



Dimensions
Equity, diversity and
inclusion Canada

**Toronto
Metropolitan
University**

**Faculty of
Community
Services**

FCS Dimensions Faculty Lead Report
Spring 2023

by Kathryn Underwood, Nadia Ahmed and Dwayne Shaw

Land Acknowledgement

Toronto is in the 'Dish with One Spoon Territory.' The Dish with One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississauga, and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, Europeans and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect. More information about this statement can be found on the Toronto Metropolitan University website (<https://www.torontomu.ca/aec/land-acknowledgment/>).

Toronto Metropolitan University is on Treaty 13 territory. Those of us who constitute the community of Toronto Metropolitan University (faculty, staff, students, partners, and alumni) hold responsibility to honour the treaties of the land where we work and live. We also hold responsibilities related to the act and process of participating in education and research. This report aims to contribute to the process of ensuring good relationships, community respect, and recognition of our responsibilities to the land and its original and current peoples, including disabled, 2slgbtqia+, Black, racialized, religious minority, and gender diverse peoples.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this report. While the three members of the FCS Dimensions team wrote this report, it reflects the perspectives of many. In particular, thank you to the Faculty of Community Services (FCS) leaders, faculty, staff and students who participated in events, and contributed to the discussions and panels, and to those who have reached out to the Dimensions team to share your experiences. We are proud of the work that has been done and look forward to ongoing engagement.

Dedication

This report is dedicated to Paul Benson. Paul was hired to be part of our FCS Dimensions team as a Research Assistant. Paul passed away on March 30, 2023. Quoting from his obituary – Paul was a life-long learner, and a student at Toronto Metropolitan University. Helping him in his education was his immense memory and range of knowledge which he was eager to share with anyone. He was also passionate about advocacy efforts in the field of disabilities, and he was a shining example of how much a person with disabilities can accomplish with the right supports including adaptive equipment. He earned two master's degrees and conducted all his current work while in full hospital care and on ventilator support, using adaptive equipment for his computer. Paul's example provides a vision for inclusive education.

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Introduction

This year, Dimensions was awarded permanent status at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). As a result the FCS Dimensions team engaged in work to determine an appropriate action plan for FCS going forward. In addition, we were interested in the question of how we determine the success of the Dimensions program. We recognize the value of the self-identification survey at TMU, and quantitative information about participation of FCS community members in Dimensions activities. However, we heard directly from FCS faculty over the last 3 years that the outcome should be that people are able to do their work in a good way. This is important for retention of faculty, students and staff, but also for research excellence.

The ways in which diversity is counted within institutions, and in the metrics used to evaluate Dimensions work, need to be defined by the people who hold interests in the institution: community based research partners and colleagues, as well as faculty, staff and students. Our faculty has extensive experience with research programs and research partnerships that are driven by social justice intentions, goals, and purposes, and which are deeply engaged with community. For that reason, we are uniquely positioned to address community engaged research barriers.

Through our work, we heard that researchers in FCS are looking at the university in a different way than the university looks at them. The university processes function to ensure researchers are complying with university and legislative requirements. Researchers on the other hand, are frequently needing to manage these processes so that they can be in good relationships with community. The term community in this report encompasses many different relationships held by researchers in FCS. These communities include disabled, Indigenous, Black, Asian, Queer, poor, trans, unhoused, sick, racialized, undocumented, institutionalized and other communities that have specific interests in how research is conducted. Further, researchers are engaged with communities that have long histories of abuse and discrimination by large institutions like universities. FCS Researchers hold responsibility to ensure that they are in respectful and reciprocal relationships with community, and need the university to support them as they engage in these relationships.

2022-2023 FCS Dimensions team activities

The recommendations outlined in this report are based on activities carried out by the FCS Dimensions team in the 2022-23 academic year. The focus this year was on mobilising previous Dimensions findings, based on work conducted for the Dimensions Pilot phase to build an action plan.

