

From: [do-allstaff-oise-l: Dean's Office - All Staff superlist](#) on behalf of [OISE Dean](#)
To: DO-ALLSTAFF-OISE-L@listserv.utoronto.ca
Subject: OISE Departmental Structure - two potential models
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Attachments: [OISE Department Structure - 2 Models May 2011.pdf](#)

One of the clear outcomes of the OISE strategic planning process to-date has been the need to rethink the structure of our departments to ensure the strong OISE in the years ahead, and cement our place as one of the world's leading education institutes.

What are we looking to achieve?

An OISE departmental structure that supports the following principles that emerged from Focus Groups:

1. Reflect and respect academic disciplines/affiliations
2. Promote and support excellence in programs and research
3. Build on existing strengths while nurturing new and emerging areas of research and programming
4. Distinguish OISE from other faculties of education around the world
5. Foster innovation, inter-disciplinarity and internationalization
6. Strengthen the alignment between graduate and undergraduate programs

What has happened to date?

Formal discussions on potential OISE departmental structure began when I asked all program coordinators both graduate and Initial Teacher Education to meet with their colleagues and "blue sky" on a departmental structure that would support these principles. I then brought together all the program coordinators, Department Chairs and Associate Deans to consider the models suggested for OISE. A number of interesting models emerged that ranged from four departments to a program-based model with no departments. As a group, we agreed that OISE will retain a department-based structure and that two models (attached) support the guiding principles. It was very clear from our discussions that no structure in and of itself will allow us to achieve the six principles or promote the culture of increased participation and transparency in decision making we want to achieve. The models will, however, set the stage and give us a place to start.

What is next?

Attached is a brief outline of each of the two proposed models prepared by two subgroups of the faculty who participated in the blue sky meetings. Please take the time to review and think about them with the best interest of OISE in mind. What are the relative strengths of each? Which model might better support the guiding principles and why? What are the worries? Over the next few weeks I will be meeting with the staff, faculty and students to hear their views. A survey will go out to the community allowing everyone to provide input and share their thoughts. The blue sky group will reconvene to look at the outcomes of the survey and all the discussions and make a recommendation to me that I will then start to move through the governance process. Once we know which model to adopt the milestones and action plans for the implementation developed by

the Rethink the Organization Taskforce will come into play. I will keep everyone well informed as things move along.

How long will it take?

The decision in principle about the structure will be made by June 2011. It is important to keep in mind that deciding on the structure is just the first step. Once we know what the departmental framework for OISE will be, colleagues in these different departments will need the time to work together to figure out their own aspirations, goals and priorities, make the decisions about names, spaces, and determine how individually and together we can support the guiding principles. It will take us a year or two to implement the changes. We will take our time; do this together with the best interest of OISE in mind.

From,
Julia

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Model 1: Three Departments¹

- 1) Department of **Curriculum Teaching, and Learning**
- 2) Department of **Applied and Developmental Psychology**
- 3) Department of **Social and Organizational Studies in Education**. This newly proposed Department would bring together five previous units into a new program matrix to be determined by further consultation amongst these parties:
 - a. Adult Education and Community Development
 - b. Educational Administration
 - c. Higher Education
 - d. History and Philosophy in Education
 - e. Sociology and Equity Studies in Education

Academic and Institutional Rationale

All departments have a distinctive character and rationale, and are committed to integrating theory and practice in education. The Departments of "Applied and Developmental Psychology" and "Curriculum, Teaching and Learning" have a degree of internal disciplinary coherence despite their considerable range of sub-disciplines (including all the Teaching Subjects in the school curriculum) and different ways of working (i.e. developmental psychology vs. counselling psychology). These two disciplinary traditions are well established and have been seen as the core of education.

Equally by tradition, there exists a range of other disciplinary contributors to education that are more diverse by subject matter, such as finance and administration, policy and planning, institutions of higher education, the social/historical/philosophical foundations of education, and education across the lifespan (in communities or workplaces, for health or citizenship, etc.). All these areas of scholarship are vital for today's education systems faced with rapidly changing social, economic and policy contexts, including growing trans-nationalism and social diversity.

