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Okanagan School of Education External Review Report



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Executive Summary

Drawing on information contained in the Self Study Report, the OSE Strategic Plan, and meetings with faculty, staff, students, administrators, and key stakeholder groups, the purpose of this report is to provide feedback and recommendations for the UBC Okanagan School of Education (OSE) inclusive of programs, resources, structures, strengths and opportunities. Overall, we found the OSE to be a positive, vibrant community of students, staff, faculty, and external stakeholders, all of whom feel supported, express pride in their shared achievements, and are optimistic about the future.

Programmatically, the transformation of the structure and content of the Bachelor of Education at OSE is notable for the scholar practitioner model that underpins it and the commitment to the inclusion of Indigenous content and knowledge that is apparent across the school's activities. The report does highlight how intentions for criticality might be more fully considered and lived by the OSE faculty, staff and students across all programs through deepening engagement with matters of equity, diversity, inclusion, indigenization, decolonization and anti-racism, while attending to the current and future diversity of faculty, staff, and student constituents. In addition, the generalist approach to the B.Ed. offers overlap and helps students see beyond teaching through subject-based methodologies. However, as School Divisions and the students themselves noted, teacher candidates would benefit from some more detailed instruction in subject-specific practices. The creation of a professional EdD is notable as is the support that graduate students across existing programs receive. An area for consideration is community building, especially as many graduate students are working professionals, and depending on where they are at in their programs, may have few opportunities to connect with other students.

The success of the OSE is attributed to the strength of its community more so than access to resources. Staffing levels have not kept pace with the significant increase in funded research projects in the OSE, including the large SSHRC partnership grant. In fact, current staff capacity, the very real shortage of space, and the need to increase the number of faculty members, especially Black and Indigenous Scholars and Scholars of Colour, creates barriers to academic and scholarly growth, as well as innovation. As there are limited financial resources available to the school, efforts to grow revenue streams through such initiatives as the professional EdD and the English Foundations Program (EFP), are becoming increasingly important. Given the importance of the OSE to the university and broader community, central investment to mitigate the capacity pressures within the School would assist in growing programs and research initiatives.

Despite the autonomy of the UBCO and UBCV campuses, there is a unique relationship between the OSE and the UBC Faculty of Education, which requires collaboration between the school Director and the Faculty Dean. It also means that there are additional demands on both positions. This is described in more detail in the report, with consideration of the current leadership structure and how it might adapt to meet the needs of OSE as the School looks toward research and programmatic growth. In addition, considering the capacity challenges faced by OSE, and in light of the academic and research resources available at UBCV, expanding access to these resources for members of OSE, may help to alleviate pressures in the short-term.

Detailed recommendations are offered in each section throughout the full report. Of particular note are the following:

Programmatic:

1. Enhance the focus on criticality within the undergraduate teacher education program to strengthen understanding of multiple and intersecting forms of oppression.
2. Create intentional and sustained opportunities for graduate students to connect and build community throughout their programs.
3. Explore opportunities for revenue generation through the creation and expansion of programs that serve UBCO students and support professional learning in school divisions.
4. Work with the Faculty of Education at UBCV to explore opportunities for students to access courses and programs in more fluid, synergistic ways.

Operational:

1. Deepen and expand Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization capacity. Increasing the number of Black and Indigenous People and People of Colour amongst faculty, staff and students is essential.
2. As the research intensity of the OSE increases, invest in a full-time research facilitator position.
3. Consider creative and innovative approaches to manage the challenges of limited space, including off-site possibilities.
4. Review the current leadership structure of the OSE and consider how it may need to adapt to meet the future needs of the School, especially as programs and funded research continue to expand.

Institutional:

1. Expand the budget for OSE and also reconsider current funding distributions for faculty, staff, and projects to make spending more efficient.
2. Enhance research supports that are available across the institution especially given the aim to increase external funding.
3. Work with the OSE to identify innovative and creative approaches to the challenges of limited space at a time when the opportunities for growth are significant.
4. Enhance institutional support for Indigenization efforts, including financial processes.

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External Review Report

1. Scholar-Practitioner Community-Making

The visit of the External Review Team (ERT) was preceded by a period of remarkable change and intentional transformation of the Okanagan School of Education (OSE). Between 2015 and 2021 evolved new organizational structures-- joining the OSE to UBC-Vancouver; a new B. Ed program-- built in collaboration with community partners; new programs and faculty--the English as an Additional Language Programs; and a new identity as a community of “scholar-practitioners.” Just two years ago, the OSE launched a new five-year strategic plan titled: *A Community of Scholar-Practitioners 2020 (2020)*, which lays out the School’s ambitions for itself as a community of faculty, staff, and students engaged in the process of advancing the life-long learning of educators. We found the purpose and priorities of the OSE Strategic Plan woven throughout the self-study and our interviews. Many of our observations and recommendations speak to its implementation and the School’s enactments of its priorities.

a. A Community of Scholar Practitioners, 2020 – The OSE Strategic Plan

“Vision -- A thriving scholar-practitioner community, investing in and envisioning the future of education together” (p.9)

We found the Vision compelling and its manifestations exciting. One imagines dynamic and productive collaborations among scholars, practitioners, staff, students, communities, engaged “together” in discovering and creating education that will make a difference. The vision portends spirals of recursive flows between research and practice, practice and research; between classroom and academy; with neither scholar nor practitioner isolated or elevated, but rather both maintaining their uniqueness with the relationship between, the hyphen, as the creative nexus of new knowledge and new action. The vision implies simultaneously the coming together of scholars and practitioners as distinct entities AND the scholar-practitioner as a person, embodying the virtues of both ways of being and the generative tension between the two. In our review of the OSE we found evidence of both-- faculty and students who exemplified the scholar-practitioner identity, and research projects that created the necessary positive relationships for scholars and practitioners to generate new knowledge and practices together. In the words of one district leader: “We are better together.”

In the Strategic Plan among the constellation of ideas associated with the term Scholar-Practitioner, was the notion that “practitioner knowledge [is] primary” (p.11). This is a signature commitment. The B.Ed. dedicates a substantial amount of time to in-situ learning. Consequently, the program effectively leverages the expertise of many educators and provides teacher candidates access to practice-based tacit knowledge. This honouring of the knowledge of working educational professionals in the development of teacher candidates was expressly appreciated by school district personnel, and clearly contributed to positive working relationships that benefit the B.Ed. program and its students. These working relationships with districts and mentor-teachers were an evident strength of the program. Districts spoke well of the graduates they hired.

We heard the scholar-practitioner teaching identity should be researched further. There was appreciation of what was happening in classrooms. It was suggested the stories of research-

practitioners as teachers and scholars working together be investigated, and research be done to understand its consequences for teachers, learners, and their learning, as well as for OSE scholars, their research, and their students.

b. The OSE as Nexus

The OSE is located at the nexus of several influential academic organizational flows. Its strategic plan is as a Russian doll, nested within other forceful and transformative strategic plans, to which it is accountable. The OSE is an important part of the UBC-Okanagan, inseparable from the campus's priorities and culture. It is equally an important part of the Faculty of Education, influenced by its priorities and culture. All are part of the University of British Columbia. As a provincially accredited Teacher Education program, it is influenced by the norms and standards of K-12 Education. It is at the center of the strategic priorities of UBC-O, Faculty of Education, UBC, and Ministry of Education and all determine its parameters and future being to some extent. Thus, it is no surprise that there is notable congruence between the program and the strategic plans of the University, the UBC-O, and the Faculty of Education. We found in the program resonances with UBC's (2018) commitments to:

- “Lead globally in research excellence, discovery, scholarship and creative endeavours;
- Inspire and enable students through excellence in transformative teaching, mentoring, advising and student experience;
- Partner with Indigenous communities on and off campus to address the legacy of colonialism and to co-develop knowledge;
- Build a diverse culture that integrates our themes of innovation, collaboration and inclusion, and infuses them through all of our activities;
- Lead globally and locally in ... wellbeing across our campuses and communities” (p. 15).