With the success of the application by Toronto Metropolitan University for recognition at the Construction phase of Dimensions, this report focuses on the future of Dimensions. The FCS Dimensions team reached out to all faculty members, through visits to departmental faculty meetings. These were conducted in the spring of 2023s. We were able to visit 7 of 9 schools and will update this report in the fall when we are able to visit the last two schools.

The Dimensions Lead began the year with extensive work on the first draft of the Dimensions application to permanence. Through this process it became clear that an FCS specific action plan would best serve our community. This work has been supported by a Dimensions working group, constituted of 4 Dimensions Leads who are interested in community engaged research. This working group held monthly meetings to discuss concerns related to community engaged research, including those raised by FCS research community members. Collaboration from within the Dean's office, and the Associate Dean SRC has been important in coordinating efforts.

In addition to sitting on several hiring committees and admissions committees, the Dimensions Lead had individual conversations as requested with faculty members, students and staff, and some of the content in this report comes from those conversations. The Lead also attended one Project Manager committee meeting and began regular meetings with the Interim Lead for the Black Scholarship Institute. The Dimensions Lead also met with the Associate Dean of SRC over the course of the year.

In FCS, we held several Dimensions events. In partnership with the library FCS Dimension Lead, Dr. Ann Ludbrook, we held a 4-part series called, "Community-based research and the Academy", with topics derived from issues that had been raised in previous Dimensions work. The Associate Dean of Research, Jennifer Martin, supported these events with Laura Wills doing outreach and technical support. This was discussion series where faculty and research staff could consider questions that arise in ethical and equity informed research. These sessions were intended to give the opportunity to share experience and to engage in conversation about community-engaged research. Content from these discussions is included in the report.

- March 22, 2023, **Project Management: Problematics and potential solutions**
- April 5, 2023, **Self-identification and equity statements: Grant writing and research practice**
- April 11, 2023, **Intellectual Property, and community partners**
- April 19, 2023, **Bonus workshop: Google Scholar and ORCID profiles**

A Graduate student event was held in collaboration with the Dean's office (led by Annette Bailey, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Internationalization). The event, titled, "Bringing Equity to Work: FCS Graduate Conversations," was a roundtable discussion with a focus on bringing equity practices from the classroom into the workplace. Inspired by the Dimensions Faculty Report 2022-23, the event provided a space to share challenges and discover opportunities. The following students led the event: Mary Anne Olalia and Sarosh Sawani (presenters and moderators), Rachel Nyhl Neville and Nerissa Inniss-Boston (presenters). Aspects of this discussion are also included throughout the report.

Through these events and activities, we heard from faculty that the definitions and categories of those who are equity deserving are narrowly defined by institutions. Community members want FCS to be proactive in defining the categories or topics that are the focus of equity discussions.

We heard from faculty that the Tri-council and Dimensions have categories that are institutionally produced. For example, the term race is being used without differentiating between anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, and additional experiences of racial identity and discrimination. Further, Disability is used without differentiating amongst experiences of ableism and disability. The queer community on campus is defined by the letters 2SLGBTQ+, but those letters do not necessarily capture the breadth of experiences of the queer community.

For examples, one community member commented that,

“I would go into environments where there would be a lot of rich white individuals that were all LGBTQ+, and it seemed like I didn't belong. But I did. I didn't care. I pushed back, as a low-income person. We are all members of the community. So why can't we all be here?”

The findings from our work this year are grouped into three topics: faculty researchers, community partnerships, and institutional processes.

Faculty researchers:

Research is driven by faculty members developing and leading projects. Research support staff from the Dean's office were named as being central to individual faculty members programs of research. We heard that research events in FCS were helpful and many of the people who participated in FCS research events also participated in Dimensions events.

We heard that we are in a system that is supposed to be a collegial governance model, but that power imbalances exist. Specifically, we heard that it is difficult to ask for support from people who will decide if you get tenure. We also heard concerns about how decisions are made regarding support for research. Some of these concerns are expanded on in the sections below on mentorship and grants.

