

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1. Review Summary

Program Reviewed:	Social Justice Education (MEd, MA, EdD, PhD)
Unit Offering Program(s):	Department of Social Justice Education
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Reviewers:	Professor Lynn Bosetti La Trobe University Professor Roderick Ferguson Yale University Professor Malinda Smith University of Alberta
Date of Review Visit:	February 13-14, 2020
Date Reported to AP&P:	October 27, 2020

Previous UTQAP Review

Review: OISE Department of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Social Justice Education and its programs

Date: March 22-23, 2012

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant program strengths:

- A number of faculty have strong research and publication records
- Many graduates are leaders in their field
- Reviewers recognized that the programs were in transition and strongly endorsed the Department's vision of the revamped interdisciplinary structure and curriculum

Opportunities for program improvement and enhancement:

- The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:
- Developing a new curricular model that balances disciplinary and interdisciplinary study based on some of the program's traditional strengths, and defines a common core and strands with a focused curriculum for each of the strands
- Re-examining course offerings to ensure on-going viability and clarity for students
- Offering and advertising subjects on a three-year cycle rather than annually
- Developing a comprehensive research plan to provide mentorship, research development support, and opportunities for research collaboration
- Renewing faculty complement to fill in for recent retirements of internationally prominent faculty; and to ensure a rounded curriculum can be delivered with solid advisement for students

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study; Previous review report including the administrative response(s); OISE Academic Plan 2017-2022; Access to all course descriptions; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty.

Consultation Process

Faculty, students, administrative staff and senior program administrators as well as members of relevant cognate units and representatives from partner community organizations and school boards.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program (n/a)

2. Graduate Program

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Outstanding department is a unique asset within OISE and the University, with high quality students and a strong reputation for its commitment to critical scholarship, scholar activism, and community engagement
 - ▶ SJE has reoriented traditional areas of humanities and social sciences towards a form of cultural studies that educates students to address sometimes contentious historical and contemporary issues
 - ▶ SJE includes a number of interconnected areas of teaching and research strengths that share a commitment to critical pedagogy and social action, equity and diversity, and social justice
- Objectives
 - ▶ Robust graduate programs in the areas of critical social theories, decolonization and anticolonial studies, Disability Studies, Black Studies and anti-Blackness, Gender studies, and Indigenous studies
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Integrative curriculum “sets an interdisciplinary agenda for the field of education studies—especially with regard to matters of race, gender, Indigeneity and disability”
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Heterogeneity of faculty, staff and students “brings epistemic diversity that informs teaching, research and community engagement, and is enriched by their experiences working in national and global contexts”
 - ▶ Students praised the department’s commitment to diversity
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ High levels of student satisfaction with program quality, the supportive environment in the department, fully-engaged professors, and the “opportunity to engage with like-minded individuals committed to social justice”
 - ▶ Study groups arranged by some advisors provide mentorship, peer support and a sense of community

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Students commented on tension between MA and MEd programs over limited access to shared high-demand courses and the need for improved coordination between the two programs
 - ▶ High demand courses often have 30 or more students enrolled, with waitlists during the enrolment period
 - ▶ MA and MEd students commented on the need for more program-specific courses; e.g., foundational research methods courses in the MA and more applied courses focused on schooling in the MEd
 - ▶ Some students expressed a desire for a wider and more diverse array of theoretical perspectives and approaches, as well as access to different kinds of knowledge in their course work
 - ▶ Limited opportunities to gain teaching experience for SJE students is a major concern, particularly for students interested in pursuing careers in academia; lack of undergraduate courses in education means students can only gain teaching experience outside the department
 - ▶ Lack of communication and integration among SJE's intellectual subfields can result in intra-department silos, and issues managing faculty-to-student ratio and space allocation
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Uneven distribution of mentoring and related support among students; established mentorship cohorts or other advising structures serve some students well while others receive inadequate mentoring or none at all
 - ▶ "Unsustainable" supervision workload for faculty members in high demand research areas limits advisory capacity and can impact students' time-to-completion
 - ▶ Some students have difficulty understanding expectations and achieving key milestones of their graduate school experience such as securing a supervisor, accessing courses, and navigating program requirements
- Student funding
 - ▶ Fully-funded students expressed concern regarding the limited opportunities to gain research experience, as research assistantships are only available to partially-funded students
 - ▶ Students expressed desire for more guidance from the department on how to access other sources of funding
 - ▶ EdD students expressed concern about their inability to access funding, and about the general perception that they are "not valued because they are not in a research-intensive program and not eligible for funding"

