



January 11, 2023

VPR Report to Senate #706 - January 18, 2023

Colleagues, welcome to 2023! I hope your holiday season was restful and joyous. With a fair bit of holiday time falling between the last Senate meeting and the current one, we have an opportunity to review some events and developments in the research enterprise from the last weeks of 2022.

1. Brock LINC launches Navigate program

Brock and Niagara entrepreneurs have just completed sign-up on January 11 for the inaugural [Navigate program](#) offered through the Brock LINC. Conceived and implemented by the LINC team, with Cassie Conte taking the lead, Navigate is an intensive 11-week program through which participants develop a business idea through intensive client and customer feedback. The program is aimed preferentially but not exclusively at Brock students, graduate or undergraduate, with opportunities also for Brock alumni and Niagara community members to participate. I encourage colleagues to read up on the Navigate program, and I look forward to sharing news on how it has gone in the future.

2. OCUR COVID-19 Recovery EDI Working Group event

On November 28, the Associate Vice-President, Research and the EDI in Research Advisor joined a faculty colleague for a virtual symposium hosted by the OCUR COVID-19 Recovery EDI Working Group. President Rigg was a founding member of this working group prior to joining Brock, and participated in the session in that capacity also.

Brock's EDI in Research Advisor Syna Thakur reports:

Panelists discussed barriers in research and EDI best practices, and attendees were invited to contribute recommendations for the report, "Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Implications of COVID-19 on University Research". Panelists explored how the compounded impacts of the pandemic continue to limit the productivity of researchers from equity-deserving groups. For example, isolation, on-site restrictions, gendered divisions of labour at home, committee membership, and support provided to graduate students and postdocs limit available time for research.

Best practices discussed during the symposium relate to funding, cultural transformation, and training and career engagement.

- Panelists called for operationalization of pandemic impacts in external funding applications. This included staggered deadlines, mindful assessments, and flexible uses of funding to address barriers, such as caregiving needs. Similarly, attendees recommended building stronger EDI requirements into internal funding opportunities.
- Panelists provided examples of cultural transformation, stressing the need for stronger attention to Indigenization and decolonization. For example, panelists discussed newly

created Indigenous research support teams and Indigenous ethics board at multiple universities. Panelists also called for further consultations with Indigenous and Black community members to understand barriers to research. As a next step at Brock resulting from panelist discussion of challenges with cluster hires, the AVPR and EDI in Research Advisor will explore how the EDI in Research position can be used to support recruitment and retention of cluster hires.

- Panelists called for EDI toolkits, modules, structural support, and pathways to higher positions within the university for employees who do EDI-related work or who belong to equity-deserving groups. As a next step, the EDI in Research Advisor has started consulting with counterparts at other universities to understand needs and interest in an EDI in research network. The AVPR has suggested that OCUR might facilitate a province-wide network.

My thanks to Syna Thakur and all Brock participants in this event for facilitating an important knowledge exchange around this set of issues.

3. Holiday Market Creativity and Entrepreneurship event

On November 30 and December 1, the LINC also hosted its first [Holiday Market](#). I attended it, and was really impressed by the beautiful and high quality items available, and the entrepreneurship that is woven into the Brock community in so many ways.

This initiative was a natural fit with the LINC's mandate to support both creative activity and entrepreneurial culture at Brock. It also responded to the perception that uptake of some entrepreneurship opportunities skews towards men, whereas market-type opportunities appeal to women as well. The Holiday Market featured a strong majority of women-led businesses.

The event saw 38 vendor applications, of which 26 were accepted, with 21 confirmed and 18 participating after a few cancellations. Of these participants, 12 were Brock student creators/businesses, 4 were staff member businesses, and 2 were faculty member businesses.

Participating businesses included clothing, accessories, candles, silk screen items, stationary, books, pottery, knitted items, jewelry, and art. Food and beverage vendors were not accepted, in order to comply with the University's food and beverage policy. Total revenue for these participants is estimated between \$8500 and \$9000 over two days. Survey feedback from vendors was overwhelmingly positive, with themes of high sales, confidence boosting, and generally a positive market experience.

Congratulations to Brock LINC organizers and the Brock community entrepreneurs on a very successful event.

T. Kenyon, Vice-President, Research