We found resonances with UBC-O's Strategic Plan *Aspire* (2014) commitments to:

- “Be a model of innovation and interdisciplinary programming as an expression of UBC's core commitments:
 - Transformative student learning;
 - Research excellence;
 - Community engagement” (p. 5)
- “Research about well-being;
- Value Indigenous culture here;
- Involve community members in teaching and research collaboration” (p.7).

We found resonances with the Faculty of Education's (2019) commitments to:

- “Ensure high standards in research-transformed teacher education to support educational practice and enhance the quality of student learning in British Columbia and beyond;
- Engage with local, national, and international partners, organizations, and professionals in the study, practice, and advancement of education;
- Foster sustainable relationships, collaborations, and partnerships with Indigenous communities;
- Enhance the wellbeing of our community” (p. 7).

We noted that a Provincial review of the B. Ed. Program (BCTC Structured Dialogue) was conducted in 2021 which confirmed alignment with the provincial Teacher Education

requirements and the Professional standards for BC Educators (2019), and in particular the new Standard 9:

“Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit and Metis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First nations, Inuit and Metis” (p.5).

We use the term resonance here to depict that strategic plans are always aspirational in nature, moving from where we were to where we intend to go, and that the School is along a continuum of meeting these priorities. We note that the University and Faculty have provided several resources to enable the School to engage its stated challenges and advance toward its goals. One example is the Indigenous Strategic Plan (ISP). The ISP provides a unit self-assessment tool that will allow the School to review on an on-going basis how it is proceeding to achieve its Indigenous priorities. The self-assessment tool also provides School members who are not Indigenous opportunity to develop their own expertise without relying upon Indigenous colleagues, who are often overburdened with this work.

In our review we did not hear or read much about sustainability and climate action, which are significant priorities to the University. We wonder how the School will be influenced by the [UBC-O Climate Action Plan 2030](#), and where sustainability and climate action fit in the School’s curricular and pedagogical priorities. Perhaps, plans for land-based education can benefit from this University priority.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion figure significantly in the School’s strategic plan, in its Self-Study document and across all of UBC. There are now significant resources available to the School for its self-assessment and advancement of this important area. These resources provide greater granularity and identify carefully considered ways forward, which will benefit the School’s own priorities in this regard. These resources include the [Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization](#) in the Faculty of Education, [Task Force on Race, Indigeneity and Social Justice – Final Report](#) (2021); and most recently, [54 Steps on the Pathway to an Anti-racist and Inclusively Excellent UBC](#) (2022).

Being at the nexus of many educational flows has the potential for energizing creative and generative research and transformative teaching and learning innovations. The OSE has emerged from a period of significant adaptation to these external forces. It appears to us that self-definition as a community of scholar-practitioners has given the OSE the basis for consolidating its strengths, engaging its challenges with confidence, and harnessing the multiple flows of influence to serve its own purposes. The committee was pleased to experience the OSE as a positive, vibrant community of students, staff, faculty, and external stakeholders, proud of their achievements together and looking forward to more.

Recommendations:

- Theorize and research the impact of the scholar-practitioner identity for teachers, graduates, and faculty, for learners, communities, and staff;

- Deepen and expand Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization capacity. This could include reference to growing university resources and strategic hiring. Take advantage of Faculty of Education EDID funding opportunities;
- Use the Indigenous Strategic Plan self-assessment as a regular reflexive exercise for the whole School and for individuals. It will be invaluable for non-Indigenous faculty and staff to do ‘their own decolonizing and Indigenizing work’;
- Use the various and emerging strategic plans, priorities and resources of the University to check directions, seek out new opportunities, and align with internal funding initiatives; and
- Keep aspiring, through scholarship and practice, to the well-being of all who participate in, and who are served by, the OSE.

2. Undergraduate, Post-Bac and Graduate Programs of Study and Student learning

The review team appreciated the opportunity to meet with various stakeholders as we deepened our understanding of the programs offered by OSE. Of note is the significant effort undertaken to completely revise and renew the Undergraduate Teacher Education program which is delivered over 16 months and includes 25 weeks of field experience. In particular, we were impressed with the scholar practitioner model that underpins the program and invites students to more intentionally engage with both the theory and practice of teaching in integrative ways. The focus of each of the Blocks that students engage in seeks to ensure that a solid foundation is built and that each successive Block deepens students’ knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a scholar practitioner in schools that are increasingly complex and diverse. In fact, each of the Blocks weaves together various topics, issues, theories and practices in holistic ways, reflective of the wholeness of children and youth in all aspects of their lives.

We did hear from undergraduate students that while they very much appreciated the Block approach, they found the intensity at times overwhelming as they struggled to shift quickly from idea to idea with little time for substantive reflection. They also noted a gap in their experiences across the program with respect to considering issues of diversity specific to supporting 2SLGBTQ2 students in schools. They spoke passionately about their commitment to these young people but expressed that they did not feel as well equipped as they would like to provide concrete, meaningful everyday support in impactful ways.

Some concerns were raised about the capacity to offer a French Education program when many instructors are not bilingual which creates a ‘double burden’ for the students in the French program to complete assignments in French and then have to translate them into English so that their professors could assess them. OSE should consider ways to address the capacity issue so that students are better supported. In addition, more opportunities for teacher candidates to make connections between approaches to mental health and wellbeing and the teaching of neurodiverse students would better equip them for their work in classrooms.

As a review team, through our conversation with various groups, our observations and in careful consideration of the materials provided to us, we noted that intentions for criticality could be more fully considered and lived by the OSE faculty, staff and students. For example, explicitly attending to the lived realities of racism for Black, Indigenous and people of Colour at UBCO, in school systems, and more broadly in society, and inviting students to understand and enact

anti-racist pedagogies in their practice would strengthen the School and its programs. This would complement the efforts of OSE in Indigenous Education especially as racism and colonialism continue to be everyday realities for Indigenous peoples. We also noted throughout our visit the predominance of whiteness - faculty, staff and students and wonder what efforts are being made to invite greater diversity into the OSE though we acknowledge the importance of the recent hiring of an Indigenous faculty member and a faculty member of colour.

Given the strength of the renewed Bachelor of Education program and because OSE delivers Education 100/200/400 courses to students across UBCO who are considering education as a profession, we see potential for the creation of a certificate in Education Studies that could become a means to generate revenue for the School. There may be additional opportunities for growth through other programs that could ladder into the Bachelor of Education (ie: Indigenous language fluency) and that meet an important need within the education sector. The English Foundation Program also has tremendous potential for growth as the University invites more international students to pursue their studies.

Graduate students expressed appreciation for their programs and supervisors, but did note feelings of isolation when their course work was completed. They wondered about more active ways to engage and connect students over the duration of their programs, and saw these as important to a larger wellness commitment that is central to the OSE.

With respect to Post-Bac learning opportunities, the school districts we spoke with recommended meeting with them to see what might be needed and how to engage the educators in those communities. They felt there are some significant opportunities especially given the implementation of a mandatory Indigenous studies class in high schools beginning Fall 2022. In addition, the school divisions spoke highly of their relationship with OSE and expressed appreciation for the collaboration with them to renew the teacher education program. They did note that areas of specialization for students, such as mathematics and science, could be strengthened, but recognized the challenges given that the B.Ed. is a generalist program at OSE. They also commented on opportunities for OSE to ensure teacher candidates have a more practical understanding of assessment in classrooms. The teacher candidates also commented on what they perceived to be a tension between a generalist program and the more specialized knowledge that secondary school teachers require to teach higher level subject matter classes.

The creation of an EdD is an important initiative that has tremendous potential to support in-service teachers, school and division leaders in and beyond the region. Of note is the effort to thread the scholar practitioner model throughout the proposed EdD program, although there does not appear to be the same attention to this in the Masters programs which poses potential challenges in terms of continuity across all levels of programming.

