

# UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON SUSTAINABILITY PEDAGOGY

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ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE 2022-2023 ACADEMIC YEAR



# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

Centring sustainability at the University of Toronto requires critiquing and re-imagining the ways that teaching and learning occurs in higher education. Starting in February 2022, the Community of Practice (CoP) has brought together UT faculty, staff, and doctoral students from different programs, faculties and campuses to discuss and critically analyze the *what* and the *how* of teaching sustainability. Comparing and critiquing the development of pedagogy, we've explored transformative and intersectional approaches to sustainability teaching across the university.

Through online webinars, in-person retreats, and lunch forums, the Community of Practice has collaboratively engaged faculty, staff and doctoral student members in exploring transformative pedagogies to engage their students in cognitive, affective, and embodied forms of learning. Key to this is centering Indigenous worldviews and 'Land as first teacher' in sustainability teaching; when combined with transdisciplinary, equity-focused, and place-based education, transformative pedagogy provides learning that is relational, community-engaged, justice-forward, and action-oriented.

We've been encouraged and energized by the positive feedback on events and the emerging sense of connection amongst Community of Practice members. We look forward to continuing and expanding the themes, reach, and outcomes of the CoP in the 2023-2024 year ahead.

**MICHAEL CLASSENS**

**HILARY INWOOD**

**LIAT MARGOLIS**

**NICOLE SPIEGELAAR**

**SARAH URQUHART**

Community of Practice Organizing Team

## JHI WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP 2022-2023

Michael Classens, A&S School of the Environment

Liat Margolis, Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape & Design

Nicole Spiegelaar, Trinity College and School of the Environment

Hilary Inwood, OISE Curriculum, Teaching & Learning

Ellyse Winter, Trinity College and School of the Environment

Sarah Urquhart, Ph.D. student, OISE Curriculum, Teaching & Learning

Maria Vamvalis, Ph.D. student, OISE Curriculum, Teaching & Learning

Matilda Dipieri, M.E.S. student, School of the Environment

[Supported by Jyotsna Kumar, undergraduate student]



# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE GOALS

## **Community and Collaboration**

Provide a collaborative space to bring together UofT Faculty, Staff, and Doctoral Students across multiple faculties, disciplines, and campuses to engage in professional learning and community building

## **Reimagining Teaching and Learning**

Reimagining/critiquing how sustainability teaching and learning occurs in higher education in pedagogy, course curriculum program design, and co-curricular learning to inform how sustainability is taught at the University of Toronto

## **Knowledge Mobilization**

## **Transformative and Intersectional Approaches**

Exploring cognitive, affective, equity-based, and embodied forms of learning. Key to this is centering Indigenous worldviews and 'Land as first teacher' in sustainability teaching in combination with transdisciplinary, equity-focused and place-based education

## **Critique and Reflection**

Instigating critique about the University's approaches to sustainability as well as supporting individual & collective reflection on the complexity and challenges of teaching and learning that is relational, community-engaged, justice-forward and action-oriented

# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE OUTCOMES

## Designing and Delivering Learning Events

Our learning events have thoughtfully brought in academic speakers to inform professional learning.

Events have occurred both in-person and virtually.

Please see the following pages for details about each event.



## Mobilizing Knowledge

Sharing and learning has been facilitated through our learning events on a range of topics. A digital hub through our [Community of Practice Website](#) includes a repository of event summaries, webinar recordings, resources with literature and summary notes.

## Building Community

Our learning events and discussions have brought together Faculty from across UofT in contact to connect across disciplines and departments. Faculty with the following affiliations have participated in our learning events:

- Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design
- Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
- Trinity College
- Victoria College
- School of the Environment
- Arts & Science (Biology, Human Geography, Anthropology, English Literature, Sociology, Indigenous Studies)
- The Munk School
- Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education
- Faculty of Engineering
- Dalla Lana School of Public Health
- Rotman School of Management

## Embedding Equity

Sustainability teaching & learning has been explored with a justice stance (e.g. Indigenous knowledges and Black liberation)

## Fostering Capacity

The Organizing team has supported colleague sharing sessions for promising practices and has provided paid opportunities to students.

