



THE DIVISION OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH &
INNOVATION, INDIGENOUS RESEARCH CIRCLE

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH ETHICS CONSULTATION REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

In Fall 2019 the University of Toronto Provost's Office appointed an Academic Advisor of Indigenous Research (AAIR) to support the Division of the Vice-President, Research & Innovation (VPRI). The AAIR started a working group in February 2020 called the Indigenous Research Circle, comprising an Elder, an Indigenous Special Projects Officer, and several Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth student and community research assistants to work on a Research Ethics Framework Initiative. The Indigenous Research Circle worked to create a community-informed vision for research services programs and policy. In March 2020, the Initiative had to revise its procedures due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in that all its work was moved from on-campus in-person activity to online virtual activity.

This initiative included completing a scoping review (synthesized into the literature review section of this report) on Indigenous research ethics within universities, and extensive internal U of T consultation with faculty and staff (includes Elders and Knowledge Keepers) engaged in Indigenous research. A final deliverable of this initiative is to develop an Indigenous framework for the VPRI that addresses historical and current harms and injustices of research on Indigenous peoples and builds on existing successes of Indigenous research at the University of Toronto. This final report results and recommendations will support decolonization and indigenization within the VPRI at U of T.

CONSULTATION PROCESS & RESULTS

University of Toronto Indigenous community stakeholder consultations were integral to developing the deliverables of this initiative. Over 65 individuals were consulted between February 2020 and July 2020 designed to solicit input on the ethical research needs of Indigenous individuals and communities. Consultation activity included focus group discussion, individual interviews, a small group interview, and an Indigenous research community information session.

Indigenous community participation was a key component of the initiative's process. Members of the Indigenous community within the University of Toronto provided their input, thoughts, suggestions, and prayers to build the initiative through emails, phone conversations, online virtual meetings, in person meetings, and on the land spiritual ceremony. Community input assisted the Indigenous Research Circle in understanding the needs, priorities, interests, fears, and hopes for the ethics of Indigenous research within research services at the University of Toronto. Community members' insights, experiences, and knowledge's with regards to Indigenous ethical needs and research services was used to refine and revise through a process of praxis the methodology of this initiative that is central to the proposed Indigenous REB framework and guidelines and policy recommendations.

MOVING FORWARD

The outputs of this initiative, including an Indigenous REB framework, Indigenous research guidelines and policy recommendations, are to be implemented in 2021 by the VPRI's Research Oversight & Compliance Office with ongoing support from the Indigenous Research Circle. These will include developing and embedding an Indigenous knowledges evaluation to the framework to be undertaken by the AAIR and a post-doctoral fellow within the Indigenous Research Circle.

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

This report outlines findings from community consultations for the Indigenous Ethics Framework and Protocols Initiative at the University of Toronto by the VPRI Indigenous Research Circle. The Indigenous Research Circle is a group that includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous student and community research assistants, a Traditional Knowledge Keeper, a Special Projects Officer, and is led by Dr. Suzanne L. Stewart, Academic Advisor of Indigenous Research to the VPRI Division. This initiative is part of the implementation of the U of T's response to the Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (TRC) calls to action and the *Wecheehetowin—Answering the Call—the Final Report of the Steering Committee undertaking at the University of Toronto response to the TRC of Canada (Wecheehetowin Report)* (2017).

SCOPE OF WORK

This initiative is informed and guided by both Indigenous knowledges and Western worldviews and methodologies. The Indigenous Research Circle worked with its Traditional Knowledge Keeper at all stages of this process to provide guidance and to honour local Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. This included operationalizing Indigenous knowledges through meaningful community collaboration and ongoing engagement and guidance from Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers throughout the process. This also involved building on the important work that has already been done by other organizations and institutions across Canada, such as the National Inuit Strategy on Research, the Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North, recent work of other universities such as Memorial University in Newfoundland, Trent University, UBC's Indigenous Research Support Initiative. At U of T, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives has unified the many successful programs, services, and supports for Indigenous faculty, staff, and students; all the work of the U of T Indigenous peoples and programs form the basis of the needs, strengths, ideas, and solutions identified in this report.

Infusing spirit into research processes, as well as the institution more broadly, is an important step towards ensuring research is not only safe but helps improve the lives of Indigenous Peoples and communities across Turtle Island. In order to start doing this, consideration of how all research might impact the earth and *all forms of life* as all intricately interconnected, is the conceptual and pragmatic basis of this report and its recommendations. This perspective includes valuing Indigenous wisdoms and spirituality, in an equal regard with Western knowledges. This means that researchers should be aware of local spiritualities before engaging in a relationship with the community or Peoples. Further, in order to meaningfully address concerns about Indigenous research and ethics, the U of T must also address ongoing racism, systemic and personal, and the racialization of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. It was also suggested through on-going consultations with the Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers that the U of T needs to examine and reflect on its own spirit before moving forward with healing and reconciliation in relation to Indigenous Peoples and Canada's colonial history. This self-reflection includes coming to terms with the institution's complicity in colonization at multiple levels, its continued oppression of Indigenous Peoples, and making critical changes to end these. This spiritual and emotional shift within the academy is a crucial step toward honoring the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples.

RATIONALE

It is clear that research involving and impacting Indigenous Peoples is often done in ways that do not benefit them and even causes harm (see Battiste, 2015; Bull, 2017; Kovach, 2015, 2010; Goodman et al, 2018; Merton, Cram & Chilisa, 2013; Riddell et al, 2017; Smith, 2012; Weiss, 2019;). The current U of T policies and guidelines for Indigenous research and ethics review are largely informed by two main sources: Chapter 9 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2) and the principles of OCAP®, however, concerns exist with the literature about how these principles are interpreted in the ethics review process and enacted during the research process undertaken by researchers. It is clear that ethical Indigenous research is a current and long-standing problem at universities, as articulated by U of T (2017), “It is essential that U of T not only advance Indigenous-related research, but also that the University considers how best to educate the U of T community on what constitutes ethical conduct of research with Indigenous people and the importance of building respectful and collaborative relationships (p.60). Further, the report (U of T, 2017) also states that the university should therefore “establish and declare ethical Indigenous-related research as a U of T priority” (p. 22).

OBJECTIVES

To address concerns of the current context of Indigenous research ethics at the U of T, the objectives of the initiative are to:

1. Understand the experiences of faculty, staff, and Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers' with university ethics review boards in order to learn

- strengths and challenges to avoid harmful practices and empower Indigenous individuals and communities within the U of T, and;
2. Develop culturally based and safe Indigenous ethics policy, protocols and guidelines for research involving and impacting Indigenous Peoples/communities for use by all VPRI services, including the Research Ethics Board.

The purpose of this initiative is to address current gaps and challenges in Indigenous research ethics within the Research Oversight and Compliance Office of the Division of the VPRI at the University of Toronto. This also includes building on existing strengths to ensure that all U of T research involving and impacting Indigenous Peoples is done in ways that are culturally safe and beneficial to all involved; this requires the Division of the VPRI to move beyond understanding and respecting Indigeneity at individual levels to addressing ideological, institutional and structural revisions needed to move towards authentic system change at U of T.

PROCESS & TIMELINE

To meet the initiative's objectives, the Indigenous Research Circle engaged in a three step process: 1) a review of the literature on Indigenous research ethics, guidelines, and practices within the context of universities; 2) consultations with existing REB committee members; 3) consultations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples involved in research that impacts Indigenous Peoples within and outside the university of Toronto, and; 4) recommendations for Research Services policy and programs that includes an Indigenous framework for the REB for use with research involving Indigenous individuals and communities.

Throughout this process and into the future, the Indigenous Research Circle continues to learn from the guidance of Elders and other Indigenous community members. An evaluative process will be put in place with the Indigenous policy and programs that are implemented as a result of this report, to ensure they are meeting the changes identified. The evolving nature of knowledges and perspectives in this report represent the spirit of the people, the history, the ancestors, the current work, and the community. Moreover, this report is a living document and is part of ongoing conversations, which will continue to influence the spirit of this initiative and its outcomes.

CURRENT LITERATURE

Research involving and impacting Indigenous Peoples continues to be done in ways that cause harm (see Battiste, 2015; Bull, 2017; Kovach, 2015; Goodman et al, 2018; Merton, Cram & Chilisa, 2013; Smith, 2012; Weiss, 2019). In a review of the literature some of the harms identified include gaps in research ethics protocols and guidelines for Indigenous research; lack of information and training for researchers and ethics board committee members; misinterpretation of Indigenous ethics principles and their practical applications; lack of understanding of the importance of self-determination and the simultaneous loss of control over their own communities; and the absence of respectful integration of Indigenous knowledges that accurately represent the diversity within and between Nations, throughout the research process, including its inception (Castleden et al., 2012; Smylie et al., 2004; Brunger & Wall, 2016; Lavallee, 2009; Morton-Ninomiya M.E. and Pollack, 2017; Moore, 2015; Glass & Kaufert, 2007). Also clear in the current literature is an acknowledgment that only two key documents have gained national recognition and guide the ethical framework and practices of Indigenous research in academic settings (see Riddell et al., 2017) and these documents have value yet also growing challenges (see Snarch, 2004; Stewart, 2018).

GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE

As clearly stated in U of T's *Wecheehetowin Report*, "[r]esearch ethics boards (REBs) in general, and the administrators supporting the REBs, lack optimal information to review and support Indigenous research ethics protocols" (p. 61). This quote highlights existing concerns about current lack of information and training at the REB level about Indigenous research at the University. An Indigenous specific committee, guided by Indigenous ethics and principles, rather than Western academic ethical guidelines currently in use by the REB, is an important component to ensuring Indigenous research is done in a way that honors the rights and safety of Indigenous Peoples and communities in an authentic way.

This includes developing Indigenous research and ethics 'Wise Practices' (Calliou & Wesley-Esquimaux, 2010) guidelines informed by, community consultations. The community consultation process involved discussions with current REB Committee members, faculty, staff and Elders at the university to ensure that the voices of broader community guide this initiative in an authentic way. The term and concept of 'Wise Practices' is purposefully utilized here as a means of shifting away from a 'best practices' model and to draw attention to the importance of always asking "best' according to and for who?" Wise Practices is defined as, "locally-appropriate actions, tools, principles or decisions that contribute significantly to the development of sustainable and equitable conditions" (Calliou & Wesley-Esquimaux, 2010, p.19). Wise Practices models are increasingly being used within Indigenous contexts as a means to create space for Indigenous knowledges, ethics, experiences and perspectives while developing initiatives

and guidelines. Wise Practices helps ensure there is no 'one size fits all' for every Indigenous person and community (Richardson & Murphy, 2018; Wesley-Esquimaux & Caillou, 2010). While it is important to draw attention to unity between Indigenous Nations and People's it is also critical that the Indigenous ethics review process is informed by Indigenous ethics and principles from a diversity of Indigenous Nations, that respects diversity and not just one standardized, pan- Indigenous perspective. This is a critical consideration as the university begins to develop new Indigenous ethics review guidelines.

This initiative is responding specifically to the need for more robust and culturally informed Indigenous ethics review processes and practice guidelines, as confirmed in the University's *Wecheehetowin Report*:

It is essential that U of T not only advance Indigenous-related research, but also that the University considers how best to educate the U of T community on what constitutes ethical conduct of research with Indigenous people and the importance of building respectful and collaborative relationships (p. 60).

U of T must work continually to ensure research being conducted with Indigenous Peoples and communities is done in the safest and most respectful way possible

CURRENT ETHICAL GUIDELINES

Current guidelines for Indigenous research and ethics reviews in Canadian universities are largely informed by two main sources. One is Chapter 9 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2), produced in collaboration with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) in 2010. The revised Tri-Council Policy Statement includes a new section that focuses exclusively on research guidelines involving First Nations, Inuit and Métis (FNIM) peoples in Canada. Although these guidelines are an improvement on pre-existing ones, based on existing literature, and our consultations, they still fall short in providing clear, comprehensive guidance that ensures research is safe and beneficial to the Indigenous Peoples/communities involved and impacted. One of the reasons for this is how these guidelines are interpreted, as this has largely been left to the researchers and ethics reviewers' own interpretations. This is problematic, as researchers' interpretations may vary based on their own histories and experiences, as well as their present understandings of Indigenous Peoples' particular vulnerabilities both historic and ongoing (Bull, 2017; Brunger & Wall, 2016; Castleden et al., 2012; Goodman et al, 2018; Killian et al, 2019; Lavallee, 2009; Morton-Ninomiya & Pollack, 2017; Moore, 2015; Smylie et al., 2004). The second set of principles that currently guide Indigenous research ethics are the principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession, often referred to as the OCAP® principles. The OCAP® principles were originally developed by the National Steering Committee of the First Nations and Inuit Regional Longitudinal Health Survey in 1998

(FNIGC, 2014), to help ensure the community's rights and control over their own information. The OCAP® principles are built on First Nations commitments to engage in research that benefits the community, while not causing harm, however, whether and how these principles are applied in research is sometimes an issue (Schnarch, 2004). As noted by Robson and colleagues (n.d), OCAP® was created to address the research process in a health/bio-medical context, and is specifically a First Nations initiative. Questions still exist over the applicability of these guidelines to the social sciences (e.g. qualitative, historical/archival, and participatory action research), as well as how well they fit for all First Nations communities and for non-First Nations communities (e.g. Métis). Is OCAP® adaptable to both rural and urban contexts? Do all First Nations know about OCAP®? Does it mean the same thing to all First Nations? Do all communities have the capacity to follow OCAP® (p. 4). Robson and colleagues (n.d) also note that there often a "strong disconnect exists between community practices and institutional policies and practices" (pg. 3), further complicating matters is that how communities are defined and bounded is complex, particularly within the urban Indigenous context. As well, research institutions have integrated the OCAP® principles into their policies and procedures in inconsistent ways (Robson et al, n.d). One particular issue identified is how 'ownership' and 'stewardship' of research is interpreted by researchers and the ethics review board. As well, once a research project has been approved there are no formal accountability processes in place, at the institutional level, to ensure the researcher adheres to these principles.

These are important considerations as we develop Indigenous ethics Wise Practices guidelines, as there is not a "one size fits all" approach to how these principles should be interpreted and enacted. In a recent study, Kilian, and colleagues (2019) argue that the current TCPS2 and OCAP® principles are the bare minimum standard for conducting ethical Indigenous research and for assessing ethics in research. Relatedly, Brunger and colleagues (2014) state that Indigenous defined concepts of Indigenous ethical research need to be front and centre, rather than just an 'add on' to existing protocols. However, in order to not merely 'add on' to existing protocols the naturalization of euro-centric ethics and values as the gold standard must be unpacked and examined, otherwise much of ethics reviewers' biases may be merely perpetuated and/or remain unconscious, and thus unlikely to change. Also, it must be brought to the forefront that bringing Indigenous ethics and protocols front and centre would require the institutions, to value Indigenous knowledges, values and principles as research institutions remain "white, privileged spaces" (Smithers Graeme, 2013, pg. 513; see also Battiste, 2008; Grande, 2008; Kilian et al, 2019).

As well there needs to be acknowledgement and representation of the diversity among and between nations as it is crucial to avoid pan-Indigenous research ethics guidelines and protocols (see also Glass & Kaufert, 2007). Furthermore, how community is defined off-reserve and in urban settings must be addressed, as well as who represents the community in the context of a First Nations reserve, or within Urban settings. Developing more comprehensive, inclusive Indigenous ethics review guidelines and protocols, defined by each community, is a critical step in making sure that Indigenous research is done in a way that places the rights and safety of the diversity of Indigenous

Peoples and communities in Canada (FNHA, n.d) at the forefront. Given the diversity, and wide varieties of specific contexts between and within nations, this is no small task.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

CONSULTATION PROGRAM

This initiative is informed and guided by Indigenous knowledges, worldviews and methodologies. Indigenous knowledges are broadly defined as the various forms of local knowledge that Indigenous communities accumulate over generations of living in a particular environment (Estey, Smylie & Macaulay, 2009, p.1). In the consultation program, Indigenous knowledges were operationalized by Indigenous evidence-based literature, community collaboration, and meaningful and on-going engagement and guidance from Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers. The Indigenous Research Circle worked with its Traditional Knowledge Keeper at all stages to provide guidance and ensure the process honoured local Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing. In order to meet the objectives of the initiative, the following consultation questions were developed by the Indigenous Research Circle to guide the semi-structured consultation interviews and were used with all consultees:

1. What has your experience been like with Indigenous ethics Research Ethics Board (REB) reviews at U of T?
2. What would make an Indigenous Ethics Framework at the REB successful from your perspective?
3. What are some of the things that could create problems or failures with Indigenous ethics reviews?
4. How might we measure the success of an Indigenous Ethics Review process?

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Participants were identified by a data base that was created by the Indigenous Research Circle of all researchers and staff at U of T who engage in Indigenous research and U of T Indigenous Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keeper. The data base includes a total of 14 Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers, 50 faculty, 5 researchers and 30 Indigenous staff.