Recommendations:

- Ensure students have time and opportunity for reflection within and between the blocks.
- Ensure that issues of diversity specific to supporting 2SLGBTQ2 students in schools are included in the content within and across blocks;
- Expand capacity in the French education program to support students to learn and be assessed in French;

- Create intentional and sustained opportunities for graduate students to connect and build community throughout their programs;
- Consider the creation of a certificate program in Education Studies that is accessible to students across UBCO;
- Explore ways to support subject area knowledge within the generalist program;
- Hire another Indigenous Faculty member; and
- Work with School Divisions to plan for and implement Credit and Non-Credit professional learning opportunities for school staff.

3. Indigenous Engagement

The OSE has many strengths with respect to Indigenous engagement. Probably the most important with respect to this is attitude. The attitudes of members of the OSE toward Indigenous engagement are positive and thoughtful, creating an atmosphere conducive to decolonization. Indigenous engagement was mentioned by various stakeholders across the School, including senior leadership and faculty who teach in the B.Ed. and graduate programs, as well as those who teach professional development education for teachers and English as an additional language.

As a result of this school-wide acknowledgement of the importance of Indigenous engagement and decolonization, Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy are incorporated across the B.Ed. program. The British Columbia Ministry of Education's Teacher Regulation Branch requires all teacher candidates in the province to complete at least 3 credits in Indigenous education. Rather than separating this into a single course focused on Indigenous education, the OSE has approached this requirement holistically and woven Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy throughout the program. This avoids tokenizing Indigenous knowledge and demonstrates to teacher candidates that Indigenous education and decolonization are the responsibility of every teacher in every classroom. The OSE has approached this integration with particular consideration of local Syilx ways of knowing and being, and has appropriately worked to include Syilx ceremony, knowledge, Elders, and educators in the B.Ed. program. Teacher candidates are aware that the Indigenous content and pedagogy they are learning is rooted in Syilx culture. The School is working to include Nsyilxcən language in land-based learning, and Nsyilxcən is visible on posters and signs in the building. Dr. Bill Cohen, as the sole tenure-stream Indigenous faculty member within the OSE, has been responsible not only for educating teacher candidates, but also educating his peers so that they as Settler teachers are able to appropriately engage Syilx knowledge and work to decolonize their teaching. Moving into the future, faculty and leadership envision the expansion of land-based learning steeped in Syilx culture, as well as decolonization of assessment practices. In addition to the B.Ed. program, faculty in the TEAL program discussed possibilities for engaging International Indigeneity and sharing best practices for language teaching and learning with Indigenous language educators.

The SSHRC Partnership Development Grant, *Co-curricular-making: Honouring Indigenous connections to land, culture, and relational self* led by Dr. Margaret Latta has had a significant influence on the presence of Indigenous knowledge in the School, as members from across the OSE are included in it. It has positively impacted local community as well, as it engages community partners including the Okanagan Nation Alliance, local art gallery and museum, and school boards. One representative from Central Okanagan Public Schools credited the grant with offering land-based learning and classroom decolonization that is saving lives, preventing self-harm, and keeping learners in school. School board representatives also noted a strong

partnership between the community and university in terms of the engagement of community Elders and knowledge keepers, which benefits all involved.

The faculty's engagement with community partners is developing well. Practices and structures such as the Faculty's Indigenous Education Council have positively impacted community partners and encouraged similar work in other education sectors. The faculty also noted strong ties to the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the Okanagan Nation Alliance. There is also a teaching connection with the Bachelor of Nsyilxcn Language Fluency (BNLF) program, which encourages students in the BNLF to consider taking teacher training at the OSE after graduation.

While there are many strengths, the OSE's work in Indigenous engagement is not without its challenges.

Of first mention, the space limitations that the OSE faces impact all areas including Indigenous education. While effort is being made to enhance land-based learning, there is no specific outdoor space that has been created for land-based education opportunities.

Furthermore, there is only one Indigenous tenure-stream faculty member, Dr. Bill Cohen, who has taken on the considerable task of leading decolonization and Indigenization within the School. Colleagues continually noted the strength of Dr. Cohen's work and their appreciation of his efforts. However, it is necessary to note that Dr. Cohen is pre-tenure and in addition to leading decolonization and educating students, staff, and faculty across the OSE, he must also engage in many other tasks to fulfill the requirements of tenure. Across Canadian universities, burnout is a serious issue disproportionately impacting Indigenous and other marginalized faculty who are constantly asked to do additional tasks that are not requested of their non-marginalized colleagues. The OSE needs to take care to ensure Dr. Cohen's career trajectory and wellbeing are not put at risk as a result of the considerable leadership role he carries.

There were also some challenges with community engagement. Members of the School noted that while Elders and Knowledge Keepers are engaged, there are challenges in terms of payment for them. The school also did not appear to have deep engagement with UBC's NITEP program, which is directed from the Vancouver campus but which has had a field centre in Kelowna and connections to Syilx communities. Even though NITEP wishes to remain independent from the OSE, there are opportunities here for collaboration. Finally, the OSE engages primarily with the member communities of the Okanagan Nation Alliance. Given that the OSE occupies space on their traditional territory, this engagement is certainly a priority. However, while we noted that the urban Indigenous community is represented by the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society on the OSE's Indigenous Education Council, the urban community was never mentioned in any of our discussions. Given that around 70% of Indigenous people live off-reserve in urban centres, and given that urban communities have their own identities, compositions, and cultures, this lack of engagement is concerning. Similarly, no mention was made of Métis engagement even though the Métis Nation of British Columbia is represented locally by the Kelowna Métis Association, and there is no Métis-specific representation on the Indigenous Education Council.

The depth of consideration of decolonization and Indigenization appeared somewhat limited. The OSE tends to use these terms interchangeably; they are not the same and involve very different processes, leadership, and outcomes. The OSE would benefit in engaging in deeper, critical strategic planning around the future of Indigenous engagement, decolonization, and Indigenization. The school's efforts to decolonize education are primarily aimed at

education for Settlers. While this is absolutely necessary to achieve societal decolonization, there is little visible representation, services for, or specific programs for Indigenous students. Existing B.Ed. students were not aware of whether there were any Indigenous students in the School, and noted that there were few events specifically for Indigenous students and/or racialized students. We heard from faculty that recruiting Indigenous students was not made a priority.

Unfortunately, we did not get to speak with Indigenous partners including representatives of OSE's Indigenous Education Council, the Okanagan Nation Alliance, or any urban community or Métis organizations, which limited what we were able to ascertain about Indigenous engagement in the School from outside perspectives.

Recommendations:

Community Engagement:

- Engage with urban and Métis communities in a more fulsome, respectful, and reciprocal way;
- Create a policy that ensures the respectful, adequate, and prompt payment of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, including setting clear rates of pay and identifying processes for remuneration that respect Indigenous cultural practices and sensitivities;
- Explore partnerships with NITEP for the creation of an ongoing field centre; and
- Explore partnerships with community organizations for more credit-based Indigenous-focused educational opportunities. One notable suggestion is to explore partnerships with the BNFL program and/or the En'owkin Centre to develop an Indigenous language teaching concentration for graduates of their programs.

Space:

- Create more space for practicing teachers to come to campus to learn with faculty and Elders alongside students in addition to the offerings that are part of the Summer Institute of Education; and
- Develop a permanent, dedicated land-based learning site that is rooted in Indigenous knowledges. Given the natural beauty of the area, it would be wise to consider developing a centre off-campus with more access to the natural environment.

Strategic Planning:

- Engage in deeper, more critical reflection and strategic planning regarding how to move forward with Indigenous education including decolonization, Indigenousization, and reconciliation;
- Continue discussions and create new practices around more inclusive assessment practices;
- Put into practice specific plans for recruiting and serving Indigenous students, and increasing the visible representation of Indigenous students within the School, taking into account the different approaches to educational decolonization that Settler students and Indigenous students need to thrive; and
- Most importantly, hire more Indigenous scholars. This could involve targeted hiring for existing positions or the creation of positions that will produce a greater sense of diversity, such as scholars who focus on and could teach about racial inequality, social justice, or Indigenous education. In general, it is necessary to create a more inclusive program by increasing faculty diversity through hiring more racialized faculty.

