

**TO:** Mike Mahon  
President and Vice Chancellor

**DATE:** October 30, 2019

**FROM:** Alan Siaroff  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

**RE:** Prentice Institute Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee approved the review of the Prentice Institute at its October 25, 2019 meeting.

The Self Study Committee for this review comprised Alexander Darku (Program Review Coordinator), Trevor Harrison, and Glenda Bonifacio.

The review produced four documents:<sup>1</sup>

1. Self Study Report. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received November 9, 2018.
2. External Review Report. Written by Nazeem Muhajarine (University of Saskatchewan) and Sandra Byers (University of New Brunswick), based on a site visit on March 19-20, 2019 and received May 1, 2019.
3. Program Response. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received June 26, 2019.
4. Dean's Response. Written by Helen Kelley, Interim Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. Received October 7, 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> All documents are available upon request.

## ***Self Study Report***

The Self Study identified the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats:

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|----------------|--|
| Strengths:     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The institute is multidisciplinary, with researchers and research affiliates from all U of L faculties.</li><li>• The institute's research enables groups and individuals to make better decisions.</li><li>• The institute builds collaborations with researchers in Canada and beyond.</li></ul>   |
| Weaknesses:    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of a formal governance structure.</li><li>• Lack of the sustained involvement of research affiliates.</li><li>• Limited paid research capacity.</li><li>• Lack of a formal academic advisory committee.</li><li>• Lack of a formal international advisory committee.</li><li>• Lack of space to fulfill current and future needs.</li></ul> |
| Opportunities: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthen the position and reputation of the institute, regionally and globally.</li><li>• Develop a data laboratory that integrates comparable data from various countries on population, economics, and resources.</li></ul>  |
| Threats:       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The lack of a formal governance structure poses challenges to the administration of the institute and to its reputation.</li><li>• Budgetary issues and the sustainability of the endowment fund.</li></ul>  |

The report noted that the institute needs specific external advice on: the governance structure; financial sustainability; future directions; and resources.

The following institute strengths were noted in the body of the report:

- The institute has several national and international research affiliates.
- The institute offers its Research Affiliates seed grants.
- The institute partners with the Society of Edmonton Demographers to offer scholarships to graduate students in population studies.
- The Statistics Canada Research Data Centre at the U of L can be used to analyze micro-level data and conduct longitudinal research.
- Researchers have published books, research articles, book chapters, research reports, and public outreach articles.
- The institute has an active public outreach program, including public talks.
- Faculty and students have an informal mentoring group that meets regularly.
- The institute runs regular workshops on multilevel and longitudinal modeling for faculty and students.

An additional challenge mentioned in the body of the report was that the U of L has been unable to hire junior Prentice Research Chairs due to loss of SSHRC funding.

## ***External Review Report***

The External Review Report contained the following recommendations:

**1. Through a strategic planning process, revisit, clarify, and update the vision and mission of the Prentice Institute.**

A review of the mission and vision should consider current institutional priorities and the political and social climate. The institute should develop a long-term strategic plan, incorporating input from its stakeholders. The plan should include: vision; mission; governance; resourcing; research priorities; graduate and undergraduate education; and emerging opportunities.

**2. Create a research advisory board.**

Convened annually, a research advisory board can provide strategic input into critical research issues and priorities. The board could develop a five-year and annual plans for research, training, and dissemination activities. Board membership should be drawn from the academic and research community, government, and non-governmental and community-based organizations. A research advisory board would help elevate the profile of the Prentice Institute and provide institutional accountability. The mandate for the research advisory board should be developed jointly by the Provost and the Vice President (Research), with input from the Director of the institute.

**3. Develop and formalize the leadership structure.**

Revisit the current leadership positions and their roles and responsibilities. The Director and Associate Director positions lack written position descriptions. Both of these positions need clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, including the responsibilities for managing the key functions of the institute (budget development, work plan development, staff supervision, development of research teams, identification of social issues related to institute mandate, etc.).

