Opening Doors in and through Education

OISE Strategic Plan 2011-2015

www.oise.utoronto.ca
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There has never been a time in the history of the world when education has been more important to more people than it is today. Around the globe, individuals, communities, and nations increasingly look to education to strengthen and sustain their cultural, linguistic, social, and economic development. And while education does not guarantee equity or a successful life, it is a letter of introduction—a golden ticket—and without it today, most don’t have a chance.

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto occupies a unique place in this educational landscape. Recognized at home and around the world as a leader in initial and continuing teacher education, graduate programs in education, and educational research, OISE has a special responsibility. Proud of our history and guided by our commitment to equity and social justice, we must ensure that we not only sustain but expand our impact by opening more doors in and through education for peoples around the world.

For this reason, when I began my term as Dean my top priority was to engage the OISE community in a strategic planning exercise to articulate our values, establish our goals, and develop strategies for achieving them. More than 500 members of our community including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and leaders from other divisions of the University of Toronto came together during the 2010-11 academic year to develop this Plan (see Appendix). That so many from our community participated, reflects their deep and abiding commitment to OISE, to the University of Toronto, and to the power of education and educators to change the lives of peoples everywhere.

Our Plan will guide OISE’s development over the next five years and serve as a filter for all major decisions. It sets the stage for the academic planning that will take place in 2011-12, the results from which will be published in print and on our website. This is a dynamic plan with sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging issues. It will not turn to dust on a shelf but will be assessed regularly, with goals and actions revisited each year.

Standing on the shoulders of one of the world’s greatest universities—the University of Toronto—and mindful of our special responsibility to lead, we are united by our shared understanding of what and how we will each contribute as OISE continues to shape how the world thinks, and goes about education.

From Julia

Julia O’Sullivan, PhD
Professor and Dean
Our Values

- **Creation of New Knowledge** through taking risks/flexibility, innovation, creativity, working in an inter-disciplinary fashion, and external outreach
- **Critical Perspectives** acted out through critically questioning, challenging, and acting
- **Excellence** in the areas of teaching, learning, research, technology, leadership, scholarship and reputation
- **Equity and Social Justice** encompassing diversity, inclusiveness, sustainability, and transformative education
- **Inclusive Community** manifested by respect, caring and support, and collaboration
- **Students** and their diversity, student experience, achievement, and support
- **Life-Long Learning** through high quality of student learning, professional development, and for the benefit of society
- **Participatory Decision-Making** characterized by openness, inquiry, freedom of speech, democracy and participation in decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving
- **Supportive Infrastructure** to facilitate effective relationships, efficient operations, and innovation.
Our Goals

- **Effective Organization Design** which includes collaboration within OISE between departments and programs, partnerships beyond OISE with the University and larger educational communities, engagement and involvement of faculty, staff and students in democratic decision-making and governance, strong open communication and transparency, equitable workloads and addressing social inequities, adequate financial and human resources for OISE priorities.

- **Innovative and Integrated Programs** that feature integration of Initial Teacher Education and graduate programs, research-informed programs, and linkages between programs, across departments, and with the University and the broader community supported by a renewed faculty.

- **Engaged Research and Teaching Community** that includes interaction of theory and practice in the field of education, collaboration across faculties, disciplines, schools, and countries, outreach to the developing world, minorities, and disadvantaged youth, institutional support for research and teaching, and a knowledge hub for sharing resources including open access publishing.

- **Innovative Technologies for Learning and Leading** that position OISE as a technological leader in education, using technology to enhance teaching and learning including the distribution of knowledge, innovative pedagogy in the use of technology for education through research and practice, and state-of-the-art technological infrastructure at OISE including classrooms, hardware, software, and workspace.

- **Supportive Physical Environment** that includes meeting places that bring people together (such as a cafeteria, lounge, etc.), a healthy building for people and the larger environment (such as a rooftop garden, a gym, and windows that open), and state-of-the-art classrooms including technologically equipped spaces.

- **Social and Ecological Responsibility** at the core of OISE, through diversity of students, faculty, staff and the leadership team, a wide definition of social justice including leadership, scholarship (research and wisdom from many cultures), and the practice of social justice, equity and ecological sustainability.

- **Stellar Student Experience** characterized by a diverse student population in both Initial Teacher Education and graduate programs, an organization responsive to student voices, work with undergraduate and graduate students in teaching, scholarship, research and publishing, and through supporting alumni.

- **Recognized as an Innovative World Leader** for our research programs focusing on policy and learning and dissemination of that research, global programs and collaboration, quality instruction, partnerships with the Universities, the Ministries of Education and Training, Colleges and Universities, school boards and more, advocacy for social justice, equity and diversity, and our widespread influence on education.
Our Strategies

1. **Enhance Collaboration** between departments and programs, and within the University of Toronto to improve the quality of research, teaching and learning, and our understanding of each other.

2. **Rethink the Organization** to define the focus and purpose of restructuring; review current structures and explore possibilities of organizational structure for our departments, programs, and administrative units; design effective communications strategies to increase knowledge sharing across our infrastructure; break down existing silos by stimulating collaboration; and resolve the division of graduate programs and Initial Teacher Education.

