



Western
SocialScience

Network for Economic
and Social Trends (NEST)

The Network for Economic and Social Trends:
Western Social Science Research and Policy

Faculty of Social Science
The University of Western Ontario

Constitution
10 July 2018

NEST and the Faculty of Social Science

The Faculty of Social Science at Western University is the largest faculty on campus, and one of the largest and most diverse Social Science faculties in Canada. The Faculty includes eight core Departments — Anthropology, DAN Management, Economics, Geography, History, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology — and the interdisciplinary Department of Women’s Studies and Feminist Research, which for planning and budgetary purposes, resides in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities. The Faculty is home to almost 200 research intensive professors across its eight core departments.

The Faculty of Social Science is committed to research excellence. Our goal is to be the best possible place for excellent faculty and staff to work and for students to learn. In order to create an internationally competitive research and teaching environment, we are working to foster a culture of belonging, along with a focus on research excellence.

The Network for Economics and Social Trends (NEST) helps us accomplish these goals. NEST encourages interdisciplinary research by bringing together researchers from across all departments of the Faculty of Social Science. Its purpose is to create opportunities for research synergy and exceptional research training. It will apply advanced approaches to the changing social, political and economic challenges facing Canada and the rest of the world. NEST will increase our research profile, both in the international academic community and with policy makers. In short, our goal is to make a difference.

NEST will officially open in September 2018. The constitution that follows outlines the rules of operation for NEST.



Robert Andersen
Dean, Faculty of Social Science
July 10, 2018

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1. Mission Statement

Modern societies are experiencing unprecedented social and economic changes, including a slowdown in economic growth, rising inequality, and increasing ethnic diversity and geographic mobility. NEST, the flagship research and policy alliance in the Faculty of Social Science at Western University, addresses these challenges by conducting world-class multidisciplinary research, fostering national and international collaborations, and facilitating the training of the next generation of leaders in academia, the private and non-profit sectors, and government. NEST employs advanced data creation and analytic techniques to provide theoretically-driven and evidence-based research that informs social and economic policy and practice on topics such as population change, economic inequality and poverty, mobility (social, economic and geographic), immigration and ethnic diversity, educational attainment, governance, urban affairs, and community development. Although NEST focuses primarily on North America, including comparative work on Canada and the United States, we are also interested in relevant international comparisons.

2. Our Mandate

The Faculty of Social Science at Western University is home to a wide array of exceptional researchers with expertise relevant to social and economic research, policy, and practice. Believing that synergy across traditional boundaries leads to innovation, NEST provides an intellectual and physical environment designed to encourage and facilitate multidisciplinary and collaborative activities in scholarship and training across Departments in the Faculty of Social Science, as well as knowledge transfer that ensures that research findings have impact locally, nationally, and internationally. NEST is an umbrella organization for the Faculty of Social Science's six Western Research Centres, which set its agenda and provide its governance.

The primary objectives of NEST are:

- to facilitate and promote world-class, cross-disciplinary research and training relevant to social and economic policy and practice that address pressing issues facing modern societies;
- to bring together researchers from all Western Research Centres housed in the Faculty of Social Science, and to share resources for the benefit of all;
- to train the next generation of leaders for the academic world, for local, national and international government, and for the private and non-profit sectors;
- to profile policy-relevant social science research being done at Western by disseminating our findings widely to policy-makers, practitioners, government, business and the general public;
- to forge new, and strengthen established, links with the community, policy-makers, and practitioners for the purpose of supporting evidence-based decision-making;
- to provide a home for international visitors conducting relevant research;
- to mentor junior faculty working in policy-related areas and improve their ability to successfully apply for grants and contracts, and disseminate their research findings;
- and,
- to facilitate applications for external grants and contracts that improve funding outcomes.

Most of NEST's activities will be facilitated by its Governing Centres. In return, NEST offers Governing Centres:

- opportunities to collaborate on policy-relevant research with colleagues across disciplines;
- seminars, workshops, and conferences on topics of mutual interest;
- a network of policy-makers and practitioners with whom to discuss research priorities, funding opportunities, and dissemination venues;
- access to the CFI-funded Migration, Gender and International Development Research Laboratory, including the remote interview data collection suite, the secure data storage and analysis suite, and the video and image production suite;
- support in dissemination of research findings, including press releases, policy briefs, and online presence;
- support in applying for grant and contract funding; and,
- shared facilities and administrative support.

3. NEST Constitution

NEST is located in and governed by the Faculty of Social Science. It is led by the Director who works closely with the Governing Council and is advised by the External Advisory Committee. The Director reports directly to the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science.

