

A Co-creation Approach to Integrating Student Voice in Decision-Making Processes

Imagining Student Housing Co-design Project at OCAD University

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Submitted to OCAD University in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design in Inclusive Design

t'karonto, kanadario, kanada, (Toronto, Ontario, Canada), 2024

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Accompanying Materials

The following accompanying materials are available upon request from the OCAD University Repository:

Appendix C. Living in the -ish Onboarding Video (External Link)

Appendix F. Living in the -ish Video Trailer (External Link)

Appendix I. Miro Board Co-design Synthesis (External Link)

Appendix K. Pathways to Integrating Student Voice in University Decision-Making Processes
Downloadable PDF (External Link)

Abstract

This research project addresses the urgent need for inclusive student housing solutions at OCAD University (OCAD U) in Toronto, Ontario, tackling complex challenges faced by its diverse student body. Initiated by first-hand experiences of housing instability exacerbated by post-pandemic economic strains and systemic disparities, our study adopts inclusive design methodologies, departing from conventional paradigms to embrace co-creation and co-design *with* students. Our research focuses on three primary issues: the inequities for international students, obstacles to integrating student voice in university decision-making processes, and housing insecurities compounded by affordability issues.

Rooted in our collective ethos of "Living in the -ish", we embrace ambiguity, uncertainty, and radical imagination as drivers for transformative design. Central to our research are the insights gained from our co-designers, OCAD U students. Through collaborative efforts, we strive to amplify student voices, identify housing barriers, and outline design considerations for future housing developments. The co-design workshop emphasized the importance of providing a platform for individuals to share their narratives, leveraging design as a vehicle for empowerment and advocacy.

Our project highlights a novel pathway for student integration in research and decision-making processes at the institutional level. By fostering sustainable partnerships with students and nurturing trust, universities can pave the way for more inclusive governance structures and student-centred initiatives. We advocate for the ongoing integration of student voice in university decision-making processes, emphasizing meaningful participation, resource sharing, and transparent communication. By disseminating our research findings and leveraging co-design methodologies, we aim to inspire systemic change, empower student communities, and foster a more inclusive future in student housing.

Keywords: co-design, university, decision-making, student engagement, affordable housing, inclusive design, higher education, student housing, participatory action research, radical imagination

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to live and learn on the ancestral lands of the Indigenous peoples. OCAD University acknowledges the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe and the Huron-Wendat, who are the original owners and custodians of the land on which we stand and create.

Their enduring presence and stewardship remind us of the importance of acknowledging the ongoing relationship between Indigenous peoples and their territories and the historical injustices that continue today. We are committed to centring Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in our research endeavours.

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Dedications

First and foremost, we thank **Zenaida Desravines, Juliette Giron, E-bing Ng, Tasnimah Ahmed, Aysia Tse, Nancy Correia** and the **rest of our co-design team**. We co-created this MRP TOGETHER. We hope this project honours the vulnerability, creativity, and brilliance you all brought to the co-design workshop.

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Statement of Contributions

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- Planning, execution and co-facilitation of the co-design workshop
- Contributing their ideas and lived experiences
- Co-designing the creative outputs: the student-housing website wireframe and the proposed housing ecosystem governance model

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Lastly, thank you to OCAD U's Senior Procurement Officer for compiling the Request for Proposals (RFP) data and documentation included in this MRP (See Appendix B).

Introduction

Background & Context

The Design Problem & Challenge

Our research and design project is to imagine student housing for an art and design university. During our studies as inclusive design graduate students at OCAD University (OCAD U) in t’karonto, kanadario (Toronto, Ontario), we experienced problems and inequities that ignited a design challenge for us. We reached out to the institution to confront our three-fold problem (Figure 1) and offered to help design a “solution”.

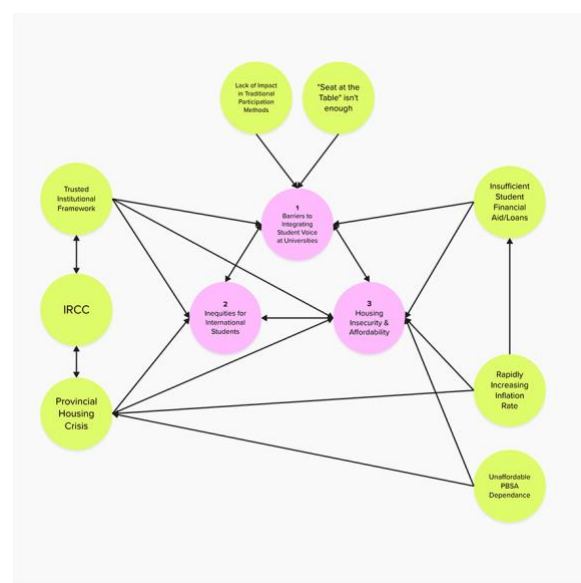
The first problem we experienced was housing insecurity in a Covid-19 “post”-pandemic economy; second, the local and international news coverage of the unfair treatment of international students by universities across Canada; and lastly, as elected student leaders and representatives at the institution, we repeatedly experienced barriers to create policy and systemic change. Although it is a common practice within institutions to include elected and non-elected student representatives in decision-making spaces with more powerful stakeholders, we experienced challenges in these settings.

In this project, we’ll take you on our journey to design student housing considerations—we’ll

walk you through how we did it, the intentions behind each decision, and how students and administrators can do it too. Our ultimate hope is that this MRP lays down some groundwork for a newly imagined way of including students in decision-making processes at post-secondary institutions— nudging the needle towards equitable, diverse and inclusive student experiences.

But first, let’s dive a little deeper into the challenges to give some understanding of what we were up against.

Figure 1.
Three-Fold Student Experience Problem.



Note. Larger Image Link: [Three-Fold Student Experience Problem](#)

Problem 1, Housing Inequities for International Students in Kanadario

This project was our response to the current housing crisis in t'karonto, which has been attributed to the lack of overall student housing in Kanadario (Moffatt, 2023). The housing crisis in Kanadario is a layered, transdisciplinary challenge that is being addressed from several different angles.

On the governmental level, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has imposed a two-year cap on international study permits issued, with the goal of reducing the number of international students by 35% from 2023 (Government of Canada, 2024). This cap was enforced to reduce the number of incoming international students seeking accommodations in the private housing market.

The IRCC also acknowledges the vulnerability of international students and developed a Trusted Institutions Framework. The Trusted Institution Framework aims to streamline the study permit process for international students applying to institutions that are providing adequate student support. This framework will come into effect in the Fall of 2024 and is made up of various "indicators", one of which is the availability of university-administered housing for international students (Singer, 2024). This poses challenges for OCAD U to meet the criteria of

the Trusted Institution Framework, potentially affecting the institution's ability to attract and support international students effectively. This is because OCAD U is a commuter campus—meaning there are no university-administered housing options for their students. Note, before this IRCC announcement, OCAD University had already identified the need for student housing as a pillar of their Academic and Strategic Plan 2022-2028 in response to the housing crisis (OCAD University, n.d.).

Problem 2, Barriers to Integrating Student Voice at Universities

When we, as elected student representatives, received the IRCC announcement and were privy to the upcoming university-administered housing project, we anticipated a unique opportunity to elevate student voices through our major research project (MRP). Reflecting on our experiences as the Board of Governors (BoG) Graduate Student Representative and, at the time, Student Union (SU) Executive Director of Graduate Studies at OCAD U, we identified a pattern: a lack of impact on decision-making processes from student voices. At the same time, we acknowledge past efforts by the institution to include student voices; our experience and research calls for a more impactful approach. We experienced that by the time the "decisions" reached elected student members on the BoG or other

committees for a vote, the designing and decision-making had already occurred. We believe that student votes didn't carry enough weight to affect change, even though it is the students who are typically most affected by the administration's decisions. Recognizing this, we approached OCAD U administration and suggested we use our MRP as an opportunity to conduct research and collaboratively design OCAD U's inaugural student housing inclusively.

Problem 3, Housing Insecurities & Affordability

In addition to university-developed student housing throughout Canada, the purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) market has emerged in response to the housing challenge, where private real estate developers provide housing specifically for students. PBSA markets are still in their early stages in Canada, comparatively to the USA and the UK (Bruvels & Naiken, 2023). While the PBSA market in Canada is comparatively underdeveloped, Canadian universities are increasingly relying on private-sector developers to provide accommodations for students (Pillai et al., 2021).

According to Pillai et al. 2021, the heavy dependence on PBSA for new student housing isn't effectively addressing the urgent needs of Canadian university students for available and

affordable housing. Instead, it's solidifying clusters of privileged student housing for a select few without significantly removing barriers to secure housing for a much larger student population. Upon reviewing four PBSA rentals in downtown Toronto, prices ranged from ~\$1,500-\$3,000 per month for unit types ranging from studio spaces to single bedrooms within a multi-roomed apartment. Two of the four PBSAs we reviewed required a mandatory meal plan cost on top of the monthly rent, increasing the overall cost by several hundred dollars per month. For example, on OCAD U's 2024 Parkside Housing Application, Parkside's mandatory meal plan is listed at an additional \$995/month on top of the monthly rent of \$1,565 (OCAD University, 2024).

According to the City of Toronto, affordable rental housing is defined as 80% of the average market rent. In the current housing market, as of May 2024, these prices ranged from \$894 for a hostel/dwelling room to \$1,366 for a one-bedroom apartment (City of Toronto, 2024). None of the PBSAs we reviewed are considered affordable according to this definition. Relative to a housing survey sent to all OCAD U students, the affordability metrics defined by the City of Toronto do not accommodate what our student population defines as affordable. The Government of Canada considers housing affordable if it costs less than 30% of a

household income (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2018). When prompted with this information in the student housing survey, the majority of respondents answered that they could afford less than \$750 per month on rent (See Appendix A).

Financing options are also lacking for both domestic and international students. With the rapid rise in the cost of living, with inflation reaching 6.8% year-over-year (YoY) in April of 2022 (Statistics Canada, 2022), students struggle to keep up with their expenses. In a news report, a domestic student commented on their experience with the Ontario Student Assistant Program (OSAP), “I feel like OSAP hasn't really reflected the increased living costs this past year. Obviously, groceries have gotten so expensive, everything in terms of rent. Housing is so difficult to find” (Merali, 2022). In addition to the insufficient financial assistance provided by OSAP, Song has encountered numerous rejections while seeking a student loan for their graduate studies in art and design. They were repeatedly informed by various financial institutions that loans were only approved for Master's degrees in Science (MSc.) and Business Administration (MBA).

As for international students, funding opportunities are even slimmer, with limitations placed on the number of hours they can work off-campus during the academic year.

International students can only work 20 hours per week off campus while school is in session. This weekly limit is said to increase in the Fall of 2024 to 24 hours per week (Robitaille, 2024). Additionally, incoming international students will face an increased cost-of-living requirement when applying for study permits. This means that whenever international students apply to study in Canada, they must prove they have \$20,635 available to fund their stay in Canada, versus the \$10,000 requirement in previous years (Robitaille & Moosapeta, 2023).

Approach Rationale

How We Plan to Address the Design Problem

The Need for Inclusive Design Methods

This led us to seek a student housing design informed by progressive, inclusive research approaches, methods, and processes.

Traditional housing research methods include surveys and questionnaires from prospective end-users, conducting focus groups, market and trend analysis, case studies and user feedback or a combination of these methods (Allen, 2009). Terms used to describe these practices include participatory, user-centred, and expert-driven design or research.

From our observations as student-elected leaders at OCAD U, these are also the common

design and research practices that have been relied on to inform decision-making processes at OCAD U. Focusing on the anticipated application of these approaches for OCAD U's upcoming housing development, we've identified gaps and limitations of these various practices, including but not limited to: survey fatigue and response bias, lack of granularity and selection bias, conflicting interests and uneven power dynamics within stakeholder groups (Fass-Holmes, 2022).

Shortcomings of Universal Design (UD)

In addition to the aforementioned approaches, universal design (UD) is commonly used in housing development. UD is a design approach that attempts to create a single design that is usable for most people. UD focuses on creating products, environments, and systems that all people can use to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design (Burgstahler, 2020). Although this is a step forward in designing an accessible and equitable world, UD falls short when designing flexible solutions that fit individual needs. This is where inclusive design comes into play.

Inclusive design expands on the principles of UD by considering a broader range of factors beyond physical abilities, such as cultural background, language, age, and socioeconomic status. It focuses not only on creating products

and environments that are accessible, but fostering a sense of belonging and participation for all individuals.

As graduate researchers and inclusive designers, we believe in designing flexible, iterative, and adaptive systems that allow individuals to participate fully with a design. Instead of designing "one size fits most," we design for "one-size-fits-one" (Inclusive Design Research Centre, n.d.). We don't seek to create finite-end solutions but systems. For example, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) standards are intended to provide design guidelines that address the minimum criteria for physical accessibility of a space (Kovac, 2020). AODA does not consider the full range of the human experience, such as cultural, language or socioeconomic barriers. UD, like AODA, should be used as a baseline for designing inclusively. However, to engage fully in inclusive design, one must involve diverse stakeholders throughout every step of the design process through co-creation and co-design.

Co-creation and Co-design Defined

For this project, we are applying de Konings et al.'s (2016) definition of *co-creation* adapted to the context of an education institution as the "service provider" and the student as the "end-user". Co-creation is the process of mutual

institution-student value creation, facilitated by a creative process that generates active interaction (vs. passive interaction) that shifts from a transactional relationship to a reciprocal idea-sharing experience. In summary, co-creation is the sharing of ideas that bring value to both parties.

