

# SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE ACTION REPORT 2021-24



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE  
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION



Living Wall in OISE's lobby

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# DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear OISE community,

We are delighted to share this report about OISE's ground-breaking Sustainability and Climate Action Plan. Sustainability is key to improving our lives – it ensures the health and wellbeing of future generations and all living beings. Education is central to sustainability and climate action efforts, and OISE's work to continue to educate and inform our local and global communities – to equip us all for the critical work of the coming years to address the crisis of climate change – is necessary and urgent.

I am very proud of the work of the Institute and our SCAN members, led by Dr Hilary Inwood. Their work and advocacy deepens our research and practice partnerships and collaborations around these critical issues within OISE, the University of Toronto, and throughout Canada. As we continue to follow through on our commitments, I am equally proud that our approach is a model for other faculties of education, school boards and systems, and educational institutions in Canada and beyond –inspiring many to develop plans of their own around climate action and sustainability.

We are grateful for everyone's continued efforts to play a part in addressing this crisis. It is incredibly moving to see these extensive contributions and their impact on our own research, pedagogy, and practice. It is paramount that we continue this good work to facilitate positive change for the environment wherever we are, making a real difference in how these important ideas and educational initiatives for sustainability turn into action at OISE and for the world.

*Professor Erica N. Walker  
Dean, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*

# OVERVIEW

The creation and launch of OISE's [Sustainability and Climate Action Plan](#) in 2021 signaled a new level of commitment for the Institute to embed this important work into its academic and operational priorities. As one of the largest and most research-intensive faculties of education in North America, and as an integral part of the University of Toronto, OISE is well-positioned to support and mobilize the education sector in this critical mission. Acknowledging that our world is now in a state of climate emergency and that there is a very limited time to shift to low-carbon and regenerative ways of living, OISE has aimed to utilize its influence in teaching, research and advocacy to address the climate crisis by embedding Sustainability and Climate Action into all facets of its work, including curriculum and teaching, research, governance, and facilities and services.

This report shares the progress that has been made on the implementation of the 24 actions and 61 strategies of OISE's Sustainability and Climate Action Plan over its three-year term. While progress has been made, so much more can, and should, be done. By drawing on the knowledge, perspectives, and expertise of OISE's students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners, OISE continues to improve its sustainability practices to amplify its contributions to a world that is safer, healthier and just for all.

**Sustainability and climate action are integral components of OISE's work and commitment to both individual and collective wellbeing, and to a more just, equitable and sustainable world.**

*Vision Statement*

*OISE's Sustainability & Climate Action Plan*

# WORKING IN CHALLENGING TIMES

The process of developing the Sustainability & Climate Action Plan (SCAP) began in January 2020 with OISE's first [Climate Action Summit](#). Since that time, many members of the OISE community – students, staff, faculty and alumni – have been actively engaged in minimizing OISE's carbon footprint and deepening its commitment to climate justice and action. However, the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 closed the OISE building and shifted the focus to online delivery of its teaching, research and community commitments. This slowed down – but did not stop – the development and implementation of the actions of the SCAP. OISE established its Climate Action Advisory Committee in the spring of 2020 to guide its development, and the SCAP was launched online in January 2021, along with the announcement of the newly formed community hub now called the [Sustainability & Climate Action Network](#) (SCAN). The SCAN team began the implementation of the actions and strategies of the SCAP, achieved online for the first eighteen months, and in hybrid form (online and in-person) for the second half of its three-year term.



*The new living wall was installed in March 2020, just as the OISE building (and the university as a whole) went into lockdown due to the pandemic. Its contributions to improving the aesthetics and air quality of the lobby weren't fully appreciated until the building re-opened for classes in September 2022.*

# NEW GROWTH

Despite the challenging conditions at its outset, OISE's SCAP has proven to be ground-breaking. It is the first plan of its type in a faculty of education in Canada, and one of the first created by a division at the University of Toronto. It supports the implementation of the priorities of the university's Committee on the Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability, and contributes to its goal of becoming a [Climate Positive Campus](#). It recognizes and enacts the critical work that education at all levels can contribute to bring about the social, cultural and infrastructure shifts needed to address the climate crisis. And as the leading faculty of education in Canada, it models how to do this work for other faculties of education in light of the [Accord on Learning for a Sustainable Future](#), released by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education in 2022. Thanks to the foundations of this Plan, OISE is currently recognized as a leader amongst faculties of education in Sustainability & Climate Action across the university, and across the country.



