



AGM 2020

Title of Document: Enhancing OCIES Member Engagement

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Intention: To present proposed ideas for strengthening engagement across OCIES, in addition to the annual conference.

Main points:

- There is potential to expand opportunities for engagement amongst OCIES members throughout the year, in both online and physical spaces.
- Creating such opportunities aligns with the proposed OCIES strategic vision, and could contribute to maintaining and further growing OCIES membership and OCIES impact
- It is proposed to establish two positions within the OCIES General Committee to play a coordination role and proactively work with Members to facilitate regular, accessible activities
- Some initial ideas for types of activities and the tasks required of the General Committee positions are outlined.

Action required at AGM:

- Decision on the proposed two General Committee positions
- Decision on confirming current co-opted members in the positions, and/or an election process
- Decision on proposed next steps, as the initial tasks for the General Committee positions



Background and Rationale

- OCIES membership has grown significantly over the last 5 years, largely through the very successful annual conferences, and various initiatives of the OCIES Executive and wider community such as the newsletter, Facebook page, the Fellowship and Networking Grants (including the support for the establishment of New and Emerging Researchers Fono -NERF), and the Journal
- We believe that maintaining and growing (in depth of engagement as well as size) this community can be supported by facilitating opportunities for members to engage in other, additional ways throughout the year. This is particularly important given the current travel restrictions and likely shrinking university travel budgets, but also responds to the long-standing challenges that international academic conferences present for equitable inclusion.
- Providing a greater range of opportunities beyond the annual conference is important for enabling OCIES to:
 - be an inclusive society that appeals the broad range of interests within Comparative and International Education, and that proactively works to ensure equitable access to activities regardless of location, language, availability of funds etc.
 - realise the proposed OCIES vision of promoting scholarship from Oceania, and working in relational ways that are dignifying of people;
 - to provide value back to members, thereby helping to maintain and grow the membership, and financial sustainability
- We believe efforts to enhance engagement should be member-led, in terms of galvanising members interests in sharing and connecting with others around topics of interest, rather than being 'top-down'. However, we believe there is a critical role for the OCIES General Committee in facilitating members to do this, through active encouragement and providing the coordination structures/processes needed. This is work that is beyond the current role descriptions (and workload demands) of the Executive Committee.

Proposal

We outline what we see as two interconnected strands of engagement for OCIES, propose some initial ideas for progressing these three strands, and an organisational structure for doing so.

In using the headings of community and connecting 'umbrellas' we recognise that there are many other activities already happening that fall under these umbrellas,



and with which any new activities will need to connect. In particular, we note that these intersect with the engagement strategies of NERF, IEJ and the Annual Conference activity, and the current work of the Communications Officer; there would need to be close coordination between all these to ensure they are mutually supportive. The proposed establishment of General Committee positions to coordinate this work is designed in part to facilitate coordination through ensuring regular engagement and communication with the wider OCIES General Committee.

1. Community umbrella

- **Focus/Purpose:** Provide a structure for, and actively facilitate, member-led online and blended opportunities for sharing and engaging with each other about our research, scholarship, and teaching.

- **What:** Activity under this umbrella could include:
 - a) facilitated online interactive forums/workshops focused on particular themes, including professional development topics;
 - b) webinar (live and/or recorded) series providing OCIES members opportunities to present their research (particularly in lieu of an OCIES face-to-face conference);
 - c) Face to face forums/seminars (that are then made available on line) hosted by institutions under the banner of OCIES or joint branded with OCIES.
 - d) Other ideas members come up with.

- **How:** A General Committee position is needed as a point of contact and to provide some coordination for this work. Their first tasks would be to work with the Communications Officer to establish a 'community' page on the website; to set up a communication structure to elicit member proposals for events and promote events; and to send out a survey to members to get feedback on the types of engagements they are most interested in.

Three initiatives have already been proposed by members that could serve as initial offerings: '*Wellington Southerlies*' led by Kabini Sanga and Martyn Reynolds (see attached); *Tips and Tricks for Getting Published* online workshop organised by Rhonda Di Biase, and a webinar opportunity for 2019 Conference Scholarship winners to present their research organised by Rebecca Spratt. Dependent on the AGM decision on the 2020 conference, a series for people to present other conference presentations from the cancelled 2019 conference could also be facilitated.



Other activities would then take place as members' volunteer. The General Committee member would be responsible for actively seeking out/encouraging Members to organise and facilitate activities.

- **Cost Implications:** No immediate cost implications for OCIES. A task for the General Committee position holder would be to discuss with the General Committee the question of funding any face-to-face activities members might offer to host, taking into account the outcomes of the impending review of the Fellowship and Networking Grants, feedback from previous events that participants would be willing to contribute small amount to attend, and the need for OCIES to balance the importance of giving value back to members with financial sustainability.

2. Connection Umbrella

- **Focus/Purpose:** Facilitate connections and information sharing across OCIES, potentially connected with opportunities to facilitate mentoring relationships, through an interactive membership database
- **What:** With permission of members, make accessible to members-only a member database that can be searched by research thematic interests, geographic area, methods etc. The new website has the functionality to enable this in a secure way with password-only access. This could include or intersect with the NERF and IEJ proposals to establish mechanisms to connect emerging researchers with those OCIES members willing to provide mentoring and/or other support, such as informal peer review of conference presentations, articles etc. In the longer-term the database could also develop into an expanded 'members only' area in the website, where members could post information about upcoming events, publications, a space for discussion or asking advice/information, or even blog posts.
- **How:** A General Committee position-holder to be responsible for taking this work forward. The first step would be to determine how to establish the database securely on the OCIES website and protocols for protecting members' information, keeping it up to date etc. This would require Executive Committee approval. Once approved, the Position holder would be responsible for coordinating initial communication with members, and collecting information from those who agree, establishing the database,



maintaining it, and progressing broader plans around mentoring relationships etc. in conjunction with NERF and IEJ.

- **Cost Implications:** There are no immediate cost implications for OCIES from this proposal.



Annex

'Wellington Southerlies'

This example has a orality and relationality focus. Others may establish threads on international education, digital methodologies etc. under the same umbrella.

Meeting form, regularity and duration: Zoom, periodically such as monthly and for 1-hour only.

Co-convenors: Kabini Sanga & Martyn Reynolds (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)

Session Facilitators: Assigned from time to time.

Format:

1. Pre-session: A paper or short video will be distributed via OCIES email, fb and website
2. Assigned respondents share reactions, make comments etc using tok stori, i.e. not as a paper presentation (5-10 minutes each)
3. General discussion (+/- 30 mins)
4. Assigned sense maker provides summary and indicates areas for further thought (max 10 mins)
5. Closure

Participation: Open to all OCIES members and also to associated academics by invitation

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