

## Curriculum 2020 Working Group Discussion Paper

# Engaged faculty, engaged students, engaged community: *Rising to the challenge of creating a UWindsor Curriculum for 2020 and beyond*

### Mandate

At the Senate meeting of 12 February, 2016, President Wildeman proposed that a small group be constituted to have a ‘discussion on what they think a curriculum should look like in 2020’. The following members volunteered to participate in this discussion: Dr. Edwin Tam, Dr. Debbie Kane, Dr. Alan Conway, Dr. Maureen Muldoon, Mr. Emmanuel Igodan, Prof. Nick Baker. The group were tasked with generating discussion points for the April Senate meeting.

### Executive summary

Creating a vision for the 2020 Curriculum at the University of Windsor is a significant, complex task that asks us to identify what distinguishes us and our academic endeavours from those of our colleagues at other institutions. What is the experience, environment, culture, and values we want to be known for? It is a challenging exercise because of the diversity of disciplines and disciplinary cultures that make up the university, each of which is valuable and which values different ways of knowing and working.

*Curriculum*<sup>1</sup> is a representation of ourselves and our disciplinary endeavours, and acknowledges the lenses of our academic cultures or tribes. Developing and reimagining curricula forces us to ask ourselves who we are and what we want to be.

When asking the question “What should the University curriculum of 2020 look like?” we are asking what will, can, and should change as the complex ecosystem of the institution evolves within the broader context of post-secondary education in Ontario. What **will** change is largely beyond our control, but what **can** and what **should** change is within our power; it requires the will to examine these questions critically and to act. We must approach these large questions in a collegial manner, drawing on the considerable and rich combined intellectual resources of the institution, and focusing on academic excellence and the student experience.

This discussion paper is not intended to be prescriptive, or to offer solutions or grand answers to the questions posed above. It is a very preliminary starting point for a much broader, challenging, and ultimately rewarding conversation through engagement of the entire University of Windsor community. Through this document we have attempted to identify some of the trends occurring globally in the post-secondary education sector, some of the emerging challenges we face, and how these will impact the students we serve. We offer some observations about ways in which curricula can be conceived, developed, and implemented. Finally, we offer observations about who we might want to be as an

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for definitions. Defined terms appear in *italics* in text.

institution in the future, and how we may go about developing a collective vision for Curriculum 2020 that involves three pillars for success:

### **Engaged Faculty, Engaged Students, and Engaged Community.**

#### Introduction

There is a clear need, driven by both internal and external factors, for the University of Windsor to articulate a distinctive model of education that distinguishes and positions UWindsor as a leader in innovative pedagogies, with a commitment to academic excellence, and providing an outstanding educational experience for our students. Our approach and vision should reflect both our rich academic and cultural heritage, and the unique opportunities that learning in a border city offer. It should also reflect the diversity and depth of our academic community, recognising that the University of Windsor's educators, with their significant disciplinary and pedagogical expertise, and commitment to academic excellence, are our greatest asset.

Our strategic plan outlines the purpose and vision of the University of Windsor, which offers an important starting point for envisioning curricula that can help us achieve this vision:

*"Universities must contribute to the betterment of society. They have a responsibility through education and enquiry to encourage minds to be creative and entrepreneurial and to help communities be vibrant and sustainable. The expectations placed on universities are high, the mobility of people and ideas is accelerating in pace and is global in breadth, and greater competition for resources to support public institutions is an economic fact of life. The University of Windsor must preserve an unwavering commitment to academic excellence and to helping people, and it must use the talents of its people to adapt in distinctive ways to the realities it faces.*

*The University of Windsor's mission, a reason for being:*

*Enabling people to make a better world through education, scholarship, research and engagement."*

*Thinking Forward...Taking Action, p. 8*

Our first strategic priority is to:

***"Provide an exceptional and supportive undergraduate experience that emphasizes independent learning, interdisciplinary opportunities, flexibility in degree completion pathways, and successful year-to-year transition."***

There are five sub-goals under this priority, all of which are addressed through the following document as themes and practices we should consider and aspire to. They inform the ongoing discussion about our institutional identity and our espoused values as educators.

