

Introduction:

Following the announcement of cancellation of GradEx 105 on March 12, 2020 and closure of OCAD University due to COVID-19 pandemic, the GradEx 105 Task Force was initiated and its Co-Chairs were appointed in early April. Reporting to the Vice-President Academic & Provost (VPAP), the Task Force involved a comprehensive membership of student and faculty representatives, academic administrators and staff, and established a mandate to:

- Explore and assess the possibility of presenting GradEx 105;
- Discuss and consider different options and opportunities for featuring the work of 2020 OCAD U graduating class;
- Enable consultations with and input from key GradEx stakeholders, including graduating students, lead faculty and program Chairs/GPDs;
- Assess the implications for resources and overall feasibility of GradEx 105 in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

Acknowledgement and context

The GradEx 105 Task Force acknowledges the ancestral and traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe and the Huron-Wendat, who are the original owners and custodians of the land on which we stand. The Task Force recognizes that the abrupt end of the 2019-20 academic year due to COVID-19 has had a wide-ranging impact on graduating students and the status of their projects.

The Task Force recognizes that its work and the recommendations have emerged in the context of ongoing global pandemic that implies changing physical space realities, the social distance practices and public health guidelines. The Task Force acknowledges the context of extraordinary protests and social justice efforts against racism and police violence in the United States and Canada. Moreover, the Task Force recognizes the fifteen years of commitment to the success of GradEx and of extraordinary leadership of Dr. Sara Diamond, President Emerita, who completed her final term as President during the pandemic.

In addition, the GradEx 105 Task Force understands the challenging fiscal reality of OCAD U and the impact of the pandemic on the operating budget of the University and its transition to online learning and remote curriculum delivery. We have also considered potentially limited and restricted access to physical facilities and exhibition spaces as OCAD U campus gradually reopens with guidance of the Reopening Working Group and the Academic Emergence Response Committee (AERC), as well as the Ontario's public health and education guidelines.

The recommendations presented below were adopted by the Task Force with an understanding that they are subject to further costing and resource and risk assessments. Although these processes have been already initiated by the Task Force, the costing of recommendations need be prioritized and completed at the University level this summer. The Task Force recognizes that the resource implications of the recommendations are significant, as much as they present potentially transformative direction for advancing the visibility of OCAD U and the university's commitment to its graduates and communities. The GradEx Co-Chairs acknowledge and thank all the members of GradEx 105 Task Force for their time, perseverance and contributions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure communication and connectivity with 2020 graduating class, with guidance and strategy from Marketing & Communications, Alumni Relations, OCAD Student Union and Vice-President, Students & International.
2. Design and enable special/customized access to facilities and equipment to support post-production and/or documentation of creative work produced by 2020 graduating class, with guidance from Studio Management, Facilities, IT Services, AV Loans, Program Chairs/Graduate Program Directors in keeping with public health guidelines and the recommendations of the Reopening Working Group and the Academic Emergency Response Committee (AERC) of the OCAD U Senate.
3. In collaboration with IT Services, AV Loans and Facilities & Studio Services establish designated Studio-Monitor positions to support graduates' access to facilities and equipment in keeping with public health guidelines and institutional operating procedures.
4. Develop a virtual GradEx digital engagement platform to showcase the work of 2020 graduates and enable opportunities for networking, e-commerce and connecting of graduates with their peers, industry partners, professional art/design community and cultural organizations, with guidance from IT Services, CEAD, Marketing & Communications and the GradEx Committee.
5. Establish a GradEx Curatorial Team to design and program a festival of site-specific exhibitions, community engagements and events that will showcase the diversity and creativity of 2020 graduating class within OCAD U Gallery System and at other venues determined in collaboration with external partners, with guidance of the Advancement Team (Development & Alumni Relations).
6. Ensure robust student representation and participation in all efforts with an emphasis on mobilizing student engagement and leadership, with guidance of CEAD.
7. Establish a Project Management Team and a designated leadership position(s) to oversee the development of alternative GradEx scenarios outlined above.
8. Ensure a budget envelope of \$100,000 to develop and realize digital engagement and hybrid festival platforms for GradEx 105 and 106, with oversight of the Project Management Team and Finance.
9. Develop and pursue a GradEx fundraising and sponsorship campaign with guidance of Development & Alumni Relations (Advancement).