In one school we heard that there is some frustration with initiatives such as Dimensions and other equity initiatives that do not necessarily include all faculty from the outset. We also heard that some faculty are frustrated with being asked to do more work related to equity initiatives, particularly if they are from equity deserving groups. We heard that collecting more information without broad commitment to action is problematic.

We were asked about what the university is going to do with the information we have collected through Dimensions activities. One faculty member asked, “Given the university supported all this data collection, across all the faculties, using a range of methodologies that resulted in these very striking findings that disabled people are not really being fully supported at the university, what are the university's plans with these findings? Beyond trying to secure a permanent dimensions status, what are the commitments to hiring?” For example, specific disability concerns were raised with regard to the hidden costs of accessibility in the work of disabled, deaf and mad scholarship. We also were asked, “What counts as palatable forms of diversity and perceptible forms of diversity? And what doesn't”.

Action: Ensure that FCS interests are reflected in university level EDI initiatives. This could be done by providing the opportunity for faculty to participate in activities that highlight both their knowledge and the specific barriers faced by faculty members on university level committees, including Dimensions. Ensure that the work is also shared by all faculty so that there is not a burden or tax on equity deserving groups.

Action: The visits to each school this year, suggested by the leadership team in the Dean's office, were intended to ensure that all faculty had the opportunity to participate in feedback. This should be part of ongoing Dimensions efforts.

Research Mentorship

Mentorship was raised across many of our events and faculty discussions this year. Faculty members identified multiple forms of mentorship that they value. We heard that the Mentorship Circle from the Dean's office is very successful. However, faculty also want mentorship specific to research. Some researchers, who have a track record of success in grant proposals, said that they have additional labour related to mentoring colleagues. This type of mentorship is not acknowledged.

We heard that mentorship should also be developed within schools and departments because there are substantial cultural differences at the departmental level. Some faculty members are going to the mentorship circle because they are not getting support from within their department. There is also a need for mentorship that recognizes the value of mentors who are racialized, disabled, and queer. However, this does not preclude the need for research specific mentorship. We heard many positive comments about mentors who made a difference, but an overall comment was that there needs to be more mentorship and it needs to be better coordinated. Robust discussion about good mentorship included comments about mentors who help to disrupt the legacy of inappropriate and colonial metrics for valuing particular forms of research, and particular outcomes.

Faculty members are interested in discussions that include researchers in every stage of their careers. Some of the questions that were raised for consideration are these:

- How do we go about ensuring that the institution is working to implement means of social justice through research?
- How do we get the university to value equity and belonging as outcomes, not just valuing publications and reports alone?
- How do we resist claiming the illusion of alliance through the rhetoric of social justice, while not implementing any actual action/change?
- What gets legitimized and what does not?

Action: Dimensions could lead research mentorship for faculty specific to community engaged research and navigating TMU systems.

It was pointed out that there are too few people to do the work of supporting researchers. We heard that TMU does not have enough people to troubleshoot or navigate the system. For example, research staff in the Dean's office are helpful but because they are responsible for all of FCS, they are overworked. One faculty member told us "There are a lot of support staff who are very helpful, but then

there are 3-levels of approval and process. There is a review and then the people change so we start at the beginning again. We need to look at who is responsible”.

Another faculty member suggested that we should activate the work of external consultants whose are trained to create a more equitable atmosphere, specifically in the private sector. This faculty member noted that this has been done for years, especially in the United States. In FCS, we have used material from consultation conducted across Canada on EDI initiatives. The 2022 FCS Dimensions report includes a summary of the reports examined, but ongoing monitoring and consideration of the findings from TMU initiatives as well as those from other universities is important.

Finally, we heard that the mission and vision of the university (including in the medical school) is community engagement, but we are the ones connecting to the community. One faculty member said, “even though I get grants, no one invites me to their grants or asks me to work with them”. This quote illustrates an experience that we have heard many times over the first 3 years of the Dimensions program.