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Consider new courses, or modifications to existing courses, to accommodate diverse perspectives, and to provide a wider array of theoretical approaches and a more inclusive space for students,
 - ▶ Articulate effective pathways into, and through, SJE graduate programs such as undergraduate feeder or service courses, co-op education, and internships
 - ▶ Develop seminars or other courses for students in research-focused programs to provide opportunity for deeper and more theoretical work than might be of interest to students in professional programs
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Cultivate more collaborative approaches to graduate supervision, mentoring, and training (e.g., co-mentoring, network mentoring, and peer advising) to ensure that all students have equitable access to quality mentoring and support
 - ▶ Consider admitting students into their program with a designated supervisor, rather than an advisor, to distribute faculty supervision load, ensure sufficient supervision capacity, and alleviate students' uncertainty around the process
 - ▶ Improve communication with students to ensure understanding of procedures, requirements, and expectations as they navigate their graduate school experience; communication methods to consider include a graduate student guidebook, workshops, orientation sessions, a newsletter, and a regularly updated calendar of events
- Student funding
 - ▶ Consider whether EdD students' research practicum can be funded

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ SJE is home to influential and internationally recognized scholars who make valuable contributions to research, education, and knowledge transfer in OISE and the university, as well as on domestic and international levels
- Faculty
 - ▶ More than half of faculty are full professors, and slightly more than a quarter are at the associate or assistant professor level
 - ▶ SJE faculty have been instrumental in various efforts to engage with and address issues of equity, diversity, and structural racism, within OISE as well as the University

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ Large student/faculty ratio creates uneven teaching, learning, supervision, and mentoring experiences, particularly in areas of growing research interest
 - ▶ Lack of clarity around succession planning and overall strategy for new faculty hires, particularly whether to hire faculty to support either emerging fields or more established ones

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ Establish a new research centre focused on Disability Studies and consider new faculty hiring in this emerging area
- Faculty
 - ▶ “To expand programs and support more graduate students, hiring additional full-time faculty members is imperative”
 - ▶ Consider hiring new faculty who can teach in more than one area, to enable development of new areas of specialization while increasing capacity in existing areas
 - ▶ Regulate student/faculty ratio to ensure reasonable teaching and supervisory loads for faculty
 - ▶ Clarify faculty hiring and succession planning strategies with regard to supporting faculty renewal in established and emerging areas of study

4. Administration

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Department Chair makes a concerted effort to create an inclusive and democratic culture in the department, holding regular events and celebrations to strengthen relationships among faculty and staff
 - ▶ Faculty commented on improved morale in the department
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Strong and dedicated staff members, including recent hires and longer-serving members, provide valuable administrative support and “have more than stepped up to structural challenges within the unit”
- International comparators
 - ▶ SJE is “in a niche all its own”; some international institutions have research centres and/or clusters of researchers working on aspects of social justice and education, (e.g. U.C. Berkeley’s faculty concentration in Critical Studies of Race, Class, and Gender) but none with as concentrated a focus as SJE

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ A number of factors in the culture of the department can create potential for the development of insular groups and “intellectual turf wars” leading to marginalization, silencing, and withdrawal of faculty and students
 - ▶ Reviewers note troubling accounts of breakdowns in faculty/student and student/student relations; some members of the department commented on a “toxic culture” and “incivility witnessed in some classes, at meetings, and among staff”
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Pressing need for “a faculty member to supervise student progress and to guide students as they pursue institutional milestones”
 - ▶ Staff complement is too small for a department of SJE’s size and complexity
 - Uneven allocation, maintenance, and use of available space is a “major structural issue” within the department, impacting the culture and the experiences of faculty, staff and students
 - ▶ Students commented on the need for more technological support with 24/7 access to computers and printers
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Long-range challenges include continuing to foster a climate of mutual respect and “establishing a sense of a collective project among the various elements of the department”