#### The purpose of the university and what society expects of us

Universities are resilient organisations. Apart from churches, no other human institutions have existed in essentially the same format for as long. Their resilience is both a strength and a challenge when faced with large-scale societal changes. Resistance to change in higher education has led to many recent claims that universities as we know them are broken, that they no longer serve their intended purpose, and that without radical change in a short period, they will simply cease to exist (e.g. Christensen and Eyring, 2011; Craig, 2015; Fallis, 2013; Selingo, 2013; Carey, 2015). Yet despite such dire predictions, many universities continue to thrive and grow within the ever-changing socio-political landscape. They remain a special place where research and teaching can co-exist, where faculty are free to research and discuss any topic, and where students are free to explore and develop.

Whether one subscribes to the von Humboldt (1810), Newman (1907), Fallis (2013), or Christensen and Eyring (2011) visions of the purpose of universities and university education, there is no doubt that their role in society has changed substantially in the last three decades. Humboldt's view of the university was one based on three principles: unity of research and teaching; freedom of teaching; and academic self-governance (Long, 2010). He believed that students do not learn by teaching, but rather, in the idealised university, they learn through research participation. Newman's view of the university was one where knowledge should be pursued for the sake of knowledge, where teaching and research were pursuits whose sole purpose was to protect and improve human values (Chan, 2011). The mission of the university in Newman's view is therefore to develop knowledge and pursue truth, and that mission exists above the needs or demands of the state. Newman also drew a distinction between research (oriented to discovery of knowledge) and teaching (dissemination of knowledge and moral and intellectual development of students) (Verburgh et al., 2007). More recent thinkers such as Christensen and Fallis have viewed universities in a more utilitarian role, with applied research and job readiness of graduates among the new values institutions should aspire to in their opinions.

There are significant pressures, both internally and externally, driving change in the *post-secondary education (PSE)* sector, leading universities to examine their values and practices more closely, and to make those more accessible to the public who fund their activities (Clark et. al., 2009). Rapid developments in technology, economies, societal norms, democratisation of knowledge through the internet, and competition from alternative learning and credentialing opportunities all contribute to the need for re-examination of what universities see as their core purposes and value. Fullan and Scott (2009) argue that the traditions of higher education systems are evolving, due largely to pressures to massively increase access, find new ways to fund their activities, the commodification of higher education, changing expectations and diversity of users of the system, and the information technology revolution, while still defending the core values of disciplinary knowledge. Potential students are also examining their options and considering whether a university education will provide them with the advantage they seek, whether that be knowledge or access to careers (Norrie and Lennon, 2013).

The question of what students learn, how much they develop, and how they are able to apply that learning in settings outside our classrooms has been the focus of a great deal of recent research. Some of this work aimed to evaluate the cognitive development of students in PSE with large-scale studies across many universities in multiple countries. Universities usually make claims about their graduates leaving with advanced critical thinking skills, complex reasoning abilities, and advanced communication skills, but tracking and measuring learning outcomes has proven problematic. Standardised measures such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment tool used widely in the United States and parts of Europe, which is specifically designed to measure the core cognitive skills of critical thinking, complex reasoning, and advanced written communication, suggest that at least in the US there is little evidence of improvement in core skills by the end of a wide range of programs. While our individual experiences point to the profound value of a university education, there is a growing need to identify appropriate evidence of this value at the program and institutional levels.

### Brief overview of local and global drivers of change in the modern higher education landscape

A series of core questions emerged from discussions in the Curriculum 2020 Working Group, which helped frame a response to the task, and which should be explored in greater depth:

1. What is the purpose of a university education?
2. Is there, or could there be a 'University of Windsor curriculum' and would that be desirable?

3. Is there a problem or gap that needs addressing?
4. What has changed in the last 30 years in society and post-secondary education, and have universities in Ontario evolved to keep pace with change and expectations?

In the context of imagining a 2020 curriculum, it is important to acknowledge the drivers of change that universities face, and consider our academic identity within the broader context of the post-secondary education (PSE) landscape in Ontario, Canada, and globally. A brief (non-systematic) review of key academic and non-academic literature, along with public policy documents reveals a number of drivers of change in the PSE sector. Most of these drivers are external to universities, and as such, many are not be well-known or understood by most of the higher education community.

The following list represents a synthesis of the key drivers of change in the higher education sector identified in the current literature.