4. Student Experience and Support

The OSE has a remarkable culture of support, and that is clear at all levels of education. In general, students report feeling very supported within the faculty, and cite the small, intimate environment as a reason for this. The ethos of the faculty as a place of egalitarian, reciprocal learning is evident. Students at all levels feel respected and heard, and in response feel a sense of responsibility to do their best. The size of the faculty and the focus on egalitarianism creates a flow for students as they progress in their learning and professional development. The inclusion of practicing professionals alongside students in the Summer Institute of Education (SIE) creates opportunities for B.Ed. students to benefit from professional mentorship beyond their field placements, which in turn creates flow from the B.Ed. into professional practice. At the same time, B.Ed. students are in contact with graduate students as well, which creates academic flow from the B.Ed. to graduate education; similarly, since graduate students are treated as equals and mentees by faculty, they see their connection to professional research and/or academia as they complete their graduate work. Faculty treat students with respect and are open to change and difficult conversations. The School has a unique approach to education through the Scholar Practitioner model, which very much informs how individuals at the OSE approach their work and learning. While the model is less clear at the Master's level, it is being threaded into the development of the Ed.D. There are also practical student supports for wellness in addition to those offered through academic opportunities. The growing emphasis on land-based learning contributes to student wellness. Furthermore, the B.A.R.K. program is very visible within the School, and is celebrated as a way to support student wellness, as well as the wellness of staff and faculty. This program is inspiring and other institutions would be wise to examine introducing it as well. Its effectiveness is enhanced by the larger work of the Centre for Mindful Engagement.

There are various elements within the B.Ed. program that contribute to student support and positive experience. With respect to program structure and professional preparation, students, faculty, and school board representatives find that the program has particular strength in inclusivity and teaching for reconciliation. The program challenges students to think critically and to grow as Scholar Practitioners, which enables them to understand teaching as a career that requires lifelong learning, reflection, and creativity rather than just practical methodology. It also enables them to recognize and critique the fact that what students are taught in a B.Ed. program and what they experience in a field placement may be quite different, and consider how they want to be as teachers. A focus on kindness and student-centred teaching contributes to this. The incorporation throughout of Syilx Indigenous knowledge prepares students to teach in a way that is responsive specifically to the Okanagan. The generalist approach of the program allows students to explore diverse topics and to be open to subjects they find challenging. Connections between those training to teach children and those training to teach adolescents also facilitates sharing of ideas.

While the program very much follows a generalist approach, there are some opportunities for specialization, including the electives offered in the SIE and options to expand to the grade 10-12 curricula during assignments. The French program offers opportunities for development in French fluency as well as language teaching. The French Institute in Québec City and support from a French-speaking advisor provide opportunities for language development; work is being done to expand these opportunities even further. The School also has a strength in its attitude toward French. It is difficult to develop full French-language fluency in a geographic region that has a small Francophone population. The School is working to move from a paradigm that expects native fluency to one that celebrates multilingualism, which builds confidence and competence in future French teachers.

Field advisors enhance student support and experience. The field advisors develop deep relationships with students, and are there to offer one-on-one support, as well as group discussions about various aspects of teaching. They are also able to help students unpack practicum experiences and because they work with course instructors, they are able to help incorporate student experiences and concerns into coursework.

Students receive good support while on practicum, and strong communication between school boards and the OSE facilitate this. There has been ongoing willingness for teachers to take on students for practicums in spite of COVID-19. Because of the relationship between field advisors and students, and between the OSE and school boards, it is possible to arrange good matches between students' needs, desires, and strengths and potential practicum placements. This enhances learning for all, as a large pool of willing teachers and knowledge of individual students helps ensure students are offered the strongest mentorship experiences on their placements. It also addresses a vital equity issue: Indigenous and racialized students as well as LGBTQ2S+ students are at risk of discrimination when placed with teachers who do not understand their experiences, which negatively impacts their wellbeing. This is particularly the case for transgender and non-binary students. These relationships ensure that students are placed with teachers who can support them appropriately. The focus on relationship also ensures that students are supported when in difficulty on placements, and allows schools, faculty, and administrators to approach difficult conversations with students about new placements, program pauses, and professional fit with understanding and empathy.

The OSE also has significant strength in language teaching and learning, including the English Foundations Program (EFP) and the Teaching English as an Additional Language (TEAL) post-baccalaureate certificate. The focus of those working with the EFP is very clearly on care and on helping students to settle in and live well in Kelowna, as well as preparing them for university courses or supporting them in concurrent courses. TEAL and B.Ed. students gain experience and contribute to EFP student wellbeing through their involvement with the program. Because the EFP brings together people from multiple disciplines, it allows for development of practical English language learning. This is also facilitated by the diversity of countries the EFP serves, since students come from diverse language backgrounds.

Students and alumni spoke highly of graduate programs. Graduate programs are small, which helps ensure students have opportunities for deep training, collaborative research, and co-authored publications. As Dr. Broom edits the *Citizenship Education Research Journal*, students also have opportunities to better understand the world of academic publishing. Sharing of ideas is facilitated by graduate courses that are offered as seminars. There are various pathways for Master's education, including a capstone project or course-based M.Ed., which is particularly attractive to working professionals, or a thesis-based M.A. An Ed.D. with a focus on this population is also being developed. Capstone projects focus on giving back to community, and there is movement toward questioning the traditional structure of a thesis as some faculty work to open up diverse ways of sharing knowledge gained through research for M.A. completion.

The OSE also faces some significant challenges. Again, lack of space came up as a serious issue. The School is growing and developing, and this is happening more rapidly than they have space for. Although it is a campus-wide concern, it presents particular difficulties for the B.Ed. program. Since the OSE has no dedicated classrooms, it is difficult to configure spaces for the unique needs of courses in education. Since the B.Ed. includes both large and small classes, purpose-built rooms of various sizes are needed. For now, the use of different rooms

including rooms that are not meant to be classroom spaces, such as the ballroom and sunshine room, makes teaching more difficult and detracts from student experience.

With respect to the B.Ed., while already strong the program could be developed to provide an even better student experience. While the generalist approach to the B.Ed. offers overlap and helps students see beyond teaching through subject-based methodologies, students would benefit from some more detailed instruction in subject-specific practices. This would take pressure off host teachers for mentoring students in these practices, and would better prepare them for professional practice. Students would also benefit from a deeper understanding of assessment practices, crisis management, sexual orientation and gender identity, and teaching for neurodiverse students. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to teaching for neurodiversity, but more discussion of social-emotional learning, a wider overview of neurodiversities, and an ongoing focus on seeing and accepting the whole child would help prepare students for teaching. They would also benefit from classes and mentorship to prepare them to be Teachers on Call. As is the case with many B.Ed. programs, there is a balance between academic rigour, amount of content, and amount of time that can be difficult to achieve. Students noted that the program is very fast-paced. Students and instructors would benefit from more time to delve deeply into serious and important issues. Students also indicated that while diversity is a focus of the program, some instructors still approach B.Ed. students with a 'cookie cutter' approach. Even more communication between field advisors and instructors would help identify priority topics for teaching and also ensure students' individual needs are met. With respect to practicum, placements in the south Okanagan are difficult because fewer students are willing to travel that far, which given the rising cost of transportation is unlikely to change unless students get support for transportation or lodging on practicum.

Registration can be a challenge. There is a general issue of bureaucratic barriers for students wishing to switch between courses and programs at the OSE and UBC Vancouver, which is frustrating for students and those supporting them. This is particularly the case for courses in French. Students preparing to be French teachers would also benefit from more support outside of French-specific courses, including having T.A. support so assignments can be completed and marked in French, and more support in seeking out opportunities for travel and French fluency development.

