ANNUAL RESEARCH REPORT
2007-08

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A MESSAGE FROM NORMAND LABRIE
Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies

In this year’s research report we are pleased to share an analysis of research funding and to highlight some of the research from our colleagues within OISE. We are all impressed at the dedication and enthusiasm shown by researchers as they continue to develop new initiatives and disseminate scholarly papers at internationally renowned conferences as well as through various outreach activities while simultaneously maintaining their teaching, supervision, and service responsibilities. Our institutional commitment to research remains strong while at the same time we realize the need to understand the changing climate of the external research community. This report highlights some of the trends in our research funding and provides an opportunity for our community to reflect on these trends and plan for the future.

Building Community

Over the past year, OISE faculty and students have been at the heart of bridging community and education while focusing on societal change and reform. As society continues to become more complex, education increasingly becomes a local responsibility. Building community capacity by improving educational outcomes is one of the steps toward creating powerful educational system changes. We are committed to the idea that by improving knowledge around issues that matter, through education in our community, we will ultimately advance our understanding of the foundations that are required to sustain social and economic change.
OISE continues to maintain strong relationships with government and various stakeholders throughout the province and the country. By continuing to broaden our network here at OISE we are better able to understand the complexity of educational issues affecting our society, as well as to identify common areas of interest for further research in our Faculty. In addition, through these links we are better able to seek out funding opportunities. We are confident that these interactions will sustain our research community, and we also look forward to opportunities to build on research infrastructure and resources for the future.

Improving Education

Our goal at OISE is to produce confident educators and researchers that have the skills to improve education for all groups in society. We are proud to say that our research environment is exceptionally collaborative; it provides the best scenario for researchers, educators, communities, governments and educational administrators to achieve excellence in education. OISE continues to attract top quality candidates to our initial teacher and graduate education programs and also provides a vibrant community for post-doctoral students. Together, we look forward to enhancing our collective expertise and knowledge through distinctive research initiatives that simultaneously support our faculty and graduate students as well as the broader educational community.

Normand Labrie is the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies and a Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning.
Total Research Funding

Research funding at OISE has been gradually increasing over the last decade. Much of this growth can be attributed to programs related to research infrastructure and the Initiatives for the New Economy (INE) introduced by SSHRC in 2001-02. As figures below demonstrate, the GRIP programs which include the Canada Research Chairs and Canada Foundation for Innovation, and the SSHRC INE Collaborative Research Initiative grants under the tri-council category, had a positive influence on overall research funding since 2002. When these programs are removed (figure 1), the level of growth would have been moderate.
Tri-Council Funding

SSHRC funding represents an average of 92 per cent of the total tri-council funding awarded to OISE researchers, with CIHR and NSERC programs constituting the remainder of funding. Our responsiveness to the various changes and initiatives proposed by the tri-council agencies, particularly SSHRC, are of primary interest to our research community. Some of the changes include an increasing focus on targeted and strategic programs such as the Initiative on the New Economy and more recently the Business, Management and Finance emphasis. While the SSHRC Standard Research Grant remains a stable source of research funding for many in our community, NSERC and CIHR funding opportunities are also important to a specific group of OISE researchers. Increasingly, the crossroads of education, health, neuroscience, science, mathematics and technology have proven to be areas where collaborative efforts have garnered support from the range of tri-council agencies. We therefore continue to explore opportunities to further diversify our tri-council funding, where appropriate.

Figure 3
Tri-Council Funding
SSHRC Standard Research Grant

Award Amount

It is important to consider funding patterns within categories and programs that have represented a substantial source of research revenue for OISE researchers. The 2008 SSHRC Standard Research Grant competition showed the first decline in amount awarded since 2001 (figure 4).

Success Rate vs. UofT and National

The overall success rate under the Standard Research Grant program relative to the University of Toronto and the SSHRC National Education Committee requires further consideration. As illustrated in figure 5, in 2007 and 2008 the OISE success rate fell below that of the University of Toronto. Furthermore, 2008 represented the first year that OISE’s success rate fell below the national average.
Success Rate within Education Committees

Although some OISE faculty apply to committees other than those based in education, a significant number of faculty at OISE apply to one of three education committees. For this reason, it is important to consider OISE results relative to the national results for these committees. As shown in Figure 6, the OISE success rate fell below the national success rate for each of the three education committees. It is worth noting that the education committees had some of the lowest success rates relative to all other SSHRC committees. This may explain why the results relative to UofT have declined as much as they have. Overall, figures 4, 5 and 6 illustrate the significance of recent Standard Research Grant results and represent the first time that OISE has experienced both a drop in total dollar amounts awarded and success rate.
Other Promising Sources of Research Revenue