Consider an alternative leadership model: Director (responsible for intellectual leadership and research mandate); and Managing Director (professional position, responsible for operational leadership). In this model the Director does not have to complete administrative tasks.

**4. Establish clear lines of reporting and accountability between institute leadership and the U of L leadership.**

There are currently many interpretations of lines of reporting. Clear lines of reporting and accountability should include: to whom the Director reports; responsibility for developing and approving the budget; and the process for holding the institute accountable for implementing the budget.

**5. Develop a multi-year financial plan.**

The institute Director should coordinate the development of the financial plan. This plan should include: strategic financial objectives and priorities; core activities based on a minimum guaranteed revenue; and additional activities contingent on additional revenue. The Dean of Arts and Science should approve the financial plan.

**6. Develop a proposed budget for the forthcoming fiscal year.**

The Director should develop the proposed budget, based on revenue generated from all sources in the previous year. This budget should be submitted to the Dean of Arts and Science. The Director should be held accountable for ensuring spending is in line with the approved budget.

**7. Every year, provide the institute Director with a summary of income and expenses.**

University administration should provide this information, including the investment income accrued at year end, so that the financial plan and the budget can be developed. Administration should also guarantee a minimum set amount to cover the institute's base budget.

**8. Continue seed funding, with enhanced accountability.**

The seed funding of Prentice Institute research affiliates should continue, but there should be a formalized structure for greater accountability. This could include a terms of reference, a granting process, and guidelines for the attribution and acknowledgement of the Prentice Institute in research products.

**9. Establish a Prentice Chair on Global Populations and Economy and a visiting scholars program.**

Use the endowment to create a Prentice Chair. This Chair will help increase research capacity in the Prentice Institute. A visiting scholar program could be for a defined term (six months, one year, two years) and subsidized by the Prentice Institute. Such a program can help with networking and research productivity.

**10. Engage research affiliates, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students.**

The institute should develop a plan with strategies to mobilize and engage affiliates and incentivize research, and set deliverables and reward mechanisms. The Prentice Institute should formalize its relationship with research affiliates and postdoctoral fellows, including clear definitions of accountabilities, benefits, contributions, and responsibilities. It should also develop ways to encourage collaboration between research affiliates, including: releasing calls for research collaboration in Prentice Institute priority areas; identifying overlapping interests that could produce collaborations; and holding workshops with multiple speakers on topics that reflect priorities of government or community groups.

**11. Create an interdisciplinary academic program in economy and global populations and ensure this program has clear links to the Prentice Institute.**

A new interdisciplinary program should be developed that is directly aligned with the Prentice Institute's mandate. Alternatively, existing policy limitations on a Type B research centre/institute offering academic programs should be mitigated by senior administration.

**12. Enhance the training of highly qualified personnel.**

The institute should find ways to involve graduate students, including: promoting opportunities for graduate students in areas linked to the Prentice Institute; adding Graduate Assistantships for Prentice Institute research projects and using these to recruit graduate students; and adding student membership on research initiatives affiliated with the institute.

**13. Increase the involvement of undergraduate students.**

Boost the visibility of undergraduate study of global populations and economy and consider developing this as a minor or concentration. Develop elective courses in related areas like demography.

**14. Conduct commissioned and collaborative action-oriented research.**

The Prentice Institute, with the help of the Advisory Board, should move into commissioned research related to policy and practice that is initiated by government bodies, health authorities, and community-based organizations. Guidelines that set the conditions of accepting commissioned research should be developed, to ensure research control, ownership of data, and ownership of dissemination products.

**15. Develop and implement knowledge translation strategies to maximize impact on policy and practice.**

This will help the institute communicate widely about its output to enable individuals, governments, and corporations make better-informed decisions.

**16. Develop collaborations with external research centres and institutes.**

Strategic research partnerships with other universities and research centres will extend the Prentice Institute's capacity for large-scale research. Ensure these collaborations are formalized with a memorandum of agreement.