In terms of challenges for the EFP and graduate programs, there are some challenges that correlate with the newness of the programs and the growth of the School. In graduate studies, the small student body sometimes makes it difficult to appropriately recruit and train research assistants. There is a cyclical issue of needing to recruit more students to grow the faculty, then needing more faculty to support the growing graduate student body. Since many graduate students are working professionals, and also likely due to COVID-19, it can be difficult to create a sense of community for graduate students. This results in a lack of events for graduate students and in some students feeling disconnected from the School. Graduate students noted that sometimes graduate studies appear to be of secondary importance to the B.Ed. program. While the Scholar Practitioner model is central to the B.Ed. and to the faculty's practice and institutional identity, it is not a focus in graduate programs. The fact that the M.A. is thesis-based while the M.Ed. is course or project-based inculcates a hidden curriculum in which research in education is seen as less rigorous and demanding than research in the Arts and Sciences.

There are recruitment challenges at the B.Ed. and graduate levels. Students at both levels expressed concern about grades as a primary factor for acceptance into these programs, and recommended more emphasis on personal statements or the inclusion of interviews as part of

the application process. While the faculty stated a desire to recruit more international graduate students, it was noted that international students, particularly students of colour, do not see themselves amongst the faculty and lack a sense of connection to the faculty. At the B.Ed. level, there was little focus on recruiting or supporting Indigenous students and students of colour, or on specific supports for LGBTQ2S+ students, particularly transgender students. The relative homogeneity of the faculty contributes to recruitment challenges for students of colour and Indigenous students.

Recommendations:

General:

- Keep fostering the relational environment that already enhances the student experience at the OSE;
- Seriously examine the space limitations on campus to offer more appropriate teaching and learning spaces for the OSE;
- Place more emphasis on personal statements than grades for entry into programs at all levels, and if possible consider adding interviews to application processes;
- Provide more professional development for faculty on diversity, internationalization, and universal design for learning; and
- Eliminate bureaucratic barriers to registration and student support between UBC Okanagan and UBC Vancouver.

B.Ed. Program:

- Add more education on subject-specific teaching methodologies and assessment practices;
- Build on existing collaboration between field advisors and course instructors;
- Add additional content on classroom management, trauma-informed practice and crisis management including where to get support for themselves as teachers, neurodiversity and universal design for learning, sexual orientation and gender identity, and working as a Teacher on Call;
- Reconsider scheduling to give more time for deep discussion of challenging issues, which will enhance the program's academic rigour and slow its pace;
- Keep building on personalized approaches to placement for teacher candidates through ongoing strong relationships between the OSE and school boards;
- Increase practice-based assessment to help students grow during practicums;
- Expand the Summer Institute of Education and provide even more connection between students and practicing teachers through increased micro-credentialing for associate teachers;
- Provide support to facilitate travel for practicums in the South Okanagan; and
- Provide further support for the development of the French program, including TA support in French and more opportunities for language learning and travel.

Graduate Studies:

- Actively recruit candidates who will be able to support existing research as research assistants, particularly those seeking full time programs;
- Improve collaboration across campus;
- Continue to think creatively about what a thesis needs to look like to offer more diverse and decolonized options for sharing knowledge;

- Reconsider the distinction between the thesis-based M.A. and project or course-based M.Ed. to reaffirm the rigour and importance of research in education, and offer more awards for M.Ed. students;
- Create more opportunities for graduate students to come together, including having a leadership team who can approach administration and faculty on behalf of graduate students;
- Enhance the amount of international content in graduate courses; and
- More clearly connect the Scholar Practitioner model to graduate studies.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

- Identify support gaps for Indigenous students, students of colour, and LGTQ2S+ students and offer specialized supports and mentorship to meet their needs, ideally led by faculty and staff who are also members of each of these communities;
- Engage in targeting hiring of Indigenous professors, professors of colour, and gender diverse professors so students from these communities are better supported and feel more connected to the OSE; and
- Actively recruit more Indigenous students, students of colour, and LGBTQ2S+ students, especially gender diverse students, once supports are in place to ensure their success.

5. Research, Scholarship and Professional Activity

The Self-Study charts a research funding trajectory of which the School is justifiably proud. The record shows on-going success with Tri-Council grants and awards with a recent large SSHRC partnership grant (\$1,076,813). The excitement of those involved in this grant on and off campus spoke to the significance of the research itself for making a difference in the lives of K-12 students, their teachers, and the school district. The resources of this grant were also being effectively leveraged within the School advancing research capacity and energy more broadly. The Centre for Mindful Engagement was also found to be contributing significantly to the School's research culture and capacity. Many publications (18 since 2016) have resulted from the work of the B.A.R.K. program, and notably students have been generatively involved in the research and publications. The program continues to grow its research and its services to various communities. Both the SSHRC partnership grant and the B.A.R.K. program are exemplars of the scholar-practitioner model advanced by the School. The external review team found it telling that representatives of both groups referred to "research success" as measured by the "relationships we have built." In other conversations it became abundantly evident that community collaborations and partnerships are a major research strength of the School. A review of faculty curriculum vitae supports the Self-Study's observation that the faculty are "locally, nationally, and internationally recognized for their research and scholarship", that they hold a comprehensive range of specialized expertise, and that they are involved in service related to research and scholarship. The external review committee appreciated the significant collaborations evident between various faculty members, and efforts of the faculty to share their research with each other.

On several occasions, faculty spontaneously expressed appreciation for the work of Dr. Danielle Lamb in support of Research in the School. Dr. Lamb previously held a position with the Office of Research Services. She currently supports the SSHRC Partner Grant implementation. Many faculty have found Dr. Lamb's presence on "their floor" has significantly contributed to the writing of research proposals and grants, even just through informal conversations in the

hallway. Dr. Lamb's contributions reveal an important opportunity in the sustainability and further advancement of research by the School.

The Self-Study identifies several challenges for research and scholarship. "Finding ways to collaborate in research when faculty are often the only scholar in their particular field" was further described by one faculty member as not having anyone nearby who could helpfully review one's writing. The external review team wondered if this shouldn't be one of the advantages of being a part of the larger Faculty of Education, where there are more likely scholars who share the same field, which led to wondering further about the boundaries that make such connection difficult. It was helpful to hear the School responding to the challenge of how to keep each other informed about what research is being done through the use of digital screens and a monthly gathering over food—"Chow Down"—to allow conversation about one's work. Presumably, by digitizing information for screens it can also be shared on the School's website and in a newsletter. Merit and Performance conversations amongst a small group of faculty are perennially a problem, and it sounds like progress has been made in this area. Again this is a problem shared by the other Departments and Schools in the Faculty of Education, and presumably by other units on Campus, so hopefully this challenge can be sufficiently mitigated for all concerned.

The Self-Study noted that space for new faculty hires was a concern. It noted that the more successful and involved faculty were in their external service work and collaborations with outside communities, the more challenging it is to ensure service responsibilities in the School and at the University are met. It also noted that with the small number of faculty and the significant number of demands on committees in the FoE and across the campus, there is a real danger of leadership role "fatigue." These concerns were further supported during our interviews. Clearly, good vertical and horizontal communication and balancing of priorities will be required, as well as an appreciation of these challenges by Faculty and UBC-Okanagan leadership.

The size challenge emerged in a different way in our conversations. It was reported that there are not enough graduate students to fulfill Research Assistant needs within the School. This has meant that some students get an excellent introduction to the academy, with a variety of experiences, which was noted as a strength, but it also means that some faculty do not benefit from any Research Assistants in their areas. Importantly, growth to meet these needs was perceived as also critiqued—our small size is an advantage, scaling up is not the answer. The committee noted that the proposed Ed.D. program could increase the number of research-oriented students. It remains to be seen how available for research assistant work the professionals targeted by this program will be.

An external challenge for the School reported to us was the lack of SSHRC oriented research support in the Office of Research Support (ORS) at UBC-O. The ORS is currently structured to support Science and Applied Science grant writing primarily. Dr. Lamb used to provide that support to the Campus. Hence, her value to the School.