An information session (meet and greet event) for all faculty and staff who engage in Indigenous research and the Indigenous Research Circle was schedule for April 8, 2020 (see Appendix A Community Meeting Invitation). Due to the Covid-19 state of emergency in Ontario, the event was cancelled, pending rescheduling. The Indigenous Research Circle wanted to maintain momentum on the timeline of this initiative, and decided to forgo the live information session and begin to research out individual to the faculty and staff via email to do consultations (see Appendix B, Internal Consultation

Invitation). A database of Canadian universities that have Indigenous ethics frameworks for their Research Ethics Boards was also created by the Indigenous Research Circle, and of these, five were invited to do a consultation (see Appendix C, for Consultation Interview)

CONSULTATION ACTIVITY

A total of 70 people were consulted for this report within and outside of the University of Toronto (see Table 1. Consultee List). The Indigenous Research Circle consulted with 67 U of T individuals, between February and May 2020, this included 34 U of T Research Ethics Review Committee members, 28 faculty/staff who engage in Indigenous research (14 Indigenous and 14 non-Indigenous), and eight Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers. The Indigenous Research Circle also consulted with three faculty/staff from two other Canadian universities that have developed Indigenous research ethics processes, guidelines, and supports. The Indigenous Research Circle conducted semi-structured, conversational style consultation interviews with each person.

Consultants	U of T Faculty & Staff	U of T Elders & Traditional Knowledge Keepers	Other University Staff & Researchers
Group Interview	34 (REB committee)	0	0
Individual Interview	24	8	4
Total = 70	58	8	4

GROUP CONSULTATIONS

The first group consultation took place in February 2020, in person, with members of U of T's REB committees (Social Science, Humanities, and Health Science review boards). Thirty-four people participated in this consultation, including faculty, staff, and community member reviewers. Information regarding the cultural Indigenous identity of individuals on the REB committees in this group was not collected, though most of the group members were self-identified as non-Indigenous; there may have been some

Indigenous members in this group, however none were asked to self-identify due to cultural safety protocols and that obtaining this demographic was not the objective of the consultation.

The consultation event started with an opening spiritual ceremony by the Elder, and an introduction the Indigenous research Circle members present (three student and community Research assistants, the Elder, the Special Projects Officer, and the academic lead), purpose and rationale of the consultation by the academic lead. Then the consultees in this group consultation divided themselves into four smaller groups (approximately eight or nine people in each group). Each group included one member from the Indigenous Research Circle to facilitate group discussions. A member of the Indigenous research circle joined each smaller group to pose the same questions (see Appendix C) to each group, record responses, and facilitate discussion over a one hour time period. The small groups returned to the large group configurations, and concluding statements and a spiritual closing were made the Elder.

In April 2020, a group of three faculty from one school at U of T expressed an interest be interviewed a group format, which was carried out online using Zoom software, using the same process outlined for the REB committee group consultation, but with one small group only maintained throughout the consultation. The Special Projects Officer from the Indigenous Research Circle posed the interview questions (see Appendix C), a student research assistant took notes, and the Elder in residence was there for cultural/spirit support.

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS

Initially all consultations with Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers, faculty and staff involved in Indigenous research at U of T were to be done in person in a focus group format to stimulate rich discussions and represent a collective voice. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions that arose in March 2020, subsequent consultation with faculty, staff, and Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers had to be adjusted to take place individually via a virtual online platform (Zoom or Microsoft Team) or over the telephone. As per Indigenous cultural protocols, tobacco is offered in to Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers and other individuals asked to share information, at the time of the request to participate in a consultation. This protocol was adjusted; each Elder/ Traditional Knowledge Keeper was individually asked at the start of their consultation how they could be respectfully offered tobacco through a virtual platform. In each case, it was agreed that the Indigenous Research Circle member conducting the consultation would place tobacco down in nature, under a tree, with a prayer for healing for the self and the earth.

For each individual consultation with Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers, faculty, and staff at U of T and two faculty from the other two universities (one from each), one member of the Indigenous Research Circle posed the interview questions (see Appendix C), an RA was present to take written notes, and the Elder in residence on the Indigenous Research Circle was present for cultural/spiritual support. Consultations were not video or

audio recorded. After each individual consultation session notes were sent to the consultee via email for their review to ensure accuracy of their responses.

AUTHENTICITY

After each consultation, information from the responses of participants was recorded in writing. The notes were compiled and entered it into a spread sheet for qualitative thematic analysis using an Indigenous knowledges approach. Themes were identified and reviewed by individual Indigenous Research Circle (IRC) members and in eight IRC group sessions. Preliminary themes that emerged from the ideas, thoughts, feedback of all consultees were shared with the seven Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers who were initially consulted, prior to being finalized, to ensure authenticity with Indigenous voices consulted.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

This section contains a summary of the recurring ideas, values, principles, actions, fears, hopes, and dreams about Indigenous research ethics at the U of T by the people consulted. The summary has identified three overarching Themes: **Challenges; Indigenous Values and Principles, and; Ways of Doing**. There are thirteen Categories within those themes, which are not intended to be a verbatim representation of the consultations (see Table 2, Consultation Themes & Categories).

Themes	Challenges	Indigenous Values & Principles	Ways of Doing
Categories	Honor Diversity Consent and Expanded Concepts of Vulnerability & Risk	Community Engagement Involvement of Elders & Traditional Knowledge Keepers Infusing Spirit into Research Processes	Developing TCPS2 & OCAP Principles Indigenous Ethics Review Timelines

	Decolonizing Ethics, Research, & Institutional Values	Reciprocity	Training
	Increasing Accountability & Transparency		
	Rebuilding & Strengthening Trust		

Table 2. Consultation Themes & Categories

CHALLENGES

This overarching theme is about important and clear difficulties that historically and continually impede the ethical dimensions of Indigenous research ethics board activities. These include categories of: Honouring Diversity; Consent and Expanded Concepts of Vulnerability and Risk; Decolonizing Ethics, Research, and Institutional Values; Increasing Accountability and Transparency, and Rebuilding and Strengthening Trust.

HONOURING DIVERSITY

Often, colonial institutions such as universities, and many of its researchers are unaware of the diversity between and within Indigenous populations, or for simplicity, prefer to standardize protocols and processes that don't reflect the diversity between and within nations, but make things easier from a bureaucratic perspective. While it is important to highlight unity between and within Indigenous Nations and groups, without an awareness of diversities, ethical protocols and guidelines can contribute to a pan-Indigenous perspective being employed for all Indigenous research, which can lead to harm. As such, consultees talked about the need to ensure that diversity between and within communities is honoured throughout Indigenous research and ethics processes, and to ensure ethics processes respect multiple Indigenous identities, such as First Nations, Metis, Inuit, urban, reserve, Two-Spirited, and more. This also includes an

awareness of the diversity within and between geographic contexts, specifically urban, rural, remote and on and off reserve communities and individuals. In particular there is concern about ensuring the university does not create one standardized Indigenous research ethics protocol or set of guidelines that does not take into account the differences in Indigenous identities, lives, and experiences and how this impacts ethical issues. Consultees suggested that ensuring diversity is honored could include making sure ethics review committees include individuals from associated communities in which research is taking place. For example, REB applications that concern research with on-reserve communities would be reviewed by an REB committee that included a person from a reserve.

CONSENT & EXPANDED CONCEPTS OF VULNERABILITY & RISK

Another important aspect to this theme is about consent and existing concepts of vulnerability and risk within research. This is a concern because consent tends towards being individualistic in the current research ethics system, whereas in Indigenous ways of being and doing, collectivism is usually the focus. In the experience of consultees, current research ethics processes and guidelines focus on the individual level and do not adequately address consent at community levels, despite requirements for community support letters in some cases. For example, when conducting research in an Indigenous community, researchers need to carefully consider who is consulted, who speaks for the community and why.

Relatedly, how vulnerability is conceptualized needs to be reconsidered within the current western academic ethical framework, as not all Indigenous Peoples are at risk, or at the same level of risk, just because of their identity; thus, there is a concern about paternalism and lack of autonomy for Indigenous individuals and communities within the current consent and risk matrix process. This means that REB policies and reviewers should not assume or operate from a deficit perspective, as is the current standard policy of most REBs, where it is the norm to evaluate vulnerability and risk for all Indigenous Peoples in the same way. Further, vulnerability may be conceptualized within some Indigenous worldviews differently than a western academic concept. For example, from an Indigenous knowledges perspective, vulnerability and crying may be viewed as a strength and a necessary part of healing, and not vulnerable behavior or something to be avoided as a risk. Further, considerations around vulnerability should also take into account legacies of harm related to research.

DECOLONIZING ETHICS, RESEARCH & INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

All consultees agreed that decolonizing research generally, and ethics in particular, is part of dismantling colonial institutional values of the university, as well as the naturalization of Euro-centric knowledges and approaches as superior. Decolonizing is a major component of reconciliation and beginning to build respectful, safe and beneficial relationships with and for Indigenous Peoples. This includes acknowledging the

university's role in colonial harms and their ongoing complicity in continuing to perpetuate these harms, even when it is simply by maintaining the status quo. This means not only developing an Indigenized ethics framework, but deconstructing existing structures of oppression, such as Euro-centric values and paradigms that are deeply entrenched in ethical values currently guiding university research ethics. Valuing and including Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in meaningful ways is a crucial component to decolonizing ethics and research at the university, as knowledges have become colonized as well. This includes building and integrating a new set of values based on Indigenous knowledges and values into research processes, including those related to ethics. Concerns were raised about the level of commitment of the university to address these issues in an authentic way; that the university needs to prove its commitment at all levels. It was also suggested that in order to address these issues meaningfully there is a need to understand how Canada's history with Indigenous Peoples came to pass, and was accepted as okay for so long.

INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

Prominent in the conversations is the need for more accountability during the entire research process, specifically with the researchers and the REB. Currently, Indigenous communities are increasingly taking ownership, control, access and possession of their research, which is important, but there also needs to be accountability in relation to community and researchers' experience during the research process to ensure these principles are enacted in ways that are agree upon at the outset. Academic researchers need to be held more accountable for their actions during the entire research process, and not in only the planning and ethics approval stages. Accountability includes being transparent and reflexive throughout the entire research process but also beyond the ethics review process. It was suggested that one way accountability and transparency could be increased in the REB process is through a separate consultation process completed with each Indigenous community involved in a research project during and after the research is completed, in order to get feedback about the quality of the research relationship, process, and outcomes. Another suggestion is that it must be made clear who the researcher and the community will be accountable to before the research begins as it isn't always certain individuals or bodies, such as band Chiefs or band councils, who speak for the community.

REBUILDING & STRENGTHENING TRUST

All people consulted raised concerns about the legacy of harmful research on Indigenous peoples, and its continued negative impact. Some improvements to Indigenous research and ethics were noted, yet not sufficient to mitigate the legacy of mistrust that has been created between Indigenous Peoples and researchers. As such, an important aspect to developing an effective Indigenous ethics review process is ensuring that the university is prepared to address, in ongoing ways, the mistrust that

many Indigenous Peoples may feel towards academic research and academic institutions in general. A crucial component to rebuilding trust is prioritizing the protection of Indigenous People over institutional priorities during the ethics review process. It was also suggested that restorative justice principles and practices could be embedded in the process of research as a way to contribute to healing some of the harms.

INDIGENOUS VALUES & PRINCIPLES

Indigenous Values and Principles as an overarching theme was identified by many consultees as something that needs to be the foundation of all aspects of Indigenous research ethics board activities. These are specified within categories of: Community Engagement; Involvement of Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers; Infusing Spirit into Research Processes, and Reciprocity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is a need for increased meaningful and respectful Indigenous community involvement by researchers and the REB. Historically, there has been a lack of authentic community engagement and this remains a current issue as well. Communities still often do not see any genuine benefit from most academic research conducted in their community, as often researchers continue entering communities, do the research, then leave with little or no accountability. In order to move away from this practice in a good way, community involvement must not only be at the forefront of research and ethical review processes but these processes should instead be driven by community as much as possible. This could occur through collaboration and relationship building between researchers and Indigenous communities and Elders prior to the start of research projects, before applying for funding or ethical review. Furthermore, it was clearly stated by consultees that having one Indigenous member on a research team should not equate with consulting the community. Whether the researcher is Indigenous or not, a relationship and collaboration with the community and/or with the local Elders must occur prior to research proposal, and this should be reflected in the research ethics protocol. Another important point raised is that Elders don't speak for everyone in the community and as such it is crucial to consider multiple community members for consultation and consent. All communities have their own unique leadership contexts, and researchers need to investigate and understand this complexity, prior to engaging with community members for partnership and consent. For example, in some communities there are multiple forms of governance that need to be consulted, and these are very different in urban and reserve contexts. On reserves there are colonial models of leadership, and on others there is an Indigenous governance lead by traditional Chiefs. For reserves, it was suggested that researchers first consult with traditional councils and then the band council.

INVOLVEMENT OF ELDERS & TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS

It was abundantly clear to all consultees that the role of Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers in Indigenous research and ethics review processes is critical, and that there is a need for respectful financial compensation for their time and expertise. Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers are fundamental to the dissemination and continuation of Indigenous knowledges and often need to be consulted during the research development and ethics proposal stages, as well as throughout the research process; this requires time and effort. Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers must be compensated fairly for their time, and local traditional cultural protocols must be followed to ensure respect and reciprocity—these are often not the case in academic research. It is also important to note that many Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers are already overburdened with both institutional and community-based obligations, and this is a key concern raised by many of the consultees. Their insight is vitally important but should not be taken for granted or over-relied upon without appropriate financial compensation and the provision of other supports, such as transportation, food, beverages, a private/comfortable/suitable place for them work or be, and the provision of an Elder's helper. Consulting Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers is an important component to the ethics review process, and it was suggested that they be employed on more than an ad hoc consultancy basis. However, some Elders expressed how complex payment issues can be and in some cases felt it would be a conflict of interest to be on the university payroll when providing reviews of ethics applications, as such these concerns must be considered.

INFUSING SPIRIT INTO RESEARCH PROCESSES

There is critical need to infuse spirit into research, and into the institution more broadly. It was very clear through all consultations, particularly with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers, that to ensure research involving and impacting Indigenous Peoples is not harmful, but of benefit, it must start from a place of spirituality and prioritizing connection to the land. This also includes considering impact from a wholistic conception (physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional perspective). For example, it was suggested that the university consider all research/ethics proposals from a lens of how it might impact not only Indigenous Peoples, but the earth and all forms of life, as all are intricately interconnected. Further, in order to meaningfully address concerns about Indigenous research and ethics, the university must address ongoing personal and systemic racism. Operating from a spiritual lens is a crucial step toward honoring the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples. At a foundational level, Indigenous Peoples should not have to fight for what should be a given, and a number of consultees stated that Indigenous researchers should stop using non-Indigenous frameworks because it is easier, or because it has become the standard to do so. The status quo of Indigenous research must be disrupted to create fundamental change; this work requires humility on the part of the university system and its people, and an openness to take a critical look at how things are done and where they need to change.

RECIPROCITY

The value and practice of reciprocity was affirmed as an essential ethical element of conducting academic research with Indigenous Peoples. This element of ethics is often missing from academic research conducted at the U of T, and appears to occur only when researchers ensure it is included in the procedures and not as an ethical requirement. In the research context reciprocity means the research must be of mutual benefit, and that all parties, including Indigenous individuals or communities, involved are equal partners. Historically, Indigenous peoples have been used for research purposes without their consent, and in some cases even without their knowing. There is a long history of research 'on' Indigenous people, which has been devoid of any respectful or reciprocal relationship between community and researcher and has caused massive amounts of acute and intergenerational trauma. Overwhelmingly, reciprocity must be an explicit core aspect of both research processes and research ethics.

WAYS OF DOING

This overarching theme is about addressing procedures that were identified by consultees as most salient, regarding Indigenous research ethics board policies and reviewing practices. These include categories of: Developing TCPS2 and OCAP Principles; Indigenous Ethics Review; Timelines, and; Training.

DEVELOPING TCPS2 & OCAP PRINCIPLES

There is a need to expand on the important work that has already been done to help guide Indigenous research, in particular the CIHR's TCPS2 Chapter 9 Guidelines on Indigenous Research and the OCAP Principles. There was considerable concern about inconsistencies in how OCAP Principles and the TCPS2 guidelines are interpreted and used, with specific concern about their improper application that does not mitigate ethical issues. Often, the ethical issues are not being defined by the community themselves, and academic researchers are not being held accountable throughout the entire research process to uphold Indigenous ethical principles and guidelines. Further, many expressed that there was not enough meaningful and extensive consultation with a diversity of Indigenous Peoples/communities during the process of establishing the TCPS2 principles in particular. For example, it was expressed that even the term "Indigenous research" is often a misnomer and should more accurately be referred to as 'research into Indigeneity', research involving or impacting Indigenous Peoples or 'Indigenist' research. Ultimately, the current ethical guidelines lack specificity and detail to adequately meet the ethical needs of Indigenous people in current academic research practice, and should be further developed to meet the needs.

INDIGENOUS ETHICS REVIEW

Although there were strong competing views regarding Indigenous-specific review committees, the majority of those consulted felt very strongly that this is needed to ensure safe and beneficial research. Concerns raised about a separate review process were mainly that it could create more divisiveness and missed collaborative research opportunities. As well, important concerns were raised about how there is not always a clear boundary between Indigenous and non-Indigenous research. For example, there are grey areas such as research that doesn't specifically focus on Indigenous Peoples but is focused on a topic, or in a geographical area that could involve or impact Indigenous Peoples. As such there is a need to create flexible parameters, yet clear guidelines, about what is considered "Indigenous research" and ways of considering who the stakeholders might be. Rationale for an Indigenous REB review committee were very compelling as there are distinct issues in Indigenous research, as well as distinct Indigenous ethics and values that need to be centrally employed to ensure respectful, safe and beneficial research, and to help rebuild trust and contribute to reconciliation and healing; these might be better served by a specific committee with specific Indigenous research experts, Elders, and community members. An Indigenous ethics review committee could play a vital role in increasing trust between Indigenous Peoples, communities and researchers moving forward, and would need to be developed in close consultation with an Elders advisory council and consultation with a diversity of Indigenous Peoples. It was suggested that an Indigenous committee be part of the general REB process, one guided by Indigenous ethics and principles rather than Western academic ethical guidelines currently in use by the REB. Many participants also suggested that the existing general REB ethics application form be modified to suit criterion for ethics created by an Indigenous committee.