Co-design, on the other hand, though the term is often used interchangeably with co-creation, differs in that, as defined by the IDRC (n.d.):

Co-design is a process of designing *with*, rather than designing *for* [...] they are engaged throughout the process and directly contribute to the creation of designs that meet their unique needs [...] Co-design can be undertaken at any stage of the design, and it encourages and makes space for a non-linear approach.

While all co-design can be co-created, not all co-creation is co-designed. Co-creation is not limited to design applications, unlike co-design. However, what they do have in common is that they are both processes that pivot toward working *with* students rather than *for* students.

These processes lead us to inclusive designs and foster a collaborative and empathetic design process that ultimately benefits all stakeholders (OCAD administration, students, housing developers, and the wider community).

Our Approach: Living in the -ish

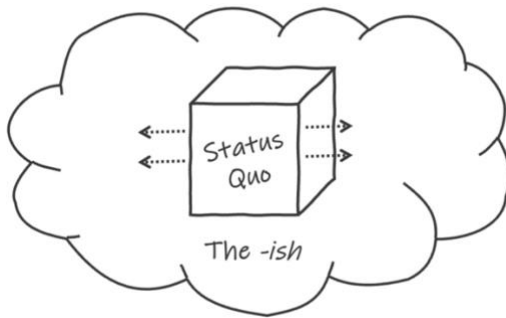
“Living in the -ish” is the name of our research and design team, which was birthed out of an acronym for this project, “Imagining Student Housing” (I-S-H). As we chatted more about the project, -ish grew into our philosophy and guiding principle. Excuse this short English lesson, but -ish is an adjective suffix that transforms a base word to convey a sense of vagueness, approximation or resemblance of that original word (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). So, when we use -ish, we're saying something is “kinda, sorta, not really”, identifying that we don't always have the language or systems to describe what's being imagined. -ish is about filling the “imagination gap” which is “the gap between current capability and future possibility” (Manu, 2007). -ish is more than an acronym or a grammatical tool; it's an attitude, mindset, and ethos. -ish is radical imagination (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014 and Hayes & Kaba, 2023) fuelled by our collective humanity. These -ish philosophies frame our three guiding principles:

1. Embrace ambiguity and exist in the in-between.
2. Face uncertainty with eagerness and curiosity.
3. Allow our minds to extend beyond the realm of what is deemed "possible" and

challenge the status quo, pressing into the -ish (Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Living in the -ish Diagram.



Our Positionality

Our approaches are shaped by our first-hand experiences as elected student representatives, serving on various decision-making bodies at OCAD U, as well as our experiences as graduate students in an inclusive design program combined with our intersectional marginalized identities (Crenshaw, 1991). Our positionality, according to Holmes (2020), encompasses both our worldview and the stances we adopt regarding a research task and its socio-political context. We embrace a transformative worldview that holds distinct ontological and epistemological viewpoints.

For this project, we have adopted a community-led co-design approach (IDRC, n.d.), through the lens of critical relativism, social constructivism, and critical theory. Our primary focus is on

empowering marginalized communities through our research efforts and working towards dismantling existing power imbalances.

We followed the Inclusive Design Research Centre’s (IDRC) definition of inclusive design, which states that inclusive design “considers the full spectrum of human diversity encompassing ability, language, culture, gender, age, and other forms of human difference” (IDRC, n.d.). We have centred our design approach around the three dimensions of inclusive design (Treviranus, 2018) (Figure 3):

1. Recognize diversity and uniqueness.

We acknowledge the uniqueness and individuality of the people who are a part of our research journey, especially those whose needs vary greatly beyond the typical average. We strive to design for those who are most marginalized and excluded from current student housing designs.

2. Inclusive process and tools. We

acknowledge the significance of diverse perspectives in shaping decision-making, prediction, and innovation. To design in a way that caters to the needs of all, we aim to embrace a wide spectrum of viewpoints, including those of students with unique needs, thereby improving the accessibility and usability of the design. We believe that diversity

makes us better and enriches our design process.

- 3. **Broader beneficial impact.** We think about how our designs affect all students, not just the ones we are directly designing with. We aim for positive impacts that ripple out to benefit everyone. By honouring our interconnectedness and lived experiences, and using inclusive design as the standard in how we make decisions, we can create more equitable societies.

Figure 3.

Inclusive Design Dimensions (IDRC, n.d.).



Our Research Questions & Objectives

Now that we have explained the challenges and our approaches, we outlined a few questions and objectives to help guide our efforts in our design research:

Question 1. How can the needs of students requiring housing at OCAD U be better defined and enumerated?

Question 2. What are the current barriers encountered by students regarding housing?

Question 3. What are the design considerations required for future developments to remove barriers for OCAD U students?

Objective 1. Amplify student voices in OCAD U decision-making regarding their upcoming housing development(s).

Objective 2. Apply a bottom-up, inclusive approach, challenging generational gaps/stereotypes/assumptions.

Stakeholders/Actors

Who Are the Designers?

Designing WITH Students, Not FOR Students

“Designing with, not for, excluded communities is how we put the inclusive in inclusive design.” (Holmes, 2020)

We are co-designing with OCAD U students. The housing crisis in kanadario disproportionately impacts marginalized communities (Canadian Centre for Housing Rights, 2020), including post-secondary students, such as those at OCAD U. University students face unique financial challenges, including rising tuition fees, living

expenses and limited income opportunities. This leads to a reliance on affordable housing options (Sotomayor et al., 2022). Many students face barriers to accessing affordable housing, such as discriminatory renting practices (Sotomayor & Davidson, 2022), especially international students. Many landlords prefer domestic tenants with stable incomes and established credit histories. The transient nature of student housing also creates challenges in establishing stable housing arrangements that support academic schedules, internships, graduation, etc.

There's also limited representation and advocacy for university students within housing legislation and federal financing. For example, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Canada's federal corporation for administering the National Housing Strategy Act, does not recognize post-secondary students as "vulnerable groups" (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2018). Although the lack of student housing has been identified as a primary driver of the housing shortage in Kanadario (Ontario), student housing is not considered a priority area for action in the National Housing Strategy.

By designing housing with OCAD U students, we also encompass shared barriers and challenges that other vulnerable communities face when acquiring affordable housing. By incorporating

inclusive strategies into housing developments designed for post-secondary students, policymakers, housing developers, and community stakeholders can create inclusive and supportive environments that benefit a wide range of marginalized communities (Inclusion Canada, 2021). This includes individuals with disabilities, low-income families, and residents facing housing insecurity. Prioritizing flexibility, affordability, accessibility, community engagement, urban revitalization, innovation, and sustainability can create inclusive and supportive environments that contribute to the overall well-being and liveability of communities (Inclusion Canada, 2021).

The Importance of Including a Range of Stakeholders in the Co-design

If students are solely responsible for representing their own interests in decision-making spaces dominated by more powerful stakeholders, they are vulnerable to exploitation or marginalization. From our lived experiences as students in these decision-making spaces, we have often felt disempowered, discouraged or even harmed by the process. Power imbalances result in students' voices being overlooked or dismissed, leading to decisions that do not adequately address their needs or concerns. Therefore, including other stakeholders in co-design

workshops with students is essential for promoting inclusivity, equity and meaningful student engagement in decision-making processes. It helps ensure that decisions are informed by diverse perspectives and that students are not left vulnerable to the consequences of power imbalances in certain settings.

Stakeholder 1, OCAD Administrators. In addition to the student participants, we also invited four OCAD U staff members and two inclusive design faculty members to join the co-design workshop. Of the invitees, only the Vice-Provost of Students and International was able to attend the co-design workshop. Although we are engaging in co-design to prioritize and elevate student voices, we believe including a range of stakeholders in co-design workshops alongside students is crucial for several reasons.

Administrators hold more power and authority within the institution, so their presence can help ensure that student voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes where power imbalances may exist. Also, by participating in these workshops, administrators can gain a deeper understanding of student perspectives, needs, and concerns regarding housing, which can inform more inclusive and equitable decision-making (Leanlab Education, 2023).

Co-design workshops provide an opportunity to reconcile power imbalances among stakeholders. When administrators collaborate directly with students in these workshops, it can help break down hierarchical barriers and create a more level playing field for discussion and decision-making, rather than reinforcing traditional power dynamics where administrators hold all the decision-making authority (Dominguez et al., 2022).

Administrators armed with knowledge gained from these workshops are better equipped to advocate for student needs in decision-making spaces where students may not have direct access or influence. In our experience, students benefit from having advocates who understand their perspectives and can champion their interests inside and outside of the institution.

Stakeholder 2, Housing Developers. We had also intended to invite a housing developer(s) to our co-design workshop, but due to the sensitive nature of the housing procurement process that OCAD U is currently in, we were unable to do so.

Excuse all the upcoming official jargon. Procurement is a formal, legal process of acquiring goods and services to support the institution's operations. A request for proposal (RFP) is a document used for purchases that are not conducive to a price-per-unit quote (see

Appendix B). Suppliers are asked to prepare and submit a proposal that may include but is not limited to, details such as pricing, design, specifications, and implementation plans. It is a process that uses predefined evaluation criteria in which price is not the only factor. This formal process is required to allow suppliers in the marketplace a fair and transparent opportunity to supply the university (a publicly funded institution) with the goods and services needed for business purposes.

In other words, an RFP is like OCAD U sending out a detailed "wanted" ad to housing developers, outlining what the university needs and expects from this project. Applicants then submit proposals explaining how they would approach the project, and the university selects the applicant that offers the best proposal that aligns with the university's vision. These proposals are reviewed and scored by a team of evaluators using a transparent grading scale (defined in the RFP) by the university (see Appendix B). We were invited to participate in the RFP process as two student evaluators, marking the first-time students are included in such a process at OCAD U. This is a milestone of co-creating with students in OCAD U's procurement process.

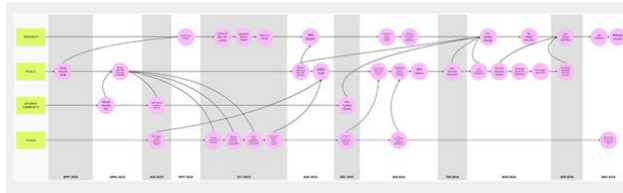
Overview

The Design Journey

Project Timeline

Unbeknownst to us, this process began in September of 2022, when we met on OCAD U orientation day. We were both enrolled in the same inclusive design graduate program. After the meeting, Song asked Benoit to complete a nomination form, so they could campaign for a seat on OCAD U's BoG as the graduate student representative. Benoit had signed the documents, beginning their student advocacy journey and, retrospectively, their design research project as well. A few months later, Benoit was elected as Student Union Executive Director of Graduate Studies, further solidifying their roles as leaders in the student body.

Our partnership in this research began in September of 2023. Since then, this project has been a nine-month adventure in student housing research and design. By engaging with the OCAD U's community early on, the events that occurred before the official start of the project played an influential role in our research design decisions. The events that have occurred have been mapped out in Figure 4.

Figure 4***Project Timeline & Design Influences***

Note. Larger image link: [Project Timeline and Design Influences Large Image](#)

Community-Led Co-design Kit

We followed the Community-Led Co-design Kit, “an open-source toolkit for sharing knowledge about co-design led by community members”, by the Inclusive Design Research Centre, to design and plan our co-design workshop (IDRC, n.d.).

Recruitment & Induction

Partnership & Community Involvement

Community Co-design Approach from the Start

Prior to the co-design workshop, we had a thorough and iterative induction that we developed for our future co-design participants. We decided to create an informative video as our onboarding tool (see Appendix C). This video was developed from a presentation we created in one of our graduate courses to explain our project to other OCAD U students. This was an iterative process, receiving student

feedback at every step and adjusting the materials accordingly.

In this video, we introduced ourselves, the idea behind our project, the background of the housing crisis, why OCAD U is developing student housing, and how we hope our participants will engage in the co-design project. We decided to do this onboarding video to brief the co-designers on the project and design challenge, and most importantly, empower our co-designers, position them as experts with lived experiences and further advocate for more inclusive research practices in university decision-making.

Once this induction video was ready, we then asked our research partner (see Appendix D), the Vice-Provost of Students and International, to lead the student recruitment process. Due to time constraints and the limited number of spots available in our co-design workshop, an email was sent out via Student Communications to a group of approximately 80 student group leaders (peer mentors). The workshop invitation letter (see Appendix E), onboarding video trailer (see Appendix F), and workshop application form (see Appendix G) were included in the email. Eight students replied to the invitation and filled out the application form, with one student withdrawing from the co-design prior to the workshop. Three additional students joined the co-design

workshop through invitations directly from the researchers. In total, 12 students attended the co-design workshop. There was a diverse mix of students, representing a variety of identities and groups (see Appendix H).

Co-design Onboarding Process

Once the students confirmed their attendance, we sent an email with the full induction video, along with a consent form, media release form, and contributor license agreement form to ensure informed consent and equitable community involvement. All three forms were created from templates from the Community-Led Co-Design Kit and modified to fit our project (IDRC, n.d.). We sent the induction materials one day before the co-design workshop and provided printed copies with allocated time at the beginning of the co-design workshop for co-designers to complete the forms and ask any questions.

Planning Facilitation for Creativity, Flexibility & Accessibility

We took great care to facilitate a workshop that would foster creativity, create flexibility and be accessible. This ranged from managing every seemingly minute detail, such as setting a sensory-controlled space in the room, to the more obvious decisions we made, such as

elevator and all-gender washroom access, to craft a successful co-design workshop.

Accessibility Accommodations

Communication. We recognize the importance of clear communication and providing multiple ways of digesting information. Ways in which we provided accessible means of communication were:

- Allowed multiple opportunities through several invitations to engage, different phrasing of the same message, and providing kind reminders.
- Provided documents that were screen reader-friendly and met minimum AODA guidelines.
- Opened multiple channels of receiving and giving information (video with closed captions and written instructions), time, and room for error.
- Putting into practice the power of taking pause, listening, being curious and reflective of each part of the plan and co-design process.
- Use of plain language—limited use of academic jargon.

