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# Making Accessibility Services Accessible Through Implementation of Information and Communication Technology

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**Abstract**

Post-secondary institutions are facing increased pressure by accessibility legislation, such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), to ensure students with disabilities have equitable access to the academic environment (Flaherty & Roussy, 2014). This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) examines the situation regarding the Student Accessibility Office (SAO) in a large Ontario university. Traditionally, student service-based offices like the SAO require an in-person visit to access tools, services and resources. The growth of information and communication technology (ICT) into post-secondary education is increasing accessibility of academic programs (Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019), but not student services. The research Problem of Practice (PoP) for this OIP determines how post-secondary institutions can make student service-based departments more accessible through the implementation of ICT. Using transformational (Bass 1996; Burns, 1978) and distributed leadership (Spillane, 2004) models while viewing the PoP through the social model of disability lens (Oliver, 2013) informs the leadership approach to change. An integrated change model (Cawsey et al., 2016; Beckhard & Harris, 1987) leads the change process. The zone of proximal agency determines that developing an online course for the SAO is the best solution to increase the accessibility of tools, services and resources. The course will be developed in consultation with university stakeholders and adhere to the AODA's accessibility standards (Flaherty & Roussy, 2014). Future considerations of this OIP are to develop a framework to support the implementation of ICT university wide.

*Keywords*: accessibility, information and communication technology, distance education, AODA, social model of disability

## Executive Summary

As the world becomes increasingly more accessible, we can thank the social model of disability (Oliver, 2013) and the passing of contemporary legislation on the federal and provincial levels (Flaherty & Roussy, 2014; Naef & Perez-Leclerc, 2018). The Ontario Institute of Science, Technology Engineering and Math (OISTEM) has until 2025 to be in full compliance with the AODA regulations (Robson, Anisef, Newton, & Tecle, 2015). Post-secondary institutions across Canada are shifting the delivery of their educational programs online (Means, Toyama, Murphy & Baki, 2013). The ability to access course material online not only benefit students living off-campus, or overseas on an international cooperative education placement, but it helps make learning more accessible for students with disabilities. The Student Accessibility Office (SAO) at OISTEM works to support students with disabilities and ensure they can access the academic environment. As the Chief Adaptive Educational Technologist (CAET), I ensure that students have the appropriate technology to access the academic environment. While a visually impaired student may use audio recording software to playback lecture notes, they do not have the same ease of access when visiting student service-based departments. Traditionally, offices like the SAO provide tools, services and resources to students in-person. The implementation of ICT will help increase the accessibility of the SAO and adhere to the AODA legislation.

Chapter 1 of this OIP explores the Problem of Practice (PoP), the organizational context and the innovative nature of OISTEM (Bondy & Hamdullahpur, 2017), the leadership focused vision for change and organizational change readiness. The PoP is framed through contemporary literature, a PESTE analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016) and the

social model of disability (Oliver, 2013). The social model of disability explicitly states that systemic barriers are the issue in accessibility, not the individual (Oliver, 2013). Staff members and administration of the SAO inherently want to increase accessibility on campus, and through a force field analysis (Toves, Graf & Gould, 2016), it is evident that the department is ready for change. The change drivers associated with the SAO have the organizational capacity for change. OISTEM is a motivated and innovative institution that is ready to address the legislative-driven challenges of 21st-century learners by implementing ICT.

Chapter 2 focuses on the planning and development of the OIP by considering leadership approaches, a framework for leading the change process, a critical organizational analysis, possible solutions to the PoP and ethical considerations. The leadership approaches to change in this OIP were transformational (Bass 1996; Burns, 1978) and distributed leadership models (Spillane, 2004) through the lens of a social model of disability (Oliver, 2013). The framework for leading the change, the integrated change model, is developed using the strengths of both the change path model (Cawsey et al., 2016) and the Beckhard and Harris change model (Beckhard & Harris, 1987). Nadler and Tushman's (1989) Congruence Model (CM) is used to determine how different aspects of the institution are working together. The primary usage of this model is to determine underlying performance gaps that the organization is facing. Possible solutions are outlined and analyzed based on the zone of proximal agency. The possible solutions to the OIP are to create an online course, to develop a university-wide framework for ICT implementation, and to maintain the status quo. The CAET position and agency profoundly influences the consideration of the solutions within the SAO.

