



OISE'S FUTURE REALITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

As part of the OISE Planning Process, we must seize the opportunity to reflect on our current environment to chart an exciting and relevant future that moves us further towards our goal of excellence in graduate studies and research in education and human development.

With an increasingly varied and diverse population, rapid advances in educational technology, and the moral imperative to understand the meaning and embrace the implications of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, we need to think and act thoughtfully about the “what, when and how” of our curricula and pedagogy. We need to focus attention on the student experience and find ways of enhancing student success. We need to build upon our base of research excellence to extend the reach and impact of our research and scholarship.

We need a more strategic, integrated approach to our international activities that builds on our proud history of global engagement in research, teaching and development. We need to expand our connections to the urban environment in which we work and live, and extend our understanding of, and relevance to, the diverse populations of Toronto, Ontario, Canada and the world. As well, in the context of a fiscal environment where our costs are increasing faster than our traditional sources of revenue, we must seek out new sources of income.

All of this is needed on the heels of what has been a challenging period for our community, so we also need to ensure a future of stability and mutual respect. This process is designed to address the major flaws in previous planning processes by emphasizing the importance of understanding our current context and promoting widespread idea sharing with a range of opportunities for reflection, input, and participation.

With this in mind, this Guide is intended to enable individuals, departments and organizations within and outside of the Institute to submit informed ideas about future possibilities for OISE’s ongoing quest to be a global leader in fostering education excellence. It is a companion to the ***OISE’s New Reality: Trends and Analyses*** document that provides extensive information regarding our current context.

You can use all or few of the questions to guide your input or simply add ideas not prompted by the sample questions in the Guide. Appendix A provides “users’ tips” on how different groups and individuals might use or adapt the Guide to particular circumstances.

Please use this Guide to submit your ideas for our best future so that your voice is heard. Thank you very much for your important input.

Glen A. Jones
Professor and Dean

SAMPLE QUESTIONS BY THEMES

The sample questions that follow are organized according to major themes and cross-referenced to the Trends document. Naturally, you may wish to add questions where appropriate—introduced with either evidence from the *Trends* document or facts and evidence drawn from elsewhere. It is also important to note information gaps that exist that need attention as a result of this process. As well, you may wish to edit questions to ensure greater clarity for you and/or remove any unintended bias. Clearly, many of the questions are more appropriate for those who work and learn within OISE. The discussion questions provide a “cafeteria.” The choices are up to you. The objective is to generate informed and creative ideas to help develop plans to achieve a new shared, relevant and inspiring vision for OISE and plans to achieve it.

RESPONDING TO AN INCREASINGLY VARIED AND DIVERSE POPULATION

We are living in a remarkably diverse environment (*Trends*, pp.19-20). Given this diversity regarding culture, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, language, citizenship/immigration status, ability, age and socio-economic status, what are the issues and opportunities for us to consider? How can we build on our best practices to date and make better use of our own expertise?

Possible Questions for Discussion

1. How can we better reflect all aspects of diversity when it comes to our approach to: student, staff and faculty recruitment and admissions; teaching, curriculum, the student experience; and alumni relations? Importantly, how can we ensure the rich and accomplished expertise we have, provides guidance regarding our “better future”?
2. What are the barriers faced by members of distinct groups and what measures are required to address them?
3. What can we do to ensure our extensive alumni provide and learn from our ideas, policies and practices when it comes to diversity and inclusion?
4. How can we effectively embed in-service equity training for all faculty, administration and staff?
5. In what ways can we both offer, and learn from, other organizations in education, and well-beyond, regarding how to develop and implement effective equity policies? What? How? With whom?
6. How can we bring about anti-bias changes in accrediting processes that evaluate both OISE programs and students in clinical programs?
7. Other questions/ideas arising?

DEALING WITH CONSEQUENCES OF THE COLONIZATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES—A MORAL IMPERATIVE

The [final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\)](#) (See *Trends*, p. 22) identifies key challenges for Canada, including hard truths that need to be acknowledged to move towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The Commission notes the devastating consequences of the residential school program: that this colonizing travesty was committed in the name of “education.” At the same time, Canadian educational institutions, including OISE, need to come to grips with their own histories, as well as ongoing practices, regarding how, by omission or commission, they have entrenched anti-Indigenous biases regarding the disciplines, curriculum, pedagogical practices such as assessment and recruitment and retention of students, staff and faculty.