As we look at opportunities outside of the tri-council category, there is some indication that OISE can be quite successful in obtaining research funds from alternate sources. Of particular interest, and as demonstrated in figures 7 and 8, is the increased levels of funding attained from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities and organizations such as the Spencer Foundation. In terms of both dollars awarded and success rates (57.7%) between 2001-2008, these categories of funding are proving to be quite beneficial to our research community.
Jim Hewitt

Jim Hewitt’s research tackles a longstanding problem: the disappointing use of computers in schools as instructional tools. In recent years, school-based computers have seen great increases in processor power, memory, disk space, multimedia capacity, and Internet accessibility. Yet their impact on teaching and learning has been minimal. Jim wants to help teachers make better use of these powerful tools. Jim believes that technology is too often used for the simple sake of using technology. His research suggests that teachers are often unaware of the different technologies that are available to them, and how they can be used to support student inquiry. In fact, “many of the typical classroom applications of computers add little or no value to student learning.” Through his research, he hopes to help teachers tap the full instructional potential of exciting new technologies.

Eunice Jang

Eunice Jang’s research looks at how to help teachers use student assessment data as a means for professional development while at the same time, helping students engage more meaningfully in their own learning. She explores new assessment approaches, such as Cognitive Diagnostic Assessment, that she hopes will assist teachers and students in this process. She works with the Ministry of Education, educators and school boards to validate new language assessment tools which will assist teachers across K-12 schools in Ontario to assess and keep track of students’ language development over time. Eunice also researches how current assessments provide students from diverse backgrounds with equitable and adequate opportunities to show what they learned.
Ben Levin

Ben Levin’s current research in large-scale change looks at how to get change not just at the individual school level but across all of the schools in a large system, like Ontario’s 4,000 elementary and 800 secondary schools. Ben works toward helping people in schools to see how they can make improvements in their own settings and helping us understand for example, how we can do better in our urban schools with high poverty levels. Progress is being made and “teacher morale has improved in Ontario along with better student outcomes. There are not many places around the world that have been able to do both those things together.”

Roy Moodley

Roy Moodley’s work on issues of critical multiculturalism looks at the ways we are challenged by diversities and facilitates the integration and intersection of marginalized identities. His research demonstrates how these categories of marginality tend to box us in or label us. By replacing notions of multiculturalism and diversity with “in between” and “beyond” categories “we can be free in ourselves and have more openness to others in our private, social and professional relationships.” His work emphasizes how “being fixed and essential about who we are can provide us with a relative sense of security, stability and happiness, but in a changing world, we may also lose out on real life experiences if we don’t engage with our multiple identities in creative and transformative ways.” Roy, along with several graduate students, raises questions of how to overcome ideologies of sameness, how to encourage the freedom of plurality in society, and how to encourage expressions of self and the other and how to “work more effectively against intolerance and discrimination, and ensure fewer conflicts of culture and race”.

Cecilia Morgan

Cecilia Morgan researches education in the 19th century focusing on gender and cultural relations. At that time, travel, particularly for the middle class, was meant to be educational and was seen as one of the most formative kinds of educational experiences that people could have. Her recent study, A Happy Holiday, looks at English Canadians who went to Britain and Europe between the 1870s and the 1930s and discusses Canadians’ interest in other forms of learning including those occurring in cultural forums such as theatre. Her new research also documents the large number of Aboriginal people who traveled to Britain and Europe from the late 18th to the early 20th century as political activists or performers. Cecilia’s research shows that there was a certain amount of intermingling between Aboriginal peoples and those born in the United Kingdom; as well, Aboriginal travelers continued to make claims to the Canadian nation and the British empire in these international settings. Canadians may not be aware of these stories of transatlantic travel, and of the forces that shaped their people’s identity and learning.
Sarfaroz Niyozov

Sarfaroz Niyozov’s research project on teachers’ work with Muslim students in Ontario schools challenges existing notions surrounding the education of Muslims and other minorities. His work shows that teachers are generally and largely a positive force: “They go the extra mile, they work hard, they care about their students, and they are sensitive to the issues. These are people with a conscience and a vision and ethics who have chosen to work in the classrooms and they bring positive dimensions to their work, not just with Muslim students, but also other minority students or other students of culturally different backgrounds.” Most of the research in this area has looked at deficits in teachers’ work with Muslim and other multicultural student populations; however, Sarfaroz looks at the positive and constructive work that teachers are doing in Muslim communities and hopes this will make an important contribution to the celebration of teachers’ work. “We have to see the good things and build on them and admit that excellence does exist in the work of teachers and schools. Without acknowledging the excellence and providing a balanced portrayal no reform effort can be genuinely accepted, take root, and become sustainable.”