Chapter 3 develops the plan for implementation, evaluation and communication for the chosen solution. The chosen solution, to build an online course, was the most viable option for the SAO. The chosen solution undoubtedly aligns with the OIP priorities to be legislatively compliant, strategic plan alignment, and promote social justice. An online course will need continual monitoring and evaluation during and after implementation. Donnelley and Kirk (2016) state that small incremental changes lead to effective outcomes in large institutions like OISTEM. Each step of the integrated change model is addressed in conjunction with a PDSA cycle that will ensure the implementation of effective change management. The communication of this OIP is strengthened with a communication change plan that incorporates Klein's (1996) communication principles, Armenakis and Harris' (2002) strategies for communicating the change message and the integrated change model.

In conclusion, this OIP addresses the purpose of the PoP to make accessibility services more accessible through the implementation of ICT. The next steps for this OIP include institutionalization, knowledge mobilization and social justice. Institutionalization will be achieved by the creation of an ICT-based accessibility framework for all OISTEM departments to use. Knowledge mobilization will occur by presenting this OIP at the CNIE and OISTEM staff conferences. Through institutionalization and knowledge mobilization of this OIP, social justice will be powerfully advocated, and OISTEM will continue to be innovative in the field of accessibility.

**Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me during my long educational journey. For all of the times when I was entirely absorbed in my education, too busy to talk, I would like to say thank you. I want my family, friends and partner to know just how much I appreciate all of you for always being there. My mom and dad, whom both had long careers in education, are the reason I am who I am today.

I would also like to acknowledge the helpful faculty members at Western University, especially Dr. Scott Lowrey. You were always there to support me when I had questions, although many of our conversations surrounding educational theory and contemporary literature somehow transitioned to the demise of the Cleveland Browns.

I would like to thank all of the students I have had the pleasure of teaching and supporting over the years. Having worked in education for a decade now, I can say unequivocally that you are the reason I still do what I do.

Lastly, I would like to recognize everyone who is navigating the inaccessible world with a disability. The challenges you face daily met with the perseverance and courage you show is inspirational.

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## Acronyms

ACA (Accessible Canada Act)

ACoP (Accessibility Community of Practice)

AFA (Alternative Format Assistant)

AIF (Accessibility Improvement Framework)

ASC (Accessibility Services Coordinator)

AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)

CAET (Chief Adaptive Educational Technologist)

CM (Congruence Model)

CNIE (Canadian Network for Innovation in Education)

CoL (Centre for Online Learning)

ERO (Ethics and Research Office)

ICT (Information and Communication Technology)

ISAR (Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations)

LMS (Learning Management System)

OAETA (Ontario Adaptive Educational Technologist Association)

OHRC (Ontario Human Rights Commission)

OISTEM (Ontario Institute for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

PD (Professional Development)

PoL (OISTEM's Principles of Leadership)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

SAO (Student Accessibility Office)

# Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem

In Canada, approximately 1 in 10 post-secondary students have some form of permanent or temporary disability, which poses barriers to the academic environment (Government of Ontario, 2017). Fortunately, contemporary legislation such as the Accessible Canada Act (ACA) (Naef & Perez-Leclerc, 2018) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) (Flaherty & Roussy, 2014) is in place to help remove barriers in public institutions. The Ontario Institute of Science, Technology Engineering and Math (OISTEM) has until 2025 to be in full compliance with the AODA regulations (Robson, Anisef, Newton, & Tecle, 2015). This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) focuses on ensuring that the department dedicated to accessibility, the Student Accessibility Office (SAO), makes its services, resources and tools more accessible to students through the implementation of information and communication technology (ICT). More specifically, this OIP describes how the development of an online course to deliver SAO services can increase access for students. Chapter 1 addresses the organizational context, leadership position, lens statement, leadership problem of practice (PoP), framing the PoP, guiding questions, leadership focused vision for change and organizational change readiness.

## Organizational Context

Each year thousands of university students in Ontario register with accessibility offices at their respective post-secondary institutions to ensure they are receiving appropriate accommodations and supports for their academic journey (Mullins & Preyde 2013; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2004). The SAO supports students with permanent, temporary and suspected disabilities. All post-secondary institutions in Ontario have a department

dedicated to ensuring equal access to the academic environment for students with permanent or temporary disabilities (Flaherty & Roussy, 2014). Implementing new policies to support inclusion and accessibility can be a challenge for post-secondary institutions that have a long running-history of doing things their way (Mullins & Preyde, 2013).