The Space. We recognized the importance of how a space can make someone feel welcomed and create a sense of belonging. The steps we took to provide an accessible space were:

- Close access to an elevator and washrooms.
- Access to all-gender bathrooms.
- Circular arrangement of seating to remove hierarchy and encourage a safe space to share.
- Choosing a location on campus for familiarity (beneficial for easy wayfinding and heightens a sense of belonging to a space).
- Multiple opportunities to accommodate accessibility needs, including diet restriction, physical barriers, and sensory limitations.
- Did not rush through quiet pauses, allowing time for co-designers to participate at their own pace.
- Supplied digital devices (iPads) as another tool to communicate and share ideas.
- Planned larger group and smaller group activities.

Day of Co-design Workshop

On April 4, 2024, the invited participants to the co-design gathered in a classroom on the OCAD U campus for a 4-hour workshop. At one end of the room, a group of chairs were arranged in a large circle for each participant to sit. Outside of the circle were two large tables with chairs with marking materials (paper, pen, markers, sticky notes, etc.) and a large whiteboard on the wall.

As participants arrived, they were greeted and given an opportunity to complete printed forms if they had not done so already. They were provided with a marker and sticker label to write their name and pronouns. Participants were then asked to take a seat in the circle.

The workshop began at a quarter past the hour with a quick introduction of the hosts (researchers of this project), then continued to proceed into the workshop agenda as follows:

Participation. We recognize it's not always easy to speak up or contribute ideas to a new group of people. To facilitate equal opportunity to contribute, we:

- Provided ample transition time to warm up to the social space.
 - Assigned the title of co-facilitator to each co-designer to share power and accountability.
 - Embarked on a power and privilege mapping activity to level the room (share power).
 - Supplied multiple mark-making tools.
 - Welcomed multiple ways of sharing ideas—verbally, writing, drawing, etc.
1. Ice Breaker Activities
 2. Term of Engagement

- a. Research Questions
- b. Goals
- c. Power Mapping
3. Break
4. Group Self Selection
5. Co-Design
 - a. Group 1
 - b. Group 2
6. Co-Design Reflection & Outcome

Summary

Icebreaker Activities

The icebreaker activities were planned with the intention of supporting the co-designers in thinking freely and creatively, activating their imagination, practicing curiosity and being able to socialize and share ideas. There were four icebreaker activities, and each was planned to progressively introduce the designers to the size of the group—beginning with an activity between a group of 2 people, the next between 3-4 people, then to half the group, moving to the whole group. The four activities were Toss the Sound Ball (SessionLab, n.d.), Asking Questions (Smart, n.d.), Terrible Presents (SessionLab, n.d.), and the classic improv, Yes And. The groups laughed and shared that they appreciated the icebreakers. The groups then gathered back into the circle and continued to the next agenda item, which was setting the Terms of Engagement.

Terms of Engagement, Our Shared Goals

The co-designers were invited to reflect and share the goals or questions they hoped to answer as designers, experts of lived experiences, and end-users. As advised in the Community Led Co-design Kit (IRDC, n.d.), terms of engagement are important to set as a group because:

People come from different backgrounds and experiences, so it's important to develop a shared understanding of how everyone will engage with the project. It allows project team members to understand each other's different goals, priorities, and ways of working. By revealing these differences, it provides an opportunity for everyone to figure out how best to work together.

The group was asked how they would like to share ideas. A suggestion was made to provide each co-designer with a pen and sticky note and approximately 15 minutes to write their goals. Prompts were provided by the facilitator for reflection. These prompts followed the same line of questions provided in the Community-led Co-design Kit, and they were listed on a nearby whiteboard as follows:

1. What are our goals?
2. What are the measures of progress?
3. How do we want to do this?
4. With whom do we want to do this?

5. With whom are we doing it?
6. Who is most affected by this project?
Are they here?
7. What experience can people with lived experiences bring to this project?

The facilitator also reiterated the research values and questions that were provided in the induction video. The facilitator also noted that their goals will likely differ from those of the researchers and hold equal merit in informing the outcomes of the co-design workshops. After 15 minutes had passed, some co-designers had asked for more time— five additional minutes were given. The co-designers were then invited to stick their notes onto a whiteboard. The facilitator read each note aloud to the group in a randomized order. The co-designers were asked to suggest any themes that emerged and/or categorize where the note would fit within these themes. Once all the notes were read, the facilitator asked the co-designers if there were any revisions they would like to make. A wide variety of goals were established through our terms of engagement process.

As inclusive designers, we would like to preface that these design goals outlined at the beginning of the co-design process are not entirely in alignment with the objections and ethos of our research, but as stated, although our goals and approaches might differ from our co-designers, due to their varying disciplines of

design, we honour and mention all goals given by the co-designers. We organized our goals into five overarching themes.

1. **Design Process.** This included inclusive contribution, confident action, flexibility, actionable planning, impact on students, informed and inclusive decision-making, student engagement, and transparency.
2. **Personas.** Who are the students and who are we designing for? This included addressing housing concerns, incorporating first-hand renting experience, incorporating design expertise and encouraging creativity. Considering the needs of vulnerable students such as new students, 2SLGBTQ+ students, international students, and domestic student with long commutes.
3. **Student Needs and Wants.**
 - a. **Diverse and Accessible Housing.** Provide housing that accommodates various needs, including accessibility and family-friendly features.
 - b. **Proximity and Convenience.** Ensure housing options are within a short walking distance

to campus and offer internal transportation.

- c. **Affordable and Sustainable.**
Prioritize affordable housing with environmentally sustainable features and efficient design.
 - d. **Individual Comfort and Safety.**
Ensure each resident has their own room, washroom, and safe, mold-free living spaces.
 - e. **Community and Amenities.**
Create vibrant housing communities with amenities like catering, public spaces, and facilities for artistic expression.
4. **Affordability.** This included addressing housing challenges, overcoming barriers, understanding financial struggles, examining the impact on academic performance, and understanding the domestic student perspective.
 5. **Journey Mapping.** This included understanding how students are exploited in finding housing, identifying the role that OCAD U has in student housing acquisition, and how do future OCAD U students find housing?

Design Requirements from the Wider Community

In March of 2024, a student-wide housing survey (see Appendix A) was launched by the Affordability Taskforce, a joint committee led by the OCAD Student Union and OCAD U administration. The purpose of the survey was to better understand the housing needs of the OCAD U student community and factor those results into the university's decision-making process to establish student housing. A summary of the survey results is as follows:

- Most students can afford housing \$750 per month and under (only 4% of students could afford over \$1250 per month).
- The top 5 must-have amenities were in-unit bathroom/shower, laundry facilities, high-speed internet, full kitchen, and air conditioning/heating.
 - Additional amenities listed (high importance, mentioned multiple times)—close to transit or school, safe and secure, good natural light, elevator.
- Most students prefer a one-bedroom apartment. This was followed closely by a house/apartment with 1 roommate, and on-campus student residence run by OCAD U.

- Students were asked what communal spaces were most important. The top 3 were studio space, quiet space, and outdoor space. Gym/fitness facilities were not far behind outdoor space.

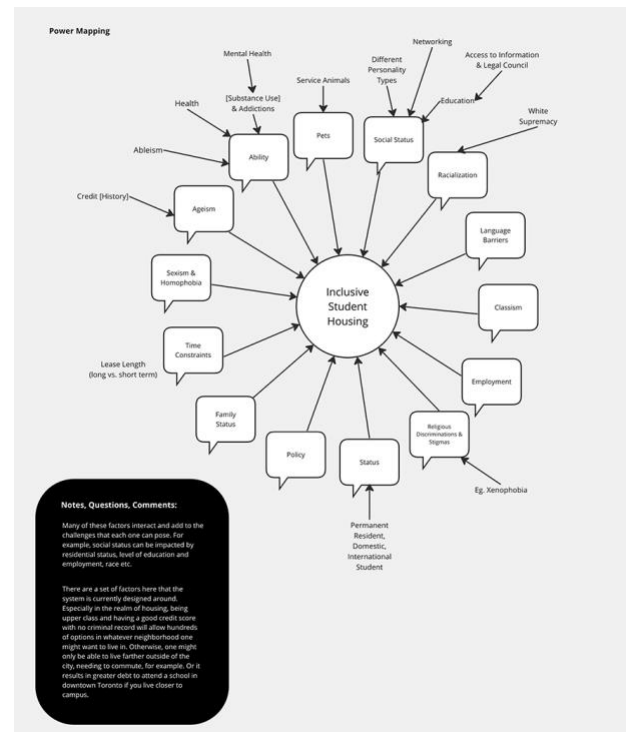
Power Mapping

The next item on the agenda was an open discussion on power influences in student housing. This was an important step in the terms of engagement. We can't co-design equitably without seeing and addressing power differentials between individuals and groups. McKercher (2020) highlights, "Power differences often prevent people from working together in meaningful ways, if at all [...] Given co-design is about unlocking people's contributions, it's critical that we see and share power".

After highlighting the intention and purpose behind making power visible, the facilitator drew a power map, following a template shared by Leanlab Education (2023). The facilitator invited co-designers to reflect on the barriers some folks might experience while trying to secure housing. The final diagram (Figure 5) was then digitized on Miro (a RealTimeBoard, otherwise understood as a collaborative online digital whiteboard) to share with the co-designers for remote synthesis.

Figure 5

Co-created Power Mapping Visual



Note. Larger Image Link: [Co-created Power Mapping Visual](#)

Breaks

Co-designers were asked if they would like a break and for how long. They were provided snacks, beverages and a food spread to enjoy at any time during the co-design. Co-designers were also given directions to where the inclusive all-gender washrooms were, just outside the classroom. The co-designers chose to break for 10 minutes. During the break, the co-designers chatted with one another, taking interest in one another's backgrounds.

Group Self-Selection

After the quick break, one of the facilitators shared a painful childhood story of often being picked last to join teams. To not perpetuate this harm, the facilitator invited the co-designers to freely choose one of two tables to be grouped together for the co-design portion of the day. This enabled the co-designers to self-assign themselves to a group they felt best suited them. Determinants of what that meant likely differed for each co-designer. Self-selection also created an opportunity to exercise autonomy. Generally, this allows for co-designers to feel committed, comfortable and role-modelled, further levelling the power dynamics between co-designers and facilitators before joining the smaller groups (Weinstein, 2019).

The Co-design Outputs

About the Design Process

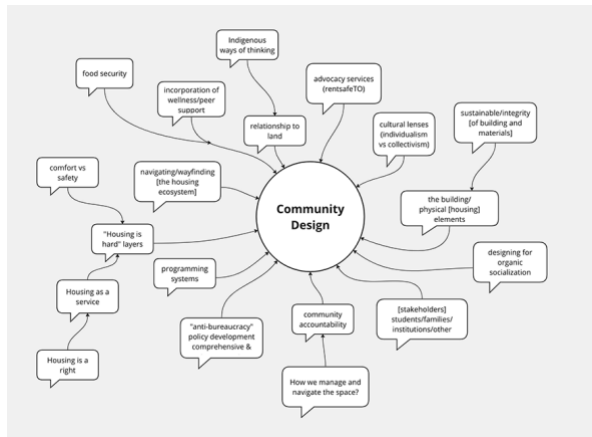
For the design process, we took the approach outlined in the Community-Led Co-design Kit. This process walks designers through four phases: Brainstorming, Discovery, Refinement, and Design (IDRC, n.d.). The approach is non-linear and flexible, and allows for convergence and divergence, much like the Double Diamond Design process: Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver (Design Council, 2003). Both processes shaped our understanding of how the design

process might unfold and were provided as suggested tools, not mandatory guides.

Output 1. Governance Ecosystem Model

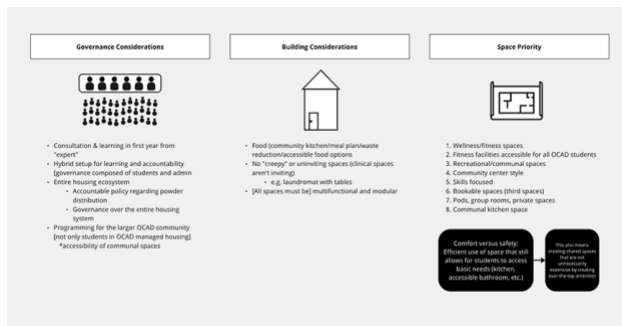
Design Process. After breaking into groups and assigning roles (note-taker, peer support), we began to reflect upon our terms of engagement, choosing a "pain point" to focus upon. We decided to focus on the "design process" theme that was outlined by the collective group. We began discussing the dangers of lacking community in t'karonto, including privacy, safety, loneliness, and mental health, leading to the prioritization of designing for the community as a "solution". This emphasis transitioned into a fulsome brainstorming workshop around community design (Figure 6). We reflected on the question: "What does community design mean?" Our co-designers shared their personal experiences and struggles around seeking community and the ways in which certain housing designs do or don't support community. We noticed a pattern begin to form: we were listing "what not to do" or features that don't work with current housing designs. We decided to compile a list of "considerations" for the housing development (Figure 7).

Figure 6
Brainstorming 1 of Designing for Community



Note. Larger Image Link: [Brainstorm 1 of Designing for Community](#)

Figure 7
Considerations for Housing Development



Note. Larger Image Link: [Considerations for Housing Development](#)

As ideas continued to flow and develop, we came to the realization that although a physical building is in our near future, housing goes far beyond the actual building. Housing is an entire system with systemic issues. We started framing our approach around the idea of

“housing as an ecosystem.” This idea led to the questions: “How do we oversee this ecosystem? What is the design of the governance?” We then designed a proposed governance structure.