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ As appropriate, improve transparency in decision-making with regard to hiring new staff and addressing departmental culture
 - ▶ Undertake a departmental climate review, including the development of a healthy workplace policy; engage in performance management for unprofessional conduct
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Strong need for additional staff in communications and graduate liaison/coordinator roles, to provide continuity of support and a more sustainable workload for staff in these areas
 - ▶ Address space concerns and consider creating a designated, open space plan for graduate students to foster “a spirit of access, inclusion, collaboration, and solidarity,” allow shared use of technology, and to use available space more efficiently
 - ▶ Improve infrastructure with additional computers, printers, and updated research-relevant software

2. Administrative Response & Implementation Plan



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FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Professor Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-President and Provost
University of Toronto

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

September 17, 2020

Re: Administrative Response to the 2019-2020 External Review of the Department of Social Justice Education and its programs

Dear Professor McCahan,

Thank you for your request for the administrative response to the external review of the Department of Social Justice Education (SJE) and its programs, and for the summary of the review.

The external review took place during the 2019-2020 academic year, following a period of academic planning at OISE and the appointment of Professor Njoki Wane as Chair of the department in 2018. Broadly consultative and inclusive – involving the participation of faculty, staff and students – the self-study process allowed members of the department to reflect on their achievements and challenges while considering the next phase of the department’s development. I would like to thank the SJE leadership, faculty, staff, and students for embracing the review as an opportunity for reflection, and for demonstrating a collective commitment to the department’s continued success. We are also appreciative of the contributions of external reviewers, professors Bosetti (La Trobe University), Ferguson (Yale University) and Smith (University of Alberta), for their visit and consultation with us in February 2020; their report represents a thoughtful review of the challenges and opportunities facing the department. What follows is our response to the points raised (in italics) in your letter dated June 22, 2020. The administrative response was developed in consultation with Professor Njoki Wane, SJE Chair, and reflects key elements of the unit response.

- *The reviewers noted a number of concerns related to supervisory capacity and uneven supervisory loads, observing that current student-faculty ratios, particularly in areas of growing research interest, create uneven teaching, learning and mentoring experiences. Students expressed concern over the process of finding a supervisor, noting that “many professors are at capacity in supervision” and that faculty workload leads to difficulty finding sufficient time for student mentoring and supervision.*

Creating critical scholarship stems from strong relationships where students have the support they require to succeed. This includes accessible and supportive departmental advisors, supervisors, staff, and infrastructure that enable students to excel in scholarship and become successful professionals. Particularly, the student-supervisor relationship is a key factor for a successful graduate experience. In this regard, the department endeavors to follow the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) general regulations and supervision guidelines according to which, students in the thesis-based programs are admitted with a faculty advisor clearly identified at the time of admission. This allows a student to seek initial guidance while considering a faculty member whose research program best aligns with their research interests and who can serve as a most suitable supervisor. Normally, the advisor later becomes a formal supervisor; however, this is not always the case. Students and faculty members develop long-term relationships based on shared research interests, clear expectations and mutual respect; however, circumstances can change along the trajectory of a student’s

journey impacting the ability to secure a supervisor and contributing to uneven supervisory loads. Specifically, the problem occurs when a student's area of study shifts during their 2nd year of the program, which is normally the time by which a supervisor should be identified and a supervisory committee established. Other reasons could include change in relationship with the initially identified faculty advisor; a leave of absence from studies due to financial, personal, or health issues; faculty retirements/departures; student transfers into programs other than those originally enrolled in, etc. As noted, these issues can create difficulties for students in finding supervisors and impact faculty workloads.

