

TRANSFORMING HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION THROUGH SCIENCE



THE WILSON CENTRE STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026

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ABOUT THE WILSON CENTRE

The Wilson Centre is an educational research organization established in 1996 to foster rigorous interdisciplinary research about how health professionals are educated, generating knowledge to improve educational practice and the preparation of healthcare providers. Now at our 25th anniversary, we have grown substantially in size, depth, diversity, and stature with 22 scientists, 43 researchers, 4 support staff, 16 fellows and 20 PhD students, working collaboratively across education-related fields ranging from psychology and anthropology to humanities and big data. The Centre is widely recognized for pushing conceptual and methodological boundaries in education science while being strategic, relevant, and embedded in health care systems and concerns.

The Centre is an extra-departmental unit at the University of Toronto but physically based at the University Health Network and governed jointly by the university and the hospital. The core practices nurtured by the Wilson Centre include: (1) a diverse range of critical, theory-informed disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches in education science; (2) excellence and innovation in research development, publication, supervision, and teaching; (3) deep collaboration with practice in health professions education; and (4) effective, distributed, and democratic leadership. We strive to embed ethical reflexivity and social responsiveness in all aspects of our work.

Recent developments include the Centre's successful 2018 launch of a PhD program in Health Professions Education Research in the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation (IHPME) at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. A new international partnership supports a Master of Health Sciences Education in Ethiopia through the Toronto Addis Ababa Academic Collaboration. The Centre also has begun foundational work in Indigenous Health Education Scholarship, extending support to Indigenous scholars and health professions learners and collaborating with others to advance Indigenous health education. **The Wilson Centre Self-Study Report** explains these and the Centre's many other education science activities in detail.

WHAT EXACTLY IS “EDUCATION SCIENCE” AT THE WILSON CENTRE?

Education science broadly seeks to understand and positively influence the complex interplay of elements, including assessment, involved in learning processes and knowledge generation. Education environments range from classrooms and digital spaces to work cultures and policy communities.

At the Wilson Centre, education science focuses on professional learning and knowledge generation in the health care professions. Professional learning is embodied and relational as well as cognitive. It is often entwined with identity and emotions and situated in particular practices and systems. Therefore when thinking about how to design, promote, support or assess professional learning, whether in classrooms or in work practices, Wilson Centre education scientists critically analyse the interplay of elements that influence learning. That is, we look at how and where learning emerges for different people and purposes. We also examine how professional learning and knowledge generation are affected by the languages, relationships, materials, technologies, and politics of particular health care and educational practices.

Education science for us is about growth, not production; it is dynamic, constantly learning through many philosophies and theoretical approaches. The Centre supports a wide range of these scientific approaches in a space of dialectic conversation. We critically question, enrich and learn from one another in a truly interdisciplinary collaborative community. Our impact is creating fertile ground for effective and transformative education: through work and education spaces that are conducive to learning, through curricula and assessments that support learner growth, and through technologies used in ways that are inclusive and welcoming.

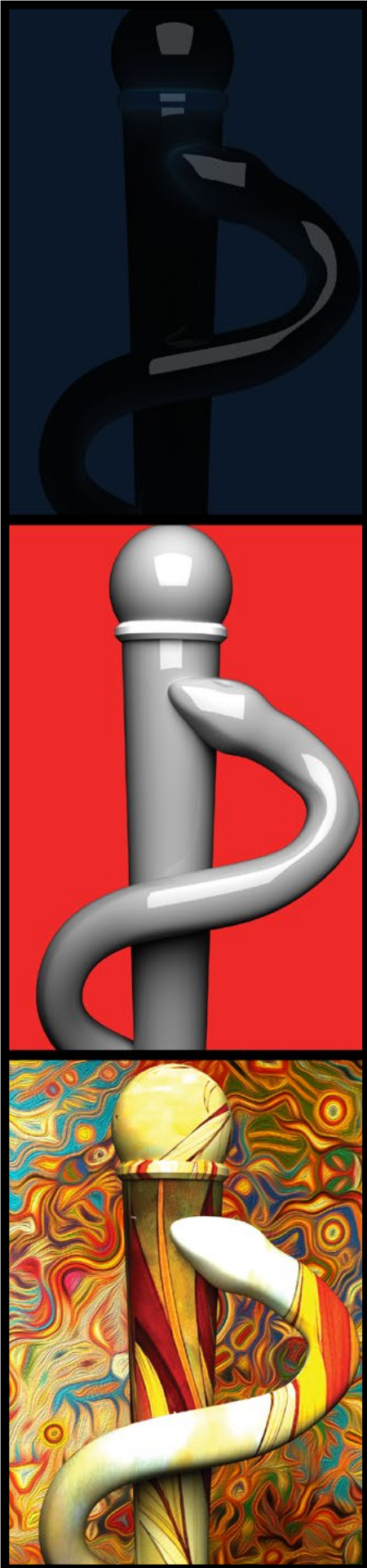
OUR MISSION

The Wilson Centre aims to offer these key values to our partners, publics, and members:

- High quality impactful education science through:
 - theory-driven expertise and knowledge creation that identifies educational problems and solutions in collaboration with health professions education (HPE) practitioners, learners, patients, and clinical partners. The Centre puts theory to work, particularly in complex issues that can be difficult to see and understand.
 - questions and perspectives that help HPE professionals and researchers reframe and reconsider assumptions about their work, opening new insights, processes, and innovative approaches in HPE. Our work aims to be bold and push boundaries.
 - strategic and practical assistance to HPE practitioners, institutions, and policy makers for transforming HPE.
- A substantial interdisciplinary PhD program in Health Professions Education Research that creates leaders in emerging areas, fosters theoretical and methodological innovations, and contributes to the Centre’s long-term sustainability and community of practice.
- Innovative contributions to diversity, inclusion and equity in HPE research, with particular attention to supporting Indigenous Health Education Scholarship through processes of reconciliation.
- A collaborative research community including external networks that creates a nexus of highly diverse practical and intellectual standpoints, providing connection, challenge, support, and inspiration. We generate models of interdisciplinary research and intellectual fluidity, and ways to speak a common language across paradigms.
- Collaborative partnerships to share knowledge and expand boundaries of HPE. These relationships balance strategic feasibility with commitments to mutual reciprocity and wellbeing, respect and humility.

