

Artificial Intelligence and Society Task Force Terms of Reference (DRAFT)

Context

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is of great interest to the research world today, potentially driving innovative problem-solving. Both the federal and provincial governments have imagined this potential, recently investing in the Vector Institute for Artificial Intelligence, flagship of development in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), intended to spur economic growth by attracting top talent, investment and researchers from around the world and advancing AI research and adoption and commercialization of AI technologies across Canada. These investments represent a stellar opportunity for the University to engage in the development and application of AI. Given York's interdisciplinary strengths, we have a unique ability to engage in AI scholarship in a holistic manner, extending STEM to STEAM, to provide a broader perspective including impacts on humanity and society, in addition to the core technology and questions around technology adoption. York has great potential to be a leading participant in provincial and federal initiatives, noting our diverse expertise, ranging from philosophical, political and legal dimensions, ethical implications, changing workplaces, and the social context of AI, to biological, computing, engineering, business and health applications.

Mission

The VP Academic & Provost along with the VP Research & Innovation are sponsoring an academic taskforce to develop ideas and examine options for building and featuring York's research strengths in the area of Artificial Intelligence. This taskforce will leverage collegial expertise, solicit advice and generate recommendations towards how York can advance research and take advantage of research, scholarship and academic opportunities in this area.

Mandate

Without limiting the generality of the following, the committee will:

- Through consultations with the relevant communities, review the AI landscape at York to gain a better understanding of where there are current strengths
- In consideration of the overall institutional landscape, formulate a series of high level recommendations to coordinate the development of AI scholarship, research and academic program opportunities, both undergraduate and graduate, for the institution
- Identify opportunities for building on current strengths including in particular the potential for York to take a leadership role within AI scholarship, research and programming.

Membership

Executive Co-Sponsors

Vice-President Academic and Provost

Vice-President Research and Innovation

Taskforce Co-Chairs

Appointed by the Executive Co-Sponsors

Committee Members

Membership to be determined by the Co-Chairs in consultation with the Provost and VPRI and will strive to include representation from all Faculties to which AI is relevant and that has potential to contribute to this initiative.

Support

The Artificial Intelligence Taskforce will be supported by VPRI staff that will

- Schedule and coordinate logistics of Taskforce meetings and events
- Circulate an agenda and documentation prior to each meeting
- Prepare and distribute minutes after the completion of each meeting
- Provide web support
- Support the writing of the Taskforce recommendations

Meetings

The committee shall meet monthly, or as directed by the Co-Chairs. Meetings shall normally occur in person, but any business transacted at an electronic meeting (e.g. by telephone/teleconference or internet videoconference) shall carry the same weight as if transacted in person.

Minutes of each committee meeting shall be kept, and will be provided to committee members for their review and approval. Minutes will be posted on the Taskforce web portal, found on the VPRI website.

The committee is expected to operate by consensus.

Timeline

The Task Force is expected to complete its report by April 2019.