Implementation Plan

(a) Immediate to Medium-term Actions (Department)

Advising and mentoring of students is at the core of student experience within SJE and most faculty have study groups and learning circles that embrace students, provide supports and promote peer mentorship. The department has put in a place a number of initiatives to address the problem of uneven faculty workload: (1) Faculty members with lighter supervisory loads will engage more in advising and mentoring of master's students, and will take on service roles such as membership on departmental (e.g. Admissions) and institutional committees (e.g. OISE Council); (2) The department is currently rethinking its admission strategies between the various degrees offered and will consider, for example, reducing the admissions of PhD students as the admissions of EdD students increases. Newly admitted EdD students are grouped into cohorts to create a sense of community and facilitate future supervision; (3) The department is also focusing on helping current PhD students to complete their degree, so that the overall supervision load of faculty is reduced. Additional assistance to current PhD students is being offered by Office of the Associate Dean, Programs through the Thesis in Motion initiative where a senior OISE faculty member provides mentoring to students who struggle through the thesis writing phase. The department also invites faculty from other departments at OISE who have a specific interest in supervising or serving on a thesis committee in SJE to consider cross-appointments. In addition, two upcoming faculty hires including a Tier 1 CRC, will contribute to a redistribution of the supervisory load; (4) In addition to the position of Associate Chair, the position of Graduate Coordinator will be established effective 2020-2021, and a faculty member will be assigned to this role to work directly with the newly admitted cohorts and support them in navigating program requirements, selecting courses, and acquiring a formal supervisor. This will include advice on who to approach and how to initiate a conversation with a prospective supervisor, and follow ups to ensure students' ability to secure supervisors by the end of their 2nd year of the program; (5) Moving forward, the department hopes to utilize to a greater extent the SGS Progress Tracker, which is a relatively new online data management tool that tracks supervisory committee meetings, progress reports, and project milestones at the graduate level. In the meantime, a study progress report form must be completed by the student and supervisor at the end of each academic year to document progress, flag any issues, and support students at risk. Additionally, a stricter enforcement of the required annual meeting of the supervisory committee and the student, as well as a faculty meeting to discuss students at risk will be applied. It is expected that, over the next two years, these initiatives will improve issues related to supervisory capacity within the department.

- *The reviewers observed that some students experience difficulty navigating and meeting key milestones in their graduate school experience. They recommended increased communication efforts to clarify policies, procedures and requirements.*

The department is committed to helping students navigate the institution and supporting them in becoming leaders in research, community engagement and knowledge mobilization. OISE's Academic Plan 2017-2022 includes a commitment to enhancing student experience through excellence in teaching and graduate supervision, and providing better access to professional development and support mechanisms our students need to complete their programs, and transition into productive and rewarding careers. In addition to the

department-based supports, SJE students can access a number of services offered on the St. George campus through SGS, and through the Office of the Registrar and Student Services (ORSS) and its OISE Student Success Centre (OSSC).

Implementation Plan

(a) Immediate to Medium-term Actions (Department)

In addition to the position of Associate Chair, effective 2020-2021, the position of Graduate Coordinator will be established and a faculty member will be assigned to this role to work with the newly admitted students and support them in navigating their programs from selecting courses and finding a superior, to navigating forms, grants, awards, and bursary applications. Such direct advising will take the form of regularly scheduled monthly meetings with the entire cohort. To help create a community, the Graduate Coordinator will offer a course to all new doctoral students, initially as a special topics course that will later be converted into a regular course following a trial period.

In addition to the webpage with resources and a detailed student guide book, the department holds an annual orientation for incoming students; however not all students are available to attend. Working with the Graduate Liaison Officer, the Graduate Coordinator will devise a plan for increasing student participation at the orientation event, as well as for a more effective distribution of the student guide book. A letter from the Chair welcoming newly admitted students to the department could be one of the strategies and could feature the Chair's advice to students shared at the 2019-2020 orientation focused on 3 Ps: (1) Prepare (learn about the program requirements); (2) Participate (in courses and academic activities to meet expectations and achieve learning outcomes); and (3) Plan (how to accomplish your academic goals and aspirations). Additionally, information sheets with clearly outlined program requirements and collaborative specialization options for each degree program will be distributed at the orientation event, and via the student listserv.

