

Achieving Excellence Through the Transformative Power of Occupation

**School of Occupational Therapy Strategic Plan
2018-2023**



**School of
Occupational Therapy**

Harnessing the Transformative Power of Occupation

Our Vision

To educate practitioners who are innovative global leaders in occupation, health and well-being, value social inclusion, challenge inequities, and promote social transformation through occupation to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

To push the boundaries of occupational therapy and occupational science to generate and enact transformational scholarship that benefits society and improves lives from local to international levels.

Our Mission

Through a commitment to health and well-being, social inclusion, and social justice, we engage in teaching, research and learning relevant to occupation that advances the profession, prepares individuals for current and future practice, and creates positive change locally, nationally and internationally.

Our Values

As a school, we seek to foster our values among our faculty and staff, instill them in our students, and enact them with our clinical and community partners.

We believe that:

- Occupation is a human right
- Diversity is a strength
- Social transformation is achievable
- Working collaboratively fosters inclusive synergistic environments
- Experiential learning enhances student engagement and promotes creativity and innovation

Message from the Director

Western's School of Occupational Therapy's new Strategic Plan 2018-2023, *Achieving Excellence Through the Transformative Power of Occupation*, elucidates our commitment and belief in harnessing the transformative power of occupation. This Plan signals our determination to strengthen our School's national and international reputation, and recruit the best and brightest students, faculty and staff to enable our School to continue to be a leader on the world stage.

Our scholars will continue to address important questions that foster social justice, social inclusion, and health and well-being on local to international scales; translating this knowledge to improve the society in which we live.

We are committed to innovative, enriched pedagogy that supports students in being agents of their own learning, and becoming scholarly and client-centred practitioners.

The School of Occupational Therapy's Strategic Plan 2018-2023 is meant to be an innovative, progressive and creative document that complements the strategic plans of the Faculty of Health Sciences and Western University, and is guided by transformative ideas.

The members of our School have worked hard to create this plan, and should be proud of the course we have set for the next five years.

Sincerely,

Angie Mandich
Director, School of Occupational Therapy

Advancing Research and Scholarship

Research within the School of Occupational Therapy is focused on harnessing the transformative power of occupation to promote health and well-being, social inclusion and social justice among individuals and communities, at local to international scales.

To enable our research success, we plan to:

Develop and Access Research Infrastructure

- Explore opportunities to enhance School of Occupational Therapy staff support of research.
- Identify and utilize supports within the faculty and broader university to facilitate research.

Support Research Funds Acquisition

- Explore diverse funding mechanisms to support innovative research in the school.
- Enhance strategies to support grant-writing among faculty members, post-doctoral associates, and graduate students.

Generate Research Evidence using Innovative Methods

- Build capacity for research in cutting-edge areas that promote health and well-being, social inclusion and social justice.
- Develop and implement innovative research methodologies and methods for generating knowledge.

Develop Diverse Research Partnerships

- Facilitate a culture of sharing and discussing research within the school to encourage organic development of ideas and partnerships.
- Explore opportunities for a School of Occupational Therapy collaborative research project or program of research.
- Continue to develop strategic external collaborations with researchers, community members, and representatives of community organizations, health and social services, government or other organizations.

Innovatively Mobilize Knowledge

- Improve awareness of our research among many audiences.
- Enhance strategies to mobilize research into practice, policy and discourses.

Recruit, Mentor and Retain Faculty, Graduate Students and Post-Doctoral Associates

- Explore opportunities for a School of Occupational Therapy Canada Research Chair.
- Build upon research mentorship activities in the school to support research success.
- Support ongoing professional development related to research.

Leading in Learning: Developing Global Leaders in OT & OS

The School of Occupational Therapy is committed to innovative enriched pedagogy that supports students in *being* agents of their own learning, and *becoming* scholarly and client centred practitioners that *belong* to the local and global professional community.