#### **Societal needs / desires / priorities for the system**

- Potential and demand for flexibility in learning and teaching approaches
- Massification of higher education;
- Aboriginalisation and internationalisation of curriculum;
- Credit transfer / student mobility;
- Democratisation and opening of access to knowledge means that the human knowledge base is massively shared on the internet, but information does not equal knowledge, and knowledge does not equal wisdom; there is still a role for education in ensuring that students leave with both knowledge and wisdom to use that knowledge;

#### **Government policy intervention / legislation**

- Regulation, accountability, performance-based funding; openness, and transparency of operations;
- Enhanced focus on teaching quality/enhancement;

#### **Changing student demographics and diversity**

- Student mobility;
- Accessible education – recognising that students learn in different ways, have different personal responsibilities, motivations, and background experiences that all influence their readiness and ability to learn;
- Student diversity;

#### **Changing labour markets**

- Focus on interdisciplinary and experiential approaches to teaching and learning;
- Work-integrated learning, co-op, graduate employability, career development, service-learning;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Casualisation of the workforce;

#### **Technology**

- Online, hybrid, flipped, and technology-enabled education
- Mobile learning and *BYOD*
- Open Educational Resources (OERs) including open access texts
- Personal Learning Environments (PLEs)
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
- Badges
- Augmented and virtual reality
- Makerspaces

- Analytics and big data/ Data driven decisions
- Adaptive learning

#### **The evolving higher education sector**

- Global competition and demand for higher education;
- Evolving disciplinary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values informing curriculum;
- Alternative credentialing (*micro-credentials, ladder credentials, competency-based education* (CBE) etc.);
- Alternative entry pathways / credit transfer / PLAR;
- Flexible teaching terms;
- Undergraduate research experience;
- Open access learning and teaching supports;
- Developing next generation learning spaces (formal and informal learning spaces);

#### **Developing pedagogical knowledge in higher education contexts**

- *High Impact Educational Practices* (Kuh, 2008);
- Aligned, *outcomes-based education*;
- Students as partners;
- Diverse modes of teaching and learning – authentic, problem-based, inquiry-based, case-based, scenario-based, studio/design-based;
- Active and collaborative learning;
- Learning communities;
- Mentoring;
- Alternative assessment strategies – self and peer-assessment, portfolios, digital stories, project outcomes;
- Blending formal and informal learning.

### What will a successful university look like in 2020?

Jim Taylor (2001), former Deputy Vice-Chancellor and distinguished scholar in higher education, noted that ***it is easier to create the future than to predict it***. While trying to predict what success might look like in the rapidly evolving university sector is challenging and hardly certain, based on the trends noted in global and local higher education, and in the demographics of our students, some general themes emerge as likely. A successful university in 2020 will most likely:

- Place the student and learning experiences at the core of its operations;
- Offer flexible (**online, hybrid, face-to-face**) programming in the majority of its programs where possible;
- Offer diverse credential pathways and options, including credit and non-credit options that can build to various credentials;
- Critically embrace technology for pedagogical enhancement (effective use of contemporary educational technologies, learning analytics, intelligent databases, digital literacy, etc.);
- Have highly developed curriculum renewal and enhancement strategies and processes (Quality Enhancement vs. Quality Assurance – the goal should be continuous improvement rather than box-checking);
- Provide a rich mix of learning environments – *high touch/low touch*, experiential, interdisciplinary, international, entrepreneurial, authentic, collaborative, online and on-campus, research-based;
- Offer curricula that address depth *and* breadth of knowledge;
- Offer clear pathways to credentials that build and support lifelong learners;
- Meaningfully integrate research and teaching;
- Collect and utilise reliable and accurate data to make decisions about curricula;

- Monitor and respond to demands from industry and society for its programming;
- Committed to preparing students for the complexity of adult life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;
- Be cognisant of the unique role it has in contributing to social justice and social equality.

### What will a successful UWindsor graduate look like in 2020?

The Working Group examined the current UWindsor Graduate Attributes in relation to the global and local trends and drivers for synergy and to determine potential gaps in curricula. They explored questions including: Are the current Graduate Attributes still relevant as they are currently framed? Do they need tweaking or adding to? If the attributes are still relevant, do we need to consider how we facilitate achievement of them? Does the process component of curriculum (the delivery or what we do as teachers) need to change to better facilitate these outcomes? Does the content component (what we teach) need to change?