(b) Medium-term to Long-term Actions (Dean's Office)

Following the completion of the academic planning process at OISE, the Office of Associate Dean, Programs established the Student Experience Committee comprised of students, faculty and staff with a mandate to promote and support the development and implementation of student-centered initiatives and services that enhance the student experience at OISE. Each year, the Students Experience Committee focuses on different priorities. Over the next two years, the Committee will focus on one of the priorities from the OISE Academic Plan 2017-2022, that is, to develop a plan for student success that identifies goals and priorities to ensure that our students receive quality instruction, advising and supervision, and that they can access resources including financial support. This will benefit students in all OISE programs including SJE.

- *The reviewers commented on several areas of tension between the needs and expectations of students in both research and professional programs:*
 - *Competition for limited spaces in shared high-demand courses*
 - *Need for courses “around which students in a particular program can cohere,” e.g., seminars or research methods courses for MA and more applied courses for MEd students*
 - *EdD students expressed concerns regarding inequitable treatment and “feeling like they are not valued because they are not in a research-intensive program and not eligible for funding.”*

Academic programs, courses and other academic activities are integral part of the overall student experience. Access to courses including adequate offering or research methods courses for students in research-stream programs, as well as online courses could be improved through effective management of course enrolment and waitlists, as well as by ensuring that OISE Bulletin includes current information on available courses.

Implementation Plan

(a) Immediate to Medium-term Actions (Department)

In order to address the tension between the needs and expectations of students in both research-stream and professional programs, courses have been created with enrollment limited to specific degrees including adding additional sections of courses in the Summer of 2020 to respond to demand. Starting the fall of 2020, all incoming Master of Education (MEd) students are encouraged to enroll in SJE1903H Major Concepts and Issues in Education, which provides MEd students with basic theories and debates in social justice education. The course is open only to MEd students and will allow them to form a community. On the other hand, research-stream students (MA & PhD) are encouraged to enroll in SJE3905H Interdisciplinary Approaches to Research: Theory and Praxis. The department will explore the possibility of creating a course solely designated for PhD students experimentally as a special topics course with a view to converting the course into a regularly offered course within a year. This approach will provide a more inclusive space for students in professional and research-stream programs respectively and accommodate diverse critical and theoretical perspectives while alleviating tensions regarding shared high demand courses.

With respect to the EdD program, which was modified during the 2017-2018 academic year, SJE3997H Practicum in Social Justice Education is a required course for all EdD students and allows them to establish a community. Another innovative feature of the redefined EdD in SJE is the introduction of the *thesis - dissertation in practice* as the culminating component of the degree. As noted above, the department has seen a spike in enrollment since the modification of its EdD program. To further enhance the EdD student experience and provide a safety net so that no student feels unsupported in navigating the program, the department will assign one faculty member to guide and advise the students. This will not absolve the rest of the faculty members from advising individual students. Unlike the research-stream PhD degree, the EdD is a professional degree and is not part of the funded cohort; however, OISE offers bursaries for students in financial need and has increased its bursary funds in 2020.

(b) Medium-term to Long-term Actions (Dean's Office)

Following the completion of the Academic Plan 2017-2022, with a view to enhancing inter-departmental collaboration in program planning, the Office of Associate Dean, Programs established the OISE Programs Strategic Advisory Committee (OPSAC) comprised of Associate Chairs, Academic Coordinators, Graduate Liaisons, and others at OISE involved in the planning and delivery of academic programs. The OPSAC's mandate is to advise on issues that have the most significant impact on the development and delivery of OISE's programs ensuring that our programs continue to be strong and relevant in terms of their content and learning outcomes, and that they are sustainable and meet the needs of students. Over the next two years, a subcommittee of OPSAC will be formed to review the research courses across OISE in order to ensure a solid foundation in research methodology for students in research-stream programs (MA & PhD). The subcommittee will review existing courses, identify duplication and gaps/areas for course development, with the goal of increasing the number of and access to quantitative research methods courses for all research-stream students consistent with the decentralized budget model at OISE. The greater offering of quantitative research methods courses will benefit students in all of OISE's research-stream program including SJE.