3. **Support Faculty and Staff** by addressing workload issues; recruiting and retaining top faculty and staff; supporting faculty and staff through: mentoring, professional development, and reward systems.

4. **Address Student Needs** by conducting an updated assessment of student needs; providing earlier and clearer information to students; involving students meaningfully; addressing their financial needs; and recruiting top students.

5. **Reinvent Space** to create community spaces that support collaboration; assess and address the current use of space and reinvent it to break down silos across OISE; update the virtual infrastructure and equip the OISE community to be more innovative and technologically sophisticated.

6. **Enhance Transparency and Engagement** to improve participation by cultivating transparent decision-making and openness in communications; increase participation in decision-making; evaluate and improve upon our governance.

7. **Promote OISE around the Globe** within the community, the University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada and beyond; build partnerships and linkages internationally; focus on research in the field of education; disseminate our research globally; and influence leaders.

8. **Diversify Resource Base** by reexamining the allocation of expenses and internal funding; expanding the donor base of alumni, major gift givers, government and the University; and exploring alternative funding sources.

9. **Sustain the Strategic Process** by articulating priorities; monitoring action; evaluating progress; and celebrating successes as the strategic plan is rolled out.

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Restructure the Departments</th>
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| Actions | - Establish transitional teams in each department to manage the restructuring  
- Maintain ongoing communication and dialog (through online and face-to-face forums)  
- Ensure that faculty and staff are informed and supported about the transition and organizational renewal  
- Ensure that the reorganization reflects OISE’s needs and vision |

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Establish a new Framework for Initial Teacher Education and Graduate Studies</th>
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| Actions | - Establish a working group to investigate models for a new Initial Teacher Education / Graduate Studies framework  
- Ensure clarity about the budget and decision-making processes  
- Revise the decanal structure to support the alignment between Initial Teacher Education and Graduate Studies |

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Provide More Learning Opportunities and Streamline Administrative Procedures for Students</th>
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| Actions | - Conduct an updated assessment of student needs  
- Improve internal communications with and for students  
- Coordinate online courses and procedures to support part time students  
- Improve teaching opportunities for graduate students  
- Encourage use of Student Services by graduate students  
- Recruit more international students |

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Enhance Equity and Accessibility</th>
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| Actions | - Appoint an advisor on equity to the Dean  
- Establish an advisory board on equity |
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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Improve our Physical Space and its Use</th>
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| Actions | • Conduct a building audit to better understand space uses and needs  
• Make improvements in accessibility  
• Re-sort space to support a new departmental structure  
• Renew community spaces (e.g., lounges on the 5th & 12th floors)  
• Create “Smart Spaces” and better teaching technology  
• Significantly improve food services |

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Support and Strengthen our Faculty</th>
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| Actions | • Undertake complement planning for the new departmental structure  
• Ensure broad consultation regarding the development of institution/department workload policies  
• Support the pursuit of research opportunities and funding  
• Maintain and improve recruitment and retention strategies for world-class faculty |

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Provide More Learning Opportunities for Staff and Faculty</th>
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| Actions | • Define career development strategies for staff  
• Re-examine professional development opportunities for faculty in light of workload considerations  
• Define faculty mentoring structures  
• Support more wide spread use of Information Technology resources  
• Celebratory accomplishments of the OISE Community |

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Enhance Collaboration</th>
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| Actions | • Establish a working group to survey collaborative programs and research centers  
• Build on the work of existing collaborative programs and research centers  
• Create a working online calendar and searchable research project database |
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<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Engage Globally and Locally</th>
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| **Actions** | • Develop tools to help OISE build and consolidate strategic alliances and partnerships locally and globally  
• Develop an international connections database  
• Develop an OISE policy global and local engagement  
• Establish a yearly timeline for collaborative events  
• Ensure wider advertisement of OISE’s events |

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Diversify Resource Base</th>
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| **Actions** | • Further develop the advancement team  
• Investigate establishing an OISE consulting services  
• Ensure better support for research grant development  
• Develop a communications and marketing strategy |

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Sustain the Momentum</th>
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| **Actions** | • Build on work by groups such as the Teaching Task Force, the Task Force on Graduate Student Funding, and the Faculty Council’s Committees  
• Establish an Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation  
• Refine the communications infrastructure  
• Ensure ongoing support for the working groups and champions – and celebrate progress |

**Implementation**

This Strategic Plan will guide OISE’s development over the next five years and serves as a filter for all major decisions. It sets the stage for the academic planning that will take place in 2011-2012, with results to be published in print and on our website. Leaders of academic and non-academic units at OISE are responsible to the Dean for achieving the strategic goals relevant to their areas of responsibility; and, an Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation has been established to develop evaluation mechanisms and monitor progress. This is a dynamic plan with sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging issues. It will not turn to dust on a shelf but will be assessed regularly, with goals and actions revisited each year. The Dean will report often to the community on progress.