#### Current UWindsor Attributes (Undergrad)

- A. the acquisition, application and integration of knowledge
- B. research skills, including the ability to define problems and access, retrieve and evaluate information (information literacy)
- C. critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- D. literacy and numeracy skills
- E. responsible behaviour to self, others and society
- F. interpersonal and communications skills
- G. teamwork, and personal and group leadership skills
- H. creativity and aesthetic appreciation
- I. the ability and desire for continuous learning

In considering the current attributes, the Working Group reflected on our guiding questions, as well as the emerging trends noted above. We identified a number of additional characteristics of graduates that may be important to consider in developing graduates and scholars of the future. To be successful, we believe our graduates should be:

- Disciplinary masters, but interdisciplinary thinkers
- Global citizens, but also citizens of the nation-state
- Digital, technological, and information literate with an understanding of
  - i. what it means to live and work in a connected world
  - ii. the changing dynamic of expert and amateur with knowledge and misinformation now freely available online
- Masters of “soft-skills”
- Self-managed and self-regulated learners capable of and committed to lifelong learning
- Able to work collaborative and cooperatively, as well as independently to solve complex problems in interdisciplinary and interprofessional contexts
- Able to effectively negotiate life in a pluralistic society
- Able to articulate an understanding of sustainable practice within a disciplinary context.

The working group identified four **core themes** that may be of particular importance in envisioning the UWindsor 2020 curriculum.

#### 1. **Interdisciplinarity**

- Exposure to, and experience working and thinking in interdisciplinary and interprofessional ways, particularly in addressing complex problems

## 2. Cultural acuity

- Developing students as global citizens *and* citizens of the nation state
- Internationalisation and indigenisation of curricula
- Curricula that enhance students' capacity to recognise and work across difference, power dynamics, and complex historical and cultural contexts

## 3. Critical self-awareness

- Empowering students to critically identify and clarify their own values and those of their chosen discipline
- Curricula enhance students' ability to identify, empathise with, and utilise interdisciplinary ways of thinking and knowing
- Learning how to learn

## 4. Technical / Technological literacy

- Critically assess the role of technology for disciplines, society, and self
- Develop high level technical and technological literacy that translates to practice

We envision a future where the University of Windsor can, and possibly must, produce graduates who are able to clearly articulate what they know, believe, and value. To do this effectively, students must be able to describe explicitly the extent and value of their knowledge (which goes far beyond a monetary value). Linking outcomes directly to the learning experiences and assessment/evaluation in the course or program makes it explicitly available to the learner (Biggs, 2014). Requiring them to reflect on and describe their ongoing development as a learner, their evolving worldview, their skills and beliefs (for example, through reflective writing, or a learning portfolio) are ways that we can help students develop a deep understanding of their chosen discipline, as well as articulating what they have gained through their University of Windsor education.

### What curricular elements can contribute to achieving these outcomes?

Learning is most effective when it is guided by clear expectations, academic standards and an integrated curriculum, where the various elements of the curriculum (at the program and course levels) are clearly identified and explicitly linked (Biggs, 2014). Additionally, curricula are most effective at facilitating learning when they consist of a critically designed pathway that scaffolds learning from the start of a student's academic engagement with the university until they graduate, and includes meaningful, intentional integration of core skills in the majority of courses. Sequencing and developmental elements of curricula require regular review and maintenance, rather than being seen as a one-shot event to get through administrative requirements. Taking an iterative and developmental approach to curriculum renewal ensures that students are actually exposed appropriately to learning activities, assessment, and feedback that help them improve throughout the course of their programs. Regular review of curricula through formal, collegial renewal processes should surface any gaps that have developed in the curriculum through curricular drift, staff changes, and other perturbations. For example, if communication is explicitly taught in first year but not taught or assessed again until a final year capstone course, students have not had the opportunity to adequately develop those skills and cannot be expected to have improved to an appropriate level for a graduate. Wolf's (2007) curriculum development process (Appendix C) provides a well-founded and widely used model as a starting point for curriculum discussions.

The Working Group explored a suite of potential curricular elements and approaches to teaching that have been demonstrated to facilitate successful attainment of the current, and potentially new learning outcomes. Kuh (2008), who developed the widely-used *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE), identified a series of **High Impact Practices** (HIPs) that have been shown empirically to be effective in improving student engagement, depth of learning, and educational gains. These practices include:

- First year seminars and experiences
- Common intellectual experiences (core courses)
- Learning communities
- Writing-intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Undergraduate research
- Exposure to diversity/global learning
- Service or community-based learning
- Experiential learning, internships, co-op, field experience, etc.
- Culminating senior experience (capstone courses, projects, portfolio, thesis)

While these practices are likely to be highly effective, they are best applied and most effective at the program level, rather than in isolated courses, which requires a high level of collegial engagement in the process at the program or departmental level. It will therefore be important to consider the role of alignment in curriculum development and renewal. The aligned curricular approach requires appropriate scaffolding of courses to build an intentional, coherent, developmental curricular pathway that meets the program level learning outcomes and exposes students to a wide variety of high impact practices (Kuh recommends at least two of the HIPs be intentionally developed in each course). The working group considered that the notion of crafting a program that is comprehensive, integrated, and experiential was critical to achieving learning outcomes, but also recognises the significant challenges this approach faces.