# COP LEARNING EVENTS

## WINTER/SPRING 2022



Virtual Event






In-person Event

<p>Faculty Forum Launch</p> <p>February 2022</p>		<p>Prompted by informal Faculty conversation about the challenges of sustainability teaching, this forum emerged to bring together UofT Faculty across multiple divisions and units to reflection on the what and the how of teaching sustainability in comprehensive, coordinated and transdisciplinary ways. This first event invited interested Faculty to engage in critical discussion and reflection.</p>	<p>20 UofT Faculty</p>
<p>Symposium on Anishinaabe Teachings on Sustainability</p> <p>March 2022</p>		<p>Dr. Nicole Bell (Trent University) joined us to share how Indigenous knowledge and worldviews can inform our understanding and teaching of sustainability. Opportunities for how to actualize an ethic of interconnection and responsibility in post-secondary education was discussed in small groups.</p>	<p>108 UofT and general public</p>
<p>Symposium on Black Liberation &amp; Sustainability Pedagogy</p> <p>June 2022</p>		<p>This panel discussion talked about the intersections of anti-Black racism and how Black liberation can strengthen sustainability curricula and pedagogy in courses and programs across multiple disciplines. Panelists: Dr. Fikile Nxumalo (Assistant Professor, OISE, University of Toronto), Dr. Ingrid Waldron (Hope Chair in Peace and Health, McMaster University), and Dr. Jennifer D. Adams (Associate professor, University of Calgary)</p>	<p>199 UofT and general public</p>
<p>Faculty &amp; Doctoral Student Forum</p> <p>June 2022</p>		<p>This half-day in-person forum for UofT faculty and doctoral students provided the opportunity to continue dialogue on the pedagogies needed for teach equity and inclusion in sustainability, using many of the themes discussed in the Anishinaabe teachings and Black liberation symposiums.</p>	<p>23 UofT Faculty, Staff and Doctoral Student</p>



# COP LEARNING EVENTS

## FALL 2022

<p>Farm, Forage, and Feast Retreat at UTSC</p> <p>September 2022</p>		<p>This full day retreat provided a day of learning and community building, focused on Land-based pedagogy and community-engaged decolonial practices at the UofT Scarborough. We began with an opening circle by members of the Nikibii Dawadinna Giigwag and we learned about agricultural practices from Indigenous Plant and Agricultural Knowledge Keeper Isaac Crosby while Harvesting late September vegetables at the UTSC farm. Following this was a valley trail hike, then seasonal foods were prepared collaboratively and enjoyed together in partnership with the Culinaría Research Centre.</p>	<p>29 UofT Faculty, Staff and Doctoral Students</p>
<p>Symposium on Bringing Hope into Sustainability Teaching</p> <p>Nov 2022</p>		<p>Our students are experiencing ever-increasing levels of eco-anxiety as they grapple with the realities of growing up in a climate crisis. We were asking: How can we support students' critical engagement with the complexities of climate justice and sustainability motivated by a sense of hopefulness about their future? Dr. Kari Grain (UBC, author of Critical Hope) and Dr. Elin Kelsey (author of Hope Matters) spoke about their research as part of a panel discussion about the ways in which hope can be manifested to support students' visioning and actions towards an equitable, just and sustainable planet.</p>	<p>74 UofT and general public</p>
<p>Lunch Forum on Bringing Hope into Sustainability Teaching</p> <p>Dec 2022 Lunch Forum</p>		<p>This in-person Forum focused on how Faculty can support students to shift from climate anxiety to climate action. We explored how narratives of hope and optimism are being brought into sustainability-related education. UofT faculty, staff and doctoral students shared current examples of how they are implementing a pedagogy of hope in sustainability-related programs to inspire one another with practices already used in the university.</p>	<p>22 UofT Faculty, Staff and Doctoral Students</p>

# COP LEARNING EVENTS

## WINTER 2023

<p>Symposium on the Potential of Transformative Sustainability Pedagogy</p> <p>February 2023</p>		<p>This symposium considered how universities could shift teaching and learning toward sustainability pedagogy. This was done by reflecting on the curriculum in courses with inventive approaches to teaching and learning about the climate crisis.</p> <p>This webinar features talks from Dr. Heather Burns (Portland State University) and Dr. Rob VanWynsberghe (UBC), who spoke about the potential of transformative pedagogy and how it must be community-engaged, justice-forward, and action-oriented.</p>	<p>98 UofT and general public</p>
<p>Lunch Forum on the Potential of Transformative Sustainability Pedagogy</p> <p>March 2023</p>		<p>To follow the February webinar, a lunch time in-person discussion allowed for exploration into the potential of transformative pedagogy in terms of being relational, community-engaged, justice-forward, and action-oriented to better align with principles of sustainability.</p> <p>UofT faculty, staff, and doctoral students were invited to share how they were implementing transformative learning in sustainability-related programs, courses, or initiatives as a way to inform and inspire one another with practices at UofT.</p>	<p>30 UofT Faculty, Staff and Doctoral Students</p>

# REFLECTION AND IMPACT

Building Community

Designing & Delivering  
Learning Events

"Meeting other people who care about this topic, getting to spend a few hours focused on ideas, hearing people's great input...it's probably my most energizing activity; I always leave with new people I want to work with, books I want to read, and ideas I want to research."

"Getting exposure to a wide range of theoretical, methodological, and axiological approaches to sustainability teaching [is valuable]. It is awesome that this CoP is engaging people from many disciplines. That is one of the things I appreciate the most because it helps you engage with contributions outside of your disciplinary "box."