Action: Develop systemic means of recognizing research mentorship, and research knowledge that is informed by equity and community-engagement. Ensure that this knowledge is valued in university wide initiatives and in FCS.

Grant writing and success

Overall concerns with relation to grantsmanship were focused on reviewers, and who gets invited on to research teams. Faculty members told us that the bureaucracy of the university can make it difficult to navigate the systems for applying for grants, funding and support. This system also lacks transparency with regard to how long it takes to hear back from granting processes, and the reasoning when a project is rejected.

One faculty member told us, they had applied for a grant with a Black student working on BIPOC issues with a team from another university. The grant guaranteed opportunities to publish and present at conferences – but it was declined and the research did not get information about why it was declined. They were told the answer was final with no explanation. They said, “I decided to leave it, but transparency is basically what I am getting at” Researchers need to know how decisions are being made when they are competing for a grant.

We heard a number of stories about faculty having difficulties with granting processes. As one faculty member, listening to their colleagues stated, “it sounds like it's a systematic problem at the grant level. How are they assuming to try to encourage more diversity in research when basically they put all kinds of barriers in. We need clearer instructions from Tri-Council on equity statements”.

Action: Repeat the FCS and Library Dimensions workshop on equity statements in grants. Develop clearer instructions based on the available Tri-Council information on equity statements, and follow the same process in internal grants, including transparency about decisions.

For community engaged research it would be ideal to be having planning meetings in community spaces, to facilitate relationship building and meeting people. The way grants are organized, and the titles that the Tri-agency gives to researchers and community members (Principle Investigators must be a the University, Knowledge Users are not researchers, etc.), do not facilitate good partnership or community-

led projects. There is no money in advance of the projects, but there could be an opportunity for startup funds or seed funds to value community-based.

Action: Advocate for community-engagement funds that do not position community partners as vendors, or contractors. Create funding that values leadership from community.

Representation

One of the pillars of most university led EDI strategies is representation. We heard that faculty members want us to continue to focus on hiring faculty who are disabled, queer and gender diverse, Black, Indigenous, and racialized, which would support building our faculty to have a breadth of research knowledge. This also means that we need to reconsider how we understand research support. Our systems are set up for particular types of research and teams. We need structural change that recognizes that research in FCS is connected to communities. The procedural systems in place, currently disconnect people from those communities. For example, there are issues around which knowledge is valued. One faculty member said, “We talk about indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, but still uphold the institutional systems while negating or seeing self-determination, as less than because of the policies”. Because we are required to follow policies, in a transactional way, relationship building and connection is undermined. Instead, we should look at research from a socio-ecological or relational perspective, in all aspects of the research ecosystem.

We should also recognize that gender is an important part of the FCS community. With a large majority of FCS faculty identifying as women, we are disproportionately affected by gender-based discrimination. One faculty member told us that when researchers go on parental leave and sabbatical they are replaced for their teaching but not for research. In FCS, this could mean that a school is doing almost no research in a given year. This is an indicator of how research is valued, particularly research that is connected to female dominated professions.

We also need to recognize that no matter how diverse our faculty becomes, we cannot, and should not be complacent in terms of ongoing work toward equity. As change is not borne of the number of racialized bodies in participation, but through active work in areas such as anti-racism and equity work. Much of the research that we do, is the basis for decision-making in society.

We heard that “There is such a huge gap between how these discussions go and how the university responds.” It is important that representation is not just about counting the number of people but also “really listening to the experiences and expertise of those people. We need to ask ourselves why we are here, what do we do and how can we help?”

One faculty member said, “The ways that discrimination can be felt by the disabled community at the university has to do with the way AAS provides and implements accommodations, very slow moving. Educators end up picking up that extra labour.” There is a need for a more comprehensive look at how disability is represented and considered in research. It needs to be about accommodation for all members of the research ecosystem, but also recognition of the value and contributions of these community members.

