

## 'York University: Globally Minded and Globally Engaged'

### Towards an integrated strategy and framework for internationalization and global engagement

#### Issue Paper for Community Consultation

##### Executive Summary

Internationalization is proclaimed as “one of the most significant drivers facing the modern university” (Taylor, 2004, p. 168) and as “one of the major forces impacting and shaping higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” worldwide (Knight, 2008, p. ix). Higher education institutions around the world and in Canada are rapidly adopting strategic approaches towards internationalization to advance their core mission; reflect their institutional values; and enhance their research and scholarship, teaching and learning, and service and capacity building.

York University has achieved major strides in internationalizing its campus, teaching and learning experience, research and scholarship and community service. York's global reach and engagement through its faculty, staff, students, alumni and partners is wide-ranging. Building on this rich tradition of global and local connectivity, we are now in a position of strength and opportunity to consider the next phase of internationalization. Hence, the President's Council on Internationalization and Global Engagement has been tasked with leading this initiative. Guided by York's principles of social justice, diversity, inclusion and sustainability, the Council identified the following four emerging themes and value propositions of internationalization based on their understanding of York's achievements and strengths, challenges and risks, and untapped opportunities: 1) global outlook and fluency; 2) international student experience; 3) global nature of research, grand challenges and talent development; and 4) global reach and profile.

This “Issue Paper” is intended to initiate a campus-wide consultation process with the goal of developing an integrated institutional strategic plan that lays out York University's vision for building on our current global engagement and initiatives, sets goals for further internationalization, and ensures York's place as a locally and globally engaged university. The next phase will invite the University community to participate in a process of defining and determining our core priorities. This process will provide a framework for continued engagement and success in the local and global arenas.

## **‘York University: Globally Minded and Globally Engaged’**

### **Towards an integrated strategy and framework for internationalization and global engagement** **Issue Paper for Community Consultation**

#### **Introduction**

The President’s Council on Internationalization and Global Engagement (the Council) is embarking on the next phase in the development of an integrated institutional international strategic plan (the Plan). Over the next five months, the Council will engage in a series of community consultations to develop the Plan.

President Lenton identified ethical, inclusive internationalization and global engagement among her top priorities and convened the Council in May 2019. The Council is comprised of members from all eleven Faculties and the related central administrative units (Research, Students, Advancement, YUELI, York International). The Plan is intended to lay out York University’s vision for building on our current global engagement and initiatives, set goals for further internationalization, and ensure York’s place as a locally and globally engaged university. It is meant to be comprehensive, inclusive of academic initiatives together with international and intercultural learning experiences (at home and abroad), sustainable research, education, capacity building collaborations and partnerships leading to bi-directional learning, knowledge transfer and reverse innovation, enhancing the experience of international students, global reach and profile, and related activities and innovation magnifying our impact many times over. The Plan will also identify areas of priority to support the advancement of the strategy.

This issue paper is the result of the committee’s deliberations and is developed to seek input from the York Community. By engaging in this process, and reflecting on our values and existing activities, the York University Community has an opportunity to build on its strengths, create a distinct vision, and expand opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to contribute towards York’s local and global impact.

#### **York University Context**

York University’s vision as a community-engaged university committed to the social, economic, environmental, cultural and well-being of society reflects our understanding of the interconnection of global and local issues. York’s global reach and engagement of faculty, staff, students, alumni and partners is wide ranging. Our faculty and scholars are connected through their formal and informal academic activities including organized research units, departments and interdisciplinary research centres specializing in regions, diaspora communities, languages as well as partnerships with over 300 institutions in more than 60 countries around the world. Our students can take part in local and global experiential programs and study abroad at over 150 institutions. York University is home to approximately 8,500 international students from over 178 countries. These students bring remarkable traditions, histories and perspectives to our community, and to the Greater Toronto Area. The University is situated in one of the world’s most diverse and innovative ecosystems in the Greater Toronto Region, with a global presence through the Schulich School of Business and the Faculty of Environmental Studies respectively in Hyderabad, India and Las Nubes, Costa Rica.

As one of Canada’s leading universities, York University promotes access, excellence, and incorporates principles of social justice, diversity, inclusion, and sustainability in all its endeavours. York University draws on a rich tradition of global and local connectivity to foster creativity, innovation and global outlook, and an open-minded and community-engaged approach to teaching, scholarship and research. This has largely been organic, led by departments, Faculties, individual faculty members, and students, and has resulted in benefits to the various communities. We

also recognize the Faculties at the University are at varying stages in their internationalization and global engagement efforts.