TIMELINES

Ethically engaging with Indigenous approaches to research requires time, often more time than is allocated in research protocols, ethics proposals, and funding timelines, as well as expectations for western academic productivity. Many of those consulted stated that these timelines need to be more flexible to adapt to Indigenous worldviews according to each project and community. Building and maintaining respectful relationships with Indigenous communities takes time, and these relationships are crucial to ensuring research is being done in a way that is safe from harm and beneficial (i.e. in a good way) as well as contributes to building trust between communities and academic institutions. Increased timeline flexibility may be especially important for pre-tenured faculty as they are in a more vulnerable position in the university context as there are pressured to produce numerous research projects, funding, and publications.

TRAINING

It was stated during many consultations that there is a general lack of knowledge about Indigenous methodologies, ethics, and cultural sensitivity/safety, as well as the need for training for all researchers and research ethic board review members, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The university could benefit from creating and integrating Indigenous methodologies and principles into a training program for all researchers and REB staff. However, it is crucial that the university does not create a standardized training toolkit for Indigenous research and ethics, as this could lead to furthering a harmful pan-Indigenous approach to research. Instead, nation-oriented and context specific relational building training tools need to be developed. Ultimately it was suggested that training for researcher and research staff should be put in place to build Indigenous and non-Indigenous education related to Indigenous histories, knowledges, ethics, and values and research methodologies. The next section outlines recommendations based on the consultations and their emergent themes

RECOMMENDATIONS

INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK

Recommendations from the results of the consultations were made by the Indigenous Research Circle in another round of consultations with the Elders. These recommendations include the creation of a wholistic Indigenous framework for the VPRI Division at U of T that would include a basis of Spirituality, an Indigenous Research Ethics Board Committee, Indigenous Research Policies, and an Indigenous Research Strategic Plan and are depicted in Figure 1. Wholistic Indigenous Research Framework.



Figure 1. Wholistic Indigenous Research Framework

SPIRITUALITY

Infusing spirit into research processes by acknowledging and looking at how research impacts humans and the natural environment is an integral way to enact the recommendations of those consulted. The ongoing act of using a spiritual framework would include the inclusion of Traditional knowledge keepers and Elders in all functioning of research services concerning Indigenous peoples, and embedding ceremony in research and senior leadership activities concerning Indigenous research ethics and contracts. Working from a spiritual framework also requires examining and deconstructing the naturalization of Euro-western values and ethical principles as the only valid forms of knowledges, and then also creating an Indigenous culturally and spiritually-based research ethics protocol and guidelines informed by Indigenous values, principles and ethics. Further, using a spiritual framework means honouring and valuing Indigenous knowledges, ethical principles and guidelines at the university as a whole; to hold Indigenous knowledges in as equal regard with Western knowledges, having processes and policies that reflect this.

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD COMMITTEE

An Indigenous Research Ethics Board (REB) committee should be created to review all applications that are identified as involving Indigenous individuals, communities, or lands. An Indigenous REB committee's criterion for ethical evaluation would address the main themes identified in this report. Criteria for ethical evaluation of research proposals on an Indigenous REB committee should be created by a group of Indigenous stakeholders from within and outside the university, such as researchers (staff and faculty), students, Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers, and community members. Criteria should include ensuring that research projects include community engagement process; how Indigenous knowledges will be protected, and how research is beneficial to Indigenous Peoples. This recommendation is in keeping with the *Wecheehetowin Report* (2017), which provided a call to action for U of T to create an Indigenous REB board or subcommittee:

Short-term Call to Action: The University should consider the creation of a Research Ethics Board sub-committee focussed solely on Indigenous-related research. The sub-committee would be tasked to develop a protocol for coordinating the ethical review with Indigenous communities (p.23).

This would not preclude ethical approval by Indigenous communities/governments/ organizations outside of the university. Key aspects of an Indigenous committee are that it be guided by Indigenous ethical principles, values, and knowledges; it remains part of the REB process as a specific committee; and the application form be modified to reflect Indigenous values and principals. The purpose of an Indigenous committee would be that it reflects policies and procedures in place within the REB ethical review process to increase transparency and accountability of researchers involved in research involving and impacting Indigenous Peoples to ensure safety and benefit to all involved.

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH POLICY

Indigenous research policy should be developed by the Division of VPRI within all of its services, including ethics, agreements and partnerships, funding, entrepreneurship that address decolonization; consent and vulnerability, spirituality, Elder engagement, and definitions of Indigenous research and community-based research. U of T's *Wecheehetowin Report* (2017), provided a call to action for U of T to Indigenous policy in collaboration with government funding agencies and other universities to address a gap in current funding policies and Indigenous ethics:

Short-term Call to Action: The Vice-President, Research and Innovation should work with other universities, in close collaboration with the granting councils, to convene a joint committee to consider the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, its application to research involving

Indigenous peoples and communities, and the fit with existing research funding programs of the granting councils. (p.23).

Decolonization requires the examining and mitigating the impact of colonization on knowledges, and what knowledges and perspectives are considered legitimate in the context of U of T research activities. Specifically, this means putting the needs and interests of Indigenous peoples ahead of the needs of western science and university policy and protocol. However, there is an acute awareness that currently, this is a process of striving toward and may not be possible to the extent that it ought to be for Indigenous communities to be safe from the harm of research. Decolonization includes creating comprehensive and clear parameters around what is considered Indigenous research. There must be consideration not only for research that directly involves and impacts Indigenous Peoples and communities but also research that, by the geographical location, subject matter, or demographics, might also indirectly involve or impact Indigenous Peoples and communities. This would require an inclusive model of indigeneity, one that takes into account the diversity within and between nations, as well as the impact of colonization on Indigenous lives and identities. There is not one way to be Indigenous and we need to make sure that the parameters don't essentialize Indigeneity.

For example, adjusting research timelines to adapt to the particularities of Indigenous community needs is one way to decolonize research. This includes making sure timelines of research processes, such as community engagement and relationship building are realistically considered and presented in the ethics application. It takes time to build relationships and doing research that involves Indigenous Peoples takes time, acts of kindness and reciprocity on the part of researcher, Indigenous practices of consent and relationship. Most university researchers are not educated in these knowledge's or practices of Indigenous culture in general, nor in research specifically, and this is fundamental piece of decolonization—researchers must practice Indigenous ways of being and doing to conduct ethical and appropriate research with Indigenous peoples.

How could this be done at U of T? Educating researchers on Indigenous history, culture, and research would be start, and creating a mechanism by which this education and supervision of research is addressed, monitored, and improved would be a good start. U of T's *Wecheehetowin Report* (2017) states that U of T must earnestly undertake decolonization by incorporating indigenous knowledge's into university structures and suggests education on Indigenous issues for all staff as an important piece to this. Results of consultation suggest that training for all REB committee members and researchers engaging in indigenous research must occur.

Longer-term Call to Action: The Provost and the Vice-President, Research and Innovation should oversee the development of research training modules that recognize historical patterns of unethical research in and with Indigenous communities. Specific cultural and research ethics training should be made

available to any scholar seeking to work in an Indigenous community (U of T, 2017, p.22).

Consultation results recommend that Elders should be engaged in respectful and on-going ways both at the VPRI and within all Indigenous research that considers their time, effort, and commitment in terms of compensation, position, and diverse representation. Specifically, Elders should be involved generally in VPRI leadership and policy decisions, and specifically within the REB committees. U of T's *Wecheehetowin Report* (2017) provided a call to action stating the role and impact of Elders should be meeting the university's needs. A call to action regarding the need for a coherent and systematic a protocol for hiring, compensating, and respecting Elders that is consistent across the university, including within research activities was also made in the report (U of T, 2017):

Short-term Call to Action: The Provost's Office, working with the divisions, should seek to expand the current financial support for Elder services, which should be made available to broader segments of the University community. (p.17)

The *Wecheehetowin Report* (2017) recommends that the Provost's Office expand its financial support for Elders to make it widely available across the university and not solely in Indigenous programs or initiatives, and this is in keeping with consultees recommendations on engaging Elders in all aspects of the work of the VPRI.