- *The reviewers noted the limited opportunities for students to gain teaching and research experience.*

OISE provides graduate students with teaching opportunities through Teaching Assistantships (TA) and Course Instructor (CI) positions. Prior to OISE's transition to an all-graduate faculty of education, these positions were more available as graduate students had opportunities to teach in the now discontinued undergraduate teacher education programs: the Consecutive Bachelor of Education/Diploma in

Technological Studies (B.Ed./Dip.Tech.Ed), and the Concurrent Teacher Education Program (CTEP). While OISE's full transition into an all-graduate institute in 2015-2016 has diminished opportunities for PhD students to gain teaching experience, teaching opportunities, although limited, continue to be provided in the in the OISE Student Success Centre (OSSC). Additionally, some OISE students take on TA opportunities in other departments within the University of Toronto.

Regarding research experience, OISE students engage in research through both formal and informal relationships with researchers and are supported by institutional, domestic, and international grants and scholarships. Through faculty advisor and thesis supervisor roles, OISE's scholars guide and mentor students throughout their research program in a supportive environment. In addition to these mentoring relationships between faculty and students, OISE offers opportunities to engage in research projects through Graduate Assistantships (GA), Research & Development Graduate Assistantships (R&D GA), Research Assistantships (RA), and Research Fellowships (RF). The main funding mechanism is the GA program. In addition to students in research-stream programs, a provision in the collective agreement allows a determined number of students outside the funded cohort to access GA-ships. OISE students are also provided with many external research opportunities including travel awards and grants offered in partnership with SGS.

Implementation Plan

(a) Long-term Actions (Deans Office)

While students in the research-stream programs (MA and PhD) have ample opportunities to engage in research, we recognize that teaching opportunities have diminished with OISE's transition to an all-graduate institute. Working with the aforementioned Student Experience Committee, over the next two years, the Office of Associate Dean, Programs will initiate an institute-wide discussion on enhancing teaching experiences for PhD students at OISE. This will include the exploration of possibilities with undergraduate departments at U of T to create opportunities for OISE students to TA in departments and faculties that focus on issues that OISE has expertise in. It is expected that this will result in creating more teaching opportunities through the Teaching Assistantship process.

- *In response to student comments, the reviewers encouraged the department to consider ways in which courses, either existing or newly-created, could provide a more inclusive space and accommodate diverse critical and theoretical perspectives.*

In their report, the reviewers noted that there are certain structural issues that seem to produce silos among the various intellectual subfields within the department; however, they also noted that "the department is characterized by representational and epistemic diversity" highlighting that this diversity "informs teaching, research and community engagement" within the department.

Implementation Plan

(a) Immediate to Medium-term Actions (Department)

It is important to note that, what may be perceived as 'silos' are actually thematic orientations that are embedded in the Social Justice Education as an interdisciplinary program (e.g. Indigenous Education, Black Studies, Disability Studies). The program's interdisciplinarity is evident from the diverse disciplinary backgrounds of SJE faculty whose current research is, for example, in Philosophy, Indigeneity, Women Studies, Postsocialism, Africa-based Studies, Policy Studies, Political Economy, Media Studies, Media Literacy Education and Radical Pedagogies. Within the program, students can also take a more focused path by enrolling in one of the eleven collaborative specializations the department's degree programs are participating in, or by choosing their elective courses based on course themes, both from within the

department, and from the courses of other departments (e.g. Indigenous, Technological, Urban Education). To ensure that students feel included and valued, the following steps will be taken: (1) The department will develop an extensive description of Social Justice Education as an area of study, including the available specializations, degree themes, as well as the clusters of courses offered, which will be included in the SJE student guide book. This will allow students to explore possibilities and make informed decisions about structuring their degree and giving it a particular focus to ensure that they can accomplish their academic goals and that, as graduates, they are competitive on the employment market; (2) The department will create a bi-monthly Newsletter, paying particular attention to the rapid changes that are taking place due to COVID-19. The annual orientation, as well as recently added additional onboarding events with staff and the Graduate Coordinator will create opportunities to address student questions, explore program specializations and employment pathways; (3) The department will continue to offer and create new courses that bridge thematic orientations and connect epistemologies and will increasingly encourage students to enroll in these courses to broaden their lenses. The department also offers seminars intended to expose students to faculty research and specializations. It is expected that these steps will increase existing and create new inclusive spaces for students while accommodating diverse critical and theoretical perspectives.