Today, we are in a position of strength and opportunity to consider the next phase of internationalization. There is a desire to provide greater support for student mobility and experiential learning as well as globally-oriented learning at home to support the development of a global outlook and fluency of our students. Our rising international student population makes it imperative to enhance their experience on campus. Expanding research engagement is key to contributing to global challenges and to having an increased impact on the global stage. There exist opportunities to leverage faculty members' research connections to enhance student learning and research opportunities abroad, to strengthen the quality of the academic partnerships, to create research networks and clusters of excellence, to diversify the recruitment base, and to engage in meaningful local and global opportunities by leveraging our location, diversity of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the local and diaspora communities.

## Global Context

In an increasingly interconnected and complex world, infusing global perspectives into decision-making and collaboration across borders are vital to humanity. As this need grows, global challenges such as climate change, access to healthcare for all, the impact of technology, trade and economic integration, and the alarming rise in trends such as exclusionary nationalism, xenophobia, polarization and inequality underscore the need for universities to contribute to finding novel solutions now more than ever. Many of the challenges are now part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and need urgent attention. It is therefore critical that universities continue to commit to the ways in which internationalization and global engagement can serve to advance their core mission of teaching, research, and service for the public good. Universities have the responsibility to lead and contribute to addressing complex socio-economic, environmental, humanitarian and political problems that are global in nature, even when their effects manifest locally.

## Canada and Ontario Context

In 2013, the Government of Canada formalized international education as a priority through the development of a pan-Canadian strategy to grow the number of international students studying in Canada. Much of the emphasis has been in the development of Brand Canada through the 'EduCanada' campaign for recruitment of international students and acquisition of skilled labour. This combined with institutional efforts and recent geopolitical events has resulted in double digit growth (16.25%) of international students studying in Canada in 2018, and an overall increase of 73% since 2014 (ICEF, 2019). However, such developments overlap in Ontario with provincial rules and internal university funding priorities in such a way that Ontario and/or York funding for graduate students to come to York is severely limited and, in some disciplines, virtually non-existent. One can reasonably assume that many top students from outside Canada will choose Canadian universities that are able to provide meaningful financial assistance. Given the centrality of masters and doctoral work to any expansive intellectual mission of leading universities, this represents a major barrier to York's present capacity to globalize.

Increasingly, the federal government is linking immigration and international trade, and international students serve as the pipeline for the next generation of immigrants to fulfill labour market needs. This recent policy change expands the role of universities beyond providing international education and experiences.

In recent months, the federal government is prioritizing the development of global outlook and fluency for Canadian students and has set aside resources to launch an outbound mobility program. Such focus on outward mobility does not have a concomitant focus on inward mobility of graduate students, other than an encouragement to attract self-supporting students from outside Canada. Further, tri-councils and other strategic research funding initiatives have been developed that require international collaborators as many of the issues facing the world today require collaboration and cooperation beyond national borders.

In Ontario, shrinking government resources over the last twenty years are leading the higher education sector to develop alternatives to maintain the high quality of education, research and service endeavours of the institutions. It is uncertain where the current provincial government stands with respect to Ontario's international education strategy.

## Higher Education Context

Most higher education systems, particularly those in the industrialized world, are rapidly internationalizing and Canada is no exception. Once mostly organic, it is now institutionally supported and championed as institutions recognize it as a key way to advance their core mission. Increasingly, internationalization is an institutional imperative and is moving beyond student mobility and academic exchanges. Today, internationalization of higher education touches on all aspects of the university's mission from scholarship and research to teaching and learning, to service and capacity building, crossing a range of inter-related and inter-connected activities, dimensions and portfolios. Universities are in various stages of exploring how best to integrate and coordinate their internationalization and global engagement efforts to align and integrate policies, programs and initiatives to position themselves as 'globally minded and globally engaged' while recognizing the approach must be driven at the local/university level in the sense both of 'bottom up' and 'top steered and supported'.

## Definitions

The most commonly used definition of Internationalization was developed by Jane Knight, an Adjunct Professor at the Comparative International Development Education Centre (CIDECE) of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. According to Knight, internationalization "at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2015).

She further elaborates on the dimensions: "International, intercultural, and global dimension are three terms that are intentionally used as a triad. International is used to describe the relationship between and among nations, cultures or countries. Today, internationalization is also about relating to the diversity of cultures that exist within countries, communities, and institutions, and so intercultural is used to address this dimension. Finally, global, a controversial and value-laden term these days, is included to provide the sense of worldwide scope. These three terms complement each other and together depict the richness in the breadth and depth of internationalization" (Knight, 2015).

