



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC)

DATE: November 11, 2010
TO: Members of the University Community
FROM: Serge Desmarais, Associate Vice President (Academic)
SUBJECT: TSS and OOL....Moving Forward

The purpose of this message is to inform the campus community of the decision to realign and combine Teaching Support Services and the Office of Open Learning within a single entity, with the goal to operationalize this re-alignment by September 1st, 2011. Such a decision is not made lightly. It is the result of extensive discussions with the Directors of the Office of Open Learning and Teaching Support Services and our collective recognition that the excellent work and contributions made by members of TSS and OOL can be enhanced by joining forces.

The creation of the Office of Open Learning and Teaching Support Services was made in a context that differs profoundly from the one in which we currently work and live. Computer technology was at its infancy and, on average, most faculty, students and staff had little or no computer skills. Distance education was also a novel concept and the University of Guelph was one of the innovators in this new educational market. By contrast, we now live in a world where technology is part and parcel of our daily activities. Similarly, educational development practices have changed and expanded and we must ensure appropriate support across a broader range of educator capabilities and interests, whether educational technology-related or not.

The past few years have seen an increasing demand for support in all aspects of teaching and learning on campus and requests for educational technology has expanded dramatically. The approach of the past, whereby support is dichotomized into services offered by TSS for on campus education, and by OOL for distance courses, will simply not enable us to meet the demands of the future. We would like to assure the campus community of our commitment to meet our current and future demands by capitalizing on the skills, knowledge and creativity of all members of OOL and TSS.

During our process of realignment, we will be conducting proper consultation with the campus community. This process will begin with a needs assessment survey, whereby we gather information about our present usage of learning technology as well as the community's anticipated needs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Desmarais".

Serge Desmarais
Associate Vice-President (Academic)