OISE can sustain these diverse disciplines by creating a single unit that is committed to respecting differences while minimizing silos and fostering synergies. This also requires commitment to building a strong participatory governance structure. In this spirit, a third new Department is proposed that brings together social, historical, philosophical and organizational perspectives on education. Application of theory to practice in these domains would require special attention to *bridging differences* across multiple sectors of education, from schools to post-secondary to workplaces and communities, all of which are sites of policy, leadership, administration, employment, and social/philosophical visions of educational purposes.

OISE Departmental Structure – Guiding Principles

1. *Reflect and respect academic disciplines/affiliations*

This would allow OISE to capitalize on existing strengths by aligning theory and practice around three nodes: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning; Applied and Developmental Psychology; and the newly proposed third department supporting the study of education from a range of social and organizational perspectives.

2. *Promote and support excellence in programs and research*

At the program level, this model would promote excellence by increasing opportunities for synergistic and integrative learning, collaboration and cooperation amongst both faculty and students. The third department in particular would support excellence by creating stronger affiliations across the range of social and institutional influences that actually shape education. At the level of research, this model would provide a climate more conducive to formation of synergistic research teams with complementary expertise, positioned to compete successfully in an institutional climate favoring large-scale, interdisciplinary research initiatives.

¹ All department names are tentative and to be suggested later in a more collective fashion.

3. Build on existing strengths while nurturing new and emerging areas of research and programming

The third department would bring together leading edge scholarship in many areas, including: aboriginal, anti-racist, feminist, critical disability and other equity studies; theoretical foundations of education; the humanities in education; leadership, policy, institutional change and knowledge mobilization; social change, community engagement and the social economy; international comparative perspectives; learning throughout adult life including in relation to work, employment, migration.

4. Distinguish OISE from other faculties of education around the world

In the past, OISE has been highly respected as one of a very small number of truly research-intensive faculties of education around the world. In the current climate, the challenge is not only to sustain that core capacity, but also to expand our abilities as leaders in knowledge mobilization and partnerships, so that leading edge research is better utilized to inform both policy and practice. This model would encourage the synergies necessary for this to happen.

5. Foster innovation, inter-disciplinarity and internationalization

The third new department could house all three Collaborative Programs currently based at OISE (Comparative and International Development Education, Educational Policy, and Workplace Learning and Social Change). It could also house the only two large CURA (Community-Research Alliance) grants currently held at the University of Toronto. This positions it from the start as a major node for innovation, inter-disciplinarity, and internationalization and clearly illustrates its capacity for synergies and a unique bridging role.

6. Strengthen the alignment between graduate and undergraduate programs

This model allows each of the three large departments to take responsibility for elements of teacher development relevant to their expertise. While the contributions from Psychology and CTL are already familiar, the new third department would hold the expertise for those parts of Initial Teacher Education dealing with social foundations, school and society, Aboriginal Education, Business Studies and Technological Education. This suggests clear areas for alignment between graduate and undergraduate programming.

Model 2: Four Departments²

- 1) Department of **Curriculum Teaching and Learning**
- 2) Department of **Applied and Developmental Psychology**
- 3) Department of **Administration, Higher and Adult Education**
- 4) Department of **Educational Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and Adult Education**

Note: Adult Education would identify its best disciplinary fit. Descriptions would be modified in response to that.

Academic and Institutional Rationale

The following is written mostly from the perspective of the need for a fourth department while assuming the value of all four as well as the need for nurturing their on-going interrelation within a governance structure that enhances democratic decision making processes and a commitment to equity. This departmental model honours the intrinsic links between the social sciences and the humanities allowing History and Philosophy to grow. The conceptual coherency of the fourth and new department arises from a unique focus on a reconstructed notion of the humanities and social sciences as an area of knowledge where the intrinsic value and the analytical and speculative aspects of inquiry combine with a consideration of practical implications and other realms of thinking and being. The four departments represent four necessarily interrelated but distinct orientations in education. If treated as a pedagogical act, this four department distinction could enable all OISE members to enhance their understanding of the complexity of education.