"The concept of integration is specifically used to denote the process of infusing or embedding the international and intercultural dimension into policies and programs to ensure that the international dimension remains central, not marginal, and is sustainable. The concepts of purpose, function, and delivery have been carefully chosen and are meant to be used together. Purpose refers to the overall role and objectives that higher education has for a country or the mission of an institution. Function refers to the primary elements or tasks that characterize a national postsecondary system or individual institution. Usually these include teaching, research, and service to society" (Knight, 2015).

In 2015, the European Parliamentary Study on Internationalization of Higher Education revised Jane Knight's commonly accepted 2004 definition of internationalization and defined it as "the *intentional* process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, *in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society*" (de Wit, Hunter & Egron-Polak, 2015, p. 29).

More recently, transnational has arisen as an adjunct to international and global: it helps focus on relations "beyond" the state – relations that may interact with the international as interstate but that often bypass or transcend the interstate -- while also not being limited to relations that are "between or among" state-associated nation, country, culture – in that civil society, corporate, relations are also central.

The Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE) of the American Council on Education (ACE) defines comprehensive internationalization as “a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected institutions” (American Council on Education, 2019).

## Challenges, Risks and Opportunities

Forces of internationalization, transnationalization, and globalization encourage competition and open channels for cooperation and collaboration while also presenting challenges, risks and opportunities. Among them are competition for talent and diversity of that talent, the impact of rankings and reputation, geopolitical instability, rapid advances in transformative technology, the need to prepare graduates for a rapidly shifting global knowledge economy and new world of work while maintaining the core university mission, meeting the needs and leveraging the diverse talents of international students, and the increasingly global nature of research projects and networks.

Internationalization can also be viewed in commercial terms as a revenue generation activity focused solely on international recruitment of self-funding students, and the creation of academic programs designed to attract such international students. Further, internationalization efforts can call into question academic quality, academic freedom, sustainability of partnerships (e.g. when understood as a net contributor to carbon footprint), academic tourism, while derailing focus from the core mission and domestic priorities and demands of a university.

Current geopolitical trends are, on the one hand resulting in increased opportunities for internationalization and global engagement for Canada, including York, while, on the other hand, they pose risks and challenges. Considering pressing global challenges such as regional instability, climate change, and growing inequality, the university and Canada need a time-sensitive approach to foster sustainable and long-term engagement around the world. Canada and York must act both quickly and thoughtfully by asking new questions about how we engage with the world, provide all our students with an understanding of Canada in the world through York’s values and tackle pressing global challenges. York University’s distinctive strengths compel us to take a leadership role in convening dialogue, producing knowledge and preparing our students to thrive and contribute their talents to address planetary challenges from climate change to refugees and to the impact of disruptive technology. This must be done through the lens of our founding values, principles and commitment to social justice and the public good.

## Emerging Themes & the Value Proposition of Internationalization

**Global Outlook and Fluency:** Our students will be working in diverse environments where success is contingent on navigating the social nuances and forces that shape politics, culture, and business. Experiential learning through international or intercultural exposure inside and outside the classroom equips students with skills to navigate their way in complex, cross-cultural environments, develop a greater understanding of the people, history and cultures, and contribute to their future success.

To prepare them for this future, international experiences can, in both local and global settings, be embedded throughout a student’s studies from first year to capstone through curricular and co-curricular opportunities. These opportunities can include infusing global and Canadian perspectives and dimensions into teaching, research, intercultural and cross-cultural offerings on campus, expanding outbound mobility (exchanges, short-term faculty led, internships, joint capstone initiatives) as well as utilizing technology-enabled virtual classrooms, such as the Globally Networked Learning (GNL) platform developed by colleagues at the University. In this context, we should also explore internationalization and indigenization in an integrated way and incorporate the local and the global constructs and engage a new generation of students in the truth and reconciliation dialogue.

The academic setting is integral for the intentional intermingling of diverse perspectives and experiences. Here students are exposed to, engage with, and can be active participants in global communities. Curricular offerings to support the increased mobility of students could include language courses, studying at our bilingual Glendon campus, and harnessing inter- and multi-disciplinary perspectives to create and discover simple to complex solutions

to address local and global issues. For example, access to clean drinking water is both a local and global concern that is best addressed by bringing together multiple disciplines (Environmental Studies, Public Policy, Business and Engineering, Development Studies among others). Colleges can be a conduit for our diverse student population to engage critically in discourse and debate, and delve deeper into understanding the world. These approaches contribute towards student learning while challenging belief systems. Opportunities to leverage the diversity of both our domestic and international students as well as the diversity of the Toronto region can be defining characteristics of the York student academic experience.