Engagement and Consultation Process

- Regular weekly Task Force Zoom/Teams meetings (May to July);
- Obtained input from Program Chairs/Graduate Program Directors on program-based alternatives to GradEx;
- Designed and administered survey of 2020 graduating class;

- Collected and analyzed 280 responses to GradEx survey (see report attached);
- Conducted an environmental scan of graduating exhibitions by comparable institutions and galleries
- Held three visioning sessions to explore alternative exhibition scenarios and assess benefits/risks;
- Formed working group for Digital Engagement Strategy Document (see document attached);
- Met and consulted with internal stakeholders representing Facilities & Studio Services, Centre for Emerging Artists and Designers (CEAD); Development & Alumni Relations and Marketing & Communications (Advancement); IT Services, Vice-President Administration & Finance, Safety & Security Services.
- Progress and update meetings of Co-Chairs with Vice-President, Academic & Provost (VPAP); and
- Co-Chairs meeting with OCAD U's new President, Ana Serrano (June 5)
- Produced and adopted nine recommendations (to be shared with VPAP and OCAD U's Executive leadership team)

OCAD U is grateful for the generosity of the GradEx105 Task Force members for their contributions to these recommendations:

Adé Abegunde, Executive Director of Diversity & Equity, OCAD Student Union
Francisco Alvarez, Dorene & Peter Milligan Executive Director, OCAD U Galleries
Susan Blight, Delaney Chair, Indigenous Visual Culture, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies
Tanya Bowes, Board Secretary & Director, Strategic Planning
Zev Farber, Director, Centre for Emerging Artists & Designers
Stephen Foster, Dean, Faculty of Art
Melissa General, Manager, Indigenous Student Centre
April Hickox, Associate Professor, Faculty of Art
Glen Lowry, Executive Director & Advisor to Provost, Partnerships, Outreach & Research
Alastair Macleod, Chief Information Officer
Alex Manu, Professor, Design
Ashok Mathur, Dean, Graduate Studies
Andrew McAllister, Director, Academic Computing & Innovation
Peter Morin, Special Advisor, Indigenous Knowledge, Practices and Production
Paulette Phillips, Professor, Art
Nick Puckett, Chair, Digital Futures Initiative
Ali Qadeer, Assistant Professor, Design
Charles Reeve, Interim Chair, BA in Visual & Critical Studies, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies
Ryan Rice, Acting Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies
Derek Sullivan, Assistant Professor, Art
Dori Tunstall, Dean, Faculty of Design
Adam Wiendels, Senior Manager, Marketing
Kanyika Yorke, Lead Advancement Events & Sponsorship
Ana Luisa Bernárdez, Student, Photography
Carly Bruce, Student, Graphic Design

Francis Ho, Student, Graphic Design

Zaid Khan, Student, Strategic Foresight & Innovation, Graduate Studies

Enna Kim, Student, Digital Futures

Armin Musa, Student, Drawing & Painting

Tami Poliwoda, Student, Drawing & Painting: Digital Painting and Expanded Animation

Alysha Rocca, Student, Drawing & Painting

Sebastian Rodriguez Vasti, Student, Photography

Lilian Sim, Student, Illustration

Yinnie Ng-Klee, Executive Assistant, Offices of Vice-President, Finance and Administration and Vice-President, Students & International

MyLy Pham, Project Coordinator, IT Services

Melanie Printup Hope, Associate Dean, Faculty of Design and **Vlad Spicanovic**, Professor, Faculty of Art (Co-Chairs)