**History.** OISTEM was established over 60 years ago and has had a resilient reputation as a leading STEM university on the national and international stage. OISTEM completed its strategic plan in 2018 that placed a strong emphasis on becoming one of the most advanced and inventive universities in the world. OISTEM's program strengths are in engineering, computer science and mathematics. Being a leading institution on the world stage has led OISTEM to attract a large population of international students (Statistics Canada, 2017). The majority of students attending OISTEM also complete cooperative education placements and have since the university was established (Darch, 1995). From an academic and research standpoint, OISTEM continues to grow and innovate regularly, producing the latest robotics, medical breakthroughs and Nobel Laureates (Gallagher, 2018). Often described as some of Canada's brightest students, many OISTEM scholars end up working in Silicon Valley for large tech firms. However, many of these students also face disability-related challenges. A growing number of students, including distance education students, attending OISTEM have some form of permanent or temporary disability (Government of Ontario, 2017). Disability is usually associated with functional limitations, which requires support from trained staff. The access to services, tools and resources offered by the SAO is a growing concern for students with a registered disability. The OISTEM's SAO provides exceptional service and care to all students registered, but developing an online presence has become an area of need. Implementing ICT to increase the accessibility

of services, resources, and tools is still an area that requires work by the SAO and support from the university's governing bodies.

***Organizational Structure.*** OISTEM follows a bi-cameral governance structure made up of an Academic Senate and a Board of Governors (OISTEM, 2019b). The Academic Senate has the power to establish academic policies and make recommendations to the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors' authority is directed towards OISTEM as a business with an emphasis on strategic planning and financial responsibility. Together, both the Academic Senate and the Board of Governors work to ensure OISTEM remains innovative and fiduciarily responsible. The President of the university is appointed by the Board of Governors every five years and is responsible for managing Vice Presidents and Provosts. The Vice Presidents and Provosts are responsible for their Associate Provosts and Deans, who oversee Directors who manage their specific organizational units, like the SAO (OISTEM, 2019b). Figure 1 illustrates the hierarchical levels of OISTEM's senior administration from the Chancellor to the position that oversees the SAO, the Associate Director, SAO.

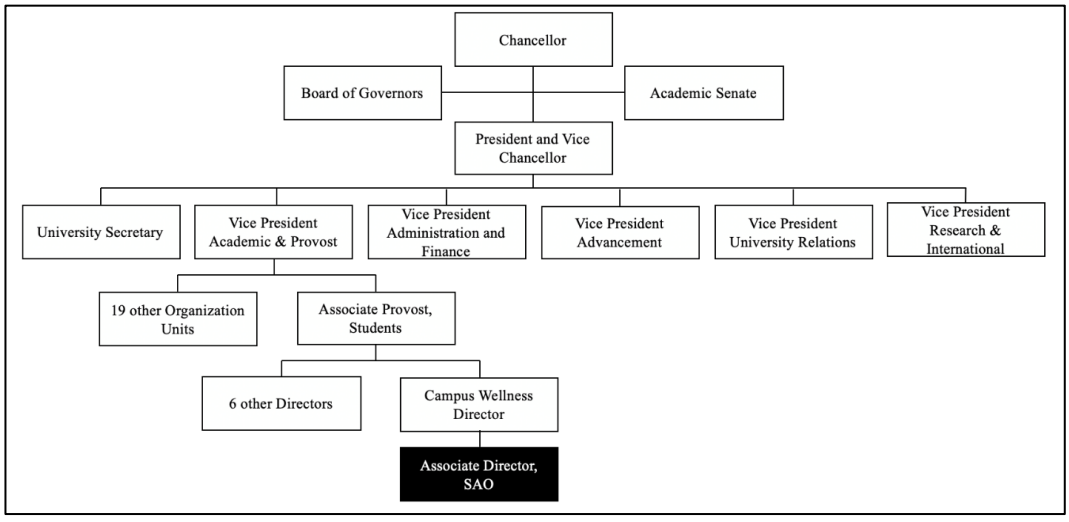


*Figure 1.* Simplified OISTEM Governance and Organizational Chart (OISTEM, 2019b)