Action: Continue work to hire diverse faculty members, and to ensure that they are able to actively do their research once they are here. We can also shift from looking for experts, to hiring and valuing knowledge. This means appreciating relational and experiential knowledge.

Community Partnership:

Community based research is a collaborative process that requires a lot of trust. This means that faculty members must engage in the work of building that trust beforehand, with a lot of conversations, opening oneself to accepting feedback and insights from community, and recognizing that community members hold knowledge.

In our community-engaged research discussions we have heard that the contracts that come from the university, are written to mitigate risk to the university. These contracts seem to aim for sweeping or all encompassing rights of the researcher, rather than an equal partnership. This was identified even in the context of contracts that are with Indigenous partners and cover Indigenous knowledge. This is not in keeping with Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) principles, or with good relationships.

We also heard concerns about this type of contract for international partnerships. Some faculty heard from grant reviewers that their work with international partners was not feasible, but the researchers knew that it was. The implication is that reviewers are making judgments about the capacity of research partners in other cultural and political contexts. The research structures, including financial reporting and ethics, are not the same in other countries. This faculty member described this as “Intellectual colonialism”.

We need to see ourselves in our community engaged relationships as being in partnership, which holds responsibilities on both sides. We are governed by Canadian law, but that is not necessarily the case for our partners. They may be governed by the laws of their nations, or through cultural practice and tradition.

Action: We need to think about, and enact, changes in the rhetoric surrounding community research. We need to activate a dialogue on community engaged research that addresses the value of these approaches.

Some faculty members said that they do not have the connections they would like in their research. One researcher said that “there are groups that I'm interested in as part of my research team. Even with excellent research topics, some of us do not have a community connection. But the minute we have those individuals as part of our research team, it becomes that much easier”. Good partnerships are important for the researchers that come after us. We must ensure that we are leaving a good legacy so that other researchers are able to form partnerships with the same communities in the future. For this reason, one faculty member recommended a running record of communities where FCS researchers have already worked. This has some challenges and should be considered further before becoming an action item.

Having authentic partners should be the basis of a project. It was also noted that students can be community members, and in that case, they are not just research assistants but part of the core team. However, their contracts do not reflect this position, both within tri-council policy and HR policy at TMU. Faculty members have included students as part of an advisory group in order to circumvent these structural barriers, but, in these cases it is necessary to compensate them for this work. Further, the power differences need to be considered.

Intellectual property and contracts

Community research should be a true partnership, and intellectual property is a component of that. In our event with the library on intellectual property (IP) we considered the following questions:

- What does it mean to have shared IP?
- What does it mean for researchers to collect intellectual property?
- How do we recognize that they cannot own traditional knowledge, or knowledge that is held by the community? We are sometimes given access to knowledge to learn from, but it is not our right to hold or keep.

Intellectual property is an important issue that needs to be worked through at the institutional level. Academics are now in a scholarly economy, where faculty give away their papers for free, and then the library has to buy it back. We are not able to then share it with the people who may need the information. Digital law is having an impact on what is available in public space. The discussions with the library were really important with regards to understanding our rights as researchers, but also the interests of our community partners.

We heard that our institutional processes need to recognize that research is not the singular knowledge of faculty members, but deeply integrated into the knowledge of community. The idea that contracts can override a community's wishes is very Western. As one faculty member said, "My loyalty is to my community not to the university." We specifically heard about concerns with relation to research partnerships with Indigenous communities. Indigenous communities are not monolithic, and we require better recognition of Indigenous law in our agreements.

We heard that sometimes researchers have to rewrite contracts and send them back to the university. Research is valuable intellectual property but this may mean that community partners, or researchers, are engaging with their own lawyer to rewrite the terms, so that they can get what they want into their contracts.

Action: Work towards a more ethical and relational approach and shift away from agreements that are only based in Western law. Ensure that faculty members are able to engage in healthy and ethical partnership where their work is available to those who have a right to access it. Faculty need better access to contracts that protect cultural expression, traditional knowledge and indigenous knowledge, in keeping with our responsibilities as an institution.