One possible approach worth exploring would be requiring all programs to provide an alignment map that addressed learning outcomes mapped from the *UDLEs* to the program and courses against learning activities, and assessment of each core course in relation to the program would be helpful. This would make explicit how each course in the program helped to achieve the stated program learning outcomes. It would also help faculty and program coordinators to identify gaps and other issues with their programs, and also build internal knowledge of the program.

### Delivery modes and credentials

Another area for further examination is the mix of delivery modes for curricula that we currently use. Including more courses and programs delivered through flexible modes that offer students choice in how they engage with the institution may help meet the needs of existing and potential new clientele, with the potential benefits including higher recruitment, retention, and progression rates. Exposing students to different ways of learning also provides them with opportunities to take greater responsibility for their own learning, and to develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills such as effective online communication and remote teamwork. The provincial government is heavily supporting universities to move in this direction where possible and sensible, and students are expecting that they will be able to do at least part of their programs online (UBC for example expects that all students will take at least 10 percent of their program online as an intentional part of their learning experience). This also opens additional markets not currently captured, and offers the potential to develop innovative programming for international students, or domestic students who seek an international experience. It also aids in providing meaningful experiential learning opportunities for students if they can choose co-op, practicums, internships etc. in locations outside the Windsor-Essex region and still maintain progress in their studies by taking online or blended courses.

Consideration should be given to the notion of expanding credential types. For example, laddered credentials (sub-degree level credentials that can be combined to provide advanced standing in a degree program) can offer those who are not confident about starting a full degree program an opportunity to experience university learning. Queens University's 'Queens Advantage' program is an example of a

successful model, and there are several others in Ontario. Lifelong learners may be more likely to take shorter, targeted certificate or graduate diploma programs, and be able to receive employer support for these activities (e.g. Craig, 2015; Selingo, 2013), and these are potentially important ways to attract new students who may then apply those credits to full degrees in the future. Expansion of continuing education and non-credit programs is also a potentially important driver in future success.

### How will we know if our students are successful?

Quality curricula include reliable, valid, authentic means of determining what our students know, value, and believe. The importance of meeting expectations of academic standards, both internally and externally determined, is likely to be critical in the next five years. This will mean that assessment practices will need to be rethought and truly aligned with learning outcomes and opportunities. Assessment is a powerful driver of student behaviour, and the quality of assessment tools has a significant impact on both the quality of learning, and how educators are able to know the outcomes of the learning that happens in their courses. The *Assessment 2020* framework (Appendix B), co-authored by former UWindsor visiting fellow in educational development, Dr. Gordon Joughin (Boud et al., 2009), is an interesting model of where assessment practice may develop in the future.

Course and program level assessment of learning is only one indicator of the success of programs. Other indicators (not an exhaustive list) that may be worthy of further investigation include:

- Enrolment;
- Level of exposure to High Impact educational Practices (HIPs);
- Progression and retention rates;
- GPA of students and graduates;
- Employment rates (within and outside the field of study);
- Successful professional examinations and registrations;
- Rate of students returning to further studies;
- Outcomes of student experience surveys, for example, NSSE, CEQ (not currently used), and SETs;
- AHELO/EASI exit exams (not currently used in Canada, but have been piloted, including at UWindsor).

The recent review of the provincial funding formula for universities also identified nine suggested metrics for student success and learning. These included:

1. Learning outcomes achievement;
2. Course evaluations;
3. Number of credit transfers and pathways;
4. Work-integrated learning opportunities;
5. Graduation rate;
6. Graduate employment rate;
7. Time-to-completion;
8. Retention rates;
9. Student population (diversity, demographics).