3.1 NEST Director

The Director chairs the Governing Council and oversees the implementation of activities supported by it. The Director is also responsible for the day-to-day activities of NEST, including supervision of staff, financial oversight, and space. The Director of NEST is appointed by and reports directly to the Dean of Social Science and may only combine the Directorship of NEST with the Directorship of a Governing Centre in exceptional circumstances. The Director's main responsibilities include:

- promoting and supporting collaborative policy-relevant research that builds on synergies across Governing and Affiliate Centres;
- maintaining and coordinating a regular speaker series and an annual Distinguished Public Lecture;
- developing new opportunities for the training of students, postdoctoral fellows, and community researchers;
- establishing connections with the community, including recruiting Senior Fellows among community members and policy-makers with expertise in relevant areas;
- supporting dissemination activities, such as a website, policy briefs, press releases, workshops, and a working paper series;
- supporting the submission and implementation of Tri-Council grant applications and policy-relevant contracts associated with the Governing Centres;
- working with the Dean and the Faculty of Social Science's Communications Officer to promote the activities of NEST to government, business, and other relevant bodies;
- supporting the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science in fund-raising activities for NEST;
- supervising administrative staff and space;
- overseeing the NEST budget; and,
- providing an annual report to be available at the final External Advisory Committee meeting.

3.2 Governing Council

The Governing Council sets the strategic direction for NEST. Council members will help to build NEST's capacity to conduct and disseminate policy-relevant research, and will serve as ambassadors for NEST, promoting its activities inside and outside of Western University.

The Governing Council is made up of:

- the Director of NEST (Chair);
- the Director of each Governing Centre;
- faculty representatives: 1-3 tenured faculty members at large from the Faculty of Social Science, appointed by the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science. The Dean will attempt to ensure representation from Social Science departments not represented elsewhere among the voting members;
- the Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Social Science (non-voting);
- the Academic Director of the Statistics Canada Research Data Centre (non-voting); and,
- Affiliated Fellows: 1-2 at large as applicable (non-voting).

The Governing Council's main responsibilities include:

- helping to coordinate NEST's research activities, educational plans, and dissemination activities;
- helping to identify new opportunities for collaborative research and for knowledge exchange with policy makers and practitioners;
- promoting educational opportunities for students, postdoctoral fellows, and community researchers;
- helping the Director choose speakers for the regular series and the annual Distinguished Public Lecturer. The majority of speakers for the academic year shall be set before the Fall term begins, though others may be invited when opportunities present themselves; and,
- providing recommendations to the Dean for new Senior Fellows, Visiting Fellows, and Junior Fellows.

The Governing Council will convene at least twice a year (October and February of each year). The Committee will be consulted at other times via email, teleconference, or special

meetings. It will be the Director's responsibility to call the meetings. While consensus should be sought, if a consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be required, with the final decision made by majority rule. Voting will be open and transparent. A quorum of four voting members is required for any decision. The Director will vote only in the case of a tie, in which case they will have the deciding vote. If the Director of NEST is also the Director of a Governing Centre they can only vote in the former capacity.

3.3 Governing Centres

While maintaining their independent research agendas, the Governing Centres, through their Directors, will support and guide the activities of NEST. Governing Centre status will be determined by the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science in consultation with the Director of NEST. At a minimum, to become a Governing Centre a Research Centre must:

- be designated as an official Research Centre by the Office of the Vice President, Research;
- include faculty members from at least two Departments in the Faculty of Social Science;
- provide evidence of recent research activity (e.g. publications and grants) with implications for social and economic policy; and,
- have its budgetary home in the Faculty of Social Science and be willing to share resources with NEST.

Newly established Western Research Centres which fit the criteria above may apply to the Dean of Social Science for inclusion as one of the Governing Centres. Governing Centre status will be re-evaluated by the Dean when each Centre is assessed for renewal of Research Centre status by the Vice-President, Research. Non-productive Governing Centres can be removed from the Governing Council at the Dean's discretion. The six initial Governing Centres are:

- Centre for Computational and Quantitative Social Science;
- Centre for Human Capital and Productivity;
- Centre for Migration and Ethnic Relations;
- Centre for Research on Social Inequality;
- Centre for Transitional Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction; and,
- Centre for Urban Policy and Local Governance.

Governing Centres will be allocated research space within NEST's space on the 6th floor of the Social Science Centre by the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, in consultation with the Director of NEST. Directors of the Governing Centres will also have access to the administrative staff in NEST.