- *The reviewers recommended increasing the staff complement to coordinate professional development, mentoring relationships, and other student supports and services.*

SJE is a vibrant and multi-layered department, which has strengthened its internal sense of community dramatically over the last five years. The reviewers noted that the SJE has dedicated staff members; however, the administrative staff complement is small given the size of the department's community particularly the graduate program and its communication needs. In fact, since the 2011-2012 review, due to organizational changes including OISE's transition to an all-graduate institute, budgetary constraints, faculty retirements and departures, both faculty and staff are experiencing a significant level of job intensification.

Implementation Plan

(a) Medium-term to Long-term Actions (Department)

With a view to strengthening its faculty resources, the department will engage in principled and fiscally responsible faculty renewal planning that will be reviewed and updated annually. In addition to the tenure-stream position in Black Studies that was filled in 2018-2019, the Provostial approval was received to launch two tenure-stream faculty searches in 2020-2021, one in Disability Studies, and the second one in Black Studies in Education. Renewal and succession planning for new academic hires will enable growth in high demand research areas and support the present and future demands for supervision. Additionally, the role of Graduate Coordinator will be more central to strengthening the student support and advising. Historically, this role and the role of the Associate Chair were separate; however, in recent years, the two roles were merged into the Associate Chair role. Effective 2020-2021, the Graduate Coordinator position will be a separate and distinct role focusing solely on supporting and advising current students.

In terms of administrative staff resources, over the next two years, the department will review the staffing structure with a view to building capacity among staff to strengthen the support for students. As part of this plan, the role of Executive Assistant will focus on administrative support and operations rather than communications. The Business Officer role will remain the same focusing on financial management, business operations, space and human resource administration functions. The position of Recruitment and Communication Assistant has been a term position and the department will make a case for maintaining this important role as a continuing administrative staff position within SJE. The Graduate Liaison Officer position will be reoriented to work collaboratively with the Office of Graduate Coordinator to coordinate professional development, mentoring relationships, and other student supports. In order to build capacity, all

SJE staff members will be encouraged to utilize resources including professional development courses offered within the University's Centre for Learning, Leadership and Culture (LLC).

- *The reviewers commented on space and infrastructure issues in the department, noting that “available space is unevenly used, renovated, and allocated between programs” and that students expressed “the strong need for access to more computers and printers with the latest research-relevant software.” They suggested improvements that could foster “a spirit of access, inclusion, collaboration, and solidarity.”*

As the department continues to grow, the need for adequate space has become an ongoing issue for its community. This has been addressed through a number of strategic changes made to the physical space within SJE including the recent construction of a state-of-the-art research facility made possible by Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) funds secured by faculty member and Canada Research Chair of Indigenous Methodologies with Youth and Communities. While facilities in other areas of research within the department are yet to benefit from equivalent resources, it is expected that the upcoming search for a Tier 1 CRC in Black Studies in Education will result in the creation of additional research infrastructures. Moreover, space needs within the department will be addressed as part of the general OISE space planning exercise. Under the Community Building focusing theme, OISE's Academic Plan 2017-2020 calls for the development of “a space utilization plan that optimizes the efficient use of space and emphasizes community building, security and safety, accessibility, environmental sustainability and respect for cultural diversity”.

Implementation Plan

(a) Medium-term to Long-term Actions (Dean's Office)

To realize this important goal, the OISE Space Planning Committee comprised of representatives of students, faculty and staff was established during the 2018-2019 academic year. The Committee includes an SJE faculty and student representative. The Committee's mandate is to review community needs in terms of space, analyze and assess space usage in the building, and develop broad space planning options guided by established core principles and community consultations. The Committee will also provide input on critical milestones, evaluation and phasing of space planning implementation. Over the next two years, the Committee will engage in community consultations that will lead to the development of a principle-based comprehensive space plan for OISE that will benefit all of its departments and units including SJE. In the meantime, the department has requested more space for its growing community needs. Related to technology needs, OISE's Education Commons (EC) has recently completed its Strategic Plan (2020-2022), and is taking steps to implement it ensuring that it can supply the technological infrastructure needed to support new and innovative forms of teaching, learning and research.