*OISE Students learning about seed-saving to stock the OISE Seed Library with seeds from the OISE Community Learning Garden*

# HIGHLIGHTS



15

launch & meetings of the Dean's Climate Action Advisory Committee



2021

unveiling of OISE's new Living Wall in the lobby



2022

leading a new Community of Practice on Sustainability Teaching for UofT



2022

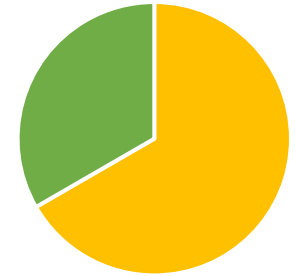
establishing a Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Global Development at OISE



2,570

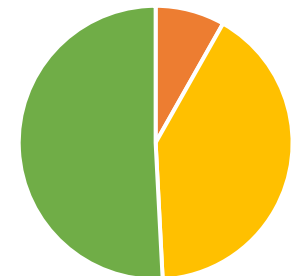
people participating in SCAN learning events over three years

## SUMMARY



### S&CA Plan Actions

- 8 completed
- 16 in progress
- 0 not started



### S&CA Plan Strategies

- 31 completed
- 25 in progress
- 5 not started

# GOVERNANCE & INSTITUTE SUPPORTS



## VISION

*Prioritize Sustainability & Climate Action by ensuring Institute supports and practices are in place to embed these into OISE's governance structure and institutional culture.*

## INDICATORS



1

New [Accord on Learning for a Sustainable Future](#) by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education in 2022



350+

signatures on OISE's [Climate Emergency Declaration](#)



110

attendees at OISE's Climate Change Summit



15

meetings of the Dean's Climate Action Advisory Committee



30+

meetings & consultations with OISE Community members



46

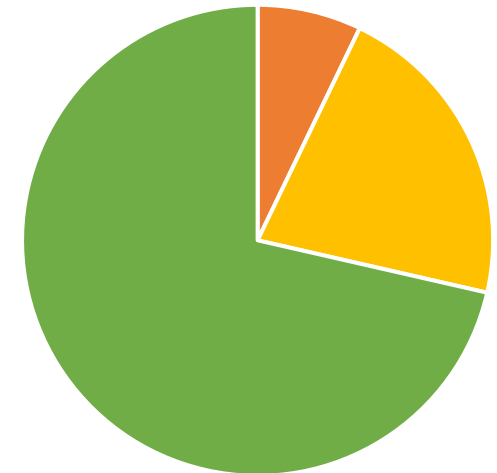
pages created for the SCAN website



4

projects supported by the Sustainability Fund

## METRICS



14 Strategies in this Strand

- 10 completed
- 3 in progress
- 1 not started



## ACTIONS

## STRATEGIES

**1: Prioritize Sustainability & Climate Action at OISE**

- Make a declaration of climate emergency at OISE that aligns with those of federal and municipal governments and universities in Canada
- Establish OISE as a 'Living Lab for Education into Sustainability & Climate Action' in alignment with other Living Labs across the university
- Embed Sustainability & Climate Action into the governance structure and institutional culture of OISE

**2: Establish a Dean's Advisory Committee on Sustainability & Climate Action**

- Ensure representation from OISE's academic departments and main business units on a Dean's Advisory Committee to inform the implementation of the Sustainability & Climate Action Plan
- Hold regular meetings of the Dean's Advisory Committee to provide feedback to the Dean on how best to prioritize Sustainability & Climate Action at OISE

**3: Embed Sustainability & Climate Action into OISE roles and responsibilities**

- Consult with the OISE community as to where and how Sustainability & Climate Action is best embedded into staff, faculty and students' roles and responsibilities
- Formalize and enact roles and responsibilities in relation to Sustainability & Climate Action

**4: Advocate for Sustainability & Climate Action policies**

- Support the development and deepening of sustainability policies at the University of Toronto
- Engage with key educational partners and advocate for the development of sustainability policies in their jurisdiction (e.g. Ontario school boards, the Ontario Ministry of Education and other provincial & federal ministries, the Ontario College of Teachers, the Ontario Association of Deans of Education, the Association of Canadian Deans of Education, etc.)