Structure and Components. In summary, we proposed the establishment of a board composed of students, administration, and housing management to oversee the entire housing ecosystem within a non-profit framework. A graphic representation was designed to illustrate this proposed governance structure (Figure 8). The housing ecosystem was divided into three major sectors: OCAD U Managed Housing, Food Security, and External Housing, highlighting the breadth of considerations of the housing ecosystem within the proposed framework.

Governance Sector Roles & Responsibilities.

1. **OCAD Managed Housing.** Overseeing all features of the future housing building that OCAD U will acquire (maintenance, peer sharing and support, roommate matching, lease management, community programming, etc.)
 - a. A key feature of this system is that all programming is designed for ALL OCAD U

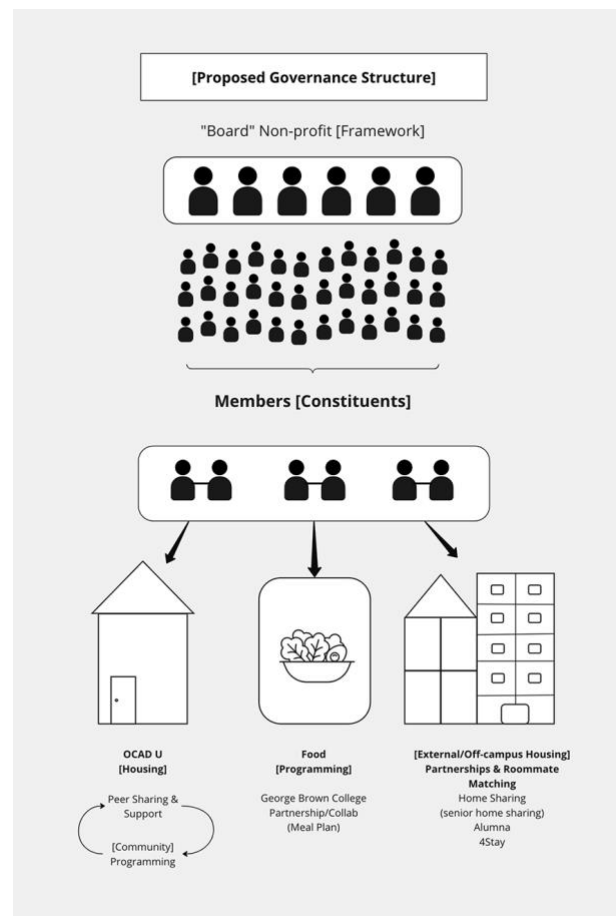
students, not only the ones residing in the OCAD U managed housing, to build community.

- 2. **Food Security.** Housing and food insecurity go hand-in-hand (Karim, 2022). We discussed whether the housing ecosystem should include a meal plan or cafeteria area.
 - a. A novel idea that arose was a potential collaboration between the culinary program at George Brown College and an optional meal plan/cafeteria service for OCAD U students.
- 3. **External Housing.** This sector would support all external housing efforts, such as securing off-campus housing partnerships, HomeSharing (residing with senior citizens), alumni housing networking, etc.

Key features include the board functioning in pairs rather than individual oversight enacting co-leadership to ensure comprehensive and balanced management (Naidu, n.d.). With the creation of our upcoming housing division at OCAD U, we wanted to prioritize employment opportunities for future staff and students. The new housing building would create ample opportunities for student employment through university-managed housing. We also

recognized a major limitation to this design: we have never had student housing before. Therefore, we don't have systems or experience to manage student housing. We addressed this limitation by suggesting that we bring in a third-party housing management partner for the first year to learn from and then develop our own system that can be sustained internally at the university.

Figure 8
Proposed Governance Structure Model



Note. Larger Image Link: [Model of Governance Structure](#)

Output 2. Student Housing Website Wireframe

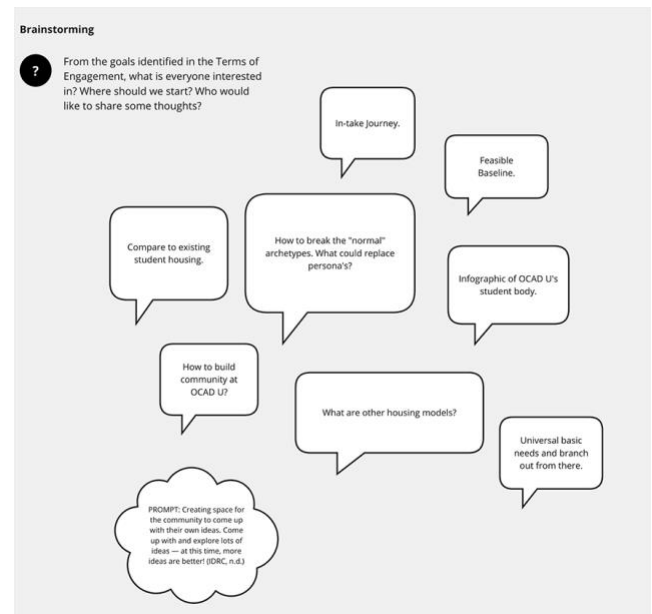
Design Process. The group began by taking a seat at a large table, and without discussion, one of the co-designers suggested we introduce ourselves with our name, pronouns, program and year. Some also shared where they were coming from in t'karonto. The facilitator then asked for volunteers to fulfil the roles of peer-support and note-taker.

The facilitator set the tone of the design process by communicating that the Double Diamond design process (Design Council, 2003), the divergence and convergence, is iterative and non-linear in nature. This would create space for us as a group to draw solutions from our own experiences rather than entertaining thoughts that speak for a larger student body. The facilitator reminded them that their lived experiences are valued here and will be at the centre of the design.

The facilitator then encouraged the group to pause and reflect on the terms of engagement, inviting them to openly share any goals that resonated with them and their reasoning. This began the brainstorming phase of the design process (Figure 9).

Figure 9

Brainstorm 1 of Wireframe Design

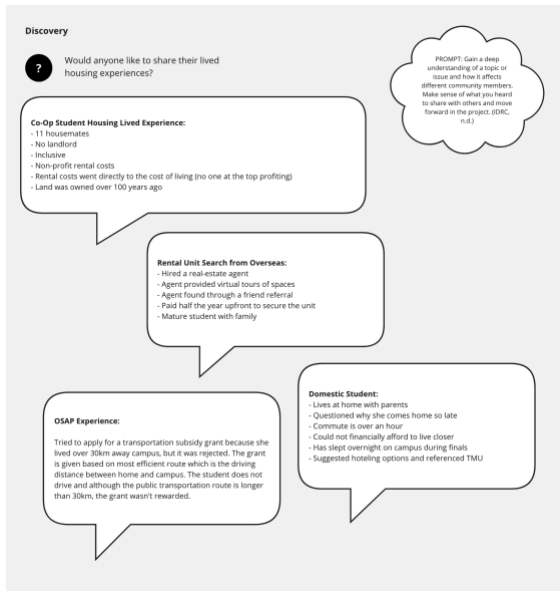


Note. Co-designers reflect and discuss the shared goals that interest them. Larger Image Link: [Brainstorm 1 of Wireframe Design](#)

The group had a range of interests and some of the co-designers began to feel at a loss for what to do next. The group organically moved into the discovery phase of the design process by sharing their lived experiences with housing, in hopes it would spark some inspiration (Figure 10).

Figure 10

Discovery 1 of Wireframe Design



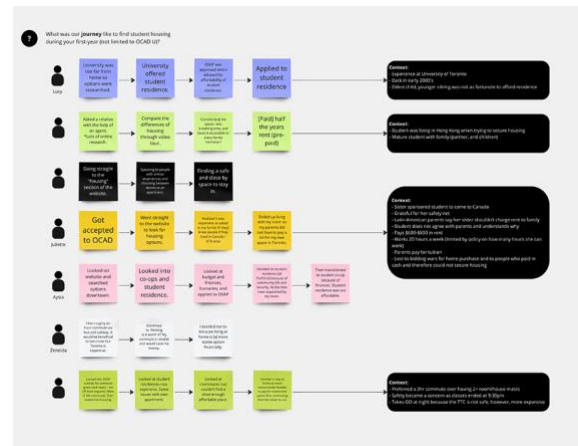
Note. Co-designers share their housing experiences. Larger Image Link: [Discovery 1 of Wireframe](#)

The facilitator noticed the diversity in experiences the group had. Some were local students whose main struggle was deciding if the cost of living closer to campus outweighed the time spent on their hour-long commutes, while others struggled to secure housing for their family of four from overseas. With the diversity in experiences, the facilitator so invited the co-designers to write on sticky notes the steps they took to navigate their housing decision (Figure 11). The facilitator read aloud each journey, asking the co-designers any questions to clarify any of the steps or provide more insights on the experience. The journey

mapping activity sparked another phase of brainstorming ideas. The group began to build on one another's thoughts, much like a “Yes, and...” improv game (Figure 12).

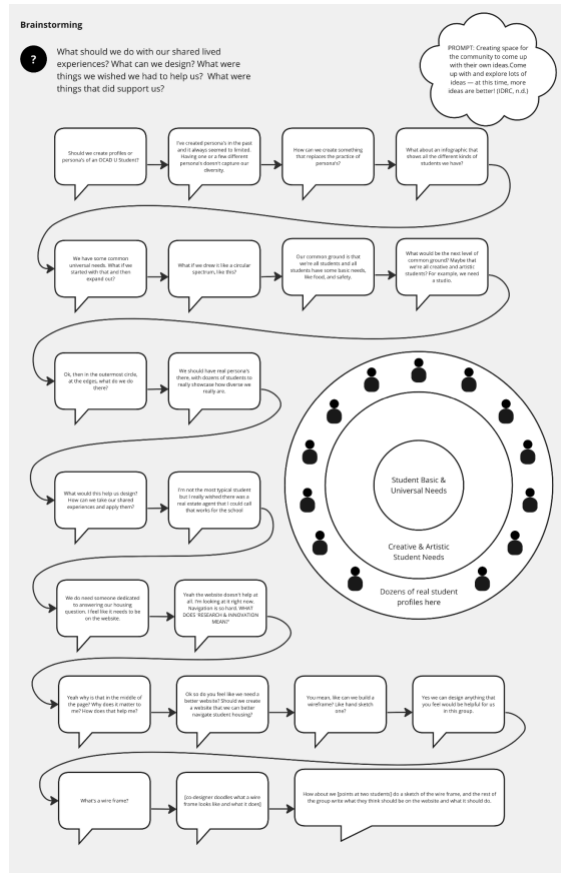
Figure 11

Discovery 2 of Wireframe Design



Note. Journey mapping the co-designers’ housing decision-making steps. Larger Image Link: [Discovery 2 of Wireframe](#)

Figure 12
Brainstorm 2a of Wireframe Design

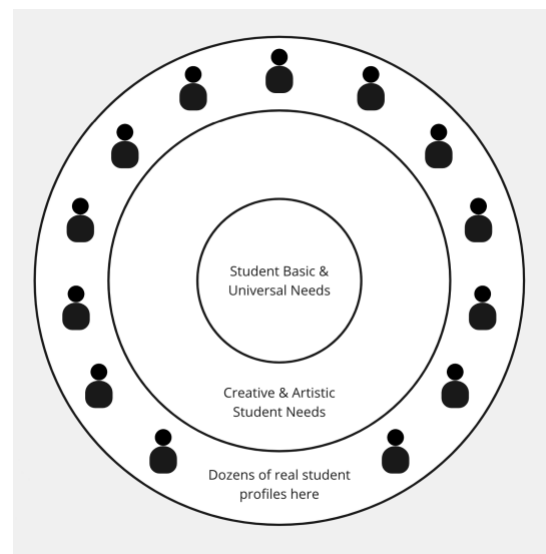


Note. Co-designers ideate by building on one another's questions, opinions, and ideas. Larger Image Link: [Brainstorm 2a of Wireframe](#)

The discussion unpacked the co-designers' critical thoughts on traditional personas: how they're used as a design tool, their experiences with persona limitations and the gaps. The group organically began brainstorming alternatives to the traditional personas in the context of the student body at OCAD U. Using the whiteboard, the group drew multiple circles to visually communicate their ideas of how the

student body could be seen as a whole, without erasing individuality and diversity. The resulting diagram is shown in Figure 13, centring students' basic and universal needs in the centre, their creative and artistic needs in the middle circle, and then a display of multiple examples of real student profiles in the outer circle. This concept displayed the limitations of traditional personas. This was an interesting discussion and one that is reminiscent of Kat Holmes' (2020) persona spectrum used in Microsoft's Inclusive Design Toolkit, depicting a range of human abilities and conditions (Figure 14).

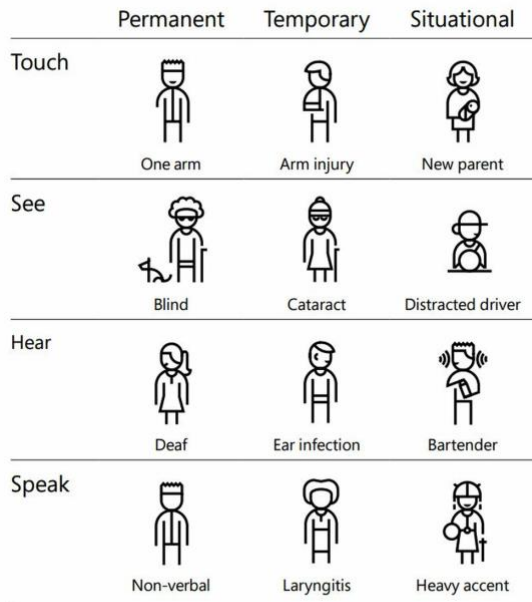
Figure 13
Brainstorm 2b of Wireframe Design



Note. Co-designers' inclusive alternative to personas. Larger Image Link: [Brainstorm 2b of Wireframe](#)

Figure 14

Persona Spectrum from Microsoft’s Inclusive Design Toolkit (Microsoft, 2015 and Holmes, 2020).



