EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 'Beyond COVID' project began in Summer 2021, drawing together nearly 100 faculty, staff and students from across both campuses, to consider what we had learned during the prior two years of significant disruption and challenge to our traditional model of teaching and learning at UBC, and how that experience may influence and shape the evolving future of teaching and learning beyond the most significant restrictions imposed by the global pandemic.

The initial considerations were collated into a phase one draft report[1] that served as the basis for a broad consultation during the fall of 2021 with stakeholder groups, committees and units that were not part of the initial conversations during the summer months. These consultations added valuable perspectives into the four thematic areas that emerged:

1. **Innovation and flexibility** – in addition to the significant challenges, the period since March 2020 has seen significant pedagogical experimentation and innovation at scale, and online and hybrid delivery has introduced new flexibility for learners.
2. **Inclusion and well-being** – pre-COVID there was considerable institution-wide momentum and progress towards core priorities of inclusion and well-being, and these were brought into sharp focus during periods of fully online learning, with stressors unevenly distributed across the UBC community.
3. **Technology and support for faculty and student success** – our ability to navigate the challenges of COVID relied on digital tools for connection, communication and collaboration, and this has given us new insights as to the role and affordances of such tools, together with the support needed to deploy them effectively.
4. **Processes and policies** – multiple cycles of rapid change placed significant pressure on faculty, staff and students operating in policy and process frameworks that were designed for exclusively in-person learning.

Priority Actions

As we approach the start of the 2022/23 academic session, the University and its community is still in a period of 'rebalancing' after more than two years of near-constant and significant change, challenges and stress. As we contemplate actions to move forwards, they must be cognizant of appetite, capacity and resource limitations, align with institutional and provincial priorities and leverage existing structures and activities where they can. To that end, we have initiated a series of priority actions across each of the thematic areas outlined above[2], each of which is described briefly below.

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[1] https://academic.ubc.ca/vpa-initiatives/teaching-learning/beyond-covid-report
[2] A summary of actions envisaged, May 2022 is online at
https://academic.ubc.ca/sites/vpa.ubc.ca/files/documents/Learning%20and%20Teaching%20Looking%20Forward%20Actions%20June%202022.pdf

1. Innovation and flexibility

1.1 Course activity types

Working with Senate Curriculum Committees on both campuses, as well as the IRP student team, we have agreed 4 modalities that define the delivery of 'course activity types' (the components of a course, such as 'lecture', 'lab', 'seminar' etc. These 4 modalities are: in-person; online; hybrid (an instructor-determined mix of whole-cohort in-person or online sessions); multi-access (permitting student choice of attending in person or online). These are now implemented in the SIS (and will be in workday), with student-facing descriptors[3].

1.2 Experiments in coordinated hybrid and multi-access learning

On the Vancouver campus, a portion of the 2022/23 Large TLEF funding has been reserved for multi-course experiments in hybrid and multi-access learning, to encourage and support teams whose goal is to redesign multiple courses within a program to maximize flexibility and accessibility for students by combining both in-person and online elements within and/or across course activities[4]. Around $1M will be made available to support funded projects in this round, and at the time of writing 13 initial Letters of Intent have been moved to full proposal development, to be adjudicated for funding in the fall of 2023, with funding provided from April 2023.

1.3 CLAF funding for non-credit learning opportunities

The Continuous Learning Advancement Fund (CLAF, formerly the Online Learning Advancement Fund) is the non-credit equivalent of the long-standing TLEF program to support credit courses and programs. The 2022 adjudication process is now completed and has supported 8 Faculty projects, intending to develop a range of non-credit certificates and micro-credentials designed for career and professional learners, in priority areas for the institution, including sustainability, Indigenous language revitalization, health data science, and ocean management.

2. Inclusion and well-being

2.1 Universal Design for Learning (UDL) fellows cohort

A portion of the small TLEF funding for 2022/23 will be used to establish a UDL Fellows cohort program. The cohort program will comprise ~15 faculty per year across different academic units to build institutional capacity to support course design / redesign aligned with UDL principles. This cohort program provides course buyouts for faculty for 2 terms, followed by supporting a follow-on project in their home department implementing UDL principles.

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[3] https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/courses/course-modes-delivery
[4] https://tlef.ubc.ca/application/special-call/hybrid-and-multi-access-course-redesign-projects/

2.2 Accessibility of digital learning materials.

Over the last few years, courses have increasingly developed and curated a broad range of digital materials to support student learning. We are piloting the use of a tool to assess the accessibility of such digital learning materials, (Blackboard Ally, which sits on top of Canvas) with a range of course, including a full Faculty pilot with the Faculty of Education. This will enable us to assess how best to support faculty using this course and making their materials more accessible for learners. As the BC Accessibility Legislation are developed over the coming years, it is likely that accessibility of digital learning materials will be one of the standards.

