



Main Themes

Research Impact and Knowledge Exchange

d. Interdisciplinary Focus

The primary focus of our research will be interdisciplinary, collaborative, and incorporate capacity building. A priority will be ensuring that diverse areas of research and expertise are showcased across fields addressing challenges from a systems science perspective. Research today is moving further away from single researcher, single discipline-focused research towards thematic, team-based collaborative initiatives, which the Institute will reflect.

e. Impactful Research

It is essential to engage with African partners in addressing their needs, priorities, and ensure we are engaging and striving for reciprocal partnerships that also fit well within our member's research strengths. Research aims and objectives will align with Western research strengths as well as with priorities of African countries and scholars and address major societal issues that will benefit both Africa and the global north.

f. Improved Engagement

Strategic partnership building and long-term relationship sustainability will be a key area of focus. Engagement with partners in governments, organizations, not-for-profit organizations, academic institutions, and communities with a common purpose to build capacity of research and academic endeavors with the African continent will be strengthened.

g. Knowledge Exchange

Improving our knowledge exchange will be tied in with improving engagement. Ensuring that partners are included throughout the process of the research from ideation, development, to implementation and outcomes impact will be a central practice. Constant updates to our website on current projects, research and activities will be vital. Taking advantage of remote learning's opportunities during COVID-19 and post-pandemic to increase engagement and knowledge exchange activities via technology. Further events such as seminar series, course exchanges, workshops will also all contribute to keeping members and partners engaged.

Enhancing Scholarship

h. Lobbying/Advocacy for International Students

Several barriers face many study visa applicants who come from an African country. The Africa Institute will endeavour to remain vigilant and aware of these barriers and play a greater role in advocating to improve and ensure equitable access to Canadian education and success of African students. This includes but is not limited to: provision of scholarships specific for African student applicants; advocating for different grading systems and a fair grading conversion; working with and supporting the Western International and Exchange Student Centre in addressing current Visa challenges faced by African students (government); playing a role in welcoming and engaging African students at Western; lobbying the central administration as well as Western International and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for policy creation and action that will remove barriers African students face; support students and trainees in their education and transition to Canadian culture. An alumni network will be built, to provide a platform for current and past students to engage and share opportunities for networking and professional development - which is beneficial to foster a sense of community and sustainability, within the Institute. The Institute will ensure that at least 50 % of scholars engaged in all its programming will be women.

i. Academic Programming

We have a strong network of academic and research expertise at Western to offer Africa-focused programming at Western. Potential approaches include the development of a certificate or diploma program in African studies which can expand to include thematic-based program offerings. We will ensure that a diverse representation of