OUR PURPOSE

The Wilson Centre generates high quality and innovative interdisciplinary education science to propel transformations in health professions education.



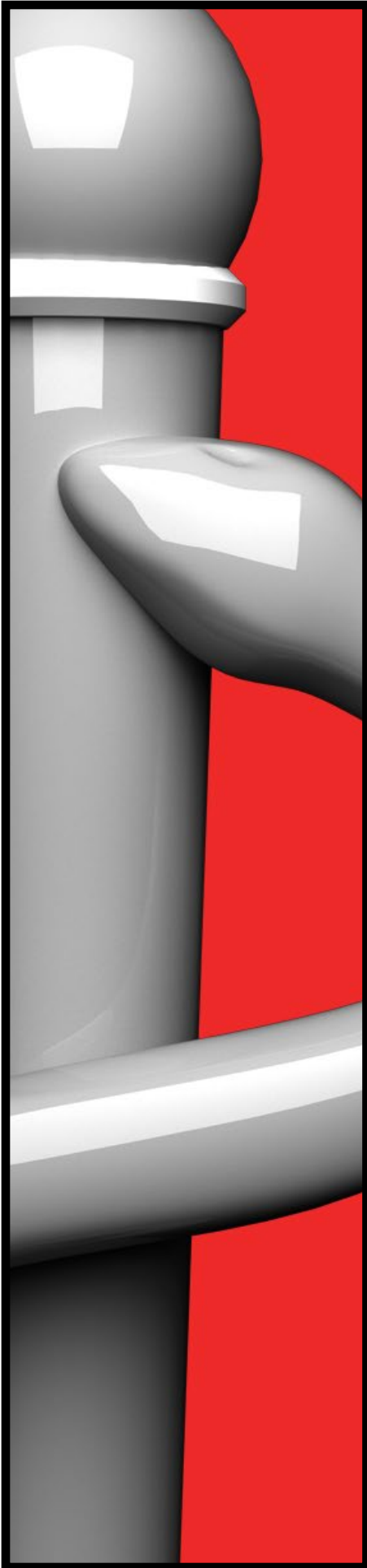
THE STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTEXT

The Wilson Centre undertook four strategic developments from 2002-2015, in response to external reviews. After the new appointment in 2015 of Professor Cynthia Whitehead as Director, the Centre developed a “refresh” of its previous strategy. Led by Donald C Cole and Niall Byrne, this **2017-2020 plan** was rooted in an educational model of growth and learning, following former University of Toronto educator Ursula Franklin. Our new strategic plan deliberately echoes the process, priorities and “action strategies” adopted in 2017.

The 2017-2020 period was marked by key developments that affected the Centre’s activity. New strategic plans in the institutional context were released, including the University Health Network (2019-2023 plan) and the Temerty Faculty of Medicine (2018-2023 plan). Both emphasized themes and ambitions which the Wilson Centre has incorporated into its own planning. Additionally, the Centre has dynamic relationships with many units in both these institutions as well as in the Toronto Academic Health Science Network (TAHSN). In particular, The Institute for Educational Research (TIER), launched in 2019 as one of seven institutes within the UHN, now works closely with the Wilson Centre and is directed by Dr. Nikki Woods, a Centre scientist. In these multiple relationships, we recognize the shifting and emergent priorities between and across units. We know that moving forward, we will find ways to continue to strengthen existing relationships as well as create new opportunities to push boundaries and collectively shape new priorities and actions.

In 2020, the Centre undertook a **rigorous self-study** of its initiatives, impacts and ways of working since 2015. This extended self-reflection pointed to new possibilities for strengthening partnerships, programs, and internal structures in our new strategic plan. An external review of the Centre was also completed in 2020, affirming areas of excellence while identifying some issues to consider in our strategy.

The 5-year reappointment in 2021 of Professor Whitehead marked the official launch of the process to plan the Centre’s direction for 2022-2026. Throughout 2021, Centre members confronted all the challenges endured by health professions academic units across Toronto working through Covid-19 shutdowns, emergencies, and isolation. Yet the planning process unfolded exciting directions for our future, grounded in the principles and commitments that have built our core strength.



OUR PLANNING PROCESS

The process for the Wilson Centre strategic plan began in early 2021 at a time when the global pandemic restructured the ways in which we work, think, and connect with each other. Spaces designed as home offices became places to engage with the wider Centre community. Despite the frustrations, limitations and disruptions of virtual meetings, the process for the strategic plan forged ahead with the remarkable engagement and genuine creative commitment of those involved while at the same time striving to ensure a non-pressured environment that was respectful of overstretched workloads.

The process started with the formation of a small advisory committee who, in the early stages, created a series of “guiding assumptions” which supported the planning process as a growth-oriented, scholarly, and reflective undertaking. One important guiding assumption was to provide continuity with the Cole and Byrne 2017 strategic refresh plan. While examining themes and activities from the previous plan that could be continued and strengthened, the committee also responded to and incorporated new recommendations made by external reviewers. Another important guiding assumption was to uphold central values that characterize governance at the Wilson Centre including a culturally safe environment, democratic engagement, dialogic approaches, and respectful challenge.

Personal interviews were then conducted with a range of Centre community members. Individuals were asked questions such as “What are the most important purposes of the Wilson Centre going forward, and why? In what challenges facing HPE research do we as a collective believe we can make the most impact? What needs to happen to achieve this? What are the greatest challenges emerging and how will we face them? What practices are inhibiting our purposes, and how? Where and how might we change or stop practices that do not serve us well and how might we work together to develop practices that we most want to cultivate?”