Inclusive
A Microsoft Design Toolkit

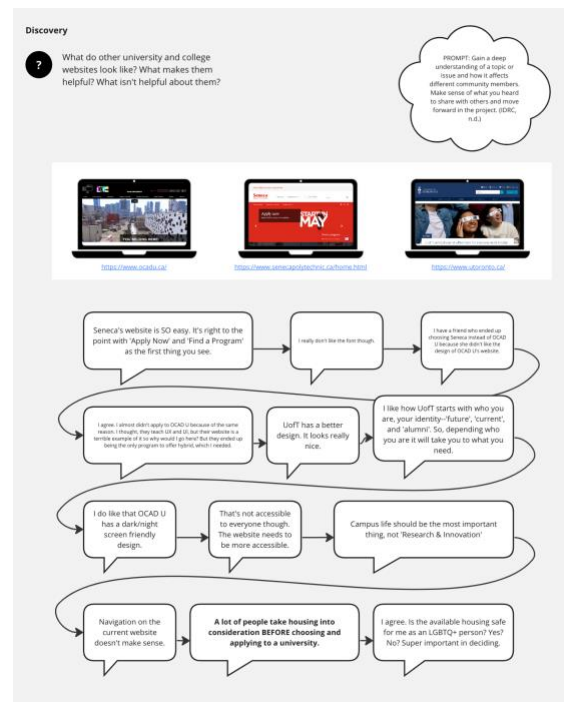
Note. Larger Image Link: [Persona Spectrum](#)

Armed with their journey map and their “persona spectrum”, the co-designers segued into another discovery phase after deciding to work on a website wireframe (Figure 15). Two of the co-designers were undergraduate design students who had learned how to create wireframes (two-dimensional skeletal outlines of a webpage or app). They led the group by explaining what a low-fidelity wireframe is, its purpose and what information they needed from the group to sketch out a design. One member shared on their laptop a critique of

OCAD U’s current website and its inadequate navigation features to support the group’s experience in making housing decisions. They looked at competing local educational institutions to critique and noted features that the group felt were helpful. They shared and noted the information architecture, UX features and visual design preferences.

Figure 15

Discovery 3 of Wireframe Design

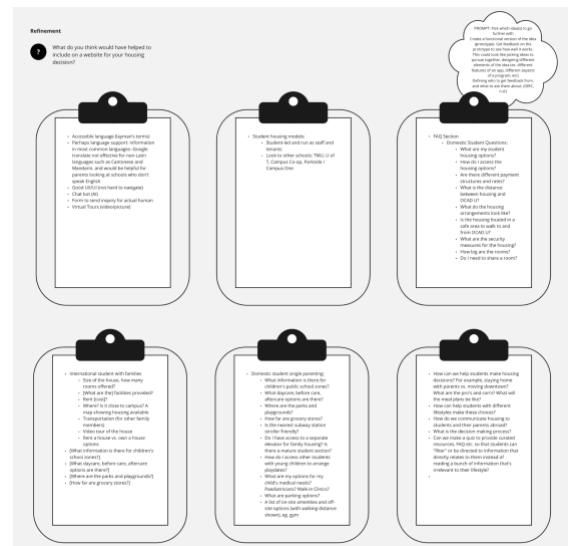


Note. Co-designers explore and critique local post-secondary websites to discuss existing navigation and UX features. Larger Image Link: [Discovery 3 of Wireframe](#)

After reviewing the websites, the group moved into the refinement phase of the Double

Diamond Design process (Design Council, 2003). They took a moment to jot down on paper any features they would have found helpful when navigating their journey to making a housing decision (Figure 16). The co-designers took turns reading aloud their list of features and ideas, while sharing their stories of why these would have been helpful—oftentimes sharing the most authentic pain-points of their housing decision journey. After each sharing, the two co-designers who self-assigned their roles as wireframe designers would add the shared ideas to a rough template, adding notes, and verbally speaking about how the features would work. It took some dialogue to explain ideas, as most members of the group did not have a background in website design. The back and forth allowed for the distilling of ideas and collective idea-sharing. For example, one idea roadblock was an AI feature the group felt the institution would likely not invest in. The group brainstormed different ideas based on their experiences as end-users of other platforms that had helpful features.

Figure 16
Refinement of Wireframe Design



Note. Co-designers reflected and noted design features and considerations. Larger Image Link: [Refinement of Wireframe](#)

In the design phase of the co-design, the low-fidelity wireframe was sketched (Figures 17 and 18). In the days following the co-design session, we used the notes that were taken during the co-design workshop to summarize the purpose, design requirements, features and functionality of the wireframe:

Wireframe Purpose. The wireframe aims to provide a user-friendly platform for OCAD U students, including both domestic and international students, to access information and resources related to student housing options. It seeks to address the diverse needs of students, including those with families and

single parents, by offering accessible language support and comprehensive FAQs. The platform also aims to facilitate informed decision-making regarding housing choices through virtual tours, housing models and curated resources.

Design Considerations, Functions & Features.

Accessibility. Ensure information is presented in layman's terms and offer language support for non-English speaking users, particularly for languages like Cantonese and Mandarin.

User Experience (UX). Design a seamless and intuitive interface for easy navigation and accessibility.

Chatbot (AI). Implement an AI-powered chatbot to assist users with inquiries and provide real-time support.

Inquiry Form. Include a form for users to send inquiries and connect with human support if needed.

Virtual Tours. Provide video and virtual tours of student housing options to give users a comprehensive view.

FAQ Section. Curate FAQs addressing common questions for domestic and international students, including housing options, payment structures, safety, and amenities.

International Student Support. Offer detailed information for international students with families, including house size, facilities, rent costs, proximity to campus, transportation options and video tours.

Family-Friendly Features. Provide information for students with children, such as school zones, day-care options, parks, grocery stores and accessibility features like stroller-friendly subway stations and separate elevators for family housing.

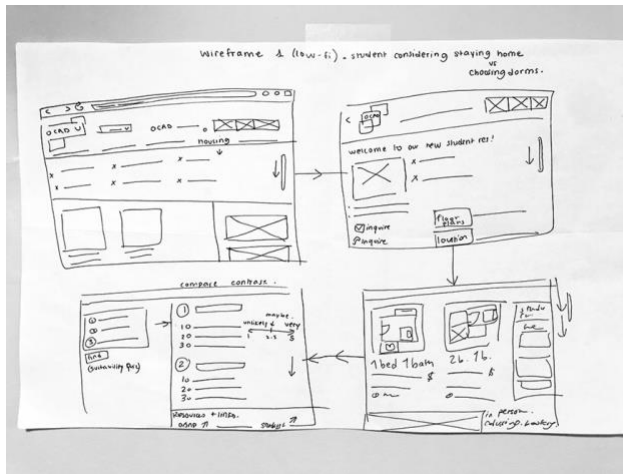
Housing Decision Support. Offer resources to help students make informed housing decisions, including pros and cons of staying at home vs. moving downtown and meal plan information.

Quiz Feature. Develop a quiz tool to help students filter and find relevant information based on their lifestyle preferences, directing them to curated resources and FAQs tailored to their needs.

These design considerations aim to create a user-centric platform that caters to the diverse housing needs of OCAD U students, offering support and resources to facilitate informed decision-making and enhance the overall student experience.

Figure 17

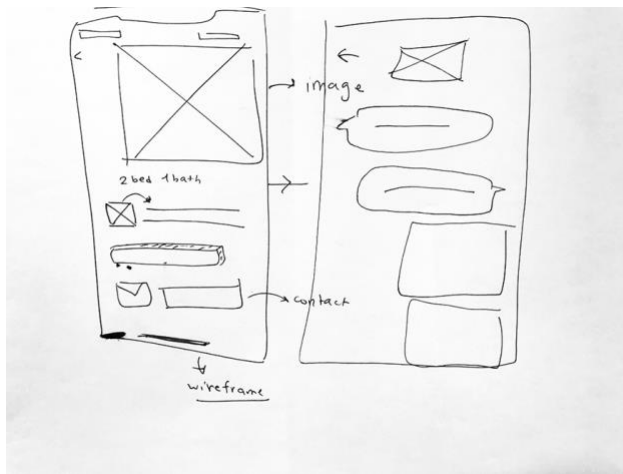
Low-Fidelity Wireframe Prototype, Image 1



Note. Larger Image Link: [Low-Fidelity Wireframe Prototype, Image 1](#)

Figure 18

Low-Fidelity Wireframe Prototype, Image 2



Note. Larger Image Link: [Low-fidelity Wireframe Prototype, Image 2](#)

Synthesis

Reflection

Synthesis Process

According to the Community-Led Co-design Kit, synthesis is the “process of transforming the outcomes of a group design activity into a cohesive format and sharing them in a way that’s easy to understand and useful to the design process” (IDRC, n.d.). Synthesis establishes a common understanding of what was done during the co-design workshop. This is important for sharing these findings with individuals who didn't participate in the workshop directly and communicating it in a way that’s beneficial to the next phase of our project. Synthesis is most effective when those most impacted by the design decisions are involved directly in the process.

With that in mind, we created three different methods for our co-designers to participate in the synthesis process. The following days after the co-design workshop, we took the raw outputs from the co-design workshop (whiteboard drawings, paper prototypes, sticky notes, etc.), digitized them and consolidated them into a Miro board (see Appendix I). We then invited the co-designers to contribute directly to the Miro board. We also created a feedback form in Microsoft Forms, asking our co-designers to share their experiences, findings

and feelings about the co-design workshop (see Appendix J). Lastly, we acknowledged that people have different ways of communicating and expressing their ideas, so we also made ourselves available for a virtual meeting in Microsoft Teams to support the co-designers in engaging with the synthesis. The co-designers were given over three weeks to engage with all three means of synthesis, as well as sending several reminder emails.

Thematic Analysis of Co-designers' Evaluations

A feedback form was sent to our co-designers to provide an opportunity for them to analyse the Miro board, contribute to the co-design synthesis and reflect on any emergent themes, stand-out ideas and future considerations. Nine co-designers responded to the co-design evaluation form. The processed data from the evaluation form is as followed:

Theme 1. Community Engagement and Inclusivity.

- Participants valued the sense of community and inclusivity fostered during the workshop.
- Importance of diverse perspectives and contributions in the design process.
- Recognition of common goals and the ability to work with a diverse group of students.

Theme 2. Engagement and Participation.

- Positive feedback on engagement levels during the workshop.
- Discussion on the clarity of instructions, time allocation, and facilitation dynamics.
- A desire for more time for meaningful discussions and idea exploration.

Theme 3. Housing Needs and Challenges.

- Recognition of diverse housing needs, experiences, and aspirations among OCAD U students.
- Challenges faced by students in finding affordable and suitable housing.
- Emphasis on the importance of addressing housing accessibility, safety, and affordability.

Theme 4. Design and Development Considerations.

- Ideas and discussions around the design and development of housing solutions for OCAD U students.
- Suggestions for future considerations, both short-term (improvements for next co-design workshop) and long-term (larger housing design development).

Emerging Keywords

Community. Emphasized the importance of fostering a sense of community and inclusivity within housing designs.

Inclusivity. Highlighted the need for designs and initiatives that cater to diverse student backgrounds and needs.

Engagement. Referred to active participation and involvement in the co-design process.

Accessibility & Affordability. Addressed the need for housing solutions that are accessible and affordable for all students.

Safety. Prioritized safety measures and considerations within housing designs.

Stand-out Ideas or Discussions

- Integration of non-residential students into the OCAD community.
- Governance models with integrated student involvement.
- Development of an inclusive housing website with features like chatbots for FAQ and matching students to housing.
- Simplification of housing processes for international students and those with language barriers.
- Consideration of diverse student archetypes and needs in housing designs.

Future Considerations

- Clearer communication and guidance in co-design workshops.
- More time allocation for meaningful discussions.
- Student-directed and researched approaches for long-term housing design development.
- Addressing navigational issues and financial barriers in housing searches.
- Integration of health and wellness aspects into housing designs.

Additional Comments and Feedback

- Positive feedback on the workshop's informal and inclusive nature.
- Appreciation for the facilitators' efforts in creating a supportive and engaging environment.
- Suggestions for improvements, such as providing more guidance on tasks and continue incorporating diverse student voices in future workshops.

Discussion

What Did We Learn?

Co-design Process Insights

We've been told repeatedly by those who have practiced co-design in their field that there's no

one formula, prescription or template to follow when planning for co-design. We were told to keep things flexible and create space for gems, unknowns and surprises. To do what we can to be welcoming and facilitate an ethos of inclusion, to foster a sense of safety and belonging for co-designers and to allow for the people with lived experiences, the people who live at the margins of society, to share ideas, to create and to innovate. We were nervous, to say the least. This was a new experience and what we hoped to be the first of many co-design workshops that we co-facilitated.

One of our greatest hopes was to provide a space that would foster storytelling. This process was touch-and-go throughout the co-design process. We noticed when certain co-designers would withdraw. We noticed when a co-designer felt unseen and unsure. We noticed when a co-designer felt intimidated. We noticed when one was being brave, or when one was being humble or feeling higher in energy. Throughout the co-design, we were juggling the social dynamics, the humanity of it all, taking pause to notice and be curious.