Action: We need to have better formal agreements with partners, and hiring and promotion criteria that value collective intellectual property. The university can and should engage in an institutional level conversation about how we can share intellectual property in a way that is good for community and society, rather than serving capitalist interests.

Knowledge Translation

Many faculty members noted the importance of sharing research with those who are in a position to use the information. The university and Tri-Council require knowledge mobilization and knowledge translation, but we have heard that often knowledge translation is not done effectively with our community partners. We heard that many people are still “just publishing a journal article, and the translation isn't done back to the community.”

We heard about many examples of knowledge sharing with communities that were valued by faculty members themselves. For example, one faculty member said, “as a BIPOC person a lot of us feel like the importance of our work is what we do in community and those outcomes...protests”.

Another faculty member told that they had done a study that had ended up changing provincial level policy but they felt they could not use it for tenure. This faculty member said, “I was criticized for not publishing, because without publishing my work, apparently it didn't mean what it was supposed to.” We heard that the university itself continues to fund a lot of reports/documents for the purpose of social justice, but when researchers publish these types of reports in collaboration with communities, they do not count in the universities quantifying of research outputs. Further, the university does not cite its own researchers when producing these types of reports. For researchers who are members of the communities where the university is building partnerships, it is important that they are consulted and recognized as knowledge holders.

Action: The institution and those who work within research need to reflect and think critically about the kinds of impact that research is having on communities. This should be used to determine what research is valued and what gets to be legitimized. This should be reflected in tenure and promotion, and in university communications and EDI activities.

Institutional Processes:

Overall, there was strong agreement that institutional processes need to be geared towards the work of researchers, rather than to the needs of the institution. TMU needs to be in compliance with research legislation and financial regulations, but this creates a tension when these systems are not geared towards the actual work of FCS researchers. As noted in the 2022 Dimensions report, faculty need to ensure that compliance with the university's policies does not cause harm to community. There is power in the procedural environment that governs research and faculty members are struggling to navigate the systems of the university while maintaining good relationships with research partners, and their own communities.

Action: Several different groups raised the idea for an ombudsperson, or a customer service type approach, to help researchers through procedural systems and issues. It was recognized that the research staff in the Dean's office do this on a daily basis and are valued for their support, with specific reference to the Associate Dean of Research, the Director, Strategic SRC, Partnerships and Special Projects, Research Accounts Support Officers (RASOs), grant support from the Research and Grant specialist, and other staff willing to help find solutions but there is also a need for ongoing monitoring and advocacy on behalf of FCS researchers to navigate the current systems.

Finance

We heard that trying to gain knowledge about how to file a form or get an application through the university are very simple things, which become overly complicated very quickly. This happens because there is no specific person, contact number or website. Even those in the department do not know at times who to refer you to. One faculty member summarized the issues that we have heard from every school and discussion:

“The research resource websites are difficult to navigate, the change over rate is high, the person is on vacation during peak times, policy procedures keep changing so that neither those working nor those applying really know what to do and you find that what should’ve taken half an hour ends up taking 3 weeks or more. And during this process deadlines are missed and opportunities to have a service or be reimbursed are lost.”

We have heard ongoing concerns about accessibility, but also payment to community people that requires extensive bureaucratic processes. We heard that it is common to be “waiting *forever* for honorarium, money for people who need the money now. It’s particularly disrespectful for the Elders.” Payments need to be made with the recognition that honoraria are a gift and those receiving honoraria should not be at risk of losing other forms of assistance or having that assistance being interrupted.

We heard that faculty members want easier processes for payments, and better information about how to support people to participate in research, and to create an environment where people are welcome and active members of research teams. We specifically heard concerns about Black communities, people who hold precarious status, who are unhoused, and who are disabled. There was general agreement that the specific issues related to some communities participating in research are not really being talked about. The participation of these communities in research requires relationship building and maintenance of those relationships, and if there are difficulties with payments or contracts, these relationships can be harmed. Given the demands of the academy, which sometimes values certain work over others, there needs to be good staff across TMU who are able to do this problem solving. For example, project managers and full-time research assistants are helpful in navigating these processes and mitigating risk to partnerships, and for this reason and should be recognized for their central role in high quality research.