The committee also reviewed strategic plans of other institutions related to the Wilson Centre such as the Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, University Health Network, and similar health professions research centres. A survey was developed and circulated to all Centre community members to prioritize key strategic areas for the planning discussions. The results were then discussed with each major Centre group (researchers, scientists, administrative staff, fellows/PhD students and their connected networks) to finalize priority areas for planning and future action.

A Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee was then established to coordinate the planning work and to develop the actual strategic plan. Five “Caretaker groups” were formed to critically analyse possibilities for each strategic priority area and propose strategic aspirations and actions. The strategic domains for the Caretaker groups included: science and research; PhD program; research community; Indigenous Health Education Scholarship; and partnerships. In addition, six “Problem Solving Teams” were formed to analyse and suggest actions to address operational issues such as funding, faculty support, governance, indicators for academic and societal impact, and communications. Finally, the plan that incorporated all these materials from the various subgroups was written by various contributors in the Wilson Centre and revised by the Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee.



OUR **KEY STRATEGIC** PRIORITIES

Through our survey and discussions across the Wilson Centre community, five areas of activity were agreed to be the key strategic priorities for focus over the next five years:

1. Integrating Discovery Science and Engaged Scholarship
2. Cultivating a World-Renowned PhD Program
3. Fostering a Collaborative Research Community
4. Supporting Indigenous Health Education Scholarship
5. Cultivating Impactful Partnerships

These are not separate spheres, but very much entwined and interdependent in everyday activity. In the following pages, we describe the importance of each, state our main aspirations, and propose initial actions towards further development.

Other themes important to Wilson Centre work and future strategy can be loosely gathered into two groups:

- a. Interdisciplinarity, innovation, and criticality; and
- b. Equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigeneity, and accessibility.

These are woven throughout our five key strategic priorities and embedded in different ways in each one.

1 INTEGRATING DISCOVERY SCIENCE AND ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP



The Wilson Centre has a long and deep commitment to discovery science, engaging in fundamental, exploratory, and critical research to inform education science. While there can be no singular list of research topics that could encompass the many unique, robust, and evolving domains of inquiry within our community, there is a strategic opportunity to build momentum around areas of common interest.

We have identified three broad areas of interest that build upon established and nascent areas of strength within our collaborative networks. We anticipate that these three areas of interest will be at the forefront of some of the most pressing, future-focused questions in health professions practice and education. These are cross-cutting topic areas with room for contribution from across a breadth of disciplinary approaches as well as our diverse education, practice, and research communities. These three areas of common interest include:

Transformation and Technology: Exploring existing and newly visible technological innovations in the education, work, and structures of health professions and health professions education.

People and Practices: Exploring shifting social and organizational dynamics and their potential implications for health professions practice and education.

Data Driven Learning and Analytics: Related but distinct from the “Transformation and Technology” theme, this interest area includes assessment, big data, learning and instructional design sciences, and other considerations for education, work, and the structures of health professions.

As leaders in education science, the Wilson Centre community is poised to shape the broader conversation around each of these topic areas, propelling health professions education in ever more impactful directions. As sites of connection and collaboration, these interest areas also provide a forum for engaged scholarship. Engaged scholarship reflects a particular kind of orientation, where members of practice, policy, and research communities coalesce around common areas of interest, collectively posing generative questions and intervening in the most pressing social and ethical challenges of our times. In this way, engaged scholarship expands our science and transforms our fields. Discovery science integrated with engaged scholarship generates instrumental and conceptual impact while bolstering the capacity of our entire community to create meaningful change.

ASPIRATIONS

The Wilson Centre community will anticipate and inform future focused questions that will advance education science in meaningful and impactful ways. We will:

- Continue building energy around existing programs of research and existing collaborations, adding to the depth and breadth of the Wilson Centre’s contribution to education science and research.
- Be instrumental in anticipating and shaping the future focused questions of our field, remaining vigilant to emerging dynamics that require new insights, new processes, or innovative approaches in HPE.
- Build focus and momentum around areas of shared interest throughout our Wilson Centre community and across our broad ecosystem of education and practice.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

The intention of these actions is to build upon areas of strength where the Wilson Centre community is already leading research and scholarship while also creating the opportunity for collaborative activity around common interests and foci.

1. Coordinators will be identified for each focus area. The intention for leaders/caretakers is to help create gathering spots and momentum around common interests.
2. Members of these interest groups will refine their scope and articulate their domains of interest in more detail. We expect these interest areas to evolve based on the dialogue of members and their engagement efforts.
3. Each interest group will identify principles of engaged scholarship that will animate their activities. While engaged scholarship is oriented towards societal impact, we recognize that there are many different paths towards this aim. Engaged scholarship may take many different forms, depending on the communities engaged and the declared purpose of these collaborations. Identifying partnerships, articulating common interests, and developing synergistic relationships across our broad ecosystem of education, practice, and research communities is part of the work of engaged scholarship.
4. Each interest group will address how their topic area intersects with the need for ongoing critical reflection and learning about equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigeneity and accessibility.
5. Within the first year, each interest group will identify additional partners, funding possibilities, and opportunities to collaborate with new stakeholders (e.g., industry, government, public organizations) in ways that will advance scholarship and impact.
6. From these engagement activities, each group will generate an actionable short-term plan (3-5 years). This action plan is intended as a catalyst for collaborations, supporting engagement in ever better science.
7. Each interest group will develop an overarching communication plan to connect the interest groups with each other and with broader audiences.
8. On an ongoing basis, each interest group will engage in scoping activities, regularly addressing changes in the field and proposing new questions to inform education science within each domain of interest. In this way, the interest groups will remain vibrant, responsive, and future-focused in their plans while building upon existing scholarship and practice trajectories.