OISE Departmental Structure – Guiding Principles

1. *Reflect and respect academic disciplines/affiliations*

The fourth department would build on concepts, research and teaching traditionally associated with the intersection of the “humanities and social sciences in education” while allowing for programmatic units that highlight the merging of theory with practice. It would respect and reflect the OISE’s strengths in humanities and social sciences that focus on a variety of related issues including history of education, philosophy of education, sociology of education, anti-racist and equity studies, media studies, cultural studies, critical race and aboriginal studies, disability studies in education, cultural diversity, literature, anthropology, theology, etc.

2. *Promote and support excellence in programs and research*

This model strongly supports excellence in both program and research trajectories. It conceptually and concretely allows for the existing integration of the humanities and the social sciences in education to develop and flourish. Developing this fourth department would remove the “mere survival” orientation that struck various programs and instead allow for an integration of ideas to grow. This fourth department would attract excellent students both locally, nationally and internationally who are seeking a unique integrated and multi-disciplinary programming that goes beyond the current narrow instrumentalist ethos of many other faculties of education and universities.

3. *Build on existing strengths while nurturing new and emerging areas of research and programming*

Existing excellence would be enhanced by providing a departmental structure wherein the above mentioned strengths can be put to work, not for the sake of survival or maintenance, but instead for the sake of building a new department reflective of the need to study any and all aspects of education, past, present and future, as a powerful social, political and cultural system that imagines possible alternatives to the human condition. The meaning and significance of pedagogy would be enhanced by this integrated disciplinary model where the contribution of various disciplines could interact in new ways without threat of their dissolution.

4. *Distinguish OISE from other faculties of education around the world*

Most faculties of education do not have such an integrated department based on the humanities and social sciences. Therefore, this model would distinguish OISE from any other faculty of education in Canada and in many other parts of the world. It would show that OISE highly supports the integration and multi-disciplinary approaches of humanities and social sciences and the prospects of such integration both with regard to teaching and research. In this regard, OISE would exhibit its positive leadership at a time where there are departmental dis-solutions and marginalizations.

² All department names are tentative and to be suggested later in a more collective fashion.

5. Foster innovation, inter-disciplinarity and internationalization

This model would foster innovation both within the national and international scene. We could find no other department in any faculty of education that brings together the humanities and social sciences in the explicit and unique way suggested here. This department is substantively different from the usual department of policy and social foundations because it would take a more holistic approach that includes the now almost excluded humanities component. Based on what we know about other faculties of education, and the already established international calibre of the faculty that are associated with this disciplinary focus, there is no doubt that this department would be one of the very strongest of its kind world-wide. The uniqueness and creativity of the department, as well as the conceptual and disciplinary integrity, would increase the internationalization that already exists among the faculty members that would form this new department.

6. Strengthen the alignment between graduate and undergraduate programs

Given that this new department would have a crucial but manageable focus, the possibility of strengthening the alignment between graduate and undergraduate programs would increase. Many, if not all of the faculty already have a connection with either the Initial Teacher Education programs or other undergraduate programs. There are several exciting courses that can be developed for undergraduate programs both in ITE and in the Faculty of Arts and Science. Given that fourth department would provide its members the opportunity to work together with a coherent conceptual framework, it would also allow them to build on the connections that already exist with undergraduate programs. Such relations are already established with History, Caribbean and African Studies, Equity Studies, Disability Studies, Women and Gender Studies, Sexual Diversity Studies, Asian Studies, Media Studies, the Concurrent Teacher Education, the Centre for Ethics, the Jackman Institute for the Humanities, etc. The existing academic and disciplinary relations between graduate studies and undergraduate studies would be further enhanced and recognized.