Possible Questions for Discussion

1. While OISE aspires to become a leader when it comes to “truth and reconciliation” and Indigenization, what can we do to ensure that all faculty, staff, students and alumni understand the history and present day consequences of the residential schools? What about OISE’s current practices, responsibilities and history in this regard?
2. There is a good deal of conversation about the concept of Indigenization. What exactly does Indigenizing OISE actually mean? What elements and challenges of organizational development and transformation might be part of a short, medium and longer term process?
3. What can we do to decolonize our approach to curriculum development and teaching and learning, including assessment? How can we infuse all that we do at OISE with Indigenous world views and ways of knowing?
4. How should the Tri-Council policy and Indigenous ethical standards apply to research, graduate and teacher education at OISE? And what expertise and other resources already exist to assist and lead in this regard? How?
5. How can we increase our research and scholarship, its visibility and relevance to teacher education, that focuses on many of the “calls to action” arising from the TRC, including:
 - a) Repealing section 43 of the Criminal Code that deals with corporal punishment;
 - b) Reducing the education and employment gap between Indigenous peoples and the non-Indigenous;
 - c) Ensuring education finance equity between off-reserve funding and on reserve;
 - d) Development of culturally appropriate curricula;
 - e) Development of culturally appropriate early child education programs;
 - f) Confronting other issues dealing with child welfare, language & culture and health.
6. Other questions/ideas arising?

RETHINKING OUR CURRICULA AND PEDAGOGY

With trends that include an ageing of the population, the presence of millennial learners and how they learn, duplication across programs regarding course offerings, the increasing focus on a trans-disciplinary approach to issues and problem-solving (*Trends*, p. 23), and new advances in technology, what should we do regarding our approach to curricula and pedagogy?

Possible Questions for Discussion

1. What competencies should be required and embedded within, or provided in different ways, for students in all programs – masters or doctoral – that define what it means to be an OISE graduate?
2. Are there certain courses that exist across all programs that could be combined that would add quality and reduce duplication? Which ones? What unique courses within a department could be expanded for broader access?
3. How can we develop new and innovative ways to redesign and market our MEd programs to meet new needs? What? How? Are there partnership opportunities with other universities and colleges?
4. With our competitors growing new and innovative professional doctorates (*Trends*, p.26), how can we renew and “refresh” our approach to the EdD? How? What?
5. In order to “model” major new approaches to educations for our own students, how can we ensure that our own curricula and pedagogical approach embraces a more trans-disciplinary, issues-oriented and problem-solving approach?
6. How can the appropriate use of technology-supported pedagogy provide higher quality learning with more students and increased access? With the rapid increase of on-line learning offered by prestigious competitors domestically and in the U.S., how can OISE encourage and support increased on-line course offerings and other technology-informed delivery options?
7. How can we best tap our own OISE scholars with expertise in technology and education to ensure that we become a major centre of excellence in this area?
8. Looking ahead, who will our students be in five to ten years? How will they differ? What are the implications regarding how we both recruit them and “serve” their needs once they are learners at OISE?
9. Other questions/ideas arising?

ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The quality of learning and overall student experience enrich our programs and services and contribute so much to the OISE environment. Satisfied students generate increased applications to our programs and create OISE ambassadors who, in turn, enhance our reputation. As well, highly satisfied students yield engaged alumni.

Possible Questions for Discussion

1. How can we ensure ongoing quality and innovation regarding course development and delivery? How can students contribute in this regard? Alumni?
2. What can be done to ensure that we decrease the time to completion for more doctoral students?
3. How can we ensure that faculty obtain the feedback they require to support continuous teaching and program development? How can we build in regular and ongoing student feedback to the Institute regarding their experience?
4. Given the increasing emphasis on a collaborative approach between teacher and student in order to achieve success (*Trends*, p.23), what can we do to reinforce and support this approach?
5. What can we do to increase the quality of the student experience for part-time and flex-time students?
6. Given the critical importance that staff play in supporting the student experience and success, how can we better support their role? How can we improve our communications with, and administrative processes for, students?
7. What are promising non-traditional career opportunities for our graduates and what can we do to better prepare them in this regard?
8. What further “experience”-related information do we need regarding students who choose OISE, those who do not and those who graduate?
9. Other questions/ideas arising?