2 CULTIVATING A WORLD-RENOUNDED PHD PROGRAM



The Wilson Centre aims to conduct and contribute high quality, theory-oriented and leading interdisciplinary health professions education research. The Health Professions Education Research (HPER) PhD program serves an integral part of the Centre, reflecting and enacting these aims. This program contributes to the overall future of HPE by attracting and supporting the growth, meaningful contributions, and positioning of its learners. Professional growth and educational impact are fostered through a program that is designed to promote understanding of education science across disciplines, awareness of the various research paradigms and epistemological opportunities, and attention to issues of diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation.

We now aim to cultivate a doctoral program that is deeply rooted in theory, methodological depth and breadth; promotes flexibility for learners; and embeds interdisciplinarity and criticality. This provides exciting possibilities for innovative discoveries, creativity, contributions, and solutions to educational problems in the health professions. Our PhD program aims to connect learners with a network of scientists and Centre members, academic and professional institutions, hospitals, workplaces and industry. Together these provide learners with opportunities for access and experiences that are unique and situated. By cultivating a world-renowned PhD program at the Wilson Centre, we aim to attract and develop prominent future scientists and leaders in HPER.

ASPIRATIONS

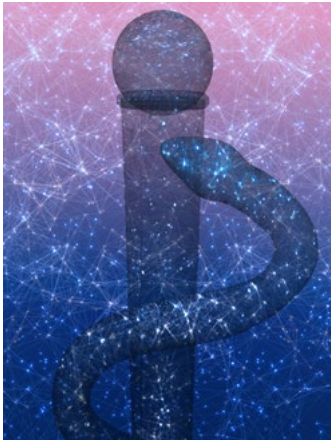
The Wilson Centre will cultivate a world-renowned doctoral program in health professions education research. This program will both reflect and enact the aims of the Centre to contribute high quality, theory-oriented and leading HPER. We will:

- Create a program structure with disciplinary, theoretical and methodological breadth and depth.
- Provide opportunities for intellectual growth, manoeuvrability and flexibility as learners gain greater exposure to and position themselves in HPER.
- Enhance the profile of the PhD program through its activities, positioning, partnerships, networks and diverse programs of research.
- Focus on issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigeneity and accessibility (EDIIA) in all aspects of the program and HPER.
- Leverage extensive networks to better integrate learners in applied educational settings where educational problems, innovations and meaningful solutions can be discovered.
- Prioritize wellness so that learners thrive personally as well as professionally.
- Seek more funding to support learner opportunities to focus on HPER.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

1. Attract national and international students across the health professions by leveraging and highlighting the diversity of Centre networks and partnerships, as well as scientists and researchers at the Wilson Centre and their programs of research.
2. Highlight the program's relevance to HPE curriculum, practice, and policy as a way of connecting the PhD program to these areas and providing a pathway for prospective students toward a future that leverages the analytical thinking and skills they will develop in the program.
3. Integrate theoretical roots with opportunities to think about and participate in applied problems. Broaden and strengthen networks and partnerships that lead to more and clearer applied opportunities to integrate with HPE contexts where educational problems and opportunities are present.
4. Integrate issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, indigeneity, and accessibility (EDIIA) throughout. Increase participation of Indigenous and underserved communities, students and researchers in the PhD program, and improve support for these.
5. Provide learner wellness strategies, as well as academic and career advising and opportunities, that are unique to the HPE research context and more generally.
6. Organize the supervision structure such that opportunities for prospective students are expanded, more visible, better distributed and representative of the Wilson Centre and its networks.
7. Revise or build where necessary, external communications in ways that achieve the Centre's and program's purposes and aspirations.
8. Review the positioning of the PhD program locally, nationally, and internationally to better signal and organize the PhD programs for prospective and enrolled learners.
9. Identify ways to increase and secure doctoral funding.

3 FOSTERING A COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH COMMUNITY



The Wilson Centre commits to continually fostering a strong, collaborative research community. The Centre is known for its diversity of disciplinary and professional expertise, and for leveraging these differences to generate impactful research. It is known for connecting practitioners across an array of scientific disciplines, health professions, and education domains. Yet collaborative community requires ongoing commitment and development. Arising challenges and opportunities in the broader academy, health system, and society include heightened attention to EDIIA, a shifting funding landscape, emerging and renewed foci on artificial intelligence, workforce capacity, and partnerships.

Accordingly, to continue building on this area of strength and to address persistent and arising challenges to interdisciplinarity and collaboration between educators, scientists, system leaders, and health professionals, we set forth a collection of aspirations and actions that foreground collaborative and equitable values and processes.

ASPIRATIONS

The Wilson Centre will:

- Uphold and enact a value for different forms of expertise and diverse perspectives.
- Foster purposeful collaboration between Centre members of all membership categories and disciplines.
- Enact interdisciplinarity through formalized discipline-crossing initiatives.
- Ensure transparent, equitable, and inclusive processes and guidelines for leadership positions, committee involvement, and supervision.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

1. Continually review membership categories to ensure that a diversity of perspective (e.g., professions, communities, scientific disciplines) and representation are considered.
2. Create an “alumni bridging program” that enables local clinician-researcher and administrator-researcher graduates of the Wilson Centre PhD or fellowship program to remain connected with the Centre community, and to link with Centre members beyond their immediate supervisors and mentors.
3. Create an internal exchange program for fellows and students. For instance, a student enrolled in a cognitive psychology or science laboratory may spend time working on a focused project with a sociologist.
4. Encourage and support members in pursuing professional development about EDIIA, team communication and team process, and develop a system to regularly monitor and advance these areas of continual work and growth.
5. Create and enact principles and transparent process for equitable and collaborative leadership processes including who is engaged and represented in Centre committees, events, and graduate program activities.