In our short time, many research opportunities presented themselves. Senior leadership at UBC-O spoke of the School being "siloeed" from the rest of the campus and that there were several opportunities for collaboration. For example, the work of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) would benefit from research relationships with those in the School whose expertise align with innovative curriculum, pedagogy, etc. It was suggested that a UBC-O "eminence" grant could help advance such a collaboration. Similarly, the School is "siloeed" from

the Faculty of Education. There are relatively fewer collaborations with the Faculty than there are between the Departments in the Faculty at UBC-V. It will be helpful to know what barriers are in place that make the threshold for collaboration across the campus, or with the Faculty of Education, difficult. There has been some work done in this area by the former Dean. It would be helpful to have this information shared and efforts made to make such collaboration an achievable norm rather than a hard-won exception. It was suggested that the School should become more effective at leveraging internal research funding within the Faculty of Education.

Other opportunities were identified by the School districts. One district leader noted the unique geography of the Okanagan and its potential as an educational region, and thought it would be helpful if colleagues at UBC-O were to undertake this research challenge with them-- where has this been done and how might we work better together for children? Another spoke to the importance of Social-Emotional Learning and how it might be better implemented. Another to Indigenizing all teaching practices. SD 23 was very interested in having the scholar-practitioner story researched and told. Clearly, the positive relationships established through the B. Ed. Program, and the partnership grant has made the school districts very interested in the possibility of further research about their emergent challenges. The scholar-practitioner framework is well suited to this work.

There were internal opportunities as well. Junior faculty mentioned the value of thoughtful mentoring from the Senior Associate Dean. Finding ways to connect new faculty with established researchers in the School could benefit both. Considering the progress of the past 5 years, continuing to advance a collaborative and open research culture will raise all boats. Seeking ongoing funding for a part-time research service provider, like Dr. Lamb, would provide significant just-in-time expertise that would advance research competitiveness. Perhaps a distributed-model could be considered where ORS funding shares part of the cost of such an appointment.

Finally, given the preeminent priority of Reconciliation, Decolonization and Indigenization as stated at all levels of the University and in the school districts served by the School, advancing further research with the Syilx (Okanagan), with urban Indigenous people, and with the Metis will remain an ongoing opportunity.

Recommendations:

- Decolonize and Indigenize research and scholarship approaches, supporting professional service to these ends;
- Formalize a research support position for the Faculty, even if on a part-time basis;
- Seek research collaborations with the Centre for Teaching and Learning, perhaps with support from the UBC-O Eminence fund;
- Seek research assistant arrangements with other UBC-O faculties;
- Leverage the relationship with the Faculty of Education for:
 - Connections to faculty who share areas of expertise;
 - Internal funding;
 - Research support from the Faculty of Education Office of Research;
 - Possible Research Assistants (if work can be done via zoom, etc.)
 - Doctoral committee participation
- Prepare for Ed.D. related research opportunities;
- Create a research table with the Okanagan basin school districts for regional research;

- Advance research relationships with the Syilx (Okanagan), urban Indigenous people, and Metis to support their research purposes;
- Theorize and research the scholar-practitioner identity and its impacts for the School, its graduates, and its educational partners.

6. Leadership and Administration

The partnership between the OSE and the UBC Faculty of Education is unique in the Province and the leadership from both the Dean and the Director have been critical to the strength of this relationship. However, this partnership does create some added pressure for the Director who often stands in for the Dean on UBCO committees in addition to her other administrative responsibilities. A common sentiment shared across all stakeholder groups we met with was appreciation for the efforts of Margaret Latta on behalf of the School. She is highly regarded by School Division leaders and local Indigenous leaders, and is also recognized for her leadership as PI on the SSHRC partnership grant. In light of the competing demands on the Director's time, efforts to grow OSE programs, and current capacity issues, we suggest a careful look at the current leadership and committee structures to determine whether these are sustainable in their current form. In addition, there is currently one Indigenous faculty member who is junior, but leading on a lot of things. Given the commitments to Indigenous initiatives, truth and reconciliation the School is demonstrating, there is an urgent need for another Indigenous faculty member because it is too much for one person to be leading.

Throughout this report, we comment on and commend the efforts of faculty members to expand funding for their research programs. Because of this, they are increasingly turning to the research facilitator position to help them apply for grants. We see the need to increase this position beyond its current 10% and wonder about the potential to draw on resources /supports available to academic staff who are situated on the Vancouver campus. Similarly, graduate students at OSE who seek to take classes offered on the Vancouver campus encounter challenges with access - what some describe as 'firewalls'. These barriers between the two campuses also impede synergies and collaboration and while the autonomy of OSE is important this can still be maintained through programmatic oversight and appropriate administrative structures while still having mechanisms in place to facilitate ease of access, collaboration, and synergies.

Recommendations:

- Review the current leadership structure to determine whether the roles and responsibilities are meeting the current and future needs of the OSE and to ensure that capacity issues are addressed;
- Explore opportunities to break down barriers between the OSE and UBCV Faculty of Education; and
- Commit resources to increasing the number of Indigenous Faculty members and seek ways to distribute leadership in Indigenous initiatives and Indigenization across the OSE. Leadership should not fall to the sole Indigenous Faculty member alone.

7. Staff and Support Experiences

It was a pleasure for us to meet with the OSE staff. Their positive energy was infectious and it was immediately evident to us how significant they are to the operations and well-being of the School. They were generally happy with their workplace and enjoyed working with each other and with the faculty and students of the OSE. We heard comments like: “It’s a great team to work with;” “everyone’s contributions are appreciated by all levels;” and, “we are valued.” This positive working culture seemed to us to be due, in part, to the staff members themselves, their excellent proficiency and their attitudes. Other factors that contributed in a good way to their work included: the support they felt they had from the School’s leadership team and from all faculty; their involvement in many aspects of the School’s activities, including unit meetings; that their opinions were “really valued”; and that they felt encouraged to be involved in a variety of things. They described their work environment as a place where they can “grow” as professionals. It seemed to us the staff felt they were valued and integral contributors to the mission of the OSE, a mission worthy of their talents and energies.

Academic communities frequently struggle with various manifestations of hierarchy, where staff are treated as being lower echelons of the Academy. We were pleased to hear that this wasn’t the typical experience of the staff in the OSE. In their collective recollection, the hierarchy card had only been played in a few “harried” moments, and only by a few faculty members. The staff noted, and appreciated, the ways in which the Leadership team has made an issue of Respectful Environment policies and expectations in the University, ensuring that attendance for these sessions was mandatory. Albeit with limited experience of incidents of disrespect, the staff felt confident such issues would be dealt with in an effective manner, though they were curious how a resolution/outcome would be communicated to them given concerns of confidentiality.

The staff identified several areas of concern that they believe could be addressed and would make a significant difference to students and faculty. The registration of UBC-O students in UBC-V courses was first among them. The many hurdles of the course registration process act as a significant deterrent to students. There are an unnecessary number of forms with too many players involved, requiring a good deal of wasted staff and student time. The fact this problem has been identified for years and nothing has been done about it represents a significant loss of learning opportunities for students, reflects poorly on the School, and is a significant frustration for the staff.

Space was a second concern. Indeed, everyone we heard from expressed the lack of space as a problem. From the staff view, space for a general reception area, where students can be comfortably received, would improve student experience and general functioning within the School’s office block.

Clear delineation of staff roles was a third concern. The staff reported that at times they are not clear about what is part of their jobs and what is not. Consequently, it is tough to say “no” to requested work. They observed their range of responsibilities as being pretty wide and that they deal with this by being supportive of each other. From our point of view, the flexibility of the staff, their ability to engage a broad range of work at an excellent level, and their positive relations with each other and their leadership team were clearly serving the OSE well. As boundary related issues and losing a sense of control over one’s work happen easily in small teams that handle a lot of work, and given these experiences can have a long-term negative effect on staff well-being and morale, urging staff to communicate about these concerns and addressing them appropriately will be important going forward.

Finally, as noted in the Self-Study document, and by the staff, opportunities for staff career advancement within the School and the UBC-Okanagan are limited. Consequently, finding alternative ways to allow staff to continue to grow, including expanding professional development funding and opportunities, are very important to pursue and implement.