Action: More information needs to be on our website with instructions about the different payment processes and options for payment. Note that the Dimensions working group has been meeting with finance. Together with colleagues in research finance we have been discussing community engaged research.

Human resources

Human resources are central to the research work in FCS. This is the primary way in which research dollars are spent. For this reason, one of our greatest assets in terms of the research ecosystem is research staff, which includes students.

Equity in the research environment requires that we treat research staff with respect and consideration both in our own interactions with staff, but also in the institutional procedures that are related to employment of research staff. We have heard frequent concerns about payment to community-based research staff. The current collective agreement does not account for the need to hire people who hold the experience and knowledge of communities. As one faculty member asked:

“How can we make the university more hospitable for people who operate in different ways? Or to operate in whatever ways that work for them? We could also hire more disabled faculty and make it far easier to pay disabled researchers.”

The OPSEU Collective Agreement defines benefits differently for those in positions for 4 months. This is the length of an academic term, which seems to indicate that it is intended for student researchers. One faculty member noted the importance of seeing students as researchers valuing their voices and providing resources for them to develop their skills in research. Students attending national and international conferences need to have resources for them to be able to be involved in those spaces. Developing without the burden of having to be reimbursed afterwards and not before. Further, this is critical for equity, diversity and inclusion in academia, research and community.

We also heard about the importance of research for students. We need to better “roll them into being academicians and research policy protection practitioners. We are doing that all without adequate resources for them to develop their professional profile.” It is our responsibility to increase the capacity of our graduate students and provide the opportunities.

Action: It would be helpful to have FCS specific communications about the different types of contracts available for RAs, pay scale, benefits, and any encumbrances that go along with these contracts. We also need to advocate to the Tri-Council to ensure that all benefits, including maternity leave are paid for in full through grants.

Research Ethics

We heard several concerns that related research ethics and the Research Ethics Board (REB). One concern has to do with who is required to submit to the REB. As one administrator noted Adjunct faculty, preceptors, contract lecturers, and alumni need a contact person that is considered legitimate and credible, in order to get grants. Some faculty members then submit as leads for non-tenure track researchers in order to support their access to the REB. There are also community members who are doing fantastic research, but who cannot lead projects within the structures of the university, such as the REB.

Another concern that has been raised in several contexts of our meetings and discussions, is the feedback researchers get from the REB. We heard that the feedback can reinforce the idea that the university has the authority to question the interests of community or the theoretical positioning of research that has been developed in and with community. There is an ethical principle that needs to be considered with regard to the extent of the REB’s authority. We need to recognize that paternalistic protections have been the root of colonial behaviour. Thus, there cannot be a paternalistic relationship in terms of “protecting” human participants.

During our discussion of Project Management, the REB was a central topic. A key concern was that the REB must recognize the authority of community in ethics and ethical research process. An example raised by researchers who are experts on research with children was the need for ongoing updating of the information about the assent process in research that is for and with children in order to keep pace with current international guidelines.

The REB needs to update policies related to research with co-investigators at multiple universities. We should not be doing a full ethics review of a project that has already been reviewed by an ethics board at another Canadian university. Further, there needs to be recognition of the position of researchers who are outside of the formal university system. For example, we heard that our ethics protocols prohibit us from sharing research data with outsiders and so community partners are essentially positioned on the outside, despite the fact that they may be the ones who have contributed the knowledge or information in the first place.

Finally, the time that it takes to undergo the REB process “is a real problem”. Researchers told us that “we have our own deadlines and it is slowing our research.” We are foregoing contracts, partnerships and opportunities because of the length of time it takes to go through REB.