- *The reviewers noted some troubling issues of climate within the department involving some relationships between faculty and students.*

As per its Constitution, the department is “committed to shared governance, mutual care and respect, transparency and accountability” and is mindful of inequitable power relations and dynamics within and across the different constituencies that may inform, influence, and impact deliberations and decisions. To the best of their individual and collective capacities, the department works to challenge inequities, to recognize diverse perspectives, and to create inclusive spaces for its members.

Implementation Plan

(a) Immediate to Medium-term Actions (Department)

The department has come a long way in strengthening its sense of community over the last five years; especially since 2018, when SJE moved into a new era in its evolution under the leadership of the current Chair, Professor Njoki Wane. While the reviewers learned of some interpersonal challenges within the department during their meetings with students, it is important to note that such grievances should not overshadow the students' general appreciation of faculty, staff and fellow students within the department. As well, interpersonal challenges that may occur between members of a department or unit is not an issue unique to SJE. Regardless, the department leadership pays close attention to some of the interpersonal relations in the department and will pursue appropriate avenues to resolve any issues going forward.

The department continues to move forward together as a community and strives to be a welcoming place for all its members. Following the 2019-2020 review, the department is well positioned to expand its reach qualitatively in terms of its programs, community engagement and research impact, and quantitatively in terms of attracting excellent students, faculty and resources that will support OISE and the University of Toronto.

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the department leadership. A brief report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, midway between the February 2020 site visit and the year of the next site visit, will be prepared. The next review of the department and its programs will be in the 2027-2028 academic year.

We trust that this response addresses the main areas raised by the reviewers. Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glen A. Jones', written in a cursive style.

Glen A. Jones, PhD
Professor and Dean
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Cc: Professor Njoki Wane, Chair, Department of Social Justice Education

3. Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P) Findings

The spokesperson for the Reading Group reported that the summary covered the full Review. The Group commented on the excellent reputation of the Department and agreed that the Dean's administrative response fully addressed the issues identified.

In reply to ancillary written comments from the reading group, Dean Jones noted that the Department continued to review its staffing complement, including leadership responsibilities between the Associate Chair and the Graduate Coordinator. In reply to another written comment regarding teaching and research experience for students, Dean Jones noted that there were a great deal of research opportunities, owing partially to the fact that Graduate Assistant roles, which were unique to OISE, allowed graduate students to explore research. Because OISE did not offer any undergraduate programs in which students could serve as Teaching Assistants, the Department was also looking into creating co-curricular opportunities to further expand teaching opportunities.

No follow-up report was requested.

4. Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised the Department for its “representational and epistemic diversity,”; they noted that the Department is home to influential, world-renowned scholars, and has a very strong reputation “for its commitment to critical scholarship, scholar activism, and community engagement”; they observed that the Department’s course offerings “integrate the study of education with some of the most exciting areas to emerge in the modern Western academy”; and finally noted that SJE students expressed high levels of satisfaction with the “quality of their program, the support from their colleagues and faculty, and the opportunity to engage with like-minded individuals committed to social justice.” The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: addressing concerns related to supervisory capacity and uneven supervisory loads; increasing communication efforts with graduate students to clarify policies, procedures and requirements; addressing several areas of tension between the needs and expectations of students in both research and professional programs, including a) competition for spaces in high-demand courses, b) need for courses “around which students in a particular program can cohere”, c) EdD student reports of concerns regarding inequitable treatment and “feeling like they are not valued because they are not in a research-intensive program and not eligible for funding”; increasing opportunities for students to gain teaching and research experience; considering ways in which courses could provide a more inclusive space; increasing the staff complement to coordinate professional development, mentoring relationships, and other student supports and services; prioritizing space and infrastructure improvements to foster “a spirit of access, inclusion, collaboration, and solidarity”; and addressing troubling climate issues within the department, involving some relationships between faculty and students.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty, unit and programs' responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result.

5. Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the department leadership. A brief report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, midway between the February 2020 site visit and the year of the next site visit, will be prepared.

The next review of the department and its programs will be in the 2027-2028 academic year.

6. Distribution

On June 30, 2021, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of OISE, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to the Chair of the Department.