4 SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS HEALTH EDUCATION (IHE) SCHOLARSHIP



Indigenous Health Education Scholarship was introduced into the Wilson Centre's strategic planning in 2017 as an important area for the Centre's engagement. Indigenous health education is a relatively new field in western institutions. Traditions of racism continue in medical schools and hospitals. Indigenous scholars and practitioners are expected to shoulder burdens of underrepresentation in their work contexts by undertaking to transform the institutions where they work, teach about Indigenous health, mentor Indigenous learners and be accountable to their own communities. Early career researchers in IHE face these challenges as well as pressures to achieve traditional academic metrics (grant attainment, publication etc). They often lack access to appropriate support in navigating these demands and how to advocate for the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges and measures of impact in the academic context. Settler engagement in IHE research poses some risks that need careful management: e.g., problematic research ideas, colonial approaches, exploitation of new funding for Indigenous-related research, or undermining self-determination.

There is now opportunity for the Wilson Centre to support Indigenous Health Education in scholarship and practice, building on emerging work and relationships. Currently there are very few Indigenous educators or educational mentors in HPE. There is also need for resources, models, and shared wise practices to help support the growth of Indigenous Health Education Scholarship. Reconciliation is an ongoing process that invites the Wilson Centre's commitment to a collective effort.

ASPIRATIONS

The Wilson Centre will actively commit to supporting and promoting Indigenous Health Education Scholarship, beginning with internal work to develop the necessary understandings and practices. We will:

- Facilitate growth and support for Indigenous health educators, learners and scholars, beginning with creating safe spaces and clear pathways into these spaces for students and researchers.
- Build the Wilson Centre as a place for generativity and growth in IHE, where people together cultivate good ways of ensuring cultural safety, anti-racist practice, listening, understanding and epistemic humility.
- Strive to integrate processes of truth and reconciliation in the Wilson Centre's activity and research.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

1. Build a culturally safe learning environment for Indigenous scholars and community members who interact with the Wilson Centre.
 - a. Offer educational activities about cultural safety and anti-racism for all members of the Wilson Centre (ensure these activities adopt an intersectional lens and respect the diversity of Indigenous peoples, communities and experiences).
 - b. Ensure that supervisors for Indigenous learners have completed San'yas [URL link <https://sanyas.ca>] or other educational activities about anti-racist practice and Indigenous cultural safety.
 - c. Create appropriate mechanisms for learners and other members to bring forward experiences of anti-Indigenous racism within the Wilson Centre.
 - d. Build formal or informal partnerships with Indigenous health education organizations.
2. Mentor and support Indigenous learners, scholars, educators and practitioners interested in health professions' education.
 - a. Identify Indigenous learners, scholars and practitioners who are interested in health professions' education and support them through formal mentorship, sponsorships and resources as needed.
 - b. Create a circle/network of Indigenous health educators (details to be determined/articulated by the members).
3. Build reconciliation into research:
 - a. Consider new types of faculty appointments to make explicit links with IHE scholars.
 - b. Work collaboratively with IHE scholars and allies to create resources, models, and frameworks, and shared wise practices that can support students, ECRs and practitioners. In particular, identify and share wise practices for non-Indigenous HPE scholars working in community engagement.
 - c. Value different ways of knowing, and practice epistemic humility in health professions' education scholarship.
 - d. Consider questions such as how can Wilson Centre scholars be critical without reproducing a colonial deficit model around Indigeneity or Indigenous frameworks and pedagogies?
 - e. Promote "pedagogies of discomfort" which help Wilson Centre members appreciate and learn from discomfort in IHE scholarship.
 - f. Practice listening with humility.

5 CULTIVATING IMPACTFUL PARTNERSHIPS



The Wilson Centre's partnerships with scholars and educational centres in the Toronto Academic Health Science Network (TAHSN), in education centres across Canada and around the world, have driven innovative ground-breaking research and thinking. Expertise from our partners in other research centres and in other cultural contexts such as Addis Ababa and Singapore have challenged us to think differently about how health professions education is delivered and about where our research gaze should be focused. The varied world views, the diverse expertise, and the different experiences that our partners have brought to our collaborations have challenged us to think more deeply and to produce better, higher quality research expanding the boundaries of health professions education research (HPER) in the process.

We see four guiding principles as key to forming successful partnerships:

1. **Excellence** - The partners share a common goal of academic excellence
2. **Efficiency** - The project is equitable and financially sustainable for both partners
3. **Impact** - The focus of the partnership is to make an impact in the domain of HPE
4. **Social Good** - The project contributes to the creation of a social good

ASPIRATIONS

The Wilson Centre will work with diverse partners to:

- Create new knowledge in health professions education.
- Enhance capacity in HPER.
- Push boundaries in HPER.
- Synthesize diverse knowledge and world views.
- Promote ethical, equitable, moral and scientific research.
- Transcend past ways of seeing and understanding the world.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

1. Identify when it is best to engage with a partner and when it is best to rely on internal strength. While we recognize that there is deep theoretical and methodological strength in the Wilson Centre, we must also recognize that there is extensive expertise outside our walls which can help us in our work to push the boundaries of HPER and expand our ability to the creation of new knowledge.
2. Resist any tendency to focus mostly on well-trodden paths that lead to partnerships with like-minded, culturally similar, educational centres and scientists. We will instead consider how to engage more regularly with diverse partners to challenge ourselves to think more broadly, to broaden the reach of our work, and to increase capacity in the domain of HPE research and practice.
3. Review our partnership practices to ensure that all partners are heard, and engaged, in every collaboration, and that we contribute to pushing the boundaries of HPE. We recognize that our privileged position in a western academic health science centre can result in our academic voices being amplified over other voices resulting in a privileging of existing hierarchies and existing boundaries.
4. Consider how to embed concepts of equity more explicitly into all aspects of our work. While considerations of equity and power have always been at the core of our scholarly work, we will work to enhance our practices of equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigeneity and accessibility, embedding them in our decisions about partnership formation and in the process synthesize diverse knowledge and world views expanding the boundaries of thought in HPE.
5. Develop an evaluative model for partnerships that is both formative and summative taking into consideration concepts of equity, social good, impact, finances and the contribution to the domain of health professions education.
6. Review how partnerships can be better financially supported. Not all partners or projects have the same access to resources or financial support. Innovative thinking around finances can be required. To that end, we will consider how our partnerships might find funding taking into consideration traditional and non-traditional sources of funding such as grant giving organizations, philanthropists and industrial partners.
7. Push the current boundaries of current thinking through embracing new ideas, alternate world views, and different theories, and by engaging with diverse partners, so that we can transcend current understandings of HPE.