Action: Develop a relationship with research ethics to establish a community engaged research discussion that addresses timely response in relation to external requirements, and recognition that the REB cannot override community knowledge.

Summary of action items:

The actions that arise from our conversations with faculty over a 3-year time period are informed by experience. Some of the actions are possible in the short-term. Others may take longer, but all of them could begin to be addressed now. Several of the action items are principles that are understood across TMU but have not been activated in the procedural environment. Finally, while a list of actions is important in response to what we have heard, it is critical to recognize that should we implement all of the actions fully, we will continue to need to work towards equity in the research eco-system. There are many complex factors that connect to this work, and we recognize that it must be done in conjunction with the larger Dimensions action plan for TMU, as well as the work of other committees and experts at the university. It should also be driven by the ongoing knowledge being produced by the exceptional research being conducted in the Faculty of Community Services.

- Ensure that FCS interests are reflected in university level EDI initiatives. This could be done by providing the opportunity for faculty to participate in activities that highlight both knowledge and the specific barriers faced by faculty members on university level committees, including Dimensions.
- The visits to each school this year, suggested by the leadership team in the Dean’s office, were intended to ensure that all faculty had the opportunity to participate in feedback. This should be part of ongoing Dimensions efforts.
- Dimensions could lead research mentorship for faculty specific to community engaged research and navigating TMU systems.
- Develop systemic means of recognizing research mentorship, and research knowledge that is informed by equity and community-engagement. Ensure that this knowledge is valued in university wide initiatives and in FCS.
- Repeat the FCS and Library Dimensions workshop on equity statements in grants. Develop clearer instructions based on the available Tri-Council information on equity statements, and follow the same process in internal grants, including transparency about decisions.

- Advocate for community-engagement funds that do not position community partners as vendors, or contractors. Create funding that values leadership from community.
- Continue work to hire diverse faculty members, and to ensure that they are able to actively do their research once they are here. We can also shift from looking for experts, to hiring and valuing knowledge. This means appreciating relational and experiential knowledge.
- We need to think about, and enact, changes in the rhetoric surrounding community research. We need to activate a dialogue on community engaged research that addresses the value of these approaches.
- Work towards a more ethical and relational approach and shift away from agreements that are only based in Western law. Ensure that faculty members are able to engage in healthy and ethical partnership where their work is available to those who have a right to access it. Faculty need better access to contracts that protect cultural expression, traditional knowledge and indigenous knowledge, in keeping with our responsibilities as an institution.
- We need to have better formal agreements with partners, and hiring and promotion criteria that value collective intellectual property. The university can and should engage in an institutional level conversation about how we can share intellectual property in a way that is good for community and society, rather than serving capitalist interests.
- The institution and those who work within research need to reflect and think critically about the kinds of impact that research is having on communities. This should be used to determine what research is valued and what gets to be legitimized. This should be reflected in tenure and promotion, and in university communications and EDI activities.
- Several different groups raised the idea for an ombudsperson, or a customer service type approach, to help researchers through procedural systems and issues. It was recognized that the research staff in the Dean's office do this on a daily basis and are valued for their support, with specific reference to the Associate Dean of Research, the Director, Strategic SRC, Partnerships and Special Projects, Research Accounts Support Officers (RASOs), grant support from the Research and Grant specialist, and other staff willing to help find solutions but there is also a need for ongoing monitoring and advocacy on behalf of FCS researchers to navigate the current systems.
- More information needs to be on our website with instructions about the different payment processes and options for payment. Note that the Dimensions working group has been meeting with colleagues in research finance to discuss community engaged research.
- It would be helpful to have FCS specific communications about the different types of contracts available for RAs, pay scale, benefits, and any encumbrances that go along with these contracts. We also need to advocate to the Tri-Council to ensure that all benefits, including maternity leave are paid for in full through grants.
- Develop a relationship with research ethics to establish a community engaged research discussion that addresses timely response in relation to external requirements, and recognition that the REB cannot override community knowledge.