Looking ahead, the staff could foresee several possibilities that would benefit the School and challenges that could need addressing. Keeping a research support position on the team was foremost. The team noted the significant contribution that Dr. Lamb, in this role, has provided regarding grant writing, and the ways in which she has been able to address faculty vulnerabilities and learning in this area since she transferred from ORS and began working in the School. The staff noted how valuable it has been and would continue to be having someone who could project manage all of the important details and initiatives associated with advancing the research ambitions of the School, rather than doing this work off the side of multiple desks. The staff have a sense, given plans currently in motion, that the School is going to grow, particularly in the EAP and graduate program (EdD) areas, and thus more staff support will be necessary and consequently additional hiring. Finally, the team noted, with some concern, that the development and implementation of Workday Student was going to take a lot of resources and effort. They noted how challenging the implementation of the Workday IRP for Finance and HR has been, how much professional development was needed, and how it remains difficult and inefficient to use without extensive and repeated use. Looking ahead, planning, preparation, professional development, and involvement in its development will all be important considerations.

We considered the staff's observations and suggestions of significant merit and make the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

- Continue to involve the staff in the School's operations and decision making;
- Honour the staff's significant contributions to the operations and the positive culture of the School;
- Continue the commitment to uphold the respectful environment expectations of the University throughout the School;
- Improve the registration processes of UBC-O students in UBC-V courses, and visa-versa, with staff guidance;
- Review the space priorities of the School. Space utilization is a constant balancing of different priorities. Are there other yet untried ways to address unmet needs and functions, or to balance differently given priorities?
- Revisit staff role delineations and communication with staff to address the challenge of work that is/could be perceived as out of scope;
- Continue to seek means for staff to advance their careers and continue their professional growth in ways that matter to them, the School, and the University;
- Pursue the sustainable formalization of a research and grant funding support position in the School;
- Carefully consider staff guidance with regard to resourcing future School growth and the development and implementation of Workday IRP Student.

8. People, Environment, and Culture

One of the most enjoyable things to observe at the OSE was the high morale and camaraderie between members of the School at all levels. People enjoy working and studying here, and the effort that has very clearly been put into creating a welcoming, inclusive, egalitarian space shows in everything that we heard. Those we heard from genuinely like each other, they feel respected in their work, and they in turn work to support their colleagues and co-workers. This indicates caring leadership and caring employees who are committed to doing their best work. In addition to a generally positive atmosphere, there are specific programs that contribute to high morale. The B.A.R.K. program was mentioned by individuals at all levels of the School as something that is particularly positive. It particularly benefits students, who experience increased wellbeing and also get mentorship by participating. The collaborative efforts of leadership, staff, and faculty with respect to research have created highly successful channels for ensuring both funding success and community responsiveness. Those who spoke with us also mentioned that there is a generally positive environment across UBC Okanagan, and that they see great potential for building on existing programs. As all universities are, the OSE is working to recover its sense of community after the isolation of COVID-19, and is exploring unique approaches such as the 'Information Chow-Down' sessions where research is shared over lunch, as well as the exploration of land-based learning initiatives. The scholar-practitioner model, while less prevalent at the Master's level, is meaningful for faculty, students, staff, and community partners and informs how people approach their work and study.

The efforts of the administration show dedication to the OSE, and contribute to the high morale in the School. Dr. Latta and her team's effort to build a Scholar Practitioner identity for the School has paid off. The OSE has developed a unique identity based on this, and that also reflects local connections to Kelowna, the Okanagan, and Syilx traditional territory. The OSE is present on campus and is building cross-curricular connections within the School and with other units at UBC Okanagan. This is supported by strong leadership and a team of Deans and administrators that care about relational accountability and that are willing to consider innovative ideas for future development.

Tenure-Stream Faculty at the OSE are happy in their work and excited about future developments. They speak highly of the school and their co-workers. They are reaching beyond the OSE and UBC to do community-engaged work, and the School and university actively encourage both community and cross-curricular involvement. Programs such as the development of Research Clusters at UBCO contribute to funding success and encourage breaking down of departmental siloes. Faculty feel they are trusted to pursue their own research interests, and they are supported strategically and practically in the work they want to do, and they particularly appreciate having staff support to achieve research funding. They also appreciate the OSE's commitment to open access, and the ability to story their publications rather than having to depend on more conventional means of demonstrating success such as impact factors, which do not adequately show the real importance or success of work in a field like education. They note the value of having in-house journal publication and support from university libraries, as well as support for helping them refine their research for publication.

Similarly, adjunct faculty, lecturers, and instructors speak highly of the OSE. They note some of them work for the OSE in addition to other full-time jobs because of how much they enjoy the work they do. Those in this situation appreciate that the School takes their needs into account with respect to issues such as scheduling. They are fully a part of the the OSE team, are treated as equals by staff and other faculty, and are respected for their expertise and experience in K-12 education and administration. They are also included in faculty projects such

as the current SSHRC Partnership Grant. They take pride in watching their students grow and in the intellectual growth they have experienced themselves through this work. The efforts of the OSE to value and include all members were particularly evident with this group.

The competence and commitment of staff was impressive. They are experts in their own right and as such contribute strongly to the workings of the OSE. Staff note that there is little sense of hierarchy. They feel valued and included, with freedom to take on different projects that correspond to their interest and expertise. They describe high morale with a strong sense of support between staff and across the OSE, and see opportunities for growth and career development.

Students are well cared for and experience a personalized approach to support because of the small, intimate nature of the OSE, because of the work of field advisors, and because of a general commitment to a high duty of care for students. Similarly, employees who work within the EFP prioritize student care and wellness over everything else. Students discussed the value of the sense of community in the faculty, and felt that this encouraged them to do their best work and to focus on their own growth. Alumni discussed feeling valued as students, and appreciated that faculty and staff valued students' perspectives and were willing to engage in difficult conversations and change.

There are, of course, challenges for the OSE as well with respect to people, environment, and culture. The School is relatively new, and as one interviewee phrased it, is in its 'teenage years'. This contributes to sometimes awkward growing pains, but also tremendous potential for moving into the future. As we all are, the OSE is finding its way back to collaborative community as we begin to move forward from the COVID-19 pandemic. Sharing research through the Information Chow-Down sessions has helped, but some employees are still reluctant to return to campus. There remains a campus-wide struggle with space that is of particular concern to the OSE, and this impacts morale because staff, faculty, and students are frustrated by constantly having to use learning spaces that are not ideal for an education program, or that are not meant to be used as classrooms at all. There is strain, noted by administration, faculty, and staff, as the OSE is pulled between the UBC Faculty of Education in Vancouver and UBC Okanagan; there need to be clearer priorities and pathways set up to alleviate this.

The administration has some concerns as the OSE continues to grow. The budget is not sufficient for the needs of the School with respect to much needed space development and hiring. The workloads of the Dean of the Faculty of Education and the Director of the OSE are demanding and likely not sustainable. Dr. Hare currently oversees what are essentially two quite distinct Faculties of Education, and Dr. Latta fulfills the role of Associate Dean, unit head, and director, meeting with leaders at both UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan. The strain placed on these positions, particularly the role of Director, was noted by the faculty who also want more support for their colleagues in leadership. Action is needed to alleviate the demands on both Dr. Latta and Dr. Hare.

Faculty have discussed the challenges of engaging graduate students, which limits the depth of research they want to do, and while good efforts are underway to encourage collaboration with other units at the university, they would appreciate even more support here. This includes a desire for events to help them engage collegially with faculty across the university. For adjuncts, who do not work in the building fulltime and are often not present during the day, a better understanding of the roles of staff within the organization would help them know who to seek out for different supports in their work.