COMMUNICATING OUR IMPACT

The Wilson Centre's discovery science and engaged scholarship have had strong impacts on both knowledge and practice in health professions education, and are well-recognized by colleagues and external reviewers. However, we realize that we can do better in clear, regular communication of these impacts to our stakeholders. Such reporting relies on systematic collection of evidence.

Academic impact is most commonly reported through evidence such as academic refereed publications, citations, grant income received, awards and honours, and reports by external colleagues. We already collect this information. Going forward we are committed to consolidating and reporting meaningful academic impact more regularly.

Societal research impact is about the concrete benefits of research to particular beneficiaries (practitioners, policy makers, the public etc). The Wilson Centre generates at least three different kinds of societal impact:

- Instrumental: influencing the development of policy or service provision in health professions education, altering or affirming current practices;
- Conceptual: reframing debates, changing thinking, or contributing to culture/attitude changes in ways that help improve policy or practice in education; and
- Capacity building: contributing to skill development, research capacity, research use, or new inquiry taken up in educational policy or practice communities.

We aspire to communicate this societal research impact regularly in ways that will be meaningful to our various stakeholders. To do this, we need to identify evidence that shows our impacts on policy and practice, feasible ways to collect it, and effective ways to present it.

Two important principles underpin our work in developing regular communication of our academic and societal research impacts. First, the focus is on collective impact of the Wilson Centre, not the achievements of individuals. All members of the Centre contribute in different ways to what can be identified as the most visible or significant contributions of our research to knowledge and society. Second, we continue to wrestle with the incongruity between highlighting our own achievements while seeking genuinely equitable and collaborative relationships with others. We will continue to ask ourselves: How do we balance the need to communicate our significant research impact with our commitment to inhabit narratives that are not invested in hierarchical power and centrality?

INITIAL ACTIONS TOWARDS CLEAR COMMUNICATION OF OUR RESEARCH

1. Identify a small number of key areas where we collectively concentrate our societal research impacts. Develop a process to gather specific evidence of instrumental, conceptual, or capacity-building evidence in these areas from Wilson Centre members. Regularly review and, if appropriate, revise these areas.
2. Develop impact stories through backtracking strategies: identify examples of practices or policy directions now in use that clearly reflect the influence of Wilson Centre education science, and track backwards to find indicators of this influence.
3. Review different extant sources of evidence to identify indicators of research impact that could be feasibly collected and consolidated on a regular basis: such as individuals' annual reports; graduate student outcomes (their publications, contributions, or career directions); external testimonials such as letters supporting promotion or award applications; etc. Where appropriate identify new forms of evidence that we could start to collect more regularly.
4. Explore a way to select those sources of evidence that are most useful and accessible, in terms of quality and quantity, for showing the Centre's research impact. Develop a feasible, efficient process for regular collection of selected types of research impact evidence, both academic and societal impact, from the Centre community.
5. Develop ways to communicate the Centre's impact stories, through this evidence, that will be meaningful to stakeholders. Invite selected stakeholders to provide external perspectives to help us understand and communicate our most important impacts.
6. Identify the amount and form of administrative resource that will be needed over time to support the regular collection and reporting of impact evidence.



SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES

Our 2022-2026 strategic plan depends upon supports and resources that are fit for purpose. We re-examined our existing infrastructure in light of our new strategy as well as changing external demands and challenges. Special “problem-solving teams” of Wilson Centre members each analysed the following operational areas and recommended initial actions going forward. These recommendations are intended to be ongoing areas of experimentation and learning as we implement our strategy.

FUNDING

The Wilson Centre has a history of strong funding support from its governing bodies, the University Health Network and the University of Toronto. It has also had recent significant growth in grant capture and philanthropic support. As we look to a future of continued growth, we realize that we cannot rest on our laurels. We see a future where we will have to think more creatively and to engage with our funding partners and stakeholders more actively as we anticipate competition for traditional funds to only increase.

To that end, we plan to:

- Engage in more active outreach to our existing funding bodies to make them more aware of our ongoing research and its potential societal impact.
- Make more visible the links between our research activities and the strategic goals of our governing bodies, the University Health Network and the University of Toronto.
- Develop diverse impact indicators that will appeal to, and be understood, by a more varied and diverse donor group.
- Work with advancement officers in University Health Network and the University of Toronto to develop more varied philanthropic cases for giving.
- Develop clear communication strategies focused on our research impact using clear non-academic language.
- Explore funding potential of new partners, non-traditional foundations, granting organizations and governmental organizations.
- Explore ways to further enhance revenue generation opportunities.

SUPPORT FOR FACULTY

We looked at mechanisms to support current Wilson Centre faculty ranging from job stability and remuneration equity to research support and career development. We also identified the complex and diverse relationships which influence this discourse at both Centre and individual levels. Going forward, we plan to:

- Establish an advisory committee reporting to the Centre Director, with specific terms of reference which include (a) identifying pathways to success; (b) establishing a mentorship program for new scientists; (c) enhancing role clarity; (d) undertaking market scans with other similar centres across Canada and internationally; (e) facilitating leadership experience on a rotational basis; (f) developing strategies to support career advancement and research profile; (g) liaising with the Centre Graduate Program Committee regarding opportunities for student supervision and graduate committee involvement; and (h) liaising with other committees to promote the diverse impact of Centre scientists.
- We will support those who apply to the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation (IHPME) tenure track positions. Attend the IHPME seminars and workshops on promotion which are open to Centre scientists.
- Establish a sabbatical fund, through philanthropy or other mechanisms.
- Explore options to support scientists with the paperwork associated with obtaining ethics approval, submitting grant applications and promotion packages as well as looking for grant opportunities.
- Conduct periodic evaluation to track career outcomes through the lenses of transparency, diversity, and equity. Exit interviews should continue with departing scientists. The advisory committee terms of reference should be revisited regularly to ensure that the focus remains relevant.