If these metrics are adopted in the funding model, universities will obviously have to pay close attention to not only achieving positive results in these areas, but also to collecting multivariate evidence that they have been achieved. While many consider the notion of measurement of educational outcomes as highly problematic, institutions may have little choice in the matter if their funding relies on measuring their achievements. Engaging faculty deeply in the process of identifying indicators of success, and recognising

that there are many ways to define, describe, and value successful outcomes will help the institution provide holistic data about the value a UWindsor education provides for our graduates.

### Challenges to achieving this vision

Developing new curricula, or revising existing ones, is a difficult process. There are fundamental challenges in the process, some of which are structural or institutional, some are cultural, and others are disciplinary. In recognising these issues, we see them as complex human interactions that will take time and resources to address. Some of the key challenges the Working Group observed include:

- Finding ways to value and reward teaching at the same level as research;
- Critically addressing the process of curriculum development and renewal so that it is more streamlined and integrated, more collegial and open, more focused on students and developmental learning, and alignment to desired outcomes;
- Ensuring achievement of learning outcomes;
- Threats to the traditional institution – there are many alternatives to universities and degree programs that are becoming increasingly accessible and popular, including those offered by big name institutions with high brand recognition;
- Declining local population and traditional market for UWindsor – there is a need to explore new markets if Windsor aspires to grow or even maintain our current enrolment levels;
- Increasing access to PSE increases diversity of students, which makes curriculum planning more complex and challenging to ensure meaningful outcomes for all students;
- Credentialism (students may focus primarily on achieving a credential, rather than education) challenges the traditional notion of liberal education and mastery of a discipline’s body of knowledge;
- Acknowledging that faculty will have different priorities at different career points, and providing appropriate supports and development for them to meet these needs;
- Maintaining quality curricula with increasing class sizes.

### Rising to the challenge: Investing in our educators and the learning environment

Curriculum development is fundamentally a means through which we identify and acknowledge the traditions, knowledge, and wisdom of our academic tribes. It is a means of expressing our academic selves and asking ourselves what we want our institution to be known for. Broadly, one can think of curricula as social contracts we engage in with our disciplinary colleagues, our students, and the institution, which means that we all have a responsibility to engage meaningfully in the process.

As scholars in our respective disciplines, the process of developing curricula is exploratory and has a scholarly approach at its core. This includes practices such as engagement with the disciplinary scholarship of teaching, using evidence-based teaching practices, engaging with pedagogical experts, seeking training and professional development, and peer review of teaching, all of which are available at UWindsor. It should also be recognised that one of the most powerful drivers of curricular change is the intrinsic motivation of excellent educators to seek continuous improvement in their practice. Providing conditions that support and enhance that motivation, and which recognise the balance and interaction between core activities of research, service, and teaching, must receive enhanced focus.

The institution can support curricular reform in many ways, through policy and guidelines, education and development opportunities, appropriate award and reward structures, recognition, investment in support mechanisms, and the physical environment of the campus. Some of the conditions that the university can address that may help enhance our approach to teaching and learning include:

- **Appropriate recognition for excellence in teaching**
  - Hiring and PTR – revised criteria, teaching dossier
  - Flexible career pathways
  - Awards
- **Funding / financial support for pedagogical innovation**
  - Implement an innovative teaching start up fund similar to research start up
  - Course development funding
  - Pedagogical innovation / scholarship of teaching and learning / research funding
  - Development of teaching spaces that support pedagogical innovation
  - Providing appropriate technology to support teaching and learning
- **Culture**
  - Measured pedagogical risk is important for innovation – e.g. creating an experimental course designation that allows for pedagogical experimentation but which can be excluded from cumulative SETs
  - Enhancing the discourse around teaching
  - Encouraging scholarship of teaching within the disciplines
  - Encouraging peer review of teaching (building on the existing Peer Collaboration Network)
  - Support/training – availability of appropriate support for teaching, enhancing requirements for teaching excellence for hiring and PTR processes
  - Clear development pathway for new faculty, GAs and TAs, sessional instructors
  - Develop new policies and guidelines that provide clarity around what we value as an institution, what best practices in teaching look like, and what we expect from our educators
  - Encouraging and providing tools to allow data / evidence driven decision making in pedagogy and curriculum.

Investing in the development of our faculty as educators, and providing the physical, technological, policy, and cultural environments in which high quality teaching can flourish is necessary to the success of the institution. What those elements will ultimately look like, what is achievable, and within what timeframe are all well beyond the scope of this Working Group.

