



BCIT IDEAS Lens programme – Equality Diversity & Inclusion



SDG focus

- ☒ Goal 4 - Quality education
- ☒ Goal 5 - Gender equality
- ☒ Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities
- ☒ Goal 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
- ☒ Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals

What did you do?

The BCIT IDEAS Lens launched in 2024 as a way of approaching our work at BCIT. IDEAS refers to the concepts of Indigenous, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, Sustainability, and Student Wellbeing. Acknowledging our historical and contemporary realities, we recognize the impacts of colonialism, racism, sexism, and discrimination. IDEAS embodies care and accountability, guiding how we collaborate and relate, with everyone at BCIT playing a role in advancing these principles.

The IDEAS Lens seeks to bring together a set of guiding documents, i.e. interconnected visions, strategies, and plans from across BCIT and provide a holistic lens through which to embed them into all work across the Institute. These documents include BCIT's Strategic Plan, Anti-Racism Framework, Indigenous Vision, Student Wellbeing Action Plan, Accessibility Plan, and Sustainability Vision. By applying an IDEAS Lens, we can develop additional tools to integrate IDEAS throughout BCIT.



Image: IDEAS Lens logo

What were the benefits and outcomes?

1. Development of an approach that brings together several core strategic initiatives and goals.

By laying out a road map, defining key concepts, and illustrating how the components within IDEAS are interconnected, there is greater clarity for BCIT employees on how to apply the related strategies and an overall ethic of care and accountability in their work. IDEAS has been built into BCIT's new Strategic Plan 2025-2030 as well as new Education Plan (in progress) to ensure deeper alignment.

2. Employees have embraced the IDEAS Lens enthusiastically. Several groups across BCIT have taken the initiative to develop resources to implement the IDEAS Lens in their work. The Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (APQA) group created the Guiding Document for Self-Study Teams as a pilot tool for academic program review. More recently, several employees presented IDEAS related sessions at the annual Professional Development Day peer-to-peer training event. There have also been over fifteen engagement activities requested by both operational and academic departments across BCIT so they could learn more about IDEAS and how to embed it into their work. Active discussions on deepening action are ongoing.

3. A solid foundation has been laid for the next level of engagement and implementation of IDEAS at BCIT. A microcredential – a short, focused skills-based education program – is in development that will provide on-demand validated training for BCIT employees on the IDEAS Lens and its components.

What barriers or challenges did you encounter in embedding sustainability into your learning and teaching practice and how did you overcome them?

1. Being on the same page in terms of what the IDEAS Lens is can be challenging when everyone has their own experiences, thoughts, and beliefs around the associated concepts. Creating consistency and coherence in concepts, definitions, and implementation is helped by having the working group develop clear definitions of all concepts, creating a road map or action plan with clear actions, and sharing as much information as possible with employees (such as on a website).
2. Lack of adequate time and resources to advance initiatives, create curriculum tools, and engage with faculty is a constant challenge. Ensuring top-level leadership acknowledges the value of the initiative and dedicating staff time and resources to advance it goes a long way in ensuring success.
3. Interest and uptake by employees is greatly affected by the type of connection they have to the organization. For instance, part time faculty may not have the time available to engage or much awareness of the strategic planning of the institution to see value in aligned initiatives. Exploring alternate incentives and methods of engagement is worthwhile to spread the word and get as many people on board as possible. "Meeting people where they're at" is a good approach.

What are your conclusions and recommendations for others?

1. Pull together a diverse and robust working group.
2. Define goals and terms of the initiative but don't be too ambitious. Use the plainest language possible.
3. Get top level support (i.e. an executive sponsor). If the initiative is a priority for senior leadership and built into the organization's strategic planning, its chances for success are greatly increased. Mapping out key strategic and operational areas for implementation over several years ensures longevity and allows time for the initiative to evolve.
4. Present the ideas and initiative however possible and offer introductory engagement sessions to anyone who asks and in a variety of formats and times. Dedicate time for working group members, individually and collectively, for this work.
5. Have someone with good administrative, technical, and project management skills as dedicated support to ensure working group members don't get bogged down in managing the initiative. This also ensures communications are consistent and actions are tracked.
6. Celebrate successes. Acknowledge efforts of all levels. Awards, luncheons, prizes, or other acknowledgement of employees can go a long way in showcasing champions, boosting recognition of the initiative, and creating a fun environment.

Web link to further information:

www.bcit.ca/ideas/