3.4 Research Data Centre

The Academic Director of the Statistics Canada Research Data Centre (RDC) will serve as a non-voting member on the Governing Council. The RDC will reside in NEST for budgetary purposes and NEST will provide administrative support to the Academic Director of the RDC.

3.5 Affiliate Centres

Centres outside the Faculty of Social Science and/or outside Western University whose research activities have social and economic policy implications will be considered for Affiliate Status.

Affiliate Centres must be approved by the Dean of Social Science, in consultation with the Director of NEST. Affiliate Centre status will be granted for a period of three years (renewable) at the Dean's discretion with advice from the Director and Governing Council.

Members of Affiliate Centres are invited to join in the activities of NEST, such as talks and seminars, but will not have access to its resources or participate in its governance. They may seek appointment as Adjunct Fellows, however.

3.6 External Advisory Committee

The External Advisory Committee will represent the needs and interests of the community and policy-makers, and will bring its expertise to bear in supporting the activities of NEST. It

will provide strategic advice to the Dean, Director, and Governing Council regarding possible research directions, dissemination strategies, educational opportunities, and fund-raising.

The External Advisory Committee will comprise five non-academics with expertise in diverse areas of relevance. Appointments will be made by the Dean of Social Science, in consultation with the Director of NEST. Where possible, a balance of community and government representatives will be appointed. Members will be appointed for a two-year term, renewable for one additional consecutive term. The Chair of the External Advisory Committee will be selected by the Dean in consultation with the Director of NEST. Members of the External Advisory Committee will also be appointed as Senior Fellows of NEST.

External Advisory Committee meetings will be organized by the Director at least twice a year (typically in early Fall and late Spring). In the Fall, the Committee will meet with the Director and Governing Council to discuss NEST's strategic direction for the upcoming year. In the Spring, the Committee will submit a brief report and meet with the Dean and Director to discuss the year's achievements. The Committee may be consulted at other times via email, teleconference, or special meetings.

3.7 Fellows

NEST has three categories of Affiliated Fellows: Senior Fellows, Visiting Fellows, and Junior Fellows.

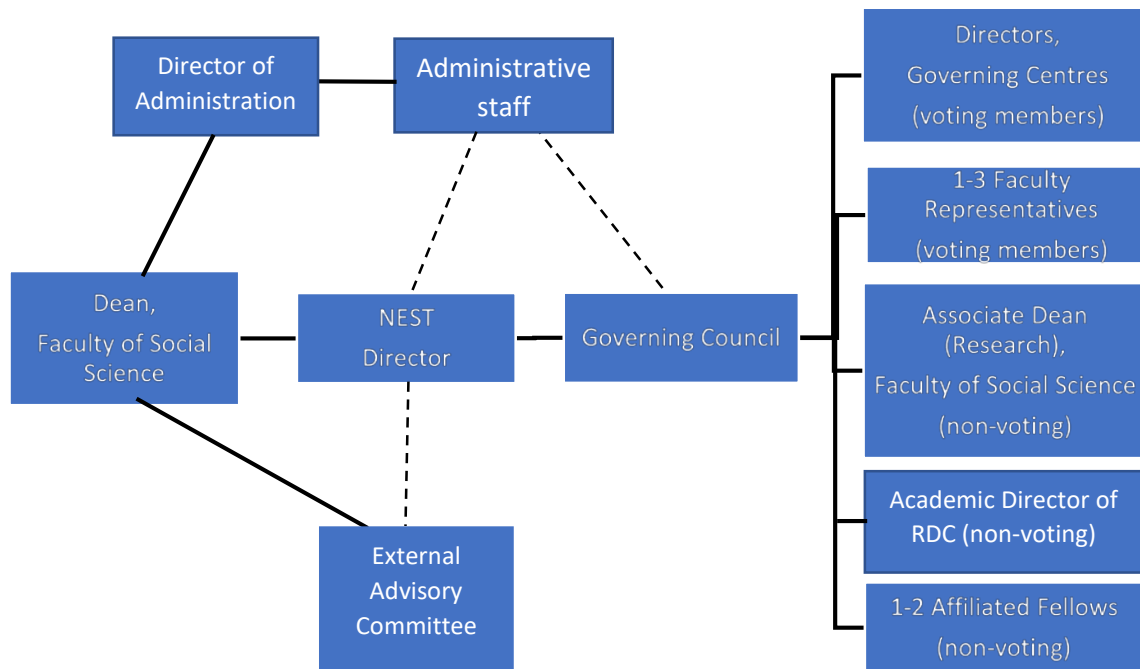
Senior Fellows have experience in government, the private sector, or non-profit organizations and have an ongoing relationship with NEST. They are appointed by the Dean of Social Science in consultation with the Director of NEST for a two-year term, renewable for two additional consecutive terms. Senior Fellows may be re-appointed after a two-year furlough, though they may continue without the furlough under exceptional circumstances, and on the recommendation of the Director of NEST and the Dean of Social Science.