If you asked us, at what moment did you feel the co-designers felt at most ease, felt most passionate about what they were designing and felt most brave to share their stories? We would say it was the moment we were engaging with the design itself. The attention directed to

the design—whether it be the governance model or the website wireframe—absorbed the spotlight, and with it, the co-designers felt safe to share their stories. It was as if the design itself was a microphone that was being passed around, giving the co-designers a stage to stand and speak their stories, their pain points and their memories without self-judgment of their hardships. The design became a vehicle to unload their grievances and drive towards supporting future students who are just like us.

The co-design process highlighted an important lesson:

People will share their authentic stories when you offer them a medium that not only gives them an outlet for meaning-making, but also a vehicle to drive them towards a humanitarian cause.

What we learned from co-design required us as “expert” designers to trade in our individual power and privilege to gain a collective power that allows access to insights cultivated by the willingness to learn. As McKercher (2020) advocates:

Co-design combines professional and lived experience for more insight than professionals can achieve alone. To do that well, professionals need to bring their knowledge to the table, as well as staying open to learning from others. That allows people with lived

experience, professionals, and broader communities to develop a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges together, grounded in mutual learning for everyone involved.

What we learned of co-design is, ultimately, a call for unlearning past hierarchical ways of doing and learning as a collective.

Novel Pathway for Student Integration

Reflecting upon the entirety of the MRP process, from its conception to establishing a partnership with OCAD U administration to the co-design workshop, we realize that our greatest output and discovery is not what we did but *how* we did it. We paved a new pathway for students to become integrated into research and decision-making processes on an institutional level. We did this within the context of acquiring and developing student housing, but this is a process that could be replicated in other contexts with other students, even in other institutions.

A major affordance of this co-design process is a potential systemic change to how the university incorporates students into decision-making processes.

We recognize that our involvement in the housing development process began long before our official research partnership with the university. Being that the university is

democratic and bureaucratic in nature, there are a select number of students who are nominated and elected to various student roles on decision-making bodies, such as the BoG and Senate, and other student leadership roles which are occupied by student volunteers, paid student monitors, proactive student group leaders and many others.

As a long-standing elected student representative on the BoG and former Executive Director at the Student Union, we were privy to information and processes that most students don't have access to. We were "in the know" about the upcoming major decisions and challenges the institution was facing regarding student housing. Although we are individual students with unique perspectives and lived experiences, we are also connected to and representatives of a larger whole. We were given an opportunity not only to voice our ideas and opinions but also to amplify the voices and ideas of our peers through co-design.

The alignment of our research interests with the university's research interests allowed for an experiential learning opportunity right on our own campus. The reciprocity of our research partnership with OCAD U created a more sustainable and equitable approach to making major decisions around the upcoming housing development. As student researchers,

we were granted access to exclusive, secondary data from the university that better informed our MRP. As a university, they gained two inclusive design graduate students who conducted equitable research to better inform their decision regarding student housing.

Pathways to Integrating Student Voice in University Decision-Making Processes

To conclude our MRP, we have compiled a list of key steps that university administration and staff should take to create meaningful, equitable and liberatory decision-making systems at their institution. Note that this is a non-linear, iterative pathway that requires humility, curiosity and deep commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

For a downloadable PDF version of this pathway, see Appendix K.

Student Engagement. Create avenues of meaningful participation for students to become involved in these decision-making processes from the very first day of their student journey (e.g. committee members, policy reviewers, working group members).

Build Relationships. Develop long-term, sustainable partnerships with students.

- Always compensate students for their time and efforts (e.g. honorariums, extra credits, grocery gift cards, etc.).
- Create accessible materials and onboarding systems/mentorship to understand the bureaucratic nature of the institution (e.g. comprehensible BoG meeting minutes).

Nurture Trust.

- Transparent reporting of the challenges the university is facing and where the university needs student support.
- Practice mindful listening and action student input.
- Answer student questions with openness and curiosity to facilitate productive conversations on their inquiry.
- Commit to the process by checking in on the student leaders—trust is built over time.

Recruit Students from the Start. Include students in every step of the decision-making process, and not merely ask them to review the end product. Model the Double Design Diamond Approach (Design Council, 2003):

- Discovery – include students in understanding the problem.

- Definition – include students in defining the problem.
- Development – include students in developing possible output(s).
- Delivery – include students in choosing and delivering the output(s).

Create Channels for Student Connections.

Support students in engaging with their peers and for elected student positions, engaging with the students they represent (i.e. their constituents).

- Provide tools to document, synthesize, and present their observations and findings.
- Connect students to events and opportunities on a university and provincial level.

Resource Sharing. Utilize the university’s resources and privileges to support student initiatives.

- Invest in resources for students who are pursuing projects and research that support the collective student experience.

Endorse Student Hiring.

- Hire students with lived experiences before defaulting to third-party

contracts who facilitate their own focus groups and market insights.

Invite Students to University Improvement

Research. The Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) is a comprehensive ethical framework guiding research involving humans in Canada. While it primarily serves to protect participants' rights and welfare, it can sometimes be a barrier to certain research methodologies, including co-design.

Co-design research involves active collaboration between researchers and participants throughout every step of the research process, emphasizing equal partnership and shared decision-making. When applying for REB approval, there is an expectation for the researchers to have the research planned out before engaging other human participants, such as potential co-designers, which goes against the ethos of co-design. It is impossible to describe the data that will be created from co-designing, as pre-emptively deciding what will be created inherently defeats the purpose of the co-design process.

The university’s exemption from REB review could be used to support student co-design research initiatives that support its quality assurance and improvement.

- According to TCPS Article 2.5: “Quality assurance and quality improvement

studies, program evaluation activities, and performance reviews, or testing within normal educational requirements when used exclusively for assessment, management or improvement purposes, do not constitute research for the purposes of this Policy, and do not fall within the scope of REB review” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2022).

Strengths & Limitations

Strengths

- We found it a major strength that we are current, full-time OCAD U students participating in the co-design process. This gave us an insider perspective, as we had common lived experiences with our fellow co-designers.
- As members of marginalized groups with intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1991) we’re able to deeply empathize with and holistically understand the barriers many vulnerable communities face when searching for housing.
- We positioned ourselves as co-creators of knowledge for the entirety of the MRP process, allowing knowledge to form in relation to the people we worked alongside and the perspectives they shared.
- OCAD U is a small university compared to other universities in downtown Toronto. Although that comes with its share of strengths and weaknesses, for the purpose of this project, we would consider it a strength. This allowed us to be more agile with our project, flexibility in scheduling and how we accessed resources.
- Another strength throughout this project was working collaboratively on this MRP, or, as we like to say, “the power of pairs”. Being two graduate students working on this project together, we were able to engage in a level of reflexivity and accountability that wouldn’t have occurred if we had done this alone. We regularly journaled and prompted each other to reflect on the co-design and the entire MRP process. We gently “called in” one another when we started to stray away from the ethos of our project or fall prey to imperialistic agendas.
- We used a mixed-method approach in this project, combining existing research, surveys, co-designing, synthesizing, reflecting, and coding, ultimately leading to the creation of unique and highly personalized

research on housing struggles for OCAD U students. Although only 12 students participated in our co-design workshop, over 600 students responded to the housing survey that was administered by our research partner. The co-design was further validated by the insights gained from the survey results.

- Which also leads us to a MEGA strength of this project: working in partnership with OCAD U administration. We had access to novel secondary data while also actively influencing the methodology in their research approaches, sharing responsibility and co-facilitating.
- We did not underestimate the power of the induction. What we mean by that is we spent months curating the onboarding video and the materials leading up to the co-design workshop. This iterative process received input from the community and fellow OCAD U students. This process allowed us as facilitators to fine-tune our approaches to the co-design and empower our co-designers, arming them with the information they needed to confidently navigate the co-design workshop. Having only one meeting as a group and a mere four-hour time window, we built

respected and mutualistic relationships with the co-designers.

Limitations

- Alex Manu defines the “imagination gap” as the gap between current capability and future possibility. While our -ish ethos slightly closes this imagination gap, we recognize its downfalls as well. We acknowledge the parallel presence of harmful colonial, racist, paternalistic, and extractive discourses within the field of co-design (King & Cormack, 2023) and academia as a whole, and how this can be unintentionally propagated in the research.
- There are also downsides to being an “insider” to the research. Our position as students in this research might make us unknowingly biased, positioning us too close to the design challenge.
- One of the biggest limitations was time constraints. We ditched our individual MRP plans during the Fall 2023 term and decided to collaborate on this housing design project instead, leaving us less than nine months to complete the project.
- Another major limitation was not being able to invite housing developers to our co-design session due to the delays in

the procurement process. In our experience, there was an overall lack of clarity in the procurement process, which made scheduling our co-design quite challenging.

- A limitation of the co-design workshop was how delayed we were in inviting students to participate. Students had less than a week to respond to the invitation. We also only hosted the session in person, which also limits who can participate in the co-design workshop.
- Fortunately for us, we did not require an REB review as we were using secondary data provided by our research partnership, and the research was being used for university quality assurance purposes. But as we went through the REB application process, we recognized how counter-conducive it was to the co-design process and is not structured in a way that supports equitable partnership between researchers and “participants”.

Contributions to the Field of

Inclusive Design and Next Steps

Co-design is not only a research methodology but a movement and a mindset. By applying co-design to our MRP, we further support the argument for more inclusive practices in

institution decision-making and housing design research. Upon reviewing the literature, it was challenging to find student housing design research that used co-design with students as a methodology. Our MRP will add to the limited literature that exists.

Beyond this MRP, we will be further mobilizing this data for increased accessibility. We shall be compiling this data and all our findings into a website that can be readily shared with students and other universities. By disseminating our research and applying the Community-Led Co-design Kit, we are further modelling how co-design and co-creation can be actioned by students to create change in their universities.

We also plan on facilitating a second co-design workshop during the Summer of 2024, inviting several OCAD staff members who have been identified as major characters in the upcoming housing development. We hope to continue to build upon our outputs from the first co-design workshop and further mobilize this information so these staff members can make more informed decisions that reflect students’ needs.

Our website is dedicated to advocating for accessible and affordable student housing development in Toronto, emphasizing housing as a fundamental right for all, not just the privileged few. Through sharing our research,

lived experiences, and collaboration with co-designers, we aim to inspire institutions to actively involve students in the housing conversation rather than just relying on private-sector solutions. Our goal is to ensure that students are included in every step of the process, from inception to implementation, fostering a more inclusive and equitable approach to student housing.

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Appendices

Appendix A

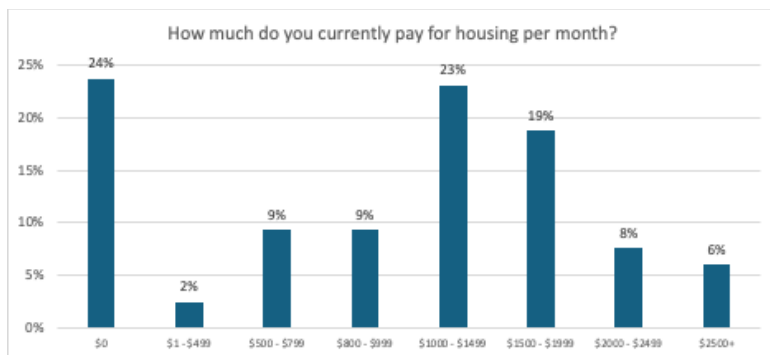
2024 OCAD University Housing Survey Report

In the March of 2024, OCAD University’s Affordability Taskforce, a joint committee led by the OCAD Student Union and OCAD U Administration launched a Housing Survey to better understand the housing needs of the OCAD University student community. The Taskforce is committed to finding viable solutions and compiling actionable resources to combat financial stress for OCAD U students through a number of initiatives and advocacy.

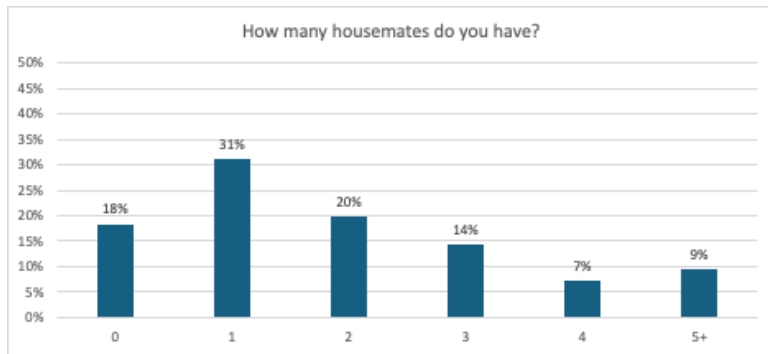
The results of the survey can be factored into the University’s decision-making process for establishing student housing, which is part of our 2022-2028 Strategic and Academic Plan. The findings will also be employed in discussions about affordability at the government level and with potential housing partners.

5023 students (4702 undergraduates/321 graduates) were invited to complete the survey. 624 students (563 undergraduates/61 graduates) responded to the survey, resulting in a 12.4% response rate.

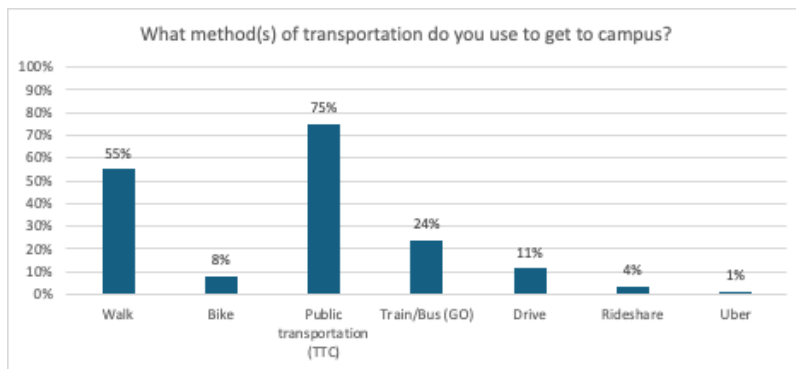
Almost 25% of students did not pay rent. Of students that paid rent, most paid between \$1,000 and \$2,000 per month.