**5: Initiate an OISE fund for Sustainability & Climate Action**

- Set up an OISE fund dedicated to supporting Sustainability & Climate Action initiatives for students, staff and faculty in the Institute
- Establish terms of reference for allocating funds to support Sustainability & Climate Action initiatives
- Identify and secure sources of funding for this fund

**6: Create a new community hub for Sustainability & Climate Action at OISE**

- Investigate the pathway to establishing a new community hub to prioritize and embed Sustainability & Climate Action in OISE's governance, facilities & services, curriculum & teaching, research, and community engagement & outreach
- Establish terms of reference, financial supports, and space for the community hub

STATUS:  - COMPLETE - IN PROGRESS - NOT COMPLETE








# FACILITIES & SERVICES



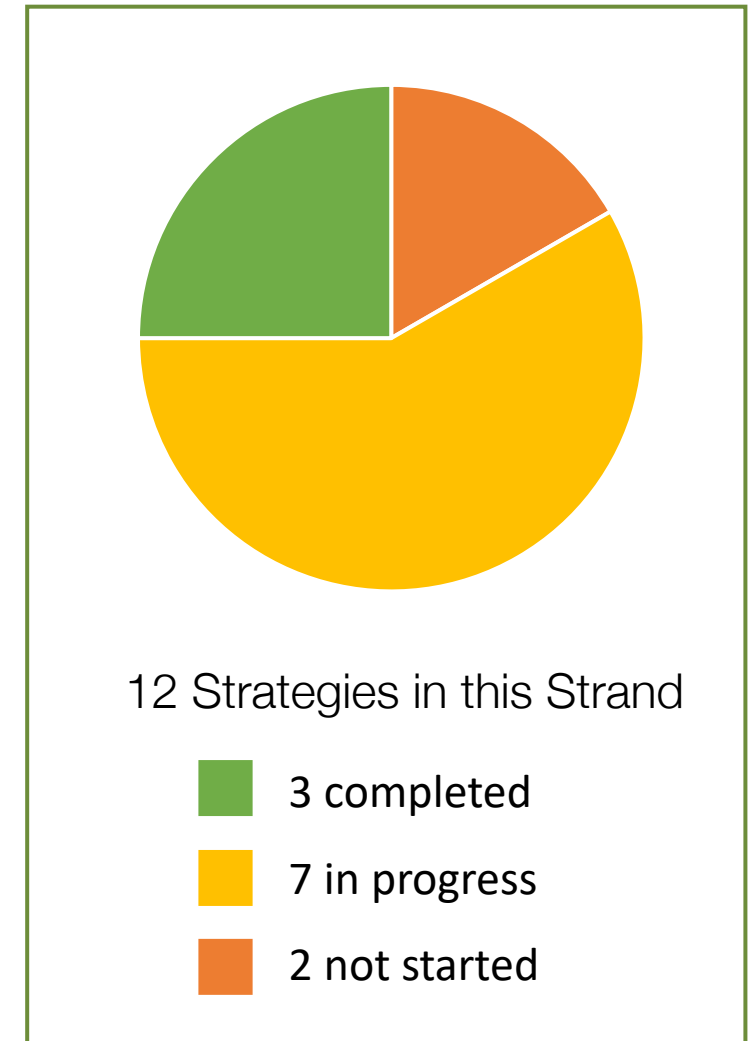
## VISION

*Minimize the environmental footprint and support the health and wellbeing of OISE's community by bringing the lenses of Sustainability & Climate Action to the forefront of the building's operations and procurement practices.*

## INDICATORS

 <b>2021</b> Unveiling of OISE's new Living Wall in the lobby	
 <b>30</b> new, secure bike spots in OISE's new bike locker	 <b>85</b> hours for developing sustainable procurement practices at U of T
 <b>5</b> plots maintained for the OISE Learning Garden	 <b>9</b> Learning Garden educational events
 <b>2</b> new partnerships with the CECCS & U of T Sustainability Office	 <b>2</b> new mural & garden space in development on the 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor

## METRICS



## ACTIONS

## STRATEGIES

<b>1: Develop campus partnerships to support Sustainability &amp; Climate Action at OISE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate, establish and deepen opportunities for campus partnerships focused on embedding Sustainability &amp; Climate Action in conjunction with OISE's Space Planning, Facilities &amp; Services team</li> </ul>	
<b>2: Establish baseline data and targets to minimize OISE's environmental footprint</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect baseline data related to OISE's environmental footprint (e.g. energy, water, waste, recycling, indoor air quality, etc.)</li> <li>Explore how to establish and work towards targets that minimize OISE's environmental footprint</li> </ul>	 
<b>3: Develop resources to support sustainable procurement practices at OISE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review procurement processes at OISE to identify opportunities for enhancing sustainability practices</li> <li>Develop a resource guide to support sustainable procurement practices at OISE</li> </ul>	 
<b>4: Develop supports for sustainable transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor bike parking utilization at OISE and advocate for additional capacity as needed</li> <li>Establish an advisory committee to identify strategies to educate and encourage OISE students, staff and faculty to use sustainable forms of transportation for travelling to and from OISE</li> <li>Identify ways that staff and faculty can minimize CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on OISE-related travel</li> </ul>	  
<b>5: Amplify a culture of conservation at OISE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop educational campaigns to support the OISE community in growing awareness and taking action on conservation practices</li> <li>Deepen a culture of conservation at OISE in relation to the use of energy, water, and waste</li> </ul>	 
<b>6: Improve OISE spaces to support well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the revitalization of the 5<sup>th</sup> floor patio to create new community space, a garden, and an Indigenous education and learning space</li> <li>Follow principles established by the OISE's academic leadership and Space Planning Committee to foster the health and wellbeing of OISE community members</li> </ul>	 

STATUS: - COMPLETE

- IN PROGRESS

- NOT COMPLETE

# CURRICULUM & TEACHING



## VISION

*Broaden and deepen curricular and co-curricular learning centred on Sustainability & Climate Action at OISE to enhance education's critical role in creating a more just, equitable and sustainable future.*

## INDICATORS



2022

SCAN helps establish new U of T Community of Practice on Sustainability Teaching



126

conference presentations delivered in partnership with the TDSB



13

professional learning events organized by the Community of Practice



10

webinars on eco-justice education delivered



12

Work-Study students employed & trained



1,320

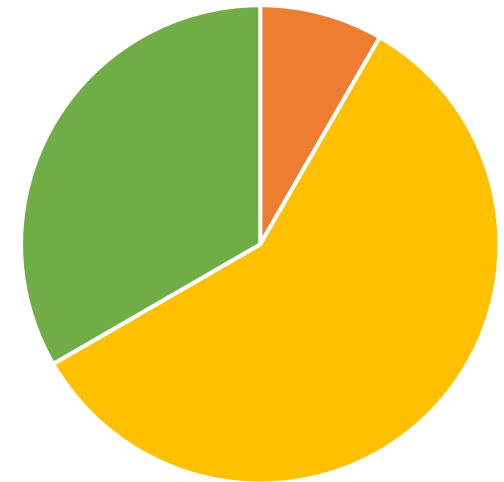
hours worked on SCAN projects by OISE Graduate Assistants



4

OISE Research Assistants employed & trained

## METRICS



12 Strategies in this Strand

■ 4 completed

■ 7 in progress

■ 1 not started

## ACTIONS

## STRATEGIES

### 1: Develop Community-Engaged Learning opportunities related to Sustainability & Climate Action for OISE students

- Conduct an inventory to identify how the SDGs and CEL (community-engaged learning) are being supported in OISE courses
- Encourage OISE's academic departments to review course offerings to potentially expand course-based opportunities for real world, experiential learning (e.g., 'Agent of Change' learning) connected to Sustainability & Climate Action
- Increase opportunities for Community-Engaged Learning connected to Sustainability & Climate Action through course work, teaching practica and internships



### 2: Support curricular innovation towards sustainability

- Infuse Sustainability & Climate Action into a variety of existing courses in each OISE department
- Explore new curricular pathways and programs for OISE students related to Sustainability & Climate Action (e.g. collaborative programs with the School of the Environment; etc.)
- Construct a community of practice to support the development of critical, transformative, culturally-responsive pedagogy in relation to Environmental & Sustainability Education
- Develop programming to support teachers' professional learning related to Sustainability & Climate Action



### 3: Expand professional learning opportunities for students

- Secure funding for paid professional learning opportunities for OISE students that develop knowledge and skills related to Sustainability & Climate Action (e.g. Graduate Assistantships, Research Assistantships, Work-Study Positions, etc.)
- Connect OISE students with educational partners for professional learning opportunities related to Sustainability & Climate Action



### 4: Strengthen staff and faculty capacity in relation to Sustainability and Climate Action

- Provide professional learning opportunities identified by staff and faculty in their shift to sustainability
- Help to build understanding about climate justice, particularly in relation to Indigenous communities, Indigenous environmental practices and sovereignty
- Consider sustainability expertise as an asset in the hiring of new staff and faculty