Fewer than 10% of students at York engage in an institutionally recognized international mobility experience,<sup>1</sup> a number that is lower than the national average and that of our global peers. Some institutions in the UK, Australia, and Singapore have attained 30-50% and their countries have set ambitious targets for the future. Similarly, Canadian institutions (UBC/UofT/Waterloo – currently at 23-25%) and the federal government are setting an ambitious agenda for outbound mobility that include an array of models (short term, faculty led, internships, academic exchanges, entrepreneurship and placements). This will require addressing barriers to their participation, such as financial pressures for many students, limitations posed by academic programs such as credit transfers, underappreciation of the value of global experience on the part of the student, their families and employers and a host of other obstacles as well as including new ways of measuring intercultural experiences. In this context, how do we enable an expanded set of global learning opportunities while reducing carbon footprint and enhancing the experience?

Many of our students come to York with an international outlook including knowledge of another language, or some global experience, and the University should take better advantage of this strength to enhance our community. For example, it may well be that the paradox of York having comparatively low international mobility percentages despite the extensive diversity of the York student body will turn out to be explained in part by the fact that many students may be highly mobile as a consequence of family and cultural background – and thus not see the need for, or have the extra time for, international travel as part of York's academic programming. Are there ways for York to create synergies that would link academic experience with international travel that such students already engage in? York could explore how to formally recognize these strengths and assist students to articulate the skills they have gained through these global experiences to support their professional aspirations, whether it be further studies or employability.

***International Student Experience:*** International students account for over fifteen percent of overall enrolment at the University. Through the Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA 2), York established an institutional international undergraduate enrolment target of twenty percent of total undergraduate enrolment, but the University (like many others in Canada, the US, Australia and the UK) has become reliant on a few countries for international students and most of these students are attracted to a small number of programs. Over the last two years, priority has been given towards expanding recruitment with regional recruiters hired to achieve York's growth and diversification strategy. In addition to regional recruiters, regions and countries need to be supported by a coordinated strategy, including robust scholarships, a focused effort to improve the experience of international students and enhance diversity in the classroom and create spaces for intercultural learning.

In 2018-19, international students made up 16% (8,300) of the total undergraduate population which represents a growth of 63% or approximately 2800 more students from 2014-15. At other Canadian institutions, the University of Toronto leads Canada with 29% (16,000), the University of Waterloo at 21%, and Simon Fraser University at 20% (6000). Programs and services and staffing have not kept pace with this growth. As planned growth continues, additional resources and planning are required to support international students and to integrate them into the fabric of university life, increase intentional dialogue between our domestic and international students and support their successful integration into the labour market, further study or return home. At the same time, national governments in other countries, including the UK, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, China, UAE, Singapore and Malaysia are

<sup>1</sup> York International mobility data from 2017-2018 academic year.

investing at the national government level to become international student hubs through the incentives of significant scholarships. Within Canada, leading institutions are competing for international students and are making significant investments to strengthen their institutional infrastructure, scholarships, and regional presence. At the undergraduate level, what additional academic supports should be in place for international students, and faculty to support the international student transition and success at the University (Scholarships & Bursaries, Orientation, English language and writing skills, inclusive classroom, learning styles, academic integrity, employment & career preparation)?

***Global Nature of Research, Grand Challenges & Talent Development:*** International collaborations are on the rise. They are driven by the geographic spread of excellence and resources, global economic competition, and research complexity, which facilitates the sharing of data, resources, and access to graduate students, while providing access to diverse populations and given entrée to complementary expertise, skills, facilities, capacity building, knowledge sharing and 'brain chain', funding from governments, industry and non-traditional sources. There is also a growing shift from the "Atlantic axis" to Asia and other parts of the world due to the rise of emerging scientific powerhouses in these regions (Suresh, 2012). All of which, have the potential to accelerate and advance discoveries and solutions to complex and borderless challenges. While individual faculty members have a multitude of collaborations around the world for research, scholarship and education, institutions are developing a more targeted approach to partnership formation.