Support student wellness

- Design and implement evaluation practices that support student wellness while maintaining academic rigour
- Support student wellness and understand the determinants of student success in occupational therapy education
- Empower students to identify their wellness needs and utilize departmental, faculty and university resources effectively
- Support students in developing resilience

Engage in curricular innovation

- Partner with stakeholders to engage in a curricular design and renewal process
- Facilitate student engagement through innovative teaching practices including alternative delivery formats, educational technologies, and case-based learning
- Integrate indigenous knowledge into the curriculum
- Recognize and advocate for the needs of marginalized populations and emerging areas of practice
- Integrate the continuum of care and clinical practice throughout the curriculum structure
- Maximize efficiency and scaffolding of content throughout the curriculum
- Integrate critical appraisal of current clinical practice realities, challenges and opportunities into the curriculum
- Foster students' critical reflexivity, awareness and advocacy skills to contribute to social justice and positive societal transformations

Foster experiential learning

- Develop a partner/simulated patient program, and integrate it effectively throughout the curriculum
- Scaffold experiential learning opportunities across courses
- Increase fieldwork opportunities throughout the program
- Integrate fieldwork with classroom experiences to enhance learning
- Foster student partnerships with clinical and community organizations

Enhance inter-professional and international education

- Expand the breadth and depth of Inter professional education (IPE) opportunities throughout the curriculum (both within the rehabilitation sciences as well as beyond)
- Increase opportunities for international and experiential learning experiences
- Develop opportunities for occupational therapy students to take on leadership roles
- Integrate the school's IPE and internationalization efforts with existing University and emerging initiatives

Engaging our Partners: Cultivating Connections with the Local and International Community

The School of Occupational Therapy is committed to fostering new and ongoing communication and relationships with alumni, community members, and partners from other institutions, both locally and internationally.

Encourage alumni to remain engaged post-graduation

- Celebrate and promote the achievements of Western alumni
- Increase social media presence to stay connected with our partners and provide a mechanism to stay in touch (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, virtual webinars)
- Profile alumni, faculty, and staff on our website to showcase the work and accomplishments of the School
- Hold “Alumni and Friends” events at homecoming and relevant conferences (e.g., CAOT/OSOT)

Foster and maintain a valuable and dynamic presence in the community

- Explore partnerships with community partners to capitalize on resources with the potential to create a ‘living lab’
- Provide opportunities for off-campus activities including classes/course content in the community that maximizes student learning while nurturing community partnerships
- Celebrate and recognize achievements of community partners to nurture strong relationships with our members
- Provide school status and explore other ongoing appreciation activities to acknowledge our community experts and the important contributions they make to our school (e.g., Clinical-Professor)
- Explore mechanisms to promote and endorse our faculty within our own institution

Develop communication strategies specific to our diverse stakeholders

- Identify strategic communication content and delivery modes for members of the School of Occupational Therapy community
- Increase visibility of the impact of our research through events such as community talks, online profiling, and the Director’s Report
- Work with faculty to secure an online presence for research labs and associated branding (e.g., Lab Twitter accounts, Lab website; lab logo, Youtube channel)
- Generate public-facing content to facilitate translation of our research to the community

Maintaining Financial Sustainability

The School of Occupational Therapy will continue to explore opportunities to increase and diversify our resource base, and improve efficiency of our current educational offerings.

Increase fundraising activities

- Explore prospects for private philanthropy
- Enhance opportunities for alumni giving
- Develop partnerships with the private sector

Increase efficiency

- Invest resources to support strategic initiatives and mission of the School.
- Explore opportunities to be nimble and efficient with the allocation of school funds

Fostering Workplace Culture: Our People are our Strength

The members of the School of Occupational Therapy value a collaborative work environment that fosters creativity, innovation and excellence. We are committed to this as a way of advancing engagement and celebrating the successes of faculty, staff and students. To that end we will:

Recognize and Celebrate Excellence and Successes in Teaching, Research and Service

- Presentation of annual awards of excellence for teaching and practice education
- Celebrate the achievements of faculty, sessional faculty, staff and students
- Provide support for teaching/research award dossier submissions

Encourage Growth and Development of the School and our Members

- Support and encourage members in developing their capacities and reaching their professional goals
- Assist members in pursuing professional development and educational opportunities
- Support members who express interest in assuming leadership roles in the future
- Formalize a creative, innovative, and supportive faculty mentorship model

Nurture Effective Communication

- Practice collegial self-governance; make decisions through collaboration among colleagues
- Distribution of the Director's newsletter to faculty, staff, and clinical partners
- Develop vehicles to communicate more effectively with staff and faculty
- Hold regular meetings with students to stay current on student concerns and ideas
- Maintain clear, effective and actively engaged leadership which consists of being positive, honest and supportive and utilizing good communication, recognition and a team approach

Promote Health and Wellness

- Develop and implement strategies that promote wellness and work life balance among faculty, staff and students

Foster a Sense of Community

- Plan activities where all members of the School can come together socially and informally
- Create a welcoming environment for both members of the School as well as guests
- Include and integrate sessional instructors into School functions
- Formalize faculty mentorship model that is creative and innovative