of best practices, problem solving, and community building.

III. Challenges:

Accessibility: OOL has been striving to make teaching and learning more accessible since the office was established. While we wholeheartedly welcome the AODA Accessibility Standards for Post-Secondary Education, the implementation is and will continue to place significant load on the OOL team in helping support the development of accessible digital learning resources, evaluating technologies for accessibility, assisting with procurement processes, and providing consultation and opportunities to learn about and enhance accessibility of course design.

Artificial Intelligence: OOL has been engaging with artificial intelligence as an emerging educational technology since at least 2017. The arrival of Generative AI at scale however, has meant a significant change in the needs of campus, which OOL is addressing in multiple ways from facilitating a learning community, to workshops, resources, individual and group consultations, and developing ethical and practice guidelines. This necessarily results in shifting priorities to support these emerging needs, and working to develop digital and AI literacy across campus. The pace at which these systems are being developed and released is a significant challenge for everyone, as is understanding ethical, responsible, safe, and equitable use of the systems.

Space: While OOL's shared space with CTL and Quality Assurance is relatively new, we do not have enough offices for our staff, with 4 AAS members sharing offices and rotating working from home. It is also challenging with no access to production space to enable us to develop high quality educational media, though we hope to address this through TERF support in the next year. While the OOL contributed considerable funding (\$200k) to the renovation and moving costs of the transition into this space, some challenges such as sound control and adequate office space were not able to be addressed and remain.

Staffing: OOL has been largely staffed with AAS members on limited term contracts funded by external grant funding. We are in the process of transitioning to a more sustainable staffing structure using base budget allocations, but some skill sets remain extremely challenging to fill (e.g. technology analysts/programmers, educational media artists/media production, instructional designers) without the ability to offer more flexible working conditions and higher salaries. These roles are a challenge to fill for institutions in major metropolitan areas, and almost impossible to attract qualified candidates locally. Additionally, as AAS members are eligible for sabbatical and study leave, we will likely have two members on sabbatical over the next two years, and while the director has been eligible for sabbatical since 2015, has not been able to apply, given workload and other challenges.

Increasing reporting load: While OOL embraces evidence-informed decision-making and sharing our successes and challenges, the load created by having to track and report different metrics to multiple audiences and for different purposes is a significant burden that impacts workload and ability to complete other tasks. The OOL has always reported to Senate through APC and the performance of our AAS faculty members is separately reviewed through the RPP process, but we are now also tasked with reporting performance goals to the AVP-A and a Service Level Agreement through the SLA Committee and Finance to the ELT. OOL also contributes to external reporting for the institution, including accreditation, to MCU for selected SMA data, and Contact North, OnCAT/OnTransfer, and eCampus Ontario for online and hybrid course information.

University fiscal challenges impacting technology needs: OOL plays an important role in exploring and forecasting educational technology needs for campus. There are a number of gaps in functionality in the University's technology stack that we receive frequent requests by faculty to provide solutions for (e.g. peer review, audience engagement, AI, design tools, social annotation, plus integration of existing tools to the LMS). Providing these tools would likely

enhance the student experience and learning. While OOL could facilitate pilots and procurement processes, institutional budget constraints and the reduction in government focus on transformational technology and overall disinvestment in the sector presents a major challenge in being able to provide technology at scale to the institution.

Future Actions/Initiatives

In response to the Aspire strategic plan, OOL collaboratively developed five overarching goals for the unit for the next five years. These goals include:

1. *Become recognized as a trusted partner in the development of digital, open, accessible, and inclusive pedagogies, learning spaces, and scholarship;*
2. *Build trust and strong reciprocal relationships with the campus, local and global community, and Indigenous partners;*
3. *Support full implementation of the (AODA) Accessible Standards for Post-secondary Education;*
4. *Drive continuous improvement of the campus digital teaching and learning ecosystem and the capacity of faculty, staff and students to engage with emerging and existing technologies; and*
5. *Develop a robust, sustainable, appropriately resourced OOL to meet the needs of the campus and our community.*

OOL's planned annual initiatives contribute to these goals, and are mapped to the Aspire Foundational Commitments and Strategic Priorities.

Foundational commitments:

1. Establishing and Implementing an Institutional Data Strategy

- Contributing to the ongoing critical conversation about digital content storage and data management in educational technology systems.
- Implement data management strategy in YuJa.
- Seeking data about success of students with disabilities to support planning for AODA Accessible PSE Standards implementation .
- Contribute to the Strategic Enrollment Management plan.

2. Foster Resilience and Institutional Learning through Connection, Reconnection and Collaboration

- Continue to host community-building events and learning opportunities, such as communities of interest in digital teaching, artificial intelligence, and H5P interactive technology.

3. Continue to Foster and Build Welcoming, Inclusive and Engaging Physical and Virtual Spaces

- Complete implementation of existing Training Equipment Renewal Fund (TERF) projects and initiate TERF 3 projects (co-lead with ITS, facilities, and finance).
- Contribute to planning and design of collaborative, active, and accessible learning spaces.
- Continue to champion technology that is accessible, equitable, inclusive, and ethical.