Fostering Capacity

"The in person forum was a wonderful format to showcase work (great that there was an open invitation for anyone interested in sharing their work), with the added benefit of networking and building connections"



# REFLECTION AND IMPACT [Continued]

Mobilizing Knowledge

"Very valuable to learn how others are shifting their approaches to teaching and learning and hear the opportunities and challenges that come up in the process. There seems to be much willingness to share and mutually support this work, which is encouraging."

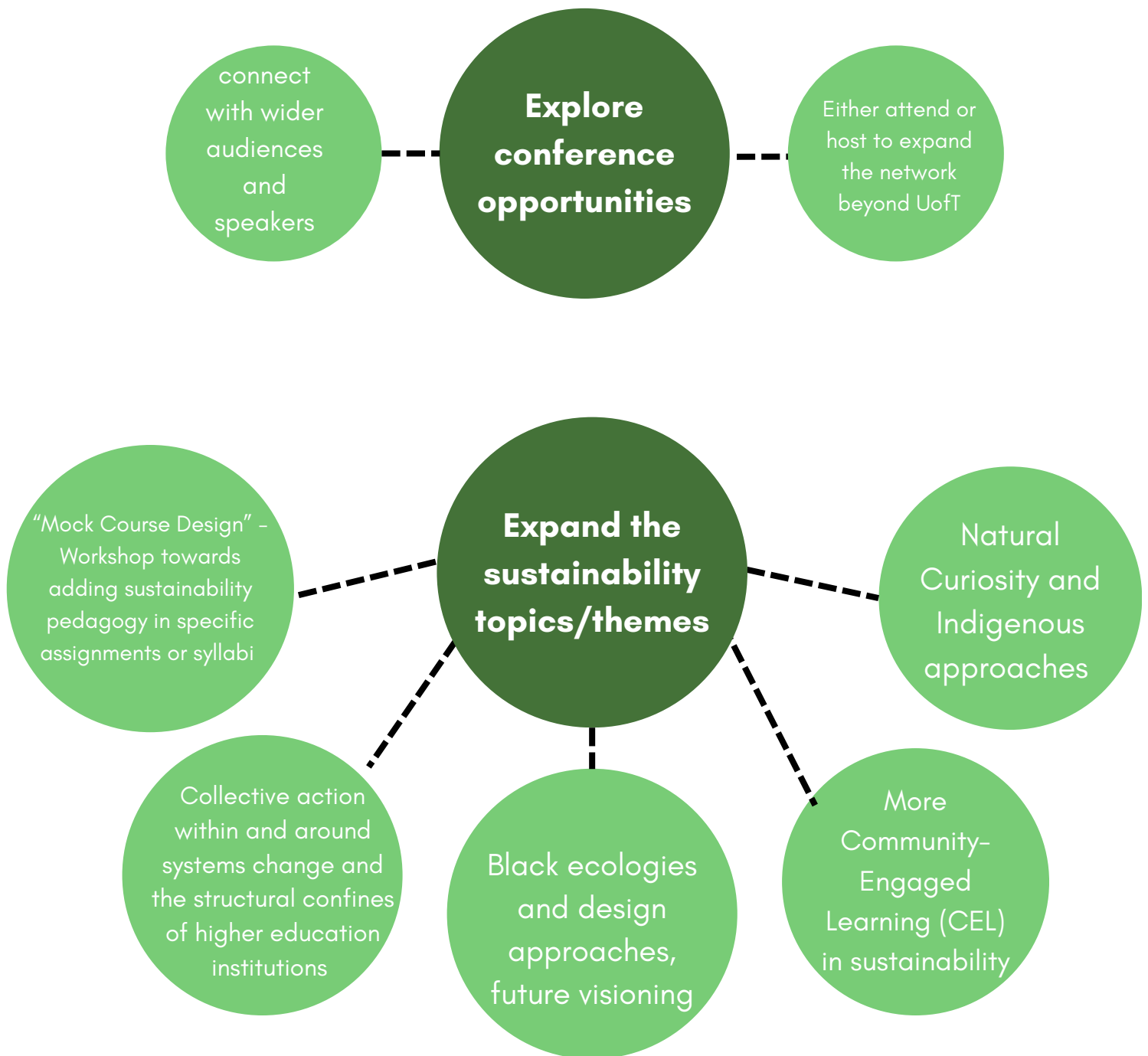
Fostering Capacity

"Confidence to explore ideas that seemed daunting to address before (including indigenous ideas into a non-indigenous course)"