### Where to from here? Observations on developing a curriculum for 2020 and beyond through engaged faculty, students, and the community

Establishing effective curriculum is complex, and requires ongoing cycles of review and refinement. Such a process might include, on an ongoing basis, the entire UWindsor community and all our stakeholders - faculty, students, staff, the broader community we serve, professional bodies, and employers of our graduates - in a conversation about what they see as our strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Valuing and promoting the practices of our inspiring and committed educators will help us to identify a representative range of personalised, interactive and engaging pedagogical approaches that can underpin our institutional vision for the Windsor student learning experience.

Consultation might also necessarily engage institutional committees (UCAPT / PTR, curriculum committees where they exist, PDC, APC, By-Laws, etc.) who define the policy environment within which we teach and learn. Other groups on campus (student and faculty associations, unions) and non-academic are critical to the conversation - every employee and every person who interacts with the institution contributes to the experience our students have while they are here, and this experience has an impact far beyond graduation. If we truly believe in the notion of lifelong learning, and if we want our students to return to us in the future as engaged alumni, donors, and higher learning students, we must provide an experience that they believe was valuable, engaging, caring, and centred on their needs.

The Working Group notes that there are a number of considerations that should be addressed in developing of recommendations for a 2020 Curriculum that may serve as big picture questions to drive discussion.

- We need a clear, evidence-based picture of how well our students are achieving existing program level learning outcomes and the required UDLEs/GDLEs. This necessarily may require rethinking how we assess learning at the program level.
- Linkages with outcomes of other projects such as the Senate Working Group on Learning Outcomes, and the implementation of the new ERP may help to inform curricular innovation.
- The University and its departments collect and maintain large datasets (for example, NSSE, SETs, graduate surveys, grade data, progression and retention data, enrolment data and more). Consideration should be given to instructors, as the primary interface with curricula, can better use the data we already have to inform curriculum and other teaching and learning related decisions. This is particularly important as we move to implement the new Outcomes and Analytics tools available with Blackboard so that they can be used to empower instructors and program coordinators / departments with data that can be used as one means of identifying areas of strength and weakness in their academic enterprise, to ultimately inform continuous improvement.
- Significant faculty and senior management renewal is happening at the moment with the SPF 50 hiring, as well as normal turnover and the various administrative vacancies. This presents a unique opportunity to work together as a community to foster change and cultural development if we so choose.
- Consideration for the important role that sessional and contract instructors play in the student experience and the culture of the institution. Finding ways to integrate our exceptional sessional members more deeply and consistently in the fabric of the institution, drawing on their considerable experience and expertise to contribute to the culture we want for the institution will improve the experience for our entire community.
- Consider ways to systematically help *all* faculty develop holistically throughout their careers as scholarly teachers and researchers, and potential future academic leaders.
- Identifying ways to involve students as partners in the educational endeavour at all levels, including the development of curricula.
- Defining and developing a shared understanding of the 'Windsor Experience' so that faculty and students can strive together to build an experience and a culture that is exceptional and lives up to the promise of our heritage and our collective potential.

### A final word

As noted at the beginning of this paper, the Curriculum 2020 Working Group is a very small group from diverse backgrounds and areas in the institution who engaged in a discussion over a short period about a topic that is of critical importance to the future of the University of Windsor. We have made some observations about current and potential future directions of the institution and higher education in general, drawing on our own expertise, experience, and a brief engagement with the literature. Our observations attempt to indicate the key factors we think should inform decisions about our approach to evolving our collective curricular activities.

We believe that all institutions, especially those charged with the special responsibility of generating and disseminating knowledge, need to change and evolve, to constantly re-examine their practices and adjust course as necessary to meet their mandate. We also fully recognise that many of the ideas contained in this discussion paper are contested and contestable, and would require significant change at many levels

to become reality. We recognise the individual aspirations to educational and academic excellence of our dedicated instructors, but also the importance of translating those individual aspirations to a collective vision for a distinctive University of Windsor education. This is far more than a marketing exercise, or a response to an external mandate; it is about identifying our institutional identity and fostering engagement in our university community.

We believe that recommendations about what the UWindsor curriculum of 2020 must come from a much broader engagement and conversation with the University of Windsor's extended community. Starting this conversation through invitation to comment on this discussion paper is one possible beginning point. This discussion paper sets out the broad landscape, and a follow-up paper may be needed to provide exploratory propositions derived from the broad consultation that will focus the discussion more critically and lead to actionable outcomes.