Visiting Fellows have experience in academia, government, the private sector, or non-profit organizations but reside at NEST during their term and return to employment elsewhere after

the completion of their term at NEST. They are appointed by the Dean of Social Science in consultation with the Director of NEST, on the advice of the Governing Council, for terms ranging from six months to two years. Visiting Fellows have access to office, computer and library resources for the term of their Fellowship.

Junior Fellows have experience in academia, but are in the early stages of their career: Junior Fellows are typically post-doctoral researchers, but exceptional PhD students in the final year of their program may also be considered. They are appointed by the Dean of Social Science in consultation with the Director of NEST, on the advice of the Governing Council, for a two-year term.

3.8 NEST Organizational Chart



4. Fundraising

The Director, in cooperation with the Dean, will also be responsible for an active fundraising campaign in the early years of NEST with the goal of helping it become self-sustaining.

Fundraising will focus on:

- an endowed annual Distinguished Lecture Series;
- an endowed annual conference;
- Visiting Fellow positions (both endowed and limited term funding) to bring recognized scholars and policymakers to NEST to conduct empirical social science research with policy implications;
- Junior Fellow positions (both endowed and limited term funding) to bring recent PhD graduates to NEST to conduct empirical social science research with policy implications;
- endowed Research Chairs in policy-related research areas for the Departments in the Faculty of Social Science ; and,
- naming opportunities for the network itself, as well as the large conference room and other rooms in NEST's physical space.

5. Administration and Finance

5.1 Physical Space

NEST is located in the 6200 block of the Social Science Centre. The space includes offices for the Director, administrative staff, Governing Centres, an interdisciplinary graduate student computing lab, a large conference room, two small multimedia meeting rooms, the Statistics Canada Research Data Centre, the CFI-funded Migration, Gender and International Development Research Laboratory (including a remote interview data collection suite, a secure data storage and analysis suite, and a video and image production suite), and a lounge. While members of NEST will be given first priority for booking the large conference room and the two small multimedia meeting rooms, these rooms are open to all Departments and faculty members in the Faculty of Social Science for Department meetings, special events such as visiting speakers, and meetings involving faculty. These rooms are not available for regular classes, however. Booking of these rooms will be done through the administrative offices of NEST, and will fall under the authority of the Director.

5.2 Administrative staff

Administrative staff funded by the Dean's office will support the activities of NEST, the Governing Centres, and the Academic Director of the Statistics Canada Research Data Centre. Direct authority over the administrative staff will fall to the Dean's office (specifically the Director of Administration), though the Director of NEST will supervise day-to-day activities.

5.3 Finance and Research Accounts

Funding will be required in order to have a fully operative consortium that undertakes significant activity. To this end, a collaborative approach will be pursued, with sharing of resources where appropriate. The Director and Centre members should actively pursue

outside funding sources, including Tri-Council grants and research contracts, as well as fund-raising to help NEST become self-sustaining.

The budget for NEST is held in the Dean's office of the Faculty of Social Science. In addition to administrative staff funded by the Dean's office, NEST will have a modest operating budget to fund the speaker series, annual Distinguished Lecture, a mini-conference, and general administrative costs (e.g., photocopying). The Dean's office also covers telephone and internet costs. It is expected that all other activities associated with NEST will be self-funded and cost-recovery.

Each Governing Centre has its own operating and research accounts that fall under the larger umbrella of NEST. To ensure financial viability of these Centres, they have been designated 'research-funding eligible' by the University. University policy requires that 40 percent of direct costs from research contracts is retained to cover overhead costs. The revenue related to indirect costs from contracts obtained through NEST's centres will be distributed as follows (table available on next page):

Table 1
Distribution of revenue associated with indirect costs

	Percentage of direct costs
Dean's office, Faculty of Social Science	6
NEST administration	6
Contracting Centre	5
Principal Investigator (can be allocated to the Centre)	5
Western's Central Administration	
Corporate UWO	9
Research Promotion Fund	9
Total	40

This accounting framework is set up in Fund 1 operating accounts and Fund 2 research accounts.