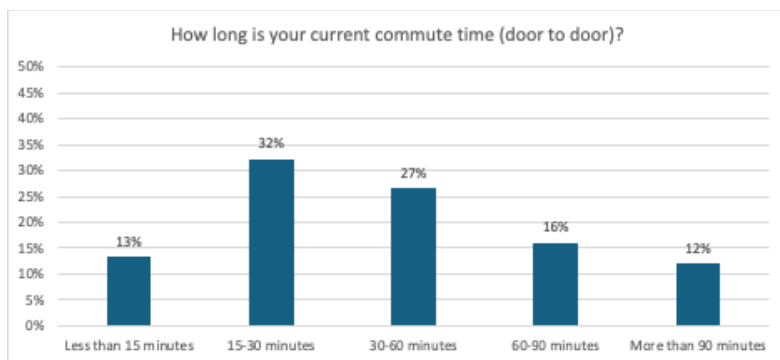
The majority of students lived with 1 housemate. The next most frequent number of housemates was 2 or 0.



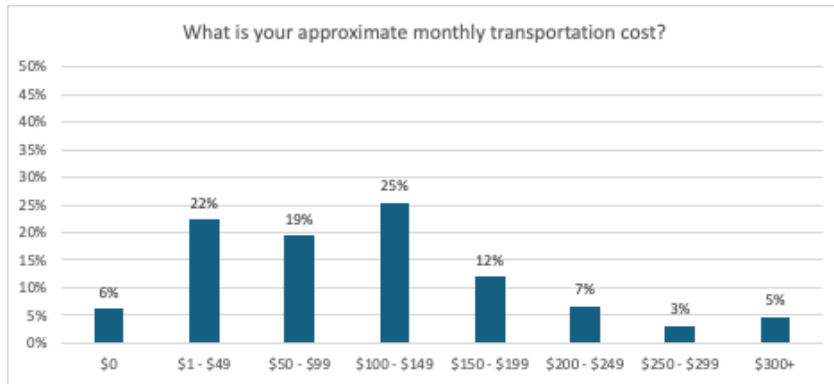
Most OCAD U students use the TTC to get to campus. The next most popular means of getting to campus was walking. Other methods of included public transit systems (i.e., Durham, York, Mississauga, Wheel Trans),



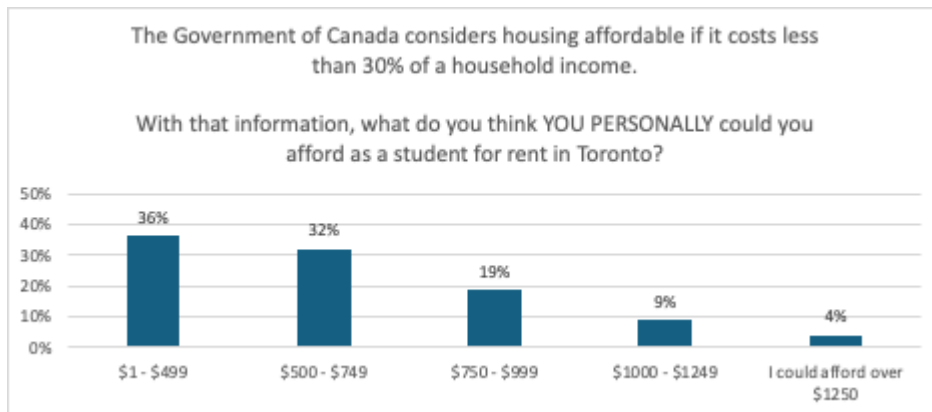
Almost a third of students commute for 15 to 30 minutes to get to campus. The second most common commute time was 30-60 minutes.



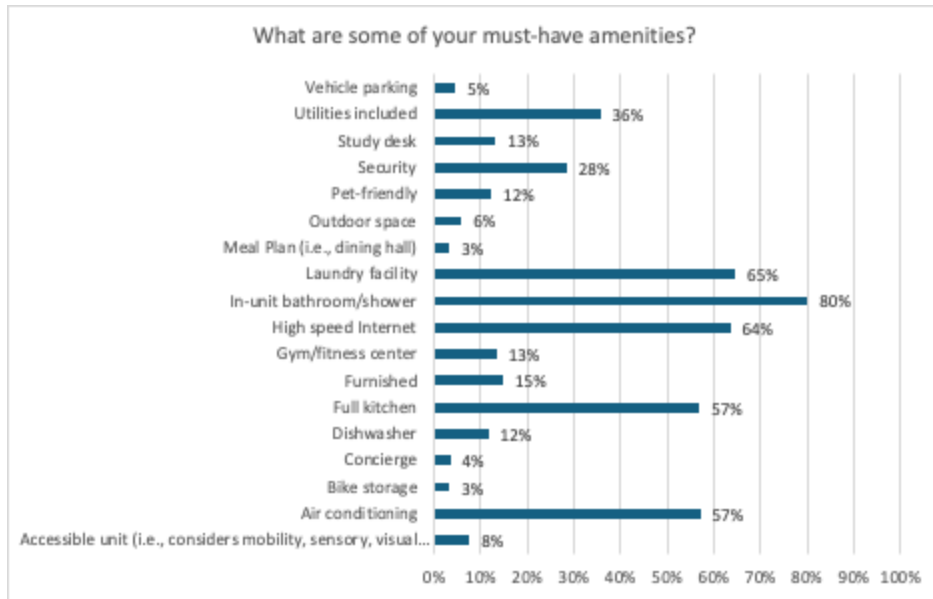
A quarter of students spend approximately \$100 to \$149 a month on transportation.



Over a third of students could afford affordable housing if rent was less than \$500 per month. Just under a third of students could afford affordable housing if rent was between \$500 and \$750 per month.



Students were asked to indicate their must-have amenities. They were allowed to choose 5. The top 5 amenities were in-unit bathroom/shower, laundry facilities, high-speed internet, full kitchen, and air conditioning.



The following are additional amenities desired by students.

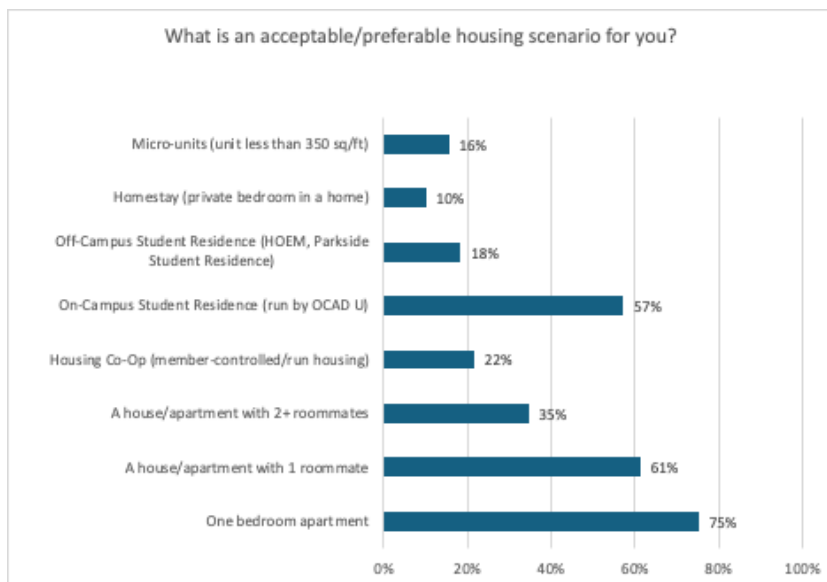


a heater for winter.
A kitchenette would be helpful
A proper living condition
A window with sunshine (mental health)
Balcony
Central heating
Cleanliness
Close to transit or to the school. Good natural light
communal study spaces
Decent waste management system, good natural light
Due to my cheap rent, I cannot move out of my current basement apartment. However, if I were to start this process again my "must-have" amenities would include a laundry machine or facility as I currently travel 15 minutes one-way to do my laundry and it costs about \$20-30 a month for me. The key issue is having to travel, especially in the winter or hot summer, to do my laundry as it is also quite <u>time-consuming</u> and I cannot leave my laundry at the laundromat unattended as it gets stolen frequently. I would also opt for an apartment with A/C as I do not have any.
Electricity

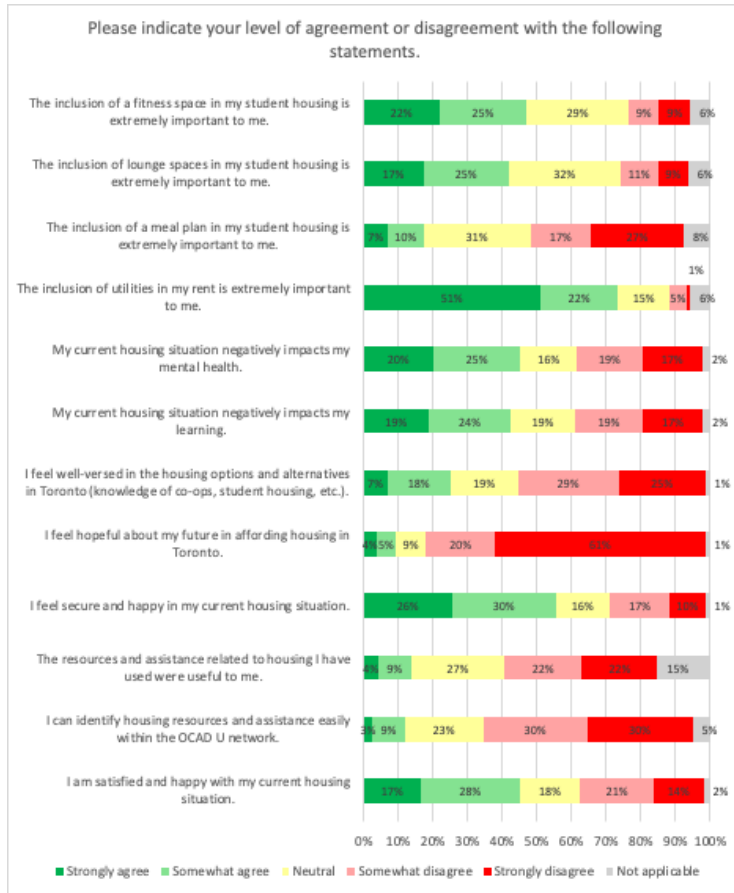
In-unit laundry
in-unit laundry machine and dryer, openable window
In-unit laundry, Heating (in case air-conditioning doesn't also include heating)
Laundry in unit
maintenance services
meal plan
Most of the amenities above should be provided in order for the housing to be considered proper housing. No housing should be built without accessibility in mind???
Natural light
near school and/or public transport
Not a basement, the stairs are never safe and a lot of them are dangerous
Personal Bedroom
Private bathroom.
Private bedrooms
Private space
proper storage in the unit and bedroom, multiple closets, private in-suite laundry that doesn't require change payments
Safe environment
Safety, cleanliness (my current landlord hires a house cleaner for us once a week and it is a godsend)
Studio space
Studio space
study desk and recreational space
The above amenities do not indicate if they are for a dorm, or for student apartments. My preferences and understanding of the housing situation vary greatly based on this specification. Only picking five with one option being accessibility, also leaves students with disabilities, realistically, four options. The way this list was structured & the lack of context means the information I'm able to provide is basically useless.
the survey only allowed me to pick 5, but security is also a must-have.

There is nothing else
Windows / fresh air
Within walking distance to OCAD or short transit routes less than 15 min
Would need to be on a reliable transit route as I do not own a vehicle. Would also need to be within reasonable distance of amenities such as grocery stores or laundromats if no laundry machines are provided

Students were asked what their preferable housing scenario was. Most students prefer a one-bedroom apartment. This was followed closely by a house/apartment with 1 roommate, and on-campus student residence run by OCAD U.

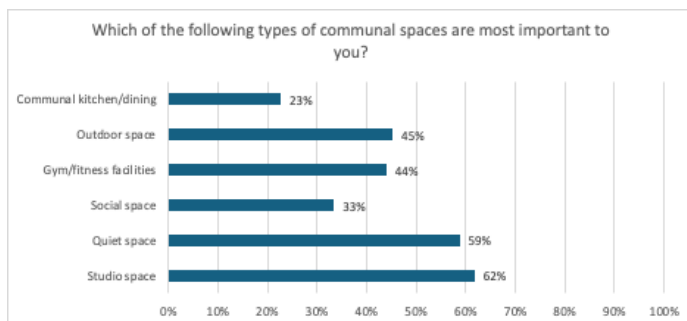


Other preferred housing scenarios are listed below.



The chart above suggests that students have a fairly negative outlook on their current and future housing situations.

Students were asked what communal spaces were most important. Students could select up to 3 spaces. The top 3 were studio space, quiet space, and outdoor space. Gym/fitness facilities were not far behind outdoor space.



Appendix B

RFP Details and Scoring Criteria

[Link to REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS For Development of Student Housing](#)

Project timeline:

RFP released on January 17, 2024 on Merx <https://www.merx.com/>

Interested proponents were directed to Bonfire to download the RFP documents.

Project briefing: January 23, 2024. 28 proponents attended.

Enquiry period opened on January 17 and ended on February 9th

RFP closing date: February 21, 2024

Evaluation deadline February 27, 2024.

Evaluators:

Vice-President, Finance & Administration (VPFA)

Director of Finance

Vice-Provost, Students & International

Merchandise Lead from the office of the VPFA

Students x2

There were 74 non-disclosure agreements signed and 73 document takers.

Final submissions: 9 proposals were submitted and evaluated.

