

Greenhouse Research and Education Training (GREAT) Institute Proposal Webinar High Level Summary

Motivation

The Ontario Greenhouse Sector is ripe with many examples of Research, Innovation, Commercialization, Education, and Teaching. Careful examination of the sector has revealed a wealth of untapped opportunities for markedly increased coordination, collaboration, and knowledge translation. Many existing GREAT Stakeholders have already established globally recognized product brands. The same should be true for our GREAT Research, Education, and Commercialization. A webinar was held to propose the GREAT Institute, identify stakeholders, and scope the initiative. High level insights from stakeholder solicitation are summarized here.



Stakeholder & Scope Identification

The wealth of knowledge among Growers, Government Labs, NGO Agencies, Consultants, and Universities is staggering. A comprehensive list of stakeholders were identified (see word cloud to the left). It is clear that growers, researchers, government, scientists, industry, municipalities, and communities will be key drivers to this GREAT pursuit. When asked what research topic should be addressed by the institute, over 90 topics were proposed with sustainability, automation, energy efficiency, pest management, light pollution, and AI leading the poll.

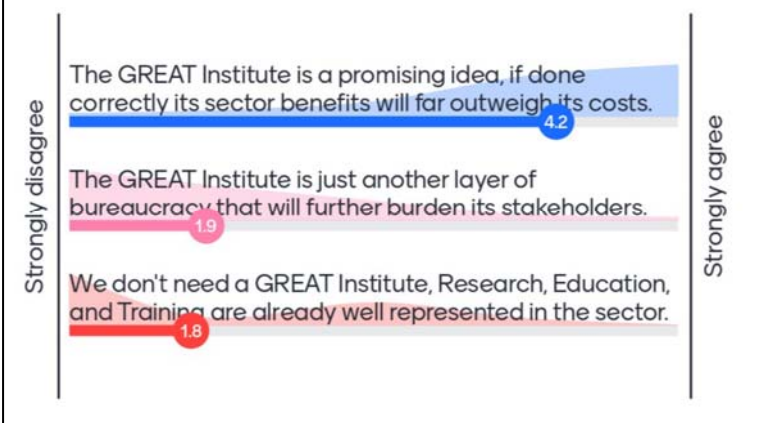


Training, Commercialization, and Linkages

It was emphasized by participants that an interdisciplinary approach to training is critical to incoming CEA workforce. Automation, crop physiology, energy systems, biosecurity, and safety topped the list of essential training topics. When asked how GREAT could increase the translation of sector innovation to commercialization, suggestions included:

- enabling connections amongst stakeholders,
- bridging knowledge gaps in innovation and industry,
- enhancing mentorship and public outreach, connections to funding,
- and the ability to include growers and end-users in early stages of innovative development.

Several agency/institutional links were identified that would serve the topics identified. The greatest foreseeable barrier to forming these linkages was uncertainty as to who does what in the sector.



Key Takeaway

Participants agreed that the GREAT Institute holds promise and presents opportunities including improved research team collaborations, improving awareness of advanced agriculture as a career path, and a conduit for grower inputs to drive research and training curriculum development. Next steps will be communicated to all participants in the upcoming weeks.