**17. Revisit the space allocation.**

Implementing recommendations from the quality assurance review may result in the growth of the institute. The space allocation for the Prentice Institute should be revisited in 2021 to ensure it is still adequate.

***Program Response***

In the Program Response, the Self Study Committee addressed the recommendations from the External Review Report:

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Response:</b>
1. Through a strategic planning process, revisit, clarify, and update the vision and mission of the Prentice Institute.	Agreed. The vision and mission are already formulated to transcend changes in the province and the country. The mission does not need to prioritize education and training as it already states "we educate students and future researchers."
2. Create a research advisory board.	Agreed. There is an interim academic advisory committee, but it lacks a formal mandate.
3. Develop and formalize the leadership structure.	Agreed. The recommended alternative leadership model of Director and Managing Director could have budgetary implications.
4. Establish clear lines of reporting and accountability between institute leadership and the U of L leadership.	Agreed. Currently the Director is accountable to the Dean of Arts and Science, and the endowment, allocation of funds from the endowment, and budget approval is under the authority of the Dean of Arts and Science. Because the institute's mandate is multidisciplinary, the Director could be accountable to the VP Research, and the endowment, allocation of funds, and budget approval be under the authority of same.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Response:</b>
5. Develop a multi-year financial plan.	Agreed. The institute will work with Financial Services and the VP Research to determine the minimum guaranteed revenue from the endowment for the next five years and will develop a financial plan from this.
6. Develop a proposed budget for the forthcoming fiscal year.	Agreed.
7. Every year, provide the institute Director with a summary of income and expenses.	Agreed.
8. Continue seed funding, with enhanced accountability.	Agreed. Integrating the seed funding program with a research development strategy will help to enhance accountability. The institute will develop a document that formalizes the award of the seed grant.
9. Establish a Prentice Chair on Global Populations and Economy and a visiting scholars program.	Agreed. The institute hopes that the U of L will receive an additional SSHRC allocation that can restore the Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in Global Population and Life Course. The existing visiting scholar program should be expanded to a longer term. The Research Associate position should be made permanent.
10. Engage research affiliates, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students.	Agreed. The Prentice Institute should formalize its relationship with research affiliates and postdoctoral fellows. This should include clear definitions of accountabilities, benefits, contributions, and responsibilities.
11. Create an interdisciplinary academic program in economy and global populations and ensure this program has clear links to the Prentice Institute.	Agreed. As a Type B research centre or institute, the Prentice Institute cannot offer educational programs that lead to academic credentials. Regardless, the Prentice Institute should implement ways to involve graduate students in its activities, such as:
12. Enhance the training of highly qualified personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating institute academic and research personnel into existing graduate programs.</li> <li>• Developing a new interdisciplinary graduate program that is linked to the institute.</li> <li>• Creating incentives such as scholarships to encourage research affiliates to recruit graduate students whose research projects align with the institute's mission.</li> <li>• Make institute-related courses more visible to students.</li> <li>• Introduce graduate assistantships in the institute budget.</li> <li>• If possible, remove policy barriers to graduate student participation in the institute.</li> </ul>
13. Increase the involvement of undergraduate students.	Agreed. A feeder program or courses should be developed at the undergraduate level. Existing undergraduate courses in demography, population, economic cycles, and health and population could be linked to the Prentice Institute and made more visible to students.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Response:</b>
14. Conduct commissioned and collaborative action-oriented research.	Agreed.
15. Develop and implement knowledge translation strategies to maximize impact on policy and practice.	Agreed. There are already brown bag talks, a distinguished speaker series, cafe conversations, and public talks by research affiliates. There is a need for new strategies for knowledge translation. This could include a regular conference for scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and students.
16. Develop collaborations with external research centres and institutes.	Agreed. There are some existing strategic partnerships with other research centres and institutes around the world. The Prentice Institute will initiate further collaborations.
17. Revisit the space allocation.	Agreed. The space allocation should be revisited in two years.