4. Ensuring that Faculty and Staff Have the Skills and Support to Maximize Impact, Growth, and Engagement

- Continually offer varied training and professional development opportunities and one-on-one consultation for instructors on educational technologies and digital pedagogies; AI will be a significant focus.
- Launch professional development initiative internally for OOL staff.

5. Telling Our Stories and Sharing Our Knowledge

- Complete redesign of the OOL website.

6. Improving Institutional Processes and Coordination of Services

- Explore the potential of generative AI to support OOL's work and share these learnings with campus.
- Develop processes for tracking and reporting SLA-related data.
- Explore possibilities for utilising Microsoft products including MS365 Copilot and PowerBI to more efficiently manage, track, and report on OOL data.

Strategic Priorities:

Advancing Bold, Impactful Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

- a. Seek a broader range of grant/funding opportunities to support scholarship and creative activity.

2. Advancing the Journey toward Truth and Reconciliation

- a. Foster a focus on inclusion, accessibility, equity, Indigenization, and anti-racism in technology-enabled

environments.

- b. Continue to build relationships and collaborations with Indigenous colleagues across campus, and with local communities to support development of digital capacity.
- c. Begin development of course on Indigenization and decolonisation of digital spaces as part of the *Humanising Digital Learning* microprogram.

3. Becoming an Increasingly Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive and Just University

- a. Co-chair the AODA Accessible PSE Standards Committee (APEC) and continue work towards implementation of the PSE Standards.
- b. Contribute to the development and refinement of institutional policies and procedures supporting accessibility and inclusive practice, especially through the use of digital technologies and pedagogies.
- c. Explore emerging technologies, such as AI, with potential to support accessibility and diverse learner needs.
- d. Develop pilot project with Student Accessibility Services on the use of Yuja for transcript creation in accommodations.
- e. Contribute to accessible classroom design.
- f. Support reviews of teaching technologies for accessibility, equity, and ethical practice.
- g. Continue to consult with instructors on accessible, equitable, and decolonial digital course designs.
- h. Launch additional courses in the Humanising Digital Learning program: *Practicing Accessibility, EDI, Decolonization and Indigenization in Digital Teaching: An Introduction*, and *Ethical Educational Technology*.
- i. Complete revisions and release open educational resource on equitable, accessible, and sustainable procurement guidance (led by OOL with cross-provincial partners).

4. Ensuring High Quality, Relevant, and Just Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience for Everyone

- a. Consult with faculty across all disciplines on digital and emerging pedagogies
- b. Generative AI response:
 - i. Co-lead institutional response to genAI including creation of institutional guidelines for teaching and learning, policy review and development, and hosting a community of interest.
 - ii. Develop resources to support informed decision-making around use of AI in teaching and learning.
- c. Support development of the *Teaching and Learning Plan*.
- d. Begin development of Emerging Media Lab to streamline and enhance capacity for creation of educational media (e.g. video, H5P, simulations).
- e. Launch *Humanising Digital Learning* microcredentials and begin development of public version of the program.
- f. Continue to provide support and incentives for open educational practices, pedagogical innovation, accessibility, and equity, inclusion, and Indigenization in digital teaching.

5. Fostering an Engaged, Healthy, Safe, and Environmentally Sustainable Campus

- a. Continue work on OOL's response to the Employee Engagement Survey, enhancing skills and exploring interests, encouraging a healthy work-life balance, taking annual leave, and planning sabbatical for eligible employees.
- b. Commit to sustainability and wherever possible, generating social value in purchasing practices of the OOL and any procurements we support.
- c. Participate as a member of the Sustainability in Teaching committee.
- d. Continue development of sustainability course with the Sustainability Office.
- e. Continue to recognise excellence in digital and open teaching across campus.

6. Generating Local and Global Impact through Partnership and Community Engagement

- a. Develop more robust mechanisms for tracking OER impact and reach.
- b. Continue to seek opportunities to support development of digital capacity in local community organisations.

Recommendations for Senate consideration (if any)

Recommendation 1: Updating By-law 54: Undergraduate Academic Evaluation Procedures

Update by-law 54 to remove exception for distance education courses (now online asynchronous or online synchronous as per the new course modalities definitions) that allows courses in that modality to have final grades determined by a single piece of assessment. The by-law currently states:

“With the exception of distance education courses, grading policies that effectively allow a single evaluation procedure to be worth the entire course (i.e., a student who fails this assignment fails the course, regardless of the total grade received for other assignments), are not permitted.”

Rationale:

The by-law as currently written discriminates against learners on the basis of the course modality, which they and the faculty teaching the course may have little control over. This exception is inconsistent with the spirit of the rest of the section that attempts to ensure that all students have the best opportunity to demonstrate their learning, and are not subjected to the pressure of single-shot assessment. We recommend that APC and the Bylaw committee consider removing the exception and, ensuring that all students have an equitable opportunity to succeed in assessment, regardless of the course modality they are studying in.