STATUS: ● - COMPLETE

🟡 - IN PROGRESS

○ - NOT COMPLETE

# RESEARCH



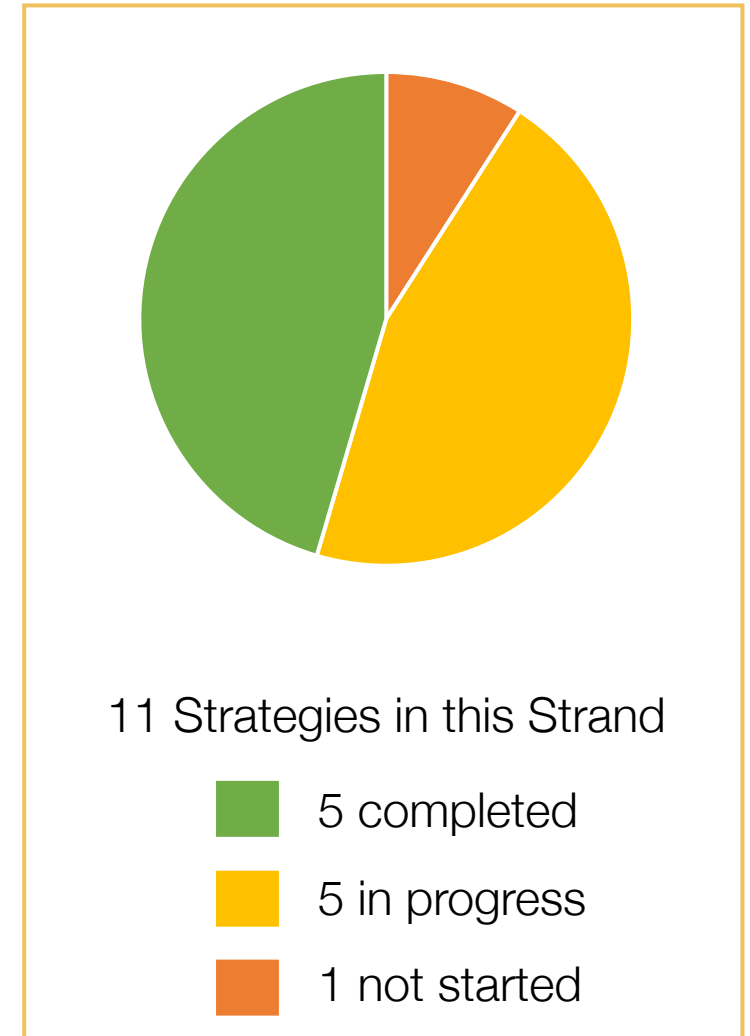
## VISION

*Enrich OISE's capacity for and mobilization of educational research related to Sustainability & Climate Action while raising awareness about the sustainable management of research projects.*

## INDICATORS

	<b>2022</b>	OISE establishes Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Global Development	
	<b>14</b>	members of the TDSB/OISE Action Research Team	
	<b>6</b>		articles published sharing SCAN developments
	<b>5</b>	webinars on OISE research on ESE & climate justice	
	<b>\$</b>		financial contributions made to the U of T carbon offset fund
	<b>1</b>	hosted National Research Symposium on ESE in Teacher Education in 2023	
	<b>1</b>		hosted ESE National Conference in 2021

## METRICS



# RESEARCH ACTIONS

# STRATEGIES

## 1: Provide supports for OISE research in Sustainability & Climate Action

- Encourage OISE's academic departments to review their capacity for educational research focused on Sustainability & Climate Action and pedagogy
- Establish a new community hub that provides a supportive environment for transdisciplinary, participatory educational research into Sustainability & Climate Action
- Initiate and support research partnerships related to Sustainability & Climate Action with educational partners across the university and in the community



## 2: Support knowledge mobilization of OISE research in Sustainability & Climate Action

- Mobilize Sustainability & Climate Action research in the OISE community and with its educational partners
- Promote Sustainability & Climate Action research from OISE through publications, events, conferences, celebrations and social media



## 3: Take action to address the environmental impacts of educational research at OISE

- Raise awareness about the environmental impacts of research activities (e.g. research-related travel)
- Advocate for Sustainability & Climate Action to be considered as part of the university's and the Tri-Council's ethics applications for research studies
- Raise awareness about minimizing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions related to OISE research projects



