This week’s Inside OISE @ Home Edition focuses on OISE staff and their efforts to continue to support the transitions to working from home. By all accounts, the efforts have been extraordinary. Check out just some of the ways our OISE staff are supporting the academic and operational efforts of our community in this new reality.

Please continue to share your updates with us! We want to know what’s happening with you and the OISE community. Be well and stay well.

“The global pandemic continues to challenge all aspects of our lives, changing our normal routines and particularly the way we work”

Madelaine Panoulias, Human Resources Manager, has seen that over the course of a few short weeks all members of the University community were faced with adapting to new ways in order to fulfill their important roles. “For OISE staff, this meant adjusting to remote work by developing new work methods and relying (even more) on technology to ensure our continued contributions to OISE’s mission. With special thanks to our Education Commons group who supported a tremendous surge in demand for hardware and software tools, our OISE staff have transitioned easily to working from home. In addition to learning new technology, the move to remote work necessitated a review of countless processes and the modification of regular activities.”

“This was all accomplished within very tight timelines, with OISE staff continuing to demonstrate their commitment to service excellence in support of our students, faculty and other OISE staff colleagues. For those of us fortunate enough to be part of the OISE community, we know that the personal interactions and social connections amongst our staff, faculty and students make this a very special place. While those interactions are currently limited to digital exchanges, we look forward to a day in the hopefully not-so-distant future, when we can once again come together at 252 Bloor Street West.”

“How can we effectively and equitably integrate digital recruitment strategies in a virtual context”

Julia Duncan, Director of the Education Commons, shared some perspective on recruiting staff in the context of COVID-19. Even before the current distancing measures, video interviewing had gained popularity across a range of organizations. Julia shares that “in the Education Commons, we had several positions vacant that were vital to our client service and digital strategy. We started our recruitment when we were still in-person and mid-process had to switch which naturally presented some challenges. I was really impressed at our collaboration with OISE Human Resources to engage interested candidates from across the institution and beyond.

“Using virtual interviewing and HR expertise and methods in the talent attraction and recruitment in the application and selection process was fantastic. We may want to consider, beyond this current context, how we can effectively and equitably integrate digital recruitment strategies in a virtual context as well as onboard and welcome staff when they virtually arrive.”

Please read more below about the recent hires to the Education Commons team and take a moment to welcome them to OISE.
OISE’s Commitment to Climate Action

Dean Glen Jones has announced the implementation of the first set of recommendations coming out of OISE’s Climate Action Summit. This summit took place in January with over 100 members of our community proposing a rich set of ideas to enact sustainability across OISE. The Dean will establish a new Advisory Council on Climate Action, as well as resource and enact a Climate Action Plan for OISE, ensuring regular and transparent communication about this as it develops.

These actions will build on the research and practice already being done to address the climate crisis at OISE, including that of OISE’s Environmental & Sustainability Education (ESE) Initiative, JICS’s Natural Curiosity Project, and our ongoing collaboration with the TDSB’s Sustainability Office. As part of our Academic Plan, we are proud to be positioning OISE as a hub for ESE and Climate Action, and aim to bring together community members and partners in leading a societal shift towards sustainability.

Education Webinars with OISE’s ESE

OISE’s Environmental & Sustainability Education (ESE) Initiative has shifted online this spring. We’re continuing our professional learning series of events online via webinars, in partnership with the TDSB’s Sustainability Office. All members of the OISE community are welcome to join in! These will continue to be offered through June, so visit our website for more info on topics, dates and times.

Happy Earth Month!

A reminder that April was Earth Month, and the importance of addressing the climate crisis by shifting towards more sustainable forms of living on this planet throughout the year. The current global pandemic adds to the urgency of this work, calling for even deeper reflection on our ability to influence change – and ensuring that OISE takes action and provides leadership toward achieving a more sustainable and environmentally viable future.

Staff Spotlight

“Working in the change-riddled IT field, at OISE I’ve been able to experience, and participate in, a rewarding continuity of learning.”

Meet Paul Steacy. The builder of websites, databases and software is also behind the scenes story building and storytelling for Education Commons. Paul is chasing stories on a daily basis as the EC team enables our students, faculty, researchers and staff to be successful and complete the many goals the community sets out to accomplish.

