

OISE

ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Invitation to faculty to participate in focus group discussion and Informed Consent

Dear Prospective Faculty Participant,

I would like to invite you to participate in my study, titled *Organizational climate study: Perceptions of full-time and non-full-time faculty at participating Ontario Colleges*. I am a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto (UofT) in Toronto and I am conducting this study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a PhD degree in Higher Education. This study is under the Supervision of Dr. Katharine Janzen, at OISE, UofT. Humber College Research Ethics Board has approved this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to increase our understanding of the organizational climate of participating Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) through the exploration of their policies, practices and procedures.

Study Procedures

All faculty both full-time and non-full-time (part-time, partial load, and sessional, with the exception of counsellors and librarians) – are invited to indicate their interest to participate in a focus group discussion regarding their perceptions of the organizational climate at their college. A small sample of six participants will be randomly selected from those who volunteer to participate in the focus group from each participating college.

The discussion will take place on campus, at a time and day that will be determined based on your availability. Each participant will be given a set of open-ended questions, to reflect on and to share with me (the researcher of this study) and the other participants present at the time of this discussion. The focus group discussion is expected to take approximately 45 - 60 minutes of your time. At the end of the discussion, you will be invited to provide any additional information that you would like to share that was not addressed in the group discussion.

Conditions for Participating

The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Participants will be asked to self-select a non-identifiable pseudonym which will be used during the focus group discussion and any reporting of the findings. Participants will also be asked to agree to keep the discussion confidential.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you are free to decline to answer any question(s) you do not want to answer or withdraw from the study at any time without explanation or penalty of any kind, by just letting me know. If you do decide to withdraw from the focus group discussion at any time, your contributions to the discussion up to that point will be included in the study as it will not be possible to isolate your comments from the group's discussion. Your participation or non-participation in this study will not impact your employment or advancement now or in the future.



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Risks/Benefits

There are no reasonably foreseeable risks, harms or inconveniences associated with participation in this study. Though unlikely, participants may encounter a minimal social risk in terms of loss of privacy as a result of the small sample size. However, every attempt will be made to ensure that participant privacy and confidentiality are maintained in order to mitigate this minimal potential risk.

While there may be no direct benefits for study participants, the findings will provide valuable insights for the participating colleges in Ontario, and may also be of interest to other colleges and postsecondary institutions who struggle with similar challenges. The findings may raise interesting and provocative insights that will hopefully generate further discussion of this topic.

Security of the Information

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, all data related to the focus group discussions will be stored in a secure location to which only my thesis supervisor and I will have access. All digital data will be encrypted consistent with UofT's data security and encryption standards. De-identified data will be kept for five years following the successful completion of all of the requirements of my doctoral program in case any secondary analysis is necessary, and will then be destroyed.

Confidentiality

Participants and their institutions will not be identified in any reporting of the findings in my thesis or in other relevant professional meetings, conferences or publications. Only non-identifiable pseudonyms will be used in any reporting of the findings, and all data will be kept confidential and secure, accessible to only me and my thesis supervisor. Institutions whose data are NOT publicly available will be identified by non-identifiable pseudonyms only.

I am not able to promise total anonymity, given the relatively small group size for discussions. There is a slight chance that participants may identify themselves and perhaps the participants given their roles within college.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact The Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto (ethics.review@utoronto.ca; 416-978-5585) or the Research Ethics Board of Humber College (reb@humber.ca).

You will be asked to provide your signature – indicating consent and agreement to participate in this study – at the start of the focus group discussion. The consent sheet is attached below, for your reference.

If you would like to participate in this focus group discussion, please send me an e-mail so that I may contact you regarding availability. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact me, Amie Gheewala (amie.gheewala@mail.utoronto.ca; 416-938-5837) or my supervisor, Dr. Katharine Janzen (katharine.janzen@utoronto.ca; 416-978-1232).

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact The Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto (ethics.review@utoronto.ca; 416-978-5585) or the Research Ethics Board of Humber College (reb@humber.ca).

Thank you,
Amie Gheewala

Consent Form for Participation in Focus Group Discussion

Your signature below verifies that you have read and understand the information above, that all of your questions have been answered to your satisfaction, and that you agree to participate in this study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please initial here if you agree to the audio recording of the focus group discussion: _____

Please send me a separate email if you wish to receive a summary of the study findings upon completion:

Yes, I would like a summary of the findings

Please keep a copy of this information for your records.

Note: By signing this consent, you are promising to maintain confidentiality and to not disclose other participants' responses outside of this focus group.