## 4: Expand OISE's capacity for educational research related to Sustainability & Climate Action

- Secure funding for graduate student involvement in research studies related to Sustainability & Climate Action (e.g. graduate and research assistant positions, work-study positions)
- Provide supports for a university-school board action research team related to Sustainability & Climate Action
- Encourage the hiring of research-stream faculty at OISE to expand capacity for educational research related to Sustainability & Climate Action



STATUS: ● - COMPLETE

📌 - IN PROGRESS

○ - NOT COMPLETE

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH



## VISION

*Engage the OISE community and its partners in the collaborative development of Sustainability & Climate Action praxis to share through local and global outreach.*

## INDICATORS



**2,570** people participating in SCAN learning events over three years



**14** professional learning ESE events offered each year



**12** Environmental Learning Circle meetings for OISE students



**9** webinars centring on Indigenous voices in ESE



**360** number of social media posts over three years

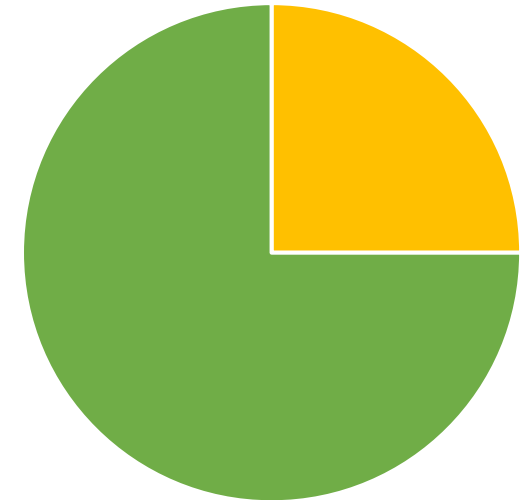


**3** Sustainability Guides created for OISE students, staff, & faculty



**3** OISE community events to share SCAP progress

## METRICS



12 Strategies in this Strand

- 9 completed
- 3 in progress
- 0 not started



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

## ACTIONS

## STRATEGIES

### 1: Improve communications about Sustainability & Climate Action across OISE

- Share ongoing information about events, curricular/co-curricular learning and resources related to Sustainability & Climate Action with students, staff, faculty and OISE partners
- Create an OISE Sustainability Guide to welcome students to OISE during Orientation by raising awareness about sustainability-related practices, courses, resources, and co-curricular learning
- Develop an OISE Sustainability Guide for staff and faculty to raise awareness about sustainability & Climate Action practices, guidelines, and resources

### 2: Deepen connections between OISE priorities and Sustainability & Climate Action

- Collaborate with the Dean's Advisory Council on Indigenous Education (DACIE) to ensure that the voices of Indigenous staff, students and scholars are integral to Sustainability & Climate Action at OISE
- Collaborate with DACIE to guide investments in Land-based Education
- Develop and expand connections between Sustainability & Climate Action and the existing priorities of OISE's Academic Plan (Indigenization, Equity, Diversity & Accessibility, Wellbeing & Mental Health, Transformative & Innovative Pedagogy, Scholarship, and Collaboration & Internationalization)
- Ensure that Sustainability & Climate Action reflects the diversity of the OISE community and its long-standing commitments to equity, anti-racism and inclusion

### 3: Embed opportunities for community engagement in Sustainability & Climate Action across OISE

- Provide multiple access points for students, staff & faculty to become involved in Sustainability & Climate Action at OISE
- Host an annual event to share OISE's ongoing progress on Sustainability & Climate Action

### 4: Strengthen outreach related to Sustainability & Climate Action within and beyond the OISE community

- Build and leverage campus and community partnerships to support Sustainability & Climate Action at OISE
- Support and deepen the collaboration between OISE and the TDSB and other school boards to support Sustainability & Climate Action across the education sector
- Extend OISE's impact on Sustainability & Climate Action with educational partners locally, regionally, nationally and globally

STATUS: ● - COMPLETE

◐ - IN PROGRESS

○ - NOT COMPLETE

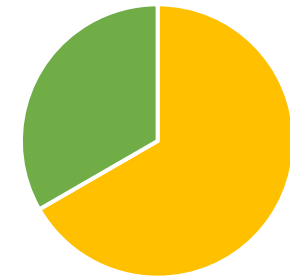


# ASSESSING IMPACT

In many ways, the first three years of OISE's Sustainability & Climate Action Plan (SCAP) has been a success. As the first faculty of education in Canada to have its own plan to address the climate crisis, it has modeled both a process as well as the ways in which faculties can embed this work into their purview. It has helped meet many of the tenets of the ACDE's [Accord on Learning for a Sustainable Future](#), as well as the newly released principles for Environmental Learning, Ecojustice and Climate Action now required by the Ontario College of Teachers' [Accreditation Resource Guide for Teacher Education Programs](#) in this province.