### ***Dean's Response***

The Interim Dean of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs addressed the recommendations and associated discussion from the External Review Report and Program Response:

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Response:</b>
1. Through a strategic planning process, revisit, clarify, and update the vision and mission of the Prentice Institute.	Agreed. Strategic directions must be reviewed annually. A strategic planning exercise must be initiated immediately. Strategic directions must align with the U of L Strategic Plan, the Research Plan, and the Comprehensive Institutional Plan.
2. Create a research advisory board.	Agreed. The mandate and actions of the Research Advisory Committee must align with the Research Centres and Institutes policy.
3. Develop and formalize the leadership structure.	Agreed. The roles and responsibilities of the Director of the Prentice Institute can be clarified by the reporting structure of the institute, the Research Centres and Institutes policy, and the contractual terms for the Interim Director position.
4. Establish clear lines of reporting and accountability between institute leadership and the U of L leadership.	Agreed. Clear reporting structure between the Prentice Institute leadership and the U of L leadership is important. The Dean proposes a dual reporting structure with the Steering Committee reporting to the VP Research and the Director reporting to the relevant Dean and the VP Research, and indirectly to the VP Academic.
5. Develop a multi-year financial plan.	Agreed.

Recommendation:	Response:
6. Develop a proposed budget for the forthcoming fiscal year.	Agreed. An annual budget must be prepared by the Director and approved by the Steering Committee and senior administration.
7. Every year, provide the institute Director with a summary of income and expenses.	Agreed.
8. Continue seed funding, with enhanced accountability.	Agreed. A formal policy is needed that outlines: criteria for funding; financial limits; reporting guidelines; and vetting and approval processes.
9. Establish a Prentice Chair on Global Populations and Economy and a visiting scholars program.	Establishing a Prentice Institute Research Chair will have to be prioritized by U of L senior leadership and will depend on resources. A University-wide visiting scholars program has to be approved by senior leadership, align with relevant policies and processes, and contingent upon resource availability.
10. Engage research affiliates, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students.	Agreed. Formal structures, accountabilities, and processes have to be established to optimize the benefits and contributions of research affiliates, research associates, research assistants, and postdoctoral fellows. The Prentice Institute's Strategic Plan, Action, Plan, Financial Plan, and annual budget will incorporate expansion of the Institute's affiliate network.
11. Create an interdisciplinary academic program in economy and global populations and ensure this program has clear links to the Prentice Institute.	The Dean of Graduate Studies and the Dean of Arts and Science will work with the Interim Director, Steering Committee, Academic Advisory Committee, and Research Advisory Committee to explore new programming and advance current programming.
12. Enhance the training of highly qualified personnel.	
13. Increase the involvement of undergraduate students.	Agreed. The Institute should explore potential laddering opportunities from undergraduate to graduate studies.
14. Conduct commissioned and collaborative action-oriented research.	Agreed. The Research Advisory Committee and all research affiliates should engage with Research and Innovation Services to identify and establish commissioned research opportunities. These opportunities should be identified as a strategic priority for the Prentice Institute.
15. Develop and implement knowledge translation strategies to maximize impact on policy and practice.	Agreed. The Prentice Institute should identify and implement knowledge translation strategies, and incorporate these strategies into their financial plan and annual budget.



<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Response:</b>
16. Develop collaborations with external research centres and institutes.	Agreed. The Prentice Institute has existing partnerships and associations with other research centres and institutes. This should be added as a goal in the Strategic Plan.
17. Revisit the space allocation.	Agreed, subject to U of L priorities and resource availability. Space requests based on Institute growth and U of L priorities and resources are submitted to Campus Planning for review and approval.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the Prentice Institute Academic Quality Assurance Review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately, and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Alan Siaroff

Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

Cc: Andrew Hakin, Provost and Vice President (Academic)