Community-based Research is both an evidence-based conceptual framework and methodology for Indigenous research. To maintain consistency and remain on the current and cutting edge of successful and ethical research, the VPRI must develop and use clear and consistent definitions and pragmatic understandings of concepts and practices such as Indigenous research and community-based research. This recommendation fits with the U of T's *Wecheehetowin Report* (2017) that call for a working group to examine community-based research:

Longer-term Call to Action: The Provost and the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, in close collaboration with the Faculty Association, should convene a working group within the next two years to examine issues related to community-based research, and specifically research in and with Indigenous communities. This working group could articulate guidelines both for the ethical undertaking of such research and for its assessment in processes of tenure and promotion. (p.15)

The VPRI Division, on their website, states:

'Research' is defined as an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation.

'Human participants' is defined as those individuals whose data, or responses to interventions, stimuli or questions by the researcher, are relevant to answering the research question.

'Research Ethics Board' (REB) is an arm's-length independent committee mandated to review the ethical acceptability of human research in accordance with federal, provincial and institutional requirements.

'Ethics Protocol' is a document describing how the research will be conducted from a participant-centric perspective to ensure that all ethical requirements and standards are maintained.

None of these definitions fit within an Indigenous paradigm of research, including ethical values, principles, and protocols. For example, clear guidelines and definitions about what community engagement entails and needs to include mandatory training for researchers and REB members on Indigenous cultural awareness and sensitivity, as well as Indigenous research principles, methodologies and methods. Processes and procedures in place for ensuring accountability between researcher and communities, such as evaluation of community experience during and after the research and not just at the ethics approval stage. The VPRI can now address these within the recommendations of a holistic Indigenous framework.

STRATEGIC PLAN

A clear strategic plan for Indigenous research would provide a metric by which to evaluate ongoing policies and programs, and would ensure accountability by the VPRI on Indigenous issues. It would be a living document and could herald as beacon for hope and change for Indigenous research at U of T and worldwide. A strategic plan could be created by the Indigenous Research Circle using an Indigenous knowledge framework, and implemented through the VPRI division in a way that is clear, coherent, and evidence based in both western and indigenous methodologies. This implementation would include a strong evaluation component supported by the work of the Indigenous Research Circle and an Indigenous post-doctoral fellow. Further, many other large Canadian universities have such a strategic plan within their central division of research, therefore U of T, as the largest and best university in Canada, is currently lagging in respect to its decolonization and Indigenization efforts, and this would demonstrate a commitment to continuing to lead academics, this time in terms of indigenous research.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Centering community-specific Indigenous ethics and values into the Indigenous research policy and process at U of T can play a vital role in increasing trust between Indigenous Peoples, communities and university researchers. This is a crucial step, the specific details of which need to be developed and implemented in close consultation with an Elders advisory council and consultation with a diversity of Indigenous Peoples and communities. The U of T must have clear goals and guidelines based in Indigenous values and principles, as would be set forth in a holistic Indigenous framework, to ensure accountability. In conclusion, all research at U of T must continually strive to empower Indigenous Peoples and ensure research positively impacts and improves the lives of Indigenous communities as defined by Indigenous Peoples themselves, and sets the stage for U of T continue to lead both the country and world in excellence.

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APPENDIX A

Community Meeting Invite

Subject Line: UT Indigenous faculty and staff consultation request

Dear Colleague;

I am the new OVPRI Indigenous Advisor. The ultimate goal of this work is two-fold: To build a network of Indigenous research and researchers that has a central place at the University of Toronto, while increasing capacity and supports for Indigenous research, including ethics, contracts, funding, and more.

I am reaching out to U of T Indigenous faculty and staff for a consultation meeting, in which I would like to facilitate a discussion to get your input about developing

- 1) An Indigenous research ethics framework for the U of T Research Ethics Board, and
- 2) A strategic Indigenous academic network across the three U of T campuses

An Indigenous talking circle/consultation meeting for Indigenous faculty and staff only is scheduled for:

**Wednesday April 8, 2020 from 2:00 to 5:00 pm
at 155 College Street, room 400 (4th floor), St George Campus, Toronto.**

Food and refreshments will be provided. The circle will be co-facilitated by Elders and youth research assistants in a culturally safe space and framework.

Please RSVP here: https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/indigenous-faculty-and-staff-consultation-university-of-toronto-tickets-96952865631?utm_term=eventurl_text

If this consultation date does not work for you, our team can accommodate an individual meeting to get your input. In the spirit of transparency and collaboration, I hope to connect with you, as your input is critical to the success of this initiative. Please contact me or the Special Projects Officer for this, Cathy Fournier (copied above), if you wish to set up an individual meeting or have any further questions. Mahsi cho, thank you so much!

Warmly,
Suzanne

APPENDIX B

Consultation Invitation

Original version February 2020:

Dear Colleague;

I am the new OVPRI Indigenous Advisor. The ultimate goal of my work is two-fold: To build a network of Indigenous research and researchers that has a central place at the University of Toronto, while increasing capacity and supports for Indigenous research, including ethics, contracts, funding, and more.

I am reaching out to U of T Indigenous faculty and staff for a consultation meeting, in which I would like to facilitate a discussion to get your input about developing

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If this consultation date does not work for you, I can also accommodate an individual meeting to get your input. In the spirit of transparency and collaboration, I hope to connect with you, as your input is critical to the success of this initiative. Please contact me or the Special Projects Officer for this, Cathy Fournier (copied above), if you set up an individual meeting or have any further questions. Mahsi cho, thank you so much!

Warmly,
Suzanne

COVID19 revised version March 2020:

Dear Colleague;

A few weeks ago Dr. Suzanne Stewart, the new OVPRI Indigenous Advisor at U of T, sent out an email invite asking you to take part in a faculty consultation to get your input on developing:

- 1) An Indigenous research ethics framework for the U of T Research Ethics Board,
and
- 2) A strategic Indigenous academic network across the three U of T campuses

We had scheduled the Indigenous talking circle/consultation meetings for Indigenous faculty and non-Indigenous faculty involved in Indigenous related research for April 8 and April 21, however, given the recent implementation of COVID-19 virus protocols to reduce its impact we are anticipating that we will need to reschedule these meetings.

What we would like to propose instead is individual consultations over the phone, via Zoom or another virtual meeting forum sometime in the next few weeks if possible. The consultation will be conducted by myself, Cathy Fournier, the Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Research at U of T, and/or members of our student research team at the Waakebiness Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health. We are wondering if you would be available anytime the week of March 23 or the following week, March 30-April 3, or another time in early April.

If you are willing to do the individual consultation please let me know a day/time in the next few weeks or so that would work best for you and we will accommodate your schedule.

In the spirit of transparency and collaboration, we hope to connect with you, as your input is critical to the success of this initiative. Please contact me if you have further questions.

Miigwetch, Marsi and thank you so much!

Warmly,
Cathy Fournier,
Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Research
University of Toronto

Consultation Interview

Individual Video/Audio Consultations, March 2020

Consultation Interview Script

My name is _____, and I am _____ [job title]. I have with me, _____ [name and job title], who will not be conducting the consultation but is here to take notes and provide support in the process. [2nd team member says "hello"].

We are part of the Indigenous Research Team in the OVPRI's office led by Dr. Suzanne Stewart, Advisor on Indigenous Research to Vice President of Research and Innovation at U of T.

I have emailed you the consultation questions and a fact sheet about our team's initiatives.

You are here today because you have agreed to consult with us about a developing an Indigenous Research Ethics Framework for the U of T Research Ethics Board (REB) and an internal strategic Indigenous Research Network (IRN) across the three U of T campuses (St George, UTM, and UTSC).

I will ask you seven questions and please answer or feel free to pass on any of them. We are not recording this consultation and will be taking written notes.

At the end of consultations like this with as many faculty and staff as possible, we will create a report of your recommendations to share with you via email and our website.

Are there any questions? [Answer their questions to best of your ability or refer them to Dr. Stewart.] Thank you for being here. Let's begin....

Consultation Questions for Faculty & Staff

Indigenous Research Ethics

1. What has your experience been like with Indigenous ethics REB reviews at U of T?
2. What would make an Indigenous Ethics Framework at the REB successful from your perspective?
 - a. [Prompt:] A separate Indigenous Ethics Committee? Application process? Involvement of Elders/other community members?

3. What are some of the things that could create problems or failures with Indigenous ethics reviews?
4. How might we measure the success of an Indigenous Ethics Review process?

APPENDIX D

REB Committee Consultation Meeting Summary

On February 11, 2020 the OVPRI Indigenous Research Circle¹ met with members of the REB committee to consult with them about their experience with Indigenous research ethics reviews at the University of Toronto. Approximately 35 people attended, including faculty reviewers from the Social Science, and Humanities and the Health Science review boards. Also present were community REB members and staff. Those in attendance were divided into 4 groups (approximately 8-9 in each group). Four group discussion facilitators lead each group discussion at separate tables and we had 2 members of our team that “floated” around to each group to help facilitate. We started with an opening ceremony with Clayton Shirt, Traditional Knowledge Keeper, and an introduction by Suzanne Stewart, the Provostial Academic Advisor, Indigenous Research.