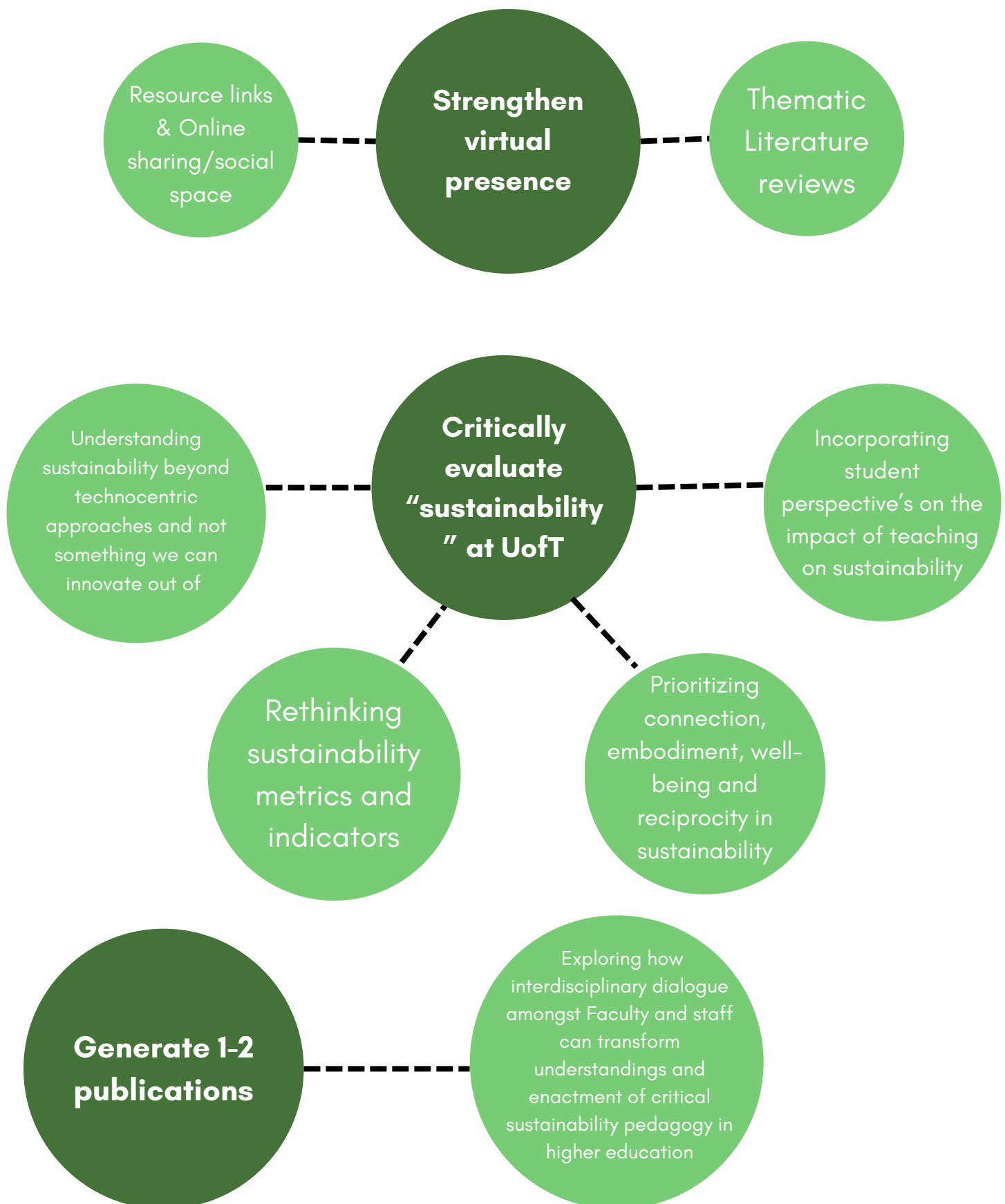
"I learnt new ways of incorporating ideas in my own teaching pedagogy. For example, the first webinar on Anishinaabe Teachings on Sustainability (March 2022) was eye-opening for me! The use of artwork in developing important themes resonated with me."

Embedding Equity

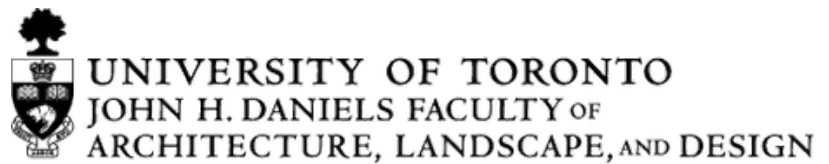
# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FUTURE PLANS



# FUTURE PLANS [Continued]



# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



Jackman Humanities Institute  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



This Community of Practice on Sustainability Pedagogy has been made possible by the collaborative opportunities and funds from a variety of partners. We are thankful for your contributions to the ongoing development of the CoP.

The CoP organizing team was designated as a Jackman Humanities Institute Working Group for 2022-23.