FURTHER FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Beyond our current faculty, many of the aspirations proposed in this strategy will require more academic resources than are currently available at the Wilson Centre. One example is the growing PhD program, which eventually will need a wider network of supervisory support than the Centre community provides. In addition, a recurring theme in the initial actions proposed for many of our key strategic priorities is building new relationships and alliances for mutual benefit, with colleagues and units drawn from our governing institutions.

Going forward, we plan to:

- Re-examine the Centre’s membership categories (such as distinctions between scientist and researcher, cross-appointments, the role of fellows and of ‘key associates’) with the aim of revising and refining these to meet future needs.
- Explore ways to develop associate faculty appointments: experts in various areas invited to formalize links with the Centre. These may include associate faculty doctoral supervisors drawn from other units, associate faculty to help develop our Indigenous Health Education Scholarship initiative, formal links sustained with our PhD alumni, and so forth.
- In each of the three new research “areas of interest”, examine key gaps in expertise and propose needs for future full-time faculty appointments. These will be pursued as and when new resources are realized through our new funding strategy.
- Examine deeper questions about what “good engagement” means and entails. This is part of the Wilson Centre’s aspiration to integrate processes of reconciliation in its research. In pursuing new forms of faculty links and partnerships, the Centre commits to exploring ways to bring these about that are rooted in mutual respect, humility, concern for others’ wellbeing, and shared learning.

ORGANIZING AND GOVERNING

From the reports of the five Caretaker groups, we created a summary grid in which we compiled and proposed a new set of organizing responsibilities. This can help ensure that the actions proposed by each of the five groups will (a) be embedded in the core operations of the Centre and (b) enable the Centre to respond nimbly to changing circumstances. Each Caretaker group offered a high-quality report that initiates and creates a new, generative, and diverse set of planning proposals that require nudging the Centre’s organization, governance, and ethos and thus all its members. In particular, the Indigenous Health Education Scholarship group prompts us to develop in-depth and novel structures at the Centre.

The proposed actions of all the Caretaker groups relative to organizing require five leads. We plan for each of these leads to annually review the progress made with respect to the recommended actions and report their findings to the Centre’s Senior Management committee. The Director could, in turn, brief the Centre’s Governance committee of these findings. In this manner, unanticipated events effecting the recommendations can be considered.

In proposing annual reviews, we are mindful of the workload and scheduling implied by these tasks. Accordingly, we plan to limit the time taken to document progress, and to expect only brief update reports from each of the leads. Because of the newness and innovative quality of the IHE Caretaker group’s analysis and recommendations, we aspire to organize an education event, with broad representation, to celebrate the Indigenous innovation and plan its future.

COMMUNICATIONS

Effective external communication is integral to the success of the Wilson Centre. All communication from the Centre must be aligned with our strategic priorities. Going forward, we plan to address three key issues:

- Our communication approach can profile the Centre more effectively. We can best cultivate partnerships and attract high quality learners by ensuring that we have a coherent, recognizable brand and clear messaging about what we do. We plan to invest resources in branding work to be done both internally and externally as well as streamlining our website to focus on our core work.
- Our current communication approach can be more dynamic. Strategic, timed communication across our website and social media can facilitate profiling of our research community, encourage public engagement, and attract learners. We must be responsive to accomplishments, events, and deadlines in our communication strategy.
- Our current communication approach can be more cohesive. We have too many communications from too many sources with too much information. We plan to streamline communications so that our communities can identify our focus and priorities.

PHYSICAL WORKSPACE

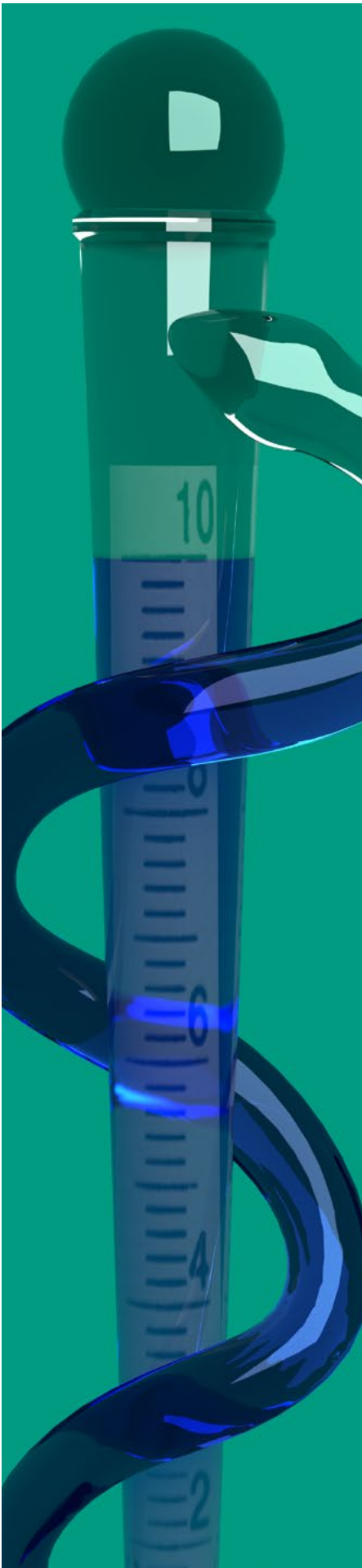
The Wilson Centre is housed in the Toronto General Hospital, and thus is unique to other Canadian education research centres located on university campuses. Physical proximity to hospital-based researchers and the activity of patient care has been important for generating the Centre's high quality education science that is embedded in health care practices and systems.