Attracting top graduate students is crucial to the university's success and attracting talented graduate students has a bearing on research productivity and talent development and the needs vary by Faculty. Over the last decade, there is a significant increase in cost to conduct research and field work, and to recruit international graduate students. In 2018-19, international graduate students made up 18% or approximately 1079 of total graduate students studying at York, and across Canada, Waterloo is at 40% (2,400), Simon Fraser University at 30% (1338) and the University of Toronto at 20% (3118)). Currently, there is a significant underfunding of international graduate students by the provincial government which has led to parochialization of graduate programs. We need to urgently address York's capacity to attract international graduate students, invest resources and expand the support systems given graduate programs are the most dependent on providing generous bursaries and scholarships in order to attract the best graduate students and, from amongst them, develop the next generation of academic leaders.

Faculty recruitment also faces an intensified global competition with academics having more options for global mobility and circulation among many institutions. Countries in the Middle East, China, India, Singapore and other leading destinations are investing in substantive recruitment packages to lure global talent in their quest for building world class institutions. Canada made a similar effort through the Canada 150 Research Chairs to attract leading scientists and researchers from abroad with some success. Attracting and retaining top talent will continue to be a challenge and York will have to continue to advocate for incentives from the federal and provincial government and work closely with other institutions and trade associations to ensure York as a leading destination for faculty and graduate students.

The need for global cooperation to solve borderless challenges, participate in the increasingly global nature of research, contribute to knowledge circulation and capacity building, mitigate against shrinking government resources for research and education are all factors leading universities to invest in global partnerships and networks. The University needs to broaden and deepen its network to establish ties with emerging and established academic institutions, funding agencies, industry, other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and global alumni networks and to deepen relationships with current strategic partners to remain at the forefront of knowledge creation and translation. York cannot be everywhere in the world and will have to determine where the university should focus its efforts (thematic areas, geographic region, capacity building), establish strategic partnerships and how it should prioritize and select its institutional partners.

**Global Reach and Profile:** International rankings play a critical signalling function to inform global profile. Consistent performance on high visibility rankings is perceived to be an indicator of quality and excellence, informing choices about partnerships and study destinations. Institutions across the world are striving to improve their global profile through and beyond rankings. Based on demonstrated contributions to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), York University has recently ranked 26<sup>th</sup> in the world in the inaugural Impact and Innovation ranking by Times Higher Education (THE). Some of our disciplines continue to be recognized in the Top 100. However, our overall ranking in the mainstream university league tables (THE, QS) is sliding and now remains outside the Top 300 and Top 500 respectively.

Given the global competition, and the University's focus on quality and excellence, it is prudent for us to focus on improving York's global profile to broaden the understanding of our value and excellence among our global peers, prospective students and parents, collaborators and alumni. York University should assess its rankings, its challenges as well as its performance in the various rankings to understand the factors impacting our reputation. By doing so, it can set out to develop a plan to enhance the understanding of our strengths, reputation and global reach. In addition, through regular engagement and communication, we can build our global network of alumni and diaspora communities to support and advance our brand and profile internationally, and instill a sense of community and school pride in our alumni abroad.

### **Beyond Borders: Aspirations Towards 2030**

In this complex global context with increased competition among institutions for resources, talent and students, York must move forward with an integrated, collaborative and coordinated plan, building on the current successes to advance the University's aspirations through international cooperation. Risks are inherent and the University must be vigilant and continue to adhere to and promote the values of academic freedom, genuine reciprocity & mutuality, quality and access. It must address challenges concerning academic integrity and freedom, quality assurance, institutional autonomy, ethics, brain drain and exchange, developing sustainable partnerships, and improving international students' experience. It must seek ways to address global forces and changes that are creating polarization and growing inequality, and to engage productively in regions and countries with diverging value systems.

Internationalization can be a strategy through which to address some of the world's most pressing challenges and its most promising opportunities. York University's distinctive contributions could include, for example, major initiatives around the UN SDGs such as climate change, the UN SDGs, refugee education, societal impact of disruptive and transformative technology, sustainable business practices, and indigenization and decolonization among others.

The integration of institutional-level and individual-level goals is vital to pursue effective global engagement. This issue paper and set of questions have been developed based on input from the Council, an environmental scan and review of current thinking and practices on internationalization at other leading institutions, a non-exhaustive inventory of York's current international engagement and activities, and an understanding of strengths, weaknesses and future opportunities. The input of faculty, students, staff, alumni, governors and friends will be critical to shaping the next phase of York's development as a globally minded and globally engaged community of learning and knowledge creation.

As a next step, the University community is invited to participate in a process of defining and determining our core priorities around the questions asked below. This process will provide a framework for continued engagement and success in the local and global arenas. From our geographic, demographic and academic context, our institutional goals around internationalization should guide our priorities in elevating York's student academic experience in global and international engagement, our global research impact and contributions to societal well-being.

## Resources

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