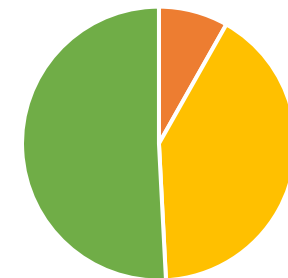
Looking at the metrics of the plan overall, work was begun on all 24 of its actions, fully completing 33% of these, and advancing work on the rest. We completed 51% of the 61 plan's strategies and made progress on 41% more (only five of the strategies were not able to be started). A new Climate Action Advisory Committee was established that reports directly to the Dean (one of only three such committees at OISE). A new hybrid community hub, led by the Sustainability & Climate Action Network, was established that supports and amplifies this work across the Institute with grants provided by the OISE Sustainability Fund. Over 40 SCAN events involved more than 2500 people in community engagement and outreach related to sustainability and climate action, including those organized by the new [Community of Practice](#) on Sustainability Teaching. Twenty graduate students were trained in this work in paid positions, and hundreds more engaged in environmental learning as part of their coursework. Considering its commencement during the pandemic, the metrics in this report demonstrate that the SCAP has had many positive impacts over its three years, and that the SCAP has been effective in ensuring OISE is taking steps to embed sustainability and climate action in its work in education.

## SUMMARY



### S&CA Plan Actions

33% completed  
66% in progress  
0 not started



### S&CA Plan Strategies

51% completed  
41% in progress  
8% not started

# MOVING FORWARD

While the first three years of the OISE's Sustainability & Climate Action Plan (SCAP) have had many positive impacts, given the speed with which the climate crisis is intensifying, there is still far more work to be done, so this plan should be seen as just a beginning. As Canada's leading faculty of education, OISE is uniquely situated to have a sizable impact on the development of education's critical role in adapting to and mitigating the climate crisis. Its scholarly leadership in equity, social justice, inclusion and diverse ways of knowing offer a promising foundation on which to conduct research, design courses, and deepen work being done in Climate Justice Education. But this requires consensus across the OISE community that this should be a focal point of our work moving forward.

Implementing the SCAP has identified many questions in how to fully embed sustainability and climate action into all aspects of OISE's work. It has also raised many more questions about how best to move forward, including how to sustain this work over the long term. As OISE commences the collective development of institutional priorities for its next Academic Plan, this process provides an opportunity to discuss these questions and identify potential new areas of impact while we continue the work of sustainability and climate action already underway.



*OISE Students reflecting on their learning in a CTL course focused on Environmental & Sustainability Education*

# GRATITUDE

We are grateful for the members of the OISE community who have contributed in small and major ways to implementing its Sustainability & Climate Action Plan over the last three years. While there are too many people to list here to acknowledge all of their contributions, special thanks goes to:

**OISE Deans:** Erica N. Walker, Glen Jones, Normand Larrie

**Climate Action Advisory Committee Members 2021-24:**

Megan Abley, Julie Blair, Elizabeth Buckner, Yiola Cleovoulou, Haley Higdon, Helen Huang, Alysse Kennedy, Mairi McKenna Edwards, David Montemurro, Fikile Nxumalo, Jennifer Sumner, Amanda Trigiani, Jenaya Webb, Kayla Webber, Terezia Zoric

**SCAN Coordinator:** Dr. Hilary Inwood

**SCAN team members 2021-24:**

*Graduate & Research Assistants:* Stephanie Chartrand, Mengyuan Guo, Alysse Kennedy, Felicia Mikrogianakis, Emiko Newman, Tien Pham, Ashley Sikorski, Sarah Urquhart, Tracy Xi

*Work-Study Students:* Eric Beyeler, Danielle Gove, Rasika Mohamed Halideen, Georgia Hinton, Olivia Kohlmaier Marina Gadioli Lenzi Mari, Camille Malcolm, Melissa Pan, Ian Pinnell, Kaitlin Rizzari



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