Roger Simon

Museums and other historical sites are not often considered serious sites of learning. Roger Simon’s work shows these public institutions can create events that bring diverse groups of people together to consider the commonalities and differences regarding issues that matter to them. His current work is focused on a comparison of the different ways two museums in the United States have exhibited the same collection of archival photographs taken at lynchings. Roger and his research team are also working with the Musée de la civilisation in Quebec City to develop an exhibit, entitled The Terrible Gift: Difficult Memories for the 21st Century, to open in December 2010. This exhibition will focus on events in various countries where state authorities have chosen policies that favour collective over individual experiences, and will contribute to the democratic character of our society through broader public discussions of these events.

Dale Willows

Dale Willows believes that teachers who have developed a deep understanding of literacy have the power to prevent literacy failure. Her research, grounded in the notion of a “balanced literacy diet”, demonstrates how teachers can more effectively learn and understand the necessary ingredients for children to become successful readers. A long-standing myth, that goes back to before the turn of the century, is that reading development is a natural process and that if we provide an environment that is supportive of literacy “children will naturally click in when they are ready.” Her research shows that teachers who have an impact on a child’s reading success also benefit from the very positive cycle of teaching and learning that develops. Teaching children living in disadvantaged populations, in home environments that are not supportive of literacy, sometimes for which English is their second language, may require teachers to be “extra good” in order to ensure that these children are successful. “If we can simply raise the teacher’s knowledge of literacy, then this can be a gift to many children.”
## Research Projects and Honours

**Highlighting Faculty Research Projects**

For a complete list of all currently funded research projects at OISE, please visit [http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/research/current_projects/current_projects.php](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/research/current_projects/current_projects.php).

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<td><em>Understanding the nature of science and scientific progress: A theory building approach</em></td>
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<td><em>Literacy attainment among newcomer students</em></td>
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SSHRC 2008 Standard Research Grant Recipients

Kathleen Gallagher  
Urban school performances: The interplay through live and digital drama, of local-global knowledge

Ben Levin  
Knowledge mobilization efforts in Faculties of Education

Esther Geva  
Vocabulary development in ESL students: what develops and how it can be enhanced

John Portelli  
Educational equity and inclusion in neoliberal times: Policy webs and school practice

Monica Heller  
Mobility, identity and new political economies: A multi-size ethnography

Creso Sa  
Interdisciplinarity in Canadian Universities

Julie Kerekes  
Internationally educated and trained employment seekers in North America: An ideological and sociolinguistic investigation of their experience

James Slotta  
Technology-enhanced activities and interactions in the science classroom: Pedagogical scripts for knowledge communities

Canada Research Chairs

Charles Chen  
Life Career Development

Karen Mundy  
Global Governance and Comparative Educational Change

James Cummins  
Language Learning and Literacy Development in Multilingual Contexts

Katreena Scott  
Family Violence Prevention and Treatment

Kathleen Gallagher  
Urban School Research in Pedagogy and Policy

James Slotta  
Education and Technology

Ben Levin  
Leadership and Educational Change

Rosemary Tannock  
Special Education and Adaptive Technology

David Livingstone  
Lifelong Learning and Work

Endowed Chairs

Carl Corter  
Atkinson Charitable Foundation Chair in Early Child Development & Education

Marlene Scardamalia  
President’s Chair in Education & Knowledge Technologies

Peter Dietsche  
William G. Davis Chair in Community College Leadership
RESEARCH CENTRES

Centre for Aboriginal Initiatives (Arts & Science – OISE)
Centre for Applied Cognitive Science
Centre for Arts-Informed Research
Comparative, International, and Development Education Centre
Centre for the Study of Education and Work
Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne
Centre for Integrative Anti-racism Studies
Institute for Knowledge Innovation and Technology
International Centre for Educational Change
Dr. R.G.N. Laidlaw Centre (Institute of Child Study)
Centre for Leadership and Diversity
Centre for Media and Culture in Education
Modern Language Centre
Centre for Science, Mathematics and Technology Education
Social Economy Centre
Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development
Centre for the Study of Students in Postsecondary Education
Centre for Teacher Education and Development
Transformative Learning Centre
Centre for Urban Schooling
Centre for Women’s Studies in Education