Our intention with this document is to start a conversation, to provoke reflection, to acknowledge some of our strengths and potential challenges we will face in the future. Whether it leads to a revolution, or a gradual evolution, the next steps are up to the UWindsor community. The possibilities are all in the hands of our **engaged faculty, students, and community**.

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**Online resources:**

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<http://halfanhour.blogspot.ca/2016/03/the-2016-look-at-future-of-online.html>

<https://theconversation.com/what-students-want-and-how-universities-are-getting-it-wrong-10000>

[https://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/Teaching%20and%20Learning/Assessment\\_2020\\_final%5B1%5D.pdf](https://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/Teaching%20and%20Learning/Assessment_2020_final%5B1%5D.pdf)

[https://www.deakin.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/192238/AGENDA-2020-curriculum-framework-updated-2014.pdf](https://www.deakin.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/192238/AGENDA-2020-curriculum-framework-updated-2014.pdf)

<http://lrs.ed.uiuc.edu/students/cwang2/vision.html>

## Appendix A: Definitions

**BYOD:** Bring your own device – an approach to IT resourcing where IT planning involves acknowledgement that the majority of customers will own and want to utilise their own, non-standardised equipment.

**Curriculum:** The sum of a student’s learning experiences, interactions with an organised body of disciplinary knowledge, and development towards disciplinary beliefs, values, attitudes and knowledge. This includes the intentionally designed and scaffolded pathway through the learning.

**High Impact Educational Practices:** A set of educational practices developed by Kuh (2008) that have been shown to improve outcomes and experience of students in higher education.

**High touch:** Highly engaging and engaged courses, usually with smaller class sizes, that incorporate High Impact Practices. More often found in upper level courses.

**Laddered credentials:** Sub-degree level credentials that can be combined to provide advanced standing in a degree program.

**Low touch:** Large enrolment classes, often foundational classes, where there are often fewer high impact practices embedded.

**Micro-credential:** credentials that require fewer credit-hours than full degree programs, e.g. certificates, graduate diplomas, MOOC certificates, badges, code academy certifications.

**National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):** A survey used in North American higher education institutions to measure student perceptions of their participation in engaging and learning activities. Localised versions of the instrument are used around the world.

**Outcomes-based education:** An approach to education that values educational outcomes over inputs, for example, seeking evidence of what a student knows, believes, values, and can do at the end of a program of formal study.

**PSE:** Non-compulsory post-secondary education

**UDLEs/GDLEs:** Undergraduate or Graduate Degree Level Expectations – the core learning that students should achieve by the end of their degree programs.

## Appendix B: Assessment 2020 framework (Boud et al., 2009)

Assessment is most effective when:

1. It is used to engage students in learning that is productive
  - a. It is designed to focus students on learning;
  - b. It is recognised as a learning activity that requires engagement in appropriate tasks;
2. Feedback is used to actively improve student learning;
3. Students and instructors are responsible partners in learning and assessment;
  - a. Students take responsibility for assessment and feedback processes;
  - b. Students develop and demonstrate the ability to judge the quality of their own and others' work against agreed standards;
  - c. Dialogue and interaction about assessment processes and standards are commonplace between and among instructors and students;
4. Students are inducted into the assessment practices and cultures of higher education;
  - a. Assessment is carefully structured early in PSE to ensure students make a successful transition to university;
  - b. Assessment practices are responsive to diverse expectations and experiences of students;
5. Assessment *for* learning is at the centre of course and program design;
  - a. Assessment design is recognised as an integral part of curriculum planning from the earliest stages of course development;
  - b. Assessment is organised holistically across courses with complementary, integrated tasks;
6. Assessment for learning is a focus for faculty and institutional development;
  - a. Professional and scholarly approaches to assessment are developed, deployed, recognised, and rewarded by institutions;
  - b. Assessment practices and curriculum are reviewed in light of graduate and employer perceptions of graduate preparedness;
  - c. Assessment of student achievements is judged against consistent national and international standards that are subject to continuing dialogue, review and justification within disciplinary and professional communities;
7. Assessment provides inclusive and trustworthy representation of student achievement;
  - a. Interim or formative assessment results are focused on feedback and learning progress, and do not play a significant role in determining students' final grades;
  - b. Evidence of overall achievement to determine final grades is based on assessment of integrated learning;
  - c. Certification accurately and richly portrays graduates' and students' achievements to inform future learning and careers.

Appendix C: Curriculum Development: Process Overview (based on Wolf, 2007)

