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**Subject:** the verdict is in on departmental structure  
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**Attachments:** [Summary of Survey Views on Departmental Restructuring June 2011.pdf](#)

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Last Wednesday the “Blue Sky Group” that has been working on potential departmental structures for OISE met to consider the findings from the community survey. The Blue Sky Group includes all the program coordinators (graduate and initial teacher education), department chairs and associate deans at OISE.

The outcomes from the survey, together with feedback from the many meetings held to discuss the issues (e.g., within programs, within departments) clearly indicate that the four-department model has strong and broad support within the community. Attached is a summary of the survey process and outcomes prepared by Doug Hart.

Based on all the information and input contributed by the community over the past 6 months, the Blue Sky Group made the following recommendation to me: That a motion “to approve, in principle, the four-department model” be brought forward to our special Faculty Council meeting on June 22. This then will be our next step. At this stage, the four-department model takes the form of a conceptual framework and, upon its approval by Council next week, we will begin to build from there.

For now, thank you to everyone who participated in the thinking, discussions, writing and survey that have brought us to this point. We have learned a lot from and about each other during this process. It is a wonderful reflection on our community that throughout, we have carefully considered all the different ideas and perspectives that were brought forward and treated each one of them, and each other with respect.

From Julia

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## Community Survey on Departmental Restructuring: Summary

As part of the consultation process on departmental restructuring, a web-based survey was conducted with all Faculty Council constituencies (tenure-stream faculty, lecturers, contract instructors with appointments of 50% or more, staff and students) between May 20 and May 31. Potential respondents were sent an initial invitation and a minimum of three reminders. The in-house Survey Wizard was used which ensures the anonymity of respondents. Response rates differed across groups. Surveys were completed by about two-thirds of tenure-stream faculty and lecturers, by just over 40% of staff, graduate students and teacher candidates responded to a lesser degree, 15% and 5% respectively.

The questionnaire consisted of two parallel sections – one for the three-department model followed by an identical set of questions for the four-department model. Each section included two multi-item questions. The first presented the guiding principles as the basis for Departmental restructuring and asked respondents to rate the potential of the department model to support each of these on a scale ranging from very positive to very negative. The second multi-item set asked respondents to use the same scale regarding the potential support of the model for a range of other desirable outcomes identified in the Strategic Planning process including: attracting outstanding students and faculty, improving communications and collaboration across programs, reducing the isolation of the BEd programs, building relationships within and beyond the University, and better addressing the needs of staff and students. The final question of the survey asked respondents how much impact implementing either model would have on them, personally.

In reporting results, the percentage of respondents who rated the four-department model as positive (e.g. reflecting and respecting academic discipline affiliations) is compared with the percentage who rated the three-department model as positive. Note that the percentages do not necessarily add to 100% because each respondent could respond favorably or unfavorably to both models.

### *Findings*

**Among tenure-stream faculty**, the four-department model is more widely seen to have potential benefits than is the three-department model. Differences in positive ratings are greatest in the case of “reflecting and respecting academic discipline affiliations (65% for the four-department model vs. 45% for the three-department model), distinguishing OISE from other faculties of education (51% vs. 34%), promoting and supporting excellence in programs and research (58% vs. 48%), building on strengths while nurturing new research and programming (58% vs. 49%), attracting outstanding faculty (56% vs. 42%), attracting outstanding research students (56% vs. 42%), and building relationships within the University (41% vs. 28%).

The gap between the four and three-department model widens when we look at the responses of those tenure-stream faculty who indicate that a new departmental structure would have a great deal, or quite a lot of impact on them personally. On four of the six principles the gap between positive ratings of the four-department versus three-department model is 29% or higher – and 19% on the remaining two, in favour of the four-department model. The difference with regard to attracting outstanding research students widens from 14% to 31%; in the case of attracting outstanding faculty, from 14% to 21%, again in favour of the four-department model.

**Among lecturers** (including limited-term appointees) the difference in ratings between the models is much narrower than for tenure-stream faculty, though on balance, the four-department model is still favoured. Unlike tenure-stream faculty, there is little widening of differences when we restrict comparisons to the views of those expecting to be highly impacted by implementation of a new model.

**Staff views** on the six principles resemble those of lecturers in that there are mainly narrow differences in rating of the two models, but favouring the four-department model. The three-department model is favoured on half of the remaining items but by margins of less than 10%. However, the four department model is seen as being better able to address the needs of departmental staff by a 17% margin.

**Departmental staff** represent a distinct minority within the staff category. They rate the four-department model more favourably than the three-department on almost all items. These include relative large differences on reflecting and respecting academic disciplines affiliations (68% vs. 52%), promoting and supporting excellence in programs and research (68% vs. 52%), distinguishing OISE from other faculties of education around the world (58% vs. 38%), attracting outstanding students to our research degree programs (72% vs. 50%), and better addressing the needs of department staff (56% vs. 29%).

**Graduate students** held views similar to that of the tenure-stream faculty who expected to be personally impacted by departmental restructuring. The four-department model was favoured on all items. The largest differences occurred for reflecting and respecting academic discipline affiliations (70% vs. 44%), promoting and supporting excellence in programs and research (70% vs. 52%), distinguish OISE from other faculties of education around the world (54% vs. 32%), attracting outstanding students to our research degree programs (64% vs. 44%), attracting outstanding faculty (64% vs. 43%) and being better able to address the needs of students (56% vs. 36%). Graduate students also thought that the four-department model had more potential for attracting outstanding students to professional graduate programs, and would better meet the needs of department staff.