Interviews: 9 proponents were interviewed.



Criteria	Points	Description
Submission form	Pass/Fail	
A - Technical response	75 pts	
A-1 - Q1	10 pts	Entity Introduction: Provide a brief introduction of the submitting entity, including its legal name, structure, and core competencies. Highlight relevant experience in real estate development, particularly in student housing or similar residential projects.
A-2 - Q2	10 pts	Project-Specific Experience: Outline any experience related to student housing or other developments, with an emphasis on successful projects completed in collaboration with educational institutions.
A-3 - Q3	10 pts	Development Models Expertise: Clearly specify any preferred development model or models proposed by the submitting entity (e.g., Equity-Purchase-Head-Lease, Head Lease Only, Joint Venture, Co-op development). Detail the entity's expertise and experience in executing the chosen development model.
A-4 - Q4	10 pts	Financial Capacity: If applicable and/or relevant, provide evidence of financial capacity, including the ability to secure funding for the development. Clearly outline the proposed financial structure and sources of funding.

A-5 - Q5	10 pts	Local and Community Engagement: Describe the submitting entity's approach to local and community engagement, especially if local or regional development partners are involved. Detail any community benefits or initiatives that will be integrated into the student housing project.
A-6 - Q6	10 pts	References: Provide any references or case studies related to past collaborations with educational institutions and/or similar public-private partnerships.
A-7 - Q7	10 pts	Specific Property or Site Details: Provide any details and specifics, including proximity information, if relevant to the proposal.
A-8 - Q8	10 pts	Why is the submitting entity interested in partnering with OCAD U on student housing development?
B - Interview/Presentation	25 pts	
B-1 - Interview/presentation	25 pts	Agenda will be provided
Total	100 pts	

Scoring Summary

Active Submissions

	Total	Submission form	A - Technical response	A-1 - Q1	A-2 - Q2
Supplier	/ 100 pts	Pass/Fail	/ 75 pts*	/ 10 pts	/ 10 pts
A	85.19 pts	Pass	62.19 pts	9.333 pts	9 pts
B	81.44 pts	Pass	63.44 pts	9.333 pts	7.667 pts
C	79.94 pts	Pass	65.94 pts	9 pts	8.667 pts
D	78.88 pts	Pass	66.88 pts	10 pts	9 pts
E	77.56 pts	Pass	61.56 pts	8.333 pts	7 pts
F	74.94 pts	Pass	55.94 pts	8.333 pts	7.667 pts



	Total	Submission form	A - Technical response	A-1 - Q1	A-2 - Q2
Supplier	/ 100 pts	Pass/Fail	/ 75 pts*	/ 10 pts	/ 10 pts
G	71.19 pts	Pass	62.19 pts	9 pts	8.333 pts
H	70.31 pts	Pass	50.31 pts	7 pts	7.333 pts
I	36.06 pts	Pass	29.06 pts	5.667 pts	4.667 pts

	A-3 - Q3	A-4 - Q4	A-5 - Q5	A-6 - Q6	A-7 - Q7
Supplier	/ 10 pts	/ 10 pts	/ 10 pts	/ 10 pts	/ 10 pts
A	8.333 pts	6.333 pts	8 pts	8.333 pts	8 pts
B	8.667 pts	9.333 pts	8.667 pts	9 pts	7.667 pts
C	9 pts	9 pts	8.667 pts	8.667 pts	8.667 pts
D	8.333 pts	9.333 pts	9 pts	9.333 pts	8 pts



	A-3 - Q3	A-4 - Q4	A-5 - Q5	A-6 - Q6	A-7 - Q7
Supplier	/ 10 pts	/ 10 pts	/ 10 pts	/ 10 pts	/ 10 pts
E	9 pts	9 pts	7.667 pts	7.667 pts	8 pts
F	6 pts	7 pts	5.333 pts	8.667 pts	9 pts
G	8 pts	8.333 pts	7.667 pts	9 pts	7.667 pts
H	6.667 pts	7.667 pts	4.667 pts	6 pts	7.667 pts
I	4.333 pts	3.333 pts	2.667 pts	1.333 pts	5.667 pts

Appendix C

Living in the-ish Onboarding Video

The onboarding video is included as an external YouTube link in the OCAD U repository. This link can be opened with a browser.

Appendix D

Letter Outlining Nature of Research Partnership with Vice-Provost, Students and International



OCAD UNIVERSITY
100 McCaul Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1W1

T. 416 977 6000
F. 416 977 6006

March 1, 2024

To Sabrina Benoit, Lucy Song,

This letter outlines the nature of our partnership with respect to your work on student housing initiatives at OCAD University.

OCAD University has identified the establishment of student housing as a priority in our Academic & Strategic Plan and has been working actively through the OCAD U – OCADSU Affordability Task Force on this effort.

You (the researchers) have identified student housing as an area of focus for your Major Research Project for the Inclusive Design masters program at OCAD University.

In recognition of our mutual interest in designing solutions for OCAD U housing that best meet the needs of OCAD U students, we agree to work together in the following respects:

- OCAD University will administer a student survey on housing and will share a report on the results with the researchers.
- OCAD University will issue a Request for Proposals to potential housing partners and invite the researchers as participants in the evaluation process.
- The researchers will design and facilitate a co-design workshop with students on Imagining Student Housing at OCAD University.

As a representative of the University, I will serve as principal investigator on the project with respect to data collection given the university's pre-existing interest in this topic.

As students in the INCD program, you will be permitted to use reports and data from the survey, RFP process and the workshop to fulfil your academic requirements.

We all agree to adhere to confidentiality as required by the various activities outlined here and to conduct the work according to best practice in research ethics.

Appendix E

Invitation Letter To Co-design Workshop

Dear OCAD U Student:

We are looking for students interested in participating in an in-person, co-design workshop and being an integral part of the **upcoming OCAD U housing development project**. The co-design workshop will include collaborative design activities with other student participants, OCAD U administrators and housing developers. to explore and understand the barriers faced by students who require housing and ideate creative design solutions that address these barriers. This project aims to creatively disrupt and challenge the traditional models applied to student housing. Using a co-design process, we want to help gather and better understand student needs and develop and refine design ideas toward a new way of **imagining student housing**.

What is Co-design?

Co-design is a process of designing *with* students and not *for* students. Students are most impacted by institution housing design, especially those with needs least served by existing designs, and are invited in the process from its earliest stages. Students are engaged throughout the process and directly contribute to creating housing designs that meet their unique needs. Co-design participants are not involved as research subjects or consultants but, rather, as designers engaged in active and sustained collaboration. For more information on co-design, please visit <https://co-design.inclusivedesign.ca/introduction/>.

The co-design workshop will occur on April 4 from 4 pm to 8 pm on the OCAD U campus (room number to be confirmed).

Please note the following:

Participation

Participation in the co-design workshop is voluntary. Your relationship or status with OCAD U will not be impacted by whether you say yes or no.

You can withdraw from the workshop at any time, even after it has started. This will not impact your relationship or status with OCAD U.

You may be asked about your personal experiences with housing. If you feel uncomfortable sharing these experiences, you do not have to participate in the activities or discussion, and you do not have to provide a reason for not participating or withdrawing from them.

Compensation

You will be compensated for your participation with a \$150 gift card for up to 4 hrs of co-designing. Even if you do not complete the workshop, this rate will not change.

Confidentiality

OCAD U and partner researchers will keep your responses confidential. You will not be identified individually in any way in written reports of this research unless you consent to your quotes and ideas being attributed to you.

Contributions

In this process, you may collaboratively create new and original material, such as verbal and written notes, drawings, images, etc. You can leave the activity at any time; however, your contributions cannot be removed from the results as they are considered part of a collective work.

Ethics Policy

This study has received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at OCAD U [File No. 102480]. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the Research Ethics Board OCAD University 100 McCaul Street, Toronto, M5T1W1 416 977 6000 x4368 research@ocadu.ca.

About the Researchers

This co-design activity is undertaken in partnership with “Living in the -ish: Imagining Student Housing for OCAD U,” a Major Research Project (MRP) by graduate students Lucy Song and Sabrina Benoit. For more information on this project, please watch the video available here:

<https://youtu.be/TSUel9RVx5Q?feature=shared>

If you have any questions or complaints about the process at any time, please email

livingintheish@gmail.com

How to Apply

If you are interested in participating, please [complete our application](#) form before noon on April 2.

Selected students will be chosen based on the application and will be contacted with further information.

Warm Regards,

Vice-Provost, Students & International

Appendix F

Living in the-ish Video Trailer

The video trailer is included as an external YouTube link in the OCAD U repository. This link can be opened with a browser.

Appendix G

Co-design Workshop Application Form

Qualifying Questions

Are you available and committed to participate in the in-person, co-design workshop on **Thursday, April 4th at 4pm** (max 4 hours)? Note: your time will be compensated with a \$150 grocery gift card.

YES or NO

Do you currently live in the GTA (City of Toronto and the regional municipalities of Durham, Halton, Peel, and York).

YES or NO

Have you ever sought housing while enrolled in a post-secondary school?

YES or NO

Demographic Information: we ask students to provide their demographic information so we can ensure a diversity of co-designers with representations from a variety of groups. This survey is confidential and is used solely for the purpose of selecting a diverse group of participants.

What year of study are you in?

Undergraduate First year

Undergraduate Upper Years

Graduate Studies

Prefer not to answer

Are you a domestic or international student? (Check one)

Domestic Student

International Student

Prefer not to answer

How do you self-identify your race and/or ethnicity?

Prefer not to answer

How do you self-identify your gender?

Prefer not to answer

Do you identify as a first-generation student? For the purposes of this survey, a first-generation student is a student whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) has not completed any post-secondary (college or university) qualification.

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

Are you a recipient of needs-based* financial aid/scholarships? This includes OSAP, student loans, grants, scholarships and bursaries.

*Need-based financial aid is based on your family's financial situation

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

Please provide your programme of study at OCAD U.

Prefer not to answer

Have you ever participated in a co-design workshop, focus group, or other form of participatory research involvement? Prior experience is not a requirement to participate in this co-design workshop.

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

Do you identify as an ELL (English Language Learner) student?

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

Please let us know if you have any accessibility or accommodation requirements.

Prefer not to answer

If yes, please list your accommodations and/or accessibility needs: _____

In 1-2 sentences, how would you describe your current housing situation?

Prefer not to answer

We believe that everyone has valuable lived experiences to contribute to our co-design workshop. What unique perspectives or experiences do you believe would enrich the workshop?

Is there any additional information you would like to share about yourself that you believe is relevant to your participation in the workshop?

Appendix H

Diversity of Co-designers

Total of 12 student participants:

- 9 undergraduate students (first year and upper years)
- 3 graduate students
- 4 international, 7 domestic, 1 non-specified
- 3 first-generation students
- 5 different racial/ethnic identities
- 4 different genders identities
- 5 students with needs-based financial aid
- 7 different study programmes represented
- 5 students with participatory research experiences
- Mature students represented
- Students with disabilities represented

Appendix I

Miro Board Co-design Synthesis

The Miro Board was included as an external link in the OCAD U repository. This link can be opened with a browser.

Appendix J

Co-design Follow-up Form

Pause. Reflect. Share.

Thank you again to everyone who joined us for our first housing co-design session. To conclude our first session, we invite all co-designers to share any observations and findings from our workshop. This part of the co-design process is called "co-designing synthesis" and "co-design outcome summary."

Before beginning this survey, we invite you to **spend a few minutes reflecting** upon the co-design process. Note any **thoughts, feelings, or insights** that arise as you reflect. After your reflection, we invite you to begin this survey. We recommend spending **20-30 minutes** on the survey if you can afford the time and energy (as it is currently our formal assessment period).

As you document your findings, we invite you to add **context** and/or **contribution**—meaning, if possible, adding references to the circumstances surrounding the moment the observation/insight occurred and noting who contributed (e.g. the context could be a question or prompt that was given to the group, or a reaction to something that a fellow co-designer said, and acknowledging those who shared that moment with you).

We also honour and embrace the *lack of completeness*, meaning our co-design "outcomes" represent a culmination of what has been understood so far, and there is more exploration and refinement to be done.

At the end of this survey, you will be able to select which type of **e-gift card** (valued at \$150) you would like to receive as compensation for participating in this co-design (**Sobeys, Walmart, or Amazon**).

Student email? (to receive your e-gift card) *

As a co-designer, what did you find most meaningful from our co-design workshop?

How do you feel about the value of your participation? Did you feel seen and heard? Did you feel inspired to participate and share? Reflect and share your thoughts.

What level of engagement and equality did you feel during the co-design workshop? Did you have enough means to participate? For example, how was the clarity of instruction, time allocation for each question, support/guidance from co-facilitators, means of communication (speaking up, writing down, drawing, etc.), group size, and dynamics support your participation?

What are the common themes that emerged during the co-design process?

What are 3-5 keywords that you would use to describe as the emerging ideas/concepts?

What are some stand-out ideas or discussions you would like to share?

What are some future considerations you feel would be helpful for our next co-design session (short-term) and/or for our larger housing design development (long-term)?

Any other questions, comments, feedback you would like to offer to the research team?

Would you like to join our next follow-up co-design session the afternoon/evening of April 22 or 23? *

- Yes
- No / Unavailable
- Maybe

If yes, would how would you like to join? *

- In-person (on campus)
- Online (Teams Meeting)
- Either of the above

From which retailer would you like to receive your \$150 e-gift card? *

- Sobeys (includes sub-brands: Foodland, Safeway, FreshCo, Urban Fresh)
- Walmart
- [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca)

Appendix K.

Pathways to Integrating Student Voice in University Decision-Making Processes Downloadable PDF

The downloadable PDF was included as an external link in the OCAD U repository. This link can be opened with a browser.