



September 9, 2015

**Indigenous Education Initiative (IEI) Announcement from the Dean of OISE**

A year ago, OISE received a \$5-million gift from an anonymous donor to strengthen Indigenous education research in Canada by establishing a fellowship and launching a comprehensive five-year initiative exploring the educational needs and aspirations of Indigenous peoples. During its first year, the Indigenous Education Initiative (IEI) focused on reviewing the current policy context of literacy and language education as an Indigenous right. With the support of Distinguished William A. MacDonald, Q.C. Fellow in Indigenous Education Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, the IEI engaged in major forums in Canada and Internationally to explore opportunities for advancing indigenous languages and cultures as a key to education and moreover, a cornerstone to reconciliation.

It is my commitment, as Interim Dean of OISE, to support the advancement and achievement of the Initiative's mandate and to engage our community in the process. To this end, I invited our Indigenous scholars and Elders in residence along with the IEI original team, to be part of the IEI Advisory Committee. Together we considered ways in which the IEI can broaden the contexts of OISE's scholarship as it relates to Indigenous worldviews and perspectives. Our summer deliberations produced two foundational documents that signal the general overarching direction of the Initiative:

1. Constitution of the IEI
2. IEI Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

These foundational documents establish the IEI around research programs that are particularly relevant to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples of Canada. Such research programs will support the mobilization of knowledge through Research Catalyst Grants open to OISE community actively involved in Indigenous education research.

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Associate Professor Suzanne Stewart as *Interim* Director of the IEI. The Advisory Committee has entrusted Dr. Stewart with the responsibility of running the IEI research program and building its capacity toward a larger undertaking for OISE to play a meaningful role in supporting Indigenous Peoples' education aspirations. Dr. Stewart will be working with Distinguished William A. MacDonald, Q.C. Fellow in Indigenous Education Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, Senior Policy Advisor to the IEI Jennifer Brennan, and IEI Research Associate Dr. Patricia Gaviria.

Please join me in thanking Associate Professor Stewart for agreeing to lead the IEI during its first research phase and stay tuned for the 2015 IEI Research Catalyst Grants.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "J".

Glen A. Jones, Ph.D.  
*Professor and Interim Dean*