Challenges identified by staff reflect negative attitudes of a limited number of staff, as well as clarification of roles and some tasks. As mentioned previously, while most faculty treat staff members well, there are a few who are disrespectful and who do not acknowledge the education or expertise of staff. Although complaints procedures and workplace workshops are available, they have little impact on these individuals' behaviour. Staff expressed frustration with certain processes, such as overly bureaucratic ways of registering students in courses between the OSE and UBC Vancouver. They also cite challenges with Workday, a finance and Human Resources platform. Many staff members are required to use it, but usually only for a short time each; this is time consuming because of the complexity of the program and a lack of training on it. In general, staff recommend a clarification of roles and job descriptions to address overlaps and gaps. This is so that staff and faculty know who to go to for specific supports, and so that important projects are not completed off the sides of their desks. They recommend creating dedicated positions for certain tasks, such as a manager for the Ed.D. program, a dedicated staff expert in research and granting. They also note a negative impact due to space limitations, and are frustrated by limited spaces for those who tend to work on-site while allocated spaces for those who tend not to come to campus sit empty.

Students noted a few challenges with respect to environment and culture. They felt that some professors could do better encouraging students to explore their own interests rather than having the same expectations for all. A significant concern shared by graduate students involved a lack of sense of community amongst graduate students, and a lack of support for international students. At all levels, Indigenous students and students of colour are underrepresented and under-supported. Students also requested increased mental health supports.

Recommendations:

General:

- Continue focusing so well on camaraderie and a positive working environment, as this is a considerable strength of the OSE;
- Continue and expand the B.A.R.K. program for the wellbeing of students and employees;
- Keep building on the Scholar Practitioner model as a tool for building corporate identity and informing approaches to scholarship, and integrate it more strongly into the Master's program, as well as the future Ed.D.;
- Moving forward from the isolation of COVID-19, continue research-sharing opportunities and also consider hosting social activities for faculty and staff to rebuild community;
- Find clearer practical pathways to balance the goals and needs of both the UBC Faculty of Education and UBC Okanagan and the OSE's responsibilities to each, particularly with respect to budgets, strategic planning, and student registration in courses; and
- Address the ongoing space concerns, which impact negatively on morale; and
- Develop a dedicated, purpose-designed space for outdoor learning that reflects the local city, geography, and Syilx Nation.

Administration:

- Expand the budget for the OSE and also reconsider current funding distributions for faculty, staff, and projects to make spending more efficient; and
- Create Associate Directorships at the OSE to ensure the workloads of the Dean and Director are sustainable, particularly in light of future goals for expansion and new developments.

Faculty:

- Clarify the roles of staff for adjunct professors, lecturers, and instructors who are not employed full-time at the OSE;
- Increase pathways for collaboration across units at UBC, particularly within UBC Okanagan, including opportunities for social engagement and mutual teaching development as well as research;
- Keep encouraging faculty to think creatively about research and follow their interests with respect to research;
- Create a full-time staff position in research support, with increased funding for the OSE to do this;
- Ensure ongoing commitment to open access, including allowing faculty to describe their research in personalized way that do not depend on conventional networks. Mobilize knowledge around this to encourage other Faculties of Education to do the same.
- Actively recruit graduate students who can support current and future research goals; and
- Balance that recruitment by still maintaining a smaller size as a unit, so as not to sacrifice agility, camaraderie, and collaboration within the OSE.

Staff:

- Create a dedicated role to support faculty in research and funding, rather than having it be a small part of an existing role;
- Create a Project Manager role to oversee smaller or one-time projects, rather than adding these to the existing roles of staff;
- Provide increased training on Workday, or have a dedicated person to do all tasks related to Workday as a means of saving time and reducing duplication of effort;
- Clarify job descriptions and roles to staff, and better inform faculty and students about who oversees specific tasks;
- Consider, where possible, allocating space to employees who are regularly on-site rather than those who tend to work remotely; and
- Develop clearer procedures and more transparent communication regarding workplace maltreatment.

Students:

- Provide professional development for instructors on Universal Design for Learning at a post-secondary level, inquiry-based learning, and other strategies to allow students to identify their strengths and interests and make space for individual challenges;
- Increase supports for graduate students, especially international students, and do more to create community and support events for graduate students;
- Engage in targeted hiring of Indigenous professors, professors of colour, and professors from other marginalized communities. Increase recruitment of students from these communities and put more supports in place to ensure their retention and success; and
- Increase mental health supports for students, and also increase supports for faculty and staff mental wellness so they are best able to support students who are struggling.

9. Infrastructure and Resources

As has already been noted in our report, space challenges are amongst the most significant resource issues facing the OSE, particularly as the school seeks opportunities for growth in graduate programs and research. We recognize this is an issue facing the institution as a whole, and that there are plans for additional buildings in the future. We wondered whether there might be some shorter term solutions through partnerships with school divisions who may have space available for teaching and learning, including outdoor / land based classrooms. Further, given the shortage of office space, and that some offices continue to be occupied only very occasionally, the OSE leadership team may want to consider the potential of 'hotelling' or shared space amongst faculty members who are choosing to balance working from home with being on campus. This may also allow for the creation of a 'General' OSE office that is open and accessible to students.

In addition to space, institutional processes, such as the payment for Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and the 'workday' system present some challenges. While the UBCO Guide for Elder honoraria was identified as being helpful, how it translates into practice is an issue that staff continue to navigate the best that they can. Good administrative support for the large SSHRC partnership grant was noted, especially as the complexities of the project seem to be well understood by the School and the University. Similarly, the BARK program appears to receive strong support and continues to be successful as a result. As the OSE continues to grow its funded research, consideration for expanding research facilitation support from the current 10% will go far in ensuring that faculty members are supported and that staff are not working beyond their capacity. Exploring the extent to which UBC Faculty of Education support may be available to OSE researchers may result in additional opportunities for research support. As programs and research continue to grow, increasing the number of staff positions should be carefully considered.

The Budget was identified as a continued area of concern for the OSE and efforts to mitigate budget pressures through the creation of revenue generating programs is front of mind. The English Foundation Program, the Ed.D, and other post-baccalaureate learning opportunities will assist the School in addressing some of their financial concerns. Given the relatively small size of the OSE faculty complement, the number of academic staff who take on leadership roles, and the increasing demands on their time as they take on more, was noted as a challenge and we wonder whether a new leadership model may need to be considered, especially as the Director stands in for the UBC Dean on several UBCO committees.

Recommendations:

- Consider opportunities for shared spaces and other innovative approaches to alleviate some of the pressures created by limited space;
- Explore the possibility of creating a General Office for the OSE to better serve students as they seek information and access to various support services;
- Increase staff support for research by shifting the research facilitation position to fulltime.
- Consider the extent to which the UBCV Faculty of Education can provide research support to the OSE; and
- Review the current leadership structure for the OSE to determine whether it is meeting the current and future needs of the School.

Conclusion

The external review committee was impressed by the OSE. We found the OSE to be a positive, vibrant community of students, staff, faculty, and external stakeholders, all of whom feel supported, express pride in their shared achievements, and are optimistic about the future. We share the School's optimism about its future. The OSE is on its way toward its aspirational vision to become a “thriving scholar-practitioner community, investing in and envisioning the future of education together.”

The strengths of the OSE, its internal culture, its strong, collaborative relationships with external stakeholders, its scholar-practitioner model, its commitment to advance the Indigenization of its programs guided by the Syilx (Okanagan), its staff, its faculty, and its leadership provide a foundation for engaging the areas of challenge, opportunity and growth we identify in our recommendations throughout this report.

We urge the institutions, UBC-Okanagan and the Faculty of Education, to consider these recommendations and to provide the necessary resources to support the School as it critically reflects on them and determines its way forward. We see in the School the ambition and the potential to further its contributions to both institutions, and to significantly contribute to the field of education, locally and globally, programmatically, in research, in service, and through its graduates.

To the students, staff, and faculty of OSE, it was an honour for us to see the world of education through your minds and hearts. We hope that our recommendations, shaped by your self-study, your strategic plan, your words, and our experiences among you, provide helpful insight and direction. From our view there is important work to be done, and clearly you are up to achieving the expectations of significance and excellence you have set for yourselves.

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