He draws his inspiration by visiting brainstorming huddles, attending virtual sessions, chatting with Education Commons experts about problems solved in the most creative ways, being part of the solution through his own work and scanning World Wide Web chatter for up and coming curiosities.

Most recently, Paul presented very dry numbers that the EC team collected, in an Excel sheet, into a beautiful story – Education Commons by the numbers. He built half a dozen stories ready for publishing before our “normal” had shifted and is now refocusing his energy on what’s relevant today and reestablishing Education Commons’ presence in our community. Let’s keep the stories coming – if you have a story to tell, share your digital moment. Paul is ready to hear it.

Upcoming Virtual Sessions

Welcome to the Centre for Learning, Leadership & Culture (LLC)

FOR STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The Centre for Learning, Leadership, and Culture (LLC) is offering a range of online webinars to staff at the University of Toronto! Upcoming sessions include:

- Leadership Styles in Action: May 5, 2020
- Coaching Skills for Managers: May 7, 2020
Additional virtual sessions include advice on how to maximize productivity while working remotely and has sessions on:

- Adjusting to a new work environment
- Remotely managing and leading teams
- Maximizing the efficiency and productivity of remote work
- Remote work productivity tool

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**Be Well and Stay Well**

**Mental Health Week**

Mental Health Week is taking place on May 4 to 8, 2020. Maintaining mental wellness is incredibly important, especially during these difficult times. Join us in our efforts to promote mental health awareness within our communities!

Your feedback matters! We would like to hear from you and have you contribute mental health tips to be shared with OISE staff and students. Check out this APHD Survey [here](#) to share your tips!

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**OISE Library Care Packages!**

Have you wondered what your colleagues across OISE are doing while at home and in isolation?

The OISE Library team has created a Care Package with all of their favorite wellness exercises, recipes, plant tips and much more! Check out the OISE Library Care Package!

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**Anishinaabemowin Language Bingo**

Cimaan/Kahuwe’ya/Qajaq Indigenous Language Initiative, First Nations House and the Indigenous Education Network at OISE are co-hosting online Anishinaabemowin Language Bingo. The bingo will start out with a tutorial on Anishinaabemowin sounds, vowels and consonants, and then look at numbers so you are familiar with the sounds. Do not worry about not being able to speak Anishinaabemowin, as we are in this together and can help each other no matter what your level of language learning or fluency. We are here to have fun and learn together! RSVP [here](#).

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**OISE Mindful Moments Online Zoom Sessions**

Sessions extended to August 27, 2020

From 12:10 – 12:50 p.m.

We will be meeting virtually through Zoom to practice secular mindful meditation techniques that will increase your relaxation, resiliency, and focus. Late arrivals and early departures welcome. You can request Zoom meeting details by emailing oise.wellness@utoronto.ca or RSVPing [here](#).

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**Online Meditation Sessions**

Check out these great opportunities to virtually practice meditation from home! Online sessions are run by Social Justice Education EdD student, Angad Kaur:

- Online meditation sessions, Thursdays at 5:30 PM
- Move and Mediate sessions, Sundays at 5:30 PM

Interested in joining a class? Email Angad Kaur [here](#) to sign up and receive a Zoom link!
APHD COVID-19 Coping Resources

OISE APHD and the Psychology Clinic offer a list of online coping resources to help manage stress and anxiety during COVID-19. These resources are also intended to promote wellness and social connectedness during this difficult time.

Learn More

Happy Ramadan! OISE Alum Shares Experiences

Ramadan Mubarak! Wishing all those celebrating a wonderful month!

Looking for a great read? Check out OISE alumna Rania Mirza’s article entitled, “It smells like Ramadan to me.”

Read More

A Warm Welcome To...

Below are some of the great OISE staff that have been hired in the past 4-5 months. Please extend a warm welcome to these newest members to OISE, some who unfortunately for the moment will not be able to meet members of our community in person.