GROWING THE IMPACT OF OUR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

While OISE enjoys an excellent reputation for research and scholarship (*Trends*, pp.29-30), it is important that we continue to explore the “what, how and with whom” of research as we conduct it, in order to achieve a higher impact with the results of our research efforts.

Possible Questions for Discussion

1. What are the various indicators or definitions of “research excellence”? How do these different definitions point the way toward different strategies for improving the impact of results?
2. How can we more effectively support student research interests and funding in a manner that is also consistent with faculty research priorities?
3. How can we support collaborative opportunities among our faculty and students (and among and between our four departments and 19 research centres) in order to pursue new areas of faculty and student research and funding? What about other opportunities with University of Toronto colleagues and programs?
4. How can we more effectively involve practitioners, community groups and policy makers in the formation of our research agendas as individual researchers and as an organization?
5. What are the things we are doing really well, and what new things might we consider, to ensure that the results of our research are more likely to have an effect on public literacy and opinion about key issues and upon policy development and practice improvement?
6. Other questions/ideas arising?

INTEGRATING AND EXPANDING OUR APPROACH TO INTERNATIONALIZATION

There is a good deal of talk about “internationalizing” all that we do (*Trends*, p. 29). And while OISE has had a good deal of success in certain international activities, what does “internationalizing” mean and how does it apply to different aspects of our work?

Possible Questions for Discussion

1. Should we, and in what ways, increase a diverse international student enrollment? In what programs? What are the obstacles and what can be done to remove them?
2. How can we maximize the positive consequences of more international students for these students and for all students and OISE? How can we embed more international ideas or courses into our programs?
3. How could our current international projects bring more opportunities for faculty and students to have a greater knowledge about global issues and international experiences? How can this be applied to learning and research at OISE?
4. In what ways can we increase our knowledge about how to partner with, and learn from, other countries? What? How?
5. How can an increased culturally knowledgeable international capacity at OISE inform new reciprocal partnerships with local public and private sector organizations?
6. How can technology increase our international experience with, and for, our students, faculty and staff?
7. How can we fully tap our alumni network to assist with internationalizing our work?
8. Other questions/ideas arising?

EXPANDING CONNECTIONS TO OUR URBAN ENVIRONMENT

While OISE continues to grow its global influence regarding education excellence, what can we do to ensure that our rich and diverse “backyard” is a source of inspiration and opportunity for what we do and how we “behave” in our own urban environment (*Trends*, pp.28-29)?

Possible questions for discussion

1. Given the growth of the Indigenous urban population (*Trends*, p.21), what are the implications for our own learning regarding recruitment, teaching and professional learning?
2. What can we do to harness and improve upon our tradition of teacher education school-based cohorts and partnerships that grow our ability to learn from the diversity that Toronto has to offer?
3. By many measures, Toronto is considered one of the most diverse cities in the world. How should this impact how we recruit students? Are there research and practice opportunities that we should be exploiting?
4. Given our broad and deep expertise, do we know how much and with whom, we are providing service and support to various communities, organizations and municipalities in the GTA? Can we do more and with whom?
5. Given that OISE has research centres that focus on areas that include anti-racism, urban schooling and the social economy, what can we learn from our own experts about recruitment, our pedagogy and curriculum and professional learning and service to, and partnerships with, the diverse communities within the GTA?
6. In what new ways can we take advantage of our location and space?
7. Other questions/ideas arising?

CREATING FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Given the trend regarding traditional sources of revenue (*Trends*, p.16), what new and innovative efforts should be considered for a healthy and sustainable financial future?

Possible Questions for Discussion

1. What new and innovative professional learning projects would yield both revenue and reputational enhancement for OISE?
2. As we increase our capacity for fundraising, what are the most important priority areas for which we should seek philanthropic support?
3. In what ways can we reduce duplication of efforts across departments and improve quality the student experience?
4. How can the use of technology improve pedagogical innovation, expand our reach and improve efficiencies?
5. What current activities or programs are currently being offered that could be turned into revenue generating opportunities?
6. How can we move from a fewer people doing more approach, to doing things differently in order to improve how and what we do with the resources we have?
7. Other promising ideas for generating revenue?
8. Other questions/ideas arising?