The consultations fostered rich discussions and suggestions for moving forward with creating Indigenous Ethics guidelines and documents at the University. There was a general sense from many of the participants that in their capacity as ethics reviewers they do not always feel comfortable evaluating Indigenous research ethics applications. Some of the participants noted that the existing guidelines are hard to apply or evaluate in practical terms. For example, how to evaluate community involvement; how the concept of community involvement is conceptualized; when is it needed; what is ‘should’ look like and how it is ‘measured’? Another example raised was when is community vs. individual consent should be required as current ethics values tend to focus on individuals rather than the collective,

Some of the current REB committees do have one or maybe two Indigenous members, but many participants brought up their concerns about ‘tokenism’, with one Indigenous member having to be the voice for all Indigenous research ethics issues and not addressing their concerns in meaningful ways. It also was quite apparent, based on the discussions and the debrief at the end of the session, that there were/are palpable tensions around knowledge

hierarchies and what counts as legitimate knowledge in research and ethics standards in general.

A few participants stated that the current ethical review of Indigenous research is already working and that they didn't see any need to develop it. This is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed going forward, as despite improvements in how Indigenous research is being done over the last few years, there is still research taking place that is causing harm to Indigenous Peoples and communities. These harms may be hard to assess as they may be subtle, ongoing and contribute to existing trauma's and harms that are already part of the fabric of Canadians relationship with Indigenous Peoples and their perspective on Indigenous Peoples, many of which may be internalized and hard to recognize.

THEMATIC SUMMARY

We used the following questions to guide our discussions:

What has been your experience with Indigenous ethics reviews? What currently guides your assessment of Indigenous research ethics applications?

What would make an Indigenous Ethics Framework/REB successful from your perspective?

A separate Indigenous Ethics Committee? Application process? Involvement of Elders/other community members?

What are some of the things that could create problems or failures with Indigenous ethics reviews?

How might we measure the success of an Indigenous Ethics Review process?

This summary is organized by the 4 main questions.

Experience with Indigenous Ethics reviews and what guides your assessment:

There was an overall sense that there are some gaps in current guideline documents and principles used when assessing Indigenous research ethics. It was also suggested by many participants that there needs to be more Indigenous community engagement at the ethics review stage. A number of participants expressed their concerns about reviewing Indigenous research ethics applications as they don't feel they are informed enough to evaluate them and worry about missing important issues. As such, a number of participants suggested that some form of cultural safety training be made mandatory for review committees, or that the review board has a dedicated Indigenous research expert present when reviewing Indigenous research

applications to guide the review. However, as mentioned earlier others worried that having just one Indigenous expert might be mere 'tokenism'. It may also be a difficult position to hold if the Indigenous expert is the only 'Indigenous voice' in the room as this comes with its own tensions that must be navigated in the moment.

Each group stated that they rely solely on the TCPS chapter 9 guidelines for Indigenous research and the OCAP (ownership, control access and possession) principles for Indigenous research ethics reviews, and a number of gaps were identified with these current guidelines. For example, many of the principles being used to guide reviews are difficult to translate into practical terms. For example, how to conceptualize and interpret risk, vulnerability and differences is between 'ownership' and 'stewardship' of research at the individual and community level. Another identified challenge also noted above is the confusion about when community consent is or is not necessary as the lines between Indigenous research and research that may include Indigenous peoples but not as the focal point of the research are blurry. Further, the urban Indigenous context poses a number of challenges to community consent as there are many and diverse Indigenous communities/peoples in urban settings. A few of the groups suggested that there should be Indigenous ethics training modules, or a website with guidelines for the reviewers to refer to. It was also suggested that not only the ethics committee members need training but researchers as well.

Another important point raised for consideration moving forward is how the current guidelines and governing documents are based on Euro-Western values. A number of participants suggested that there needs to be more Indigenous voices, knowledges and values embedded underlying societal and research level ethical values, process and guidelines in general. This was a contentious point and a few other participants strongly disagreed, arguing that Euro-western values were more objective and therefore important to maintain in ethics reviews. This led to a conversation about the "ethics of ethics". It is important to remember that universities and ethics guidelines, in general, are colonial artifacts that are deeply ingrained in the culture of colonial institutions and as such may be invisible and taken for granted as the ultimate truth.

What would make an Indigenous ethics framework/review process more successful:

The majority of participants felt that a separate Indigenous review committee was not a good idea. The reason being that it may create and further entrench divisiveness, 'us vs them'. A concern was also raised that if there were separate review committees for Indigenous research then would there also need to be separate review committees for 'Queer', 'Jewish' or 'Black' research ethics, for example. Further, many participants felt there were just not enough Indigenous research ethics applications being submitted to merit a separate committee. There were also concerns about making the ethics process more time consuming and cumbersome as many stated it is already lengthy. REB committees are made up of volunteer members and people are already feeling stretched as the REB review process is time consuming already.

On the other hand, one group felt that they should apply an 'Indigenous lens' to all ethics applications, and that there needs to be more recruiting of Indigenous community members for

the ethics committees in general. It was suggested that a more 'wholistic' and collaborative approach to research become more integral to all protocols as it could benefit all research.

There was a common theme amongst all the groups that there should at least be more 'Indigenous' community representation, guidance and involvement in Indigenous ethics reviews, in the form of having Elders and community partners to consult with, but not just involvement of one or two Indigenous Peoples in a tokenistic way but integrated into the process more comprehensively. However, compensation for their time would need to be addressed.

One group suggested that there be a separate ethics application form for Indigenous research – a new application form that would illicit more information based on the TCPS guidelines for Indigenous research, not just check boxes that have to be ticked off but more meaningful engagement with Indigenous values and protocols. However, it was also suggested that there should be at least a section in the current application where researchers have to check off as to whether the ethics protocol has been reviewed by an Indigenous community or organization that will be involved or affected by the research.

Another idea was that research projects not only be evaluated for ethical concerns before the research begins, but also during and after to make sure protocols were indeed followed throughout the project. It was suggested that this should apply to all research projects involving human participants and not just Indigenous related research.

The point about the importance of how vulnerability and risk is conceptualized was raised again by a number of participants when considering this question. For example, it was suggested that risk needs to be divided into different types/categories and evaluated such as, physical, social and not just risk on an individual level but that community risk needs to be evaluated as well.

What could create problems or failures with Indigenous ethics reviews:

As mentioned above, one of the main concerns raised was there are relatively few Indigenous research ethics applications that come through the REB. The other problems participants raised were already existing time and human resources shortages; researchers have institutional pressures and timelines for getting research started and the ethics review process can already slow things down. This is something that needs to be looked at more closely.

Another issue raised by one of the groups is that it is already easy for misunderstandings/miscommunications to occur between REB, researchers and communities and that these need time and expertise to be negotiated; part of this is related to tensions between Indigenous ways of knowing and what participants identified as more 'objective' ways of knowing that they thought are embedded in Euro-Western knowledges as well as tensions between the perspective that some participants held that researchers need to be 'apart' from the research rather than a 'part' of the research for it to be 'scientific'. This perspective affects how proposed Indigenous research is evaluated.

A number of participants raised concerns about the high turnover within REB committees, with over 1/3 of the REB changes each year. This needs to be factored in with regards for training and building Indigenous 'experts' moving forward.

How might we measure success of an Indigenous ethics review:

It was suggested by many participants that an Indigenous ethics protocol/review be evaluated/tested yearly and that it needs to be evaluated by Indigenous Peoples and communities, and that it be evaluated not only by existing university standards. For example, one group suggested that there be yearly surveys to assess each step of the ethics review process with space for feedback. It was also suggested that the communities involved in the research be consulted with after the research to find out how they feel about the research that was done. This could be done by having consultations with the participating individuals/community during and after the research project. This would hold researchers more accountable for ensuring research does not cause harm, as well as capacity building within the communities involve. However, this would require systemic changes in existing research timeline constraints and institutional pressures on researchers to complete projects.

Post session Discussion Summary:

- REB only gets dozens of Indigenous ethics proposals out of 1000's of other types of REB applications
- REB made up of those identified as 'experts', however we need to consider how expertise in being conceptualized within this context – need to decolonize ethics/a paradigm shift
- We need to carefully consider the potential that being part of a REB committee may be traumatizing for some Indigenous Peoples as they are entering colonial spaces and the views of REB committee members may be triggering. As such vulnerable peoples should not sit alone on REB committees
- Research in general needs to contribute to change, growth and benefits for communities involved and not just the career of the researcher or the reputation of the university
- Ethics reviews should take place not just before the research begins but during and after as well to ensure ethics protocols were followed and to ensure accountability
- Consider other forms of ethics applications, not just written – maybe oral process or both oral and written in some instances
- Need to involve Indigenous Elders and traditional knowledge keepers in the process and available for consultations as needed
- Align Indigenous ethics review process with the 7 grandfather teachings, build them into the process as well as the underlying values guiding ethics

- Need to create and implement Indigenous ethics training modules
- There are gaps not just in ethical guidance for Indigenous research but for the researchers themselves who are applying for ethics approval
- More explicit and practical guidance needed for Indigenous research ethics reviews
- Create an Indigenous research consultation office to guide research proposal
- Suggested that a separate Indigenous Research Office be set up at U of T, as well as a new separate Indigenous research ethics application

This was our first Indigenous Ethics Framework consultation. We will be following up with consultations with University of Toronto Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty engaged in Indigenous research, Indigenous staff and graduate students, as well as with Indigenous Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers in the community.