Saira Mall will be joining Education Commons as our new Associate Director, Client Experience and Learning Technologies on June 1. Saira comes to us from the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI) and Academic & Collaborative Technologies (ACT). At CTSI/ACT, Saira led the ACT Support central services team that is responsible for supporting faculty and divisional educational technology professional staff with existing solutions and identifying new solutions for both academic and collaborative services that include Quercus and the Academic Toolbox.

Saira has over 12 years of experience advising faculty and departments on pedagogical best practices of available and emerging technologies. She endeavours to provide faculty with a variety of support resources, professional development opportunities, and training that support all phases of technology adoption that meet teaching and learning needs. Saira has been a member of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (SoTL) for over 15 years. She has a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) from McGill University, a BSc in Environmental Science from Trent University. Saira is pursuing her PhD at OISE.

Alex Andrei has joined as Application Support Specialist in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning. In this role, Alex will be responsible for supporting online systems such as Pepper and Willow and providing front-line end-user support to CTL students, faculty and staff. He will also work on creating and editing support documentation and training end users on procedures and the use of supported IT systems. As part of the communications team, Alex will maintain department websites and disseminate information via social media.

Alex has a background in computer science and has been working at Ryerson for the past 5 years on education and e-Learning initiatives such as the Law Practice Program, designing Serious Games, blended offerings for various industries, creating resources and workshops for instructors, promoting digital accessibility practices in teaching, and more. He is passionate about empowering people to bring their creative ideas to life by merging technology and design to create products and services that will help them be as successful as they can be.

Rick Smith is coming to Education Commons from York University where, over the past several years, he led a team of infrastructure professionals managing server, storage and virtualization platforms. Most recently, Rick developed a core team who built an automation platform to lay the foundation for developing an Infrastructure as Code practice. Prior to York, Rick worked at Queen’s University where he held several positions in the administrative systems team. Focusing on both the application and infrastructure sides of their Enterprise Information Systems environments, Rick led an application development and middleware team developing custom client solutions. Rick has extensive experience in application development, infrastructure monitoring, server and storage platforms, system architecture and project management.

Rick brings leadership, passion and dedication to his work. He has developed exceptional relationships throughout the educational community, and will continue to build those partnerships within Education Commons.
Anne Marie Kwan has joined as Financial Aid and Awards Coordinator to the Office of the Registrar and Student Services (ORSS) team. In this role, Anne Marie is responsible for advising students on financial aid and award matters, reviewing and assessing financial need, implementing plans for awards programs and the appropriate disbursement of funds to students. She brings a wealth of academic and financial advising experience with a focus on student health and wellness. Anne Marie has been a part of the U of T community for over 20 years including positions at the Division of Engineering Science, Enrolment Services and the Victoria College Registrar’s Office. She completed an Honours BSc at U of T with a double major in Psychology and Sociology, and a minor in English.

Trish (Mazzotta) Shaheen has joined OISE Continuing and Professional as Associate Director, Professional Learning. Trish joins our team from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) where she was the lead talent and learning consultant within the People and Organization group responsible for leading talent strategies and learning development solutions for various non-profit and for-profit entities nationally.

While with PwC, a key initiative under Trish’s leadership was the Workforce of the Future practice – a national platform solution focused on Canada’s future skills and skill development specifically.

Prior to this work, Trish managed learning and development teams accountable for national curricula development, learning design, learning delivery, program evaluation, solutions funding and operations. Trish is an OISE alumna with an MEd in Workplace Learning & Social Change and a B.Ed – Science from St. Joseph’s College in Indiana.

Trish leads our professional learning solutions activities across our four OISE CPL learning portfolios: Pre K-12, Postsecondary, Workplace Learning and Human Services. Her wonderful work experience and significant team leadership capabilities will advance our efforts specific to course/program needs assessment, design, development, delivery and evaluation as well as enabling the administrative conditions for OISE CPL to achieve and advance its goals.

Moni Kim, joined SJE as a Graduate Liaison Officer in December 2019 with previous experience in delivering excellence in graduate program administration student services at the Faculty of Medicine and also strategic leadership in social justice and community development organizations.

The OISE community also welcomes...

- Samantha Presutto – Portfolio Solutions Officer – CPL
- Faizal Baksh – Financial and Operations Assistant - LHAE

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