2.3 Student-centred syllabus toolkit for faculty

The experiences of teaching and learning during COVID have expanded the range of options for course activities, modalities, and expectations. The course syllabus is a key resource for communicating the choices that went into designing courses. There is a syllabus policy at UBCV that provides basic requirements for what must be included in syllabi, as well as information about when and how changes to the syllabus can be made after the course begins. Working with a group of faculty over the summer of 2022, we have created a student-centred syllabus toolkit as a companion to the formal policy requirements. This toolkit provides further advice and suggestions for instructors to consider as they create syllabi that fit their own courses and contexts, framed in an approach to foreground student inclusion and participation in the learning community of the course. The toolkit[5] has been shared through Dean's offices, and is CC licensed to encourage adaptation, revision and incorporation into departmental or faculty level guidance.

3. Tools and supports for faculty and student success

Our efforts to better understand the affordances (and limitations) of tools and platforms that support digital learning, together with the supports needed to ensure their successful and effective deployment, are informed by related projects underway within and beyond UBC. The Digital UBC[6] framework under development aligns with and supports these efforts in the domain of teaching and learning. There is considerable overlap with (and contributions to) the Ministry of Advanced Education & Skills Training Digital Learning Strategy[7], published in draft form in the Spring of 2022, with consultation on-going and implementation to follow over the coming academic session.

3.1 Moving towards a single Enterprise Video Platform

Applications to support the creation, capture and streaming of media to support learning have been a feature of the learning landscape for many years, but the reliance on these

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[5] To appear on the CTLT website; link to follow
[6] https://cio.ubc.ca/about-ocio/digital-ubc
[7] https://etug.ca/2022/06/30/digital-learning-strategy/

applications through the period of COVID disruption have given us new insights to review and reimagine the role and use of video to support learning. There is a patchwork landscape of media creation, capture and distribution systems in use that have evolved organically over time. We have initiated an Enterprise Video Platform project, funded through the IT Capital Planning Fund, to stabilize and better integrate the two core platforms (Kaltura and Panopto) whilst at the same time conducting a scan to assess other tools in this space, with a goal to move towards a single Enterprise Video Platform in 2 years. Guidance for faculty and students on the implications of classroom recordings have been developed[8], along with a discussion paper of some of the affordances and limitations of such recordings[9].

3.2 Understanding support needs through evaluation of COVID Block funding

To support faculty efforts in multiple cycles of course redesign over the duration of the pandemic, we provisioned a series of 'block funding' grants to faculties, pro-rated based on student program FTEs, totalling $14.2M between the period of April 2020 and April 2022. We have undertaken a mixed-methods evaluation of the usefulness and impact of this funding, through direct survey of faculty and input from Deans offices[10]. A deeper understanding of the tools and supports that were effective (and those less so) will assist in tailoring support better towards needs.

3.3 Ethical guidelines for use of learning technology tools

Based on COVID experiences, and reinforced by feedback from those involved in Academic Integrity work and input from the Anti-Racism Task Force, there is an imperative to consider the ethical implications of increased technology use beyond regulatory / privacy compliance, with a particular focus on how technology use can specifically impact equity deserving students, faculty, and staff. Ethical guidelines are in development and this work is being undertaken in parallel with a working group from the MAEST Digital Learning Strategy.

4. Policies and processes

4.1 Academic integrity; education and misconduct process

Increased attention on cheating during the period of enforced online learning during the pandemic has made longstanding issues more visible around how academic integrity is taught and promoted and around how academic misconduct cases are managed and experienced by various stakeholder groups. A project was started to in early 2021 to look at academic integrity at UBC and it provided a starting point to considering what academic integrity supports should be available and how those supports should be delivered. Work at UBC across both campuses has been exploring ways to enrich and

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[8] https://ctlt-act-2020.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/10/Principles-ClassRecordings.pdf
[9] https://academic.ubc.ca/sites/vpa.ubc.ca/files/documents/Class%20recordings%20discussion%20paper_LTAG_8July2022.pdf
[10] A report is in preparation and will be hosted on the VPA website.

optimize the academic integrity cycle, from education and awareness to dealing with academic misconduct with an increasingly educative and restorative approach. The focus of the project will continue through an Academic Integrity Hub for the Vancouver campus. The purpose will be to centralise resources around academic integrity and academic misconduct as well as develop new resources to support faculty and students.

4.2 Central TA training funding review

Some of the most valuable support to learners during the pandemic came through an expansion of the number and scope of roles undertaken by Teaching Assistants, both graduate and undergraduate. As Faculties consider effective ways in which this enhanced TA support can be sustained within courses, we have initiated a review of how Departmental TA training programs are supported (and funded) from the VPA, with an intention to overhaul a grant funding process that has been in place unchanged for well over a decade. This work will engage Departmental staff and faculty who support and organize TA training programs within their academic units, and will be completed by Sept 2023.