Space was identified by our external reviewers as a key future issue. They noted that physical space is a critical facilitator of the collaboration, innovation and interdisciplinarity of our research work. However, the current space is limited for the work we are undertaking. Meanwhile, institutional considerations of overall space utilization could impact the Centre. Other issues include our institutions' post-pandemic guidelines on safe interpersonal work practices which are still uncertain. As well, our own relationships with space have shifted given that virtual work practices dominated the Centre's activity from March 2020 to December 2021. This experience has suggested new possibilities for growth while highlighting the importance of physical space in sustaining a strong community as a resource and support.

Going forward, the Wilson Centre is convening a range of discussions to address these issues. We will complete our assessment of people's experiences and the effects on their work of the recent virtual work practices. Hybrid work models (combining days at home and at the physical Centre) will be developed and trialled, alongside discussions about most effective uses of the available physical space.

We are also exploring new opportunities for collaborative sharing of space, working with partners to enhance its potential for activity and presence. For example, beginning in the fall of 2021 the Wilson Centre is sharing space with the Indigenous Health Program (IHP) at UHN while the organization works to design and build a dedicated Indigenous space at UHN. This opportunity enables the Centre to work collaboratively with Indigenous Health Education scholars and allies, building relationships and sharing knowledge. We will continue seeking ways to use our space to ensure robust opportunities for collaborations and exchange of ideas, while ensuring positive impacts for our members and partners.

These six operational areas of funding, support for faculty, further faculty appointments, organizing and governing, communications, and physical workspace will require some prioritization and balance. We cannot tackle them all at once. Our implementation plan will need to carefully sequence the work required. We will focus attention on those supports and resources that, at any given time, are most needed to assist our strategy implementation as well as our everyday activity.



EVALUATING OUR PROGRESS

We do not view this strategic plan as an achievement to be approved and put away, but as a springboard for a range of activities. Like many other organizations, we have learned a great deal about dramatic uncertainty through the recent pandemic years. A written plan at best can only represent today's aspiration. What emerges tomorrow, and how we negotiate it using our planning principles, will ultimately form what becomes enacted as our strategy.

Our intention during 2022-2026 is to approach this negotiating process as a collective learning opportunity. As we experiment with proposed actions and reflect on these experiments, we develop new possibilities for further action while learning about our assumptions and our changing environments.

Therefore, our next step is to create a plan for implementing this strategy. We have appointed a coordinator for this. Actions proposed in this document will be sequenced and delegated, with timelines. The process and specific achievements of these will be assessed regularly in terms of our strategic aspirations. Further actions will be identified through these assessments. Specific indicators will be developed for each area in the first year. These indicators need careful thought to be meaningful for nuanced activity, and feasible in terms of gathering evidence and reporting results.

Each of our five “Key Strategic Priorities” set forth in this document will go forward over the next five years with some form of caretaking, perhaps through groups that may change in membership and focus over time. They will begin by guiding the Proposed Actions described in this document, reflecting critically on what happens, what changes, what is being learned, and how to assess these dynamics. They also will propose next actions and help modify strategic priorities as needed. Additional activities proposed in the “Supports and Resources” section will be implemented through existing Centre structures, with a plan of timelines and ways to assess ongoing results. Monitoring the overall balance of all these different areas of activity is an important part of our ongoing evaluation of this plan's realization, to adjust relative priority and distribution of resources as needed at different times of the implementation.

Overall, the Wilson Centre is committed to accountability and clear, evidence-informed reporting of its progress and impacts. It undertakes these activities with the theoretically rich, critically reflexive approach that has built its reputation. The ongoing principle at heart of these activities is growth, not production. We do not look only at how we measure our progress. We also ask: How do we understand growth and impact, and how will we advance our practices around evaluation to make both growth and impact visible?

DIRECTOR'S REFLECTIONS



I am grateful for the engagement of the Wilson Centre community in creating this 2022-2026 Wilson Centre Strategic Plan. We thank Professor Emerita Tara Fenwick for expertly facilitating this journey. As we navigated the bumps and jolts of successive pandemic wave, we had deep and wide-ranging strategic discussions. We are now ready to begin the exciting work of implementation, recognizing that this document will be used to guide rather than constrain future directions.

As I write these thoughts, I realize that it was fortuitous to be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Wilson Centre as we embarked on this strategic planning exercise. This allowed us to juxtapose understandings of our past with ideas for the future, which of course will include continued deep engagement in ‘traditional’ areas of health professions education research such as teaching, learning, and assessment. We will also continue to build on our strengths as we continue to pay attention to structures, systems, and technologies in HPER, and actively engage in pushing boundaries within HPER, including adding diverse perspectives and incorporating socially relevant concerns into the field.

Attending to our history gives us clarity about where we are now, which can in turn influence decisions about our future. For example, how might we incorporate the fact that healthcare and higher education in Canada and globally have been inextricably intertwined with colonisation? Do we need to think about how to de-centre our Centre in some engagements? Should we reflect upon ways we contribute to discovery science and engaged scholarship given our privilege as a research centre that is part of both a hospital

and a university that are globally very highly ranked? Recognizing the benefits of this prestige challenges us to think—scientifically, ethically, morally and practically—about good ways to interact and intervene with generosity and humility in local, national, and global academic spaces.

Going forward, we may decide to increase our engagements beyond the boundaries of HPER. In addition to mirroring and incorporating societal concerns into HPER, are there ways HPER might have broader impact in driving social change? For example, we might see potential roles for HPER centres such as ourselves to support the revitalization of global partnerships as articulated in the **United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals**. With our dual focus on health and education we have an opportunity to develop partnerships for the purposes of mobilizing knowledge, expertise, technology, and resources in ways that are collaborative, reciprocal, and impactful.

As I think about the future, I believe that the Wilson Centre, along with the broader HPER community, is poised to leverage our education science knowledge and theoretical insights to inform key health and education issues of our time. However we collectively choose to engage in different spaces, through our work at the confluence of health and higher education, we can harness the transformative potential of education in service of a healthier world.

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