APPENDIX E

Faculty, Researchers and Staff Consultation Meeting Summary

The OVPRI Indigenous Research Circle² met with 28 faculty, researchers and staff, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Research to consult with them about their experience with Indigenous research ethics reviews at the University of Toronto. These Faculty and staff members represented a range of discipline diversity, from the social sciences and humanities to the natural sciences. Due to COVID restrictions the consultations were held virtually. Each session was attended by the Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Research, a research student and our Traditional Knowledge Keeper, Clayton Shirt. In each session permission was asked to take notes and later notes were sent to the participant to make sure we accurately captured their thoughts and ideas in relation to the questions asked.

THEMATIC SUMMARY

We used the following questions to guide our discussions:

1. What has been your experience with Indigenous ethics reviews?

2. What would make an Indigenous Ethics Framework/REB successful from your perspective?
 - a. A separate Indigenous Ethics Committee? Application process? Involvement of Elders/other community members?
3. What are some of the things that could create problems or failures with Indigenous ethics reviews?
4. How might we measure the success of an Indigenous Ethics Review process?

The following is a summary of 28 consultations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty working in Indigenous research.

WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL INDIGENOUS REB?

A common question raised during consultations was: what exactly is the definition of “good research”? Not only how is it defined, but how is it evaluated? It was agreed that good research should build capacity at the community level while enhancing the Indigenous research infrastructure. In this sense, the definition of what constitutes good research means research that involves and positively impacts Indigenous people. It is not extractive; it is done in collaboration with Indigenous communities. While principles such as OCAP and the Tri Council exist, these do not protect Indigenous communities enough. Extra precautions and considerations need to be undertaken—and final consent for any finished research product should lay in the hands of the community themselves. A successful ethics process would give credit wherever it can, whether that's welcoming the participating community in the presentation of the research results or accredited them as co-authors of the work.

There was consensus among every faculty and staff consulted that a successful Indigenous Research Ethic Board (REB) must be community based. There was a careful emphasis not to overburden existing Indigenous faculty and staff with roles in the REB, so to supplement this the university should hire additional faculty and staff.

While there were compelling arguments both for and against a separate Indigenous REB, the majority thought a separate process was more suitable. While those hesitant saw separation as a potential missed opportunity for education, it was noted that an Indigenous specific REB would allow it to be truly grounded in Indigenous methodologies and values. It would allow Elders to be integrated meaningfully into the ethics process. It would be able to function as a greater overhaul of the problematic ethics process that currently exists; one that connects Indigenous people relationally, face-to-face, upholding and cherishing community with potential opportunities to foster relations with the land and an emphasis on spirit, ceremony and traditional medicines.

In the adaptation of Indigenous methodologies, it was consistently noted that pan-indigeneity, or a one-size-fits-all model, would do much more harm than good. Indigenous ethics require a certain flexibility and a holistic approach that factors in the needs and cultural context of

specific nations. There must also be fair representation of the diverse fabric of what it means to be Indigenous. This means representation from the Mi'kmaq of the east coast, to the Haida of the far west and all the nations and identities in between them; from urban populations to rural populations; and especially the inclusion of Northern communities who have a unique set of strengths and needs worlds apart from many other Canadians.

FAILURES/SHORTCOMINGS OF REB

Through the consultations there were some commonly identified pitfalls to avoid with Indigenous research ethics. It is important to meaningfully engage with OCAP and Tri-Council on the ground, beyond the 'ticking' of boxes. The researcher must have an organic and humble approach to its partnership with community, and ideally one that is sustained beyond the conclusion of the research. Settler allyship is an important piece and should be involved in ethics, but Indigenous voices and knowledges must be centered. The largest pitfall identified would be a failure to recognize the deeply entrenched colonialism within academic culture, and despite building and enacting these discussed decolonial structures, falling back on the old ways out of convenience or habit.

HOW MIGHT WE MEASURE SUCCESS OF REB?

Measures of success for an Indigenous REB were another focus of the consultations. They included a need for decolonial metrics of success that are aligned with Indigenous ways of practice. This includes integration of continual community feedback throughout the entire research project; self reflection for both Indigenous and settler researchers; having a variety of voices and perspectives holding space within the REB; community's willingness to engage in future research collaboration with U of T; and finally the bolstering of community's connection and research capacity.

It was also highlighted that the ultimate measure of success is the university's commitment to a meaningful overhaul in how it views its responsibility and relationship with Indigenous people. Beyond tokenism and placation, there is a vital need for a restructuring to be done in earnest, to respectfully uphold the Indigenous leaders and center the knowledges they possess.

Elders Consultation Meeting Summary

The OVPRI Indigenous Research Circle³ met with 7 Elders/Traditional Knowledge Keepers to consult with them about their views on Indigenous research ethics reviews at the University of Toronto. The elders we consulted with are all involved in an advisory capacity at the University and come from a diversity of nations. Due to COVID restrictions the consultations were held virtually. Each session was attended by the Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Research, a research student and our Traditional Knowledge Keeper, Clayton Shirt. In each session permission was asked to take notes and later notes were sent to the participant to make sure we accurately captured their thoughts and ideas in relation to the questions asked.

THEMATIC SUMMARY

We used the following questions to guide our discussions:

1. What has been your experience with Indigenous ethics reviews?
2. What would make an Indigenous Ethics Framework/REB successful from your perspective?
 - a. A separate Indigenous Ethics Committee? Application process? Involvement of Elders/other community members?
3. What are some of the things that could create problems or failures with Indigenous ethics reviews?
4. How might we measure the success of an Indigenous Ethics Review process?

This summary is organized by a synthesis of the answers to these four questions.

There was a total of eight initial consultations with seven different U of T Elders and Knowledge Keepers to discuss the current state of Indigenous research ethics at the university and how Indigenous research ethics should move forward in the future. Subsequent consultations were

held individually to discuss the findings of the consultations and for further reflection and consideration of the Elders.

There were many common themes identified throughout these consultations. Primary among them was the need to infuse spirit into the ethics process. Many Elders felt that institutional academia is inherently a place without spirit. Spirit must be acknowledged, respected and brought into every facet of the process. To incorporate spirit, Indigenous teachings (i.e. 7 grandfather teachings, the great law of peace, grandmother moon teachings) and ceremony (i.e. medicines, sweats) need to become a core element of the Indigenous research ethics process.

All Elders agreed that the underlying ethics of the university must be assessed. What is U of T's definition of research ethics? What does the research ethics process as it presently stands embody and value? During the consultations, it became clear that the priority of U of T's research ethics must shift from protecting the university to protecting the Indigenous communities participating within research. Another priority of research ethics should be its commitment to integrating Indigenous frameworks, and recognizing that some difficulties may arise due to the incongruity of these Indigenous frameworks functioning within a broader colonial system. Additionally, it was agreed that the need for greater institutional accountability and transparency was necessary to create beneficial, culturally competent research.

The question of a separated versus an integrated research ethics board (REB) was carefully considered by each Elder. There was not one unanimous answer. Some Elders thought that there had been a push to be included within academia, so re-segregating Indigenous research ethics could do further harm and undo some of the important work carried out by previous generations of Indigenous academics. Other Elders spoke on the vital need for a separate REB. With an Indigenous specified REB, it would guarantee integration of Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies, values and worldviews. It would grant Indigenous communities with greater self-determination. A separate REB would be a rare opportunity to rewrite research ethics—this time written by Indigenous people for Indigenous people.

There was a clear need for ethics to be done on Indigenous terms. Meaning face-to-face meetings with a focus on relationships, not a fixation on deadlines or the satisfying of a quota. Further, assessment of community needs must be made the crux of each research ethics application. Ethics must be non-hierarchically structured. Ethics should not be viewed exclusively through a scientific lens, but holistically. Ethics should be inclusive and uphold Indigenous voices, not impose or discredit.

In summary, the Elders who participated in consultations agreed that U of T's definition of research ethics must shift to integrate a wealth of Indigenous teachings. Self-reflection is a continual process and a vital piece in research ethics, especially for the university itself. The concept of ethics should be re-defined to be goal-based and collaborative. Most importantly, Indigenous communities must be an equal player in research and must benefit from any research being produced by U of T.