OTHER BIG IDEAS?

The *Trends* document provides extensive information regarding the Institute's current situation along with external factors that provide both challenges and opportunities.

In reviewing *Trends*, what are the three most compelling trends or issues that you believe will have the biggest impact on OISE's future?

For each trend, what should OISE do to either adapt to or change each "trend"? What should we change? Stop doing? Invest in?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

APPENDIX

TIPS FOR USERS

This brief document is, indeed, a “guide,” an instrument designed to foster conversations that will generate informed and creative ideas for OISE’s very best future. What follows are a few tips for its use according to various constituent groups and individuals. As with the Guide itself, these tips are not exhaustive. You may have other ways your input might be generated and submitted. Just use the guide to develop your ideas—the what, the why and how of implementing your suggestions.

While the expectation is that all preliminary submissions should be provided by February 15, 2017, as ideas are developed, many will be looped back to the OISE community for further conversations to build upon or adapt suggestions during the process. As well, further submissions will be encouraged and focused around promising consensus ideas that arise from the initial submissions. A note about how to use this Guide in a workshop format and the availability of facilitation support is also noted below.

Departments and Programs

It is expected that each department will make a major submission to this academic planning process, a strategic contribution that takes into consideration the Trends document and the questions posed by this Guide along with others as appropriate. It is also assumed that programs within each department are expected to develop a submission as part of the departmental process.

Each departmental and program submission will be expected to delineate how and in what manner faculty, students, staff and alumni were involved in developing reports.

Other OISE “Units” and Horizontal Conversations

It is expected that other “units” within OISE will also provide submissions based on discussions that involve all of their staff. It is assumed that ORSS, Education Commons, JICS, CPL and research centres as well as our student associations and alumni executives and union representatives, will also wish to generate and submit ideas to this process. In addition, various opportunities for “horizontal” workshops will be generated to ensure the kind of “cross-fertilization” required to move OISE forward in an integrated and coherent manner. While various “across OISE” meetings will be organized for this purpose, any group of colleagues – large or small – may wish to get together, “workshop” around some of the Guide’s questions and make a submission to oise.planning@utoronto.ca.

Affinity Groups—Inside and Outside

Whether students, staff or faculty within a “unit” inside OISE, or an organization or group of individuals outside, a gathering of individuals may wish to collectively discuss any or all of the questions – and others – and make a submission to oise.planning@utoronto.ca. The Guide is well-suited for a workshop mode. A facilitator or leader can convene the group, provide an overview to the process, use small breakout groups to generate ideas that are brought back for discussion with the most creative and high impact ideas chosen for a submission to oise.planning@utoronto.ca.

Individuals

It is expected that many individuals within and outside of OISE will wish to contribute ideas that will inform a better future for OISE’s capacity to support and lead education excellence locally and globally. Don’t feel obligated to respond to all themes and questions. Just let your own experience and judgement be your compass for using the Guide. You can send your ideas, on line, by sending your submission to oise.planning@utoronto.ca.

WORKSHOPPING YOUR IDEAS

Many groups within and outside of the Institute may wish to develop their submission through the use of some sort of group process approach. Naturally, a small group of five people may simply find a time and space to examine the Guide, choose question areas that resonate, discuss and generate some clear and creative ideas for their submission. Larger groups might wish to use a workshop approach that allows smaller sub-groups to “break out” after a plenary overview for the entire group, focus on some or all of the theme areas; then generate promising ideas and report back to the group as a whole for further discussion. Some groups may wish to strive for unanimity, some might be comfortable submitting ideas with opposing notions to foster further dialogue in the process.

When it comes to facilitation expertise, some groups – within and outside of OISE – might have natural and experienced facilitators; other groups might have experienced facilitators but would prefer to have an “arms-length” animator. We are prepared to support what is necessary including a short “training the facilitator” session for within group facilitators or by providing facilitation. Please contact Denise Makovac in this regard at oise.planning@utoronto.ca.

As well, it is critical that each group process – whether for a department or other unit or group within OISE – is supported by quality “note-taking” that eschews verbatim notes in favour of capturing ideas during the various conversations. This is key to break out groups reporting back to plenary sessions and overall submissions in order to have the clarity that captures the essence of the ideas being offered.