The digitization of SAO resources, services and tools through the implementation of ICT has implications connected to both sides of OISTEM's governance structure. Since OISTEM is a large-sized institution, this means that human resources and organizational structures may take a significant amount of time to develop and implement policies that will drive systemic change. The size and levels of bureaucracy surrounding OISTEM's organizational development, operations of the university are often referred to as siloed, which can make it hard to get organizational improvement projects off the ground promptly. There is an operational disconnect between faculties, organization units and departments, which for the most part, operate autonomously. Projects must be in alignment with the university's strategic plan in order to get traction.

***Vision and Mission.*** OISTEM is currently implementing its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. The mission statement in the new strategic plan remains unchanged from the previous plan "to innovate knowledge and learning through teaching and research, globally" (OISTEM, 2019a). The updated vision is "OISTEM: Making the world better through innovation," which is supported by four pillars (values): inquisitiveness, bravery, involvement, and belonging (OISTEM, 2019a). The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan took two years of development and extensive consultation from various stakeholders. OISTEM's strategic plan sets the groundwork for innovation and organizational improvement to come in the next five years.

***Values, Purpose and Goals.*** OISTEM's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan has a clear and direct alignment to recent legislation and contemporary issues faced by post-secondary students with disabilities. OISTEM has recognized the need to support accessibility on campus and has committed to including the pillar of "belonging" in the development of its

new strategic plan (OISTEM, 2019a). The connection between university policy and legislation will help support students with disabilities in post-secondary institutions and this OIP- to make accessibility services more accessible for students through the implementation of ICT. Increasing the development of accessibility policies to support the resilience of students with disabilities will be imperative to ensure the current ICT infrastructure is accessible (Delgado, Meza, Chávez & Murillo, 2018) for students registered with the SAO. In this OIP process, appropriate leadership frameworks will be used. Choosing an appropriate leadership framework will strengthen the execution of a large-scale organizational change while leveraging my position in the SAO.

**Leadership Approaches.** The leadership frameworks chosen to support this OIP are transformational and distributed. Given the innovative nature of the OISTEM and the flexibility of my role as the Chief Adaptive Educational Technologist (CAET) in the SAO, these two frameworks eloquently compliment the leadership required to grow and innovate. Hallinger (2003) comments on the similarities of these frameworks "…transformational leadership is often considered a type of shared or distributed leadership" (p. 338). While post-secondary institutions may have large and complex hierarchal structures, as outlined in Figure 1, transformational and distributed leadership principles are engrained in OISTEM's innovative culture. Utilizing the similarities and differences of each leadership approach will ensure the OIP is developed holistically and authentically, which fits with OISTEM's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

***Transformational Leadership.*** A transformational leadership framework can help motivate people to reach a higher level of motivation and performance by connecting them to the mission at hand (Yukl, 1999). Individuals can develop a collective identity as they

become motivated and inspired to stimulate change for the collective good of the organization (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Bass, 1996; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Often, transformational leadership starts from the bottom of an organization and works its way up, and this helps empower people who are not in formal leadership roles (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Hallinger, 2003).

Transformational leadership is often associated with education and the traditional relationships between teachers and administration. This type of leadership can also be highly beneficial to those involved in large scale organizational change. A meta-analysis by Leithwood and Sun (2012) states that "Non-school-sector evidence also demonstrates large effects of transformational leadership on organizational conditions during the management of complex organizational change" (p. 403). A transformational leadership approach can significantly support the complex organizational change outlined in this OIP.

A meta-analysis by Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) outlined which circumstances affected the impact of transformational leadership. The findings concluded that organizational culture, shared school goals, and coherent plans and policies helped foster the impact of transformational leadership. OISTEM is an institution that has a sophisticated organizational culture where strategic goals and policies are clearly defined from the senior management down to the SAO. An institution's organizational culture amplifies transformational leadership effects, shared goals, plans and policies, which are explicitly outlined in the OISTEM strategic plan (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Figure 2 outlines the organizational structure of the SAO with emphasis placed on the CAET role as a middle manager. The many levels of bureaucracy within the SAO have created many formal and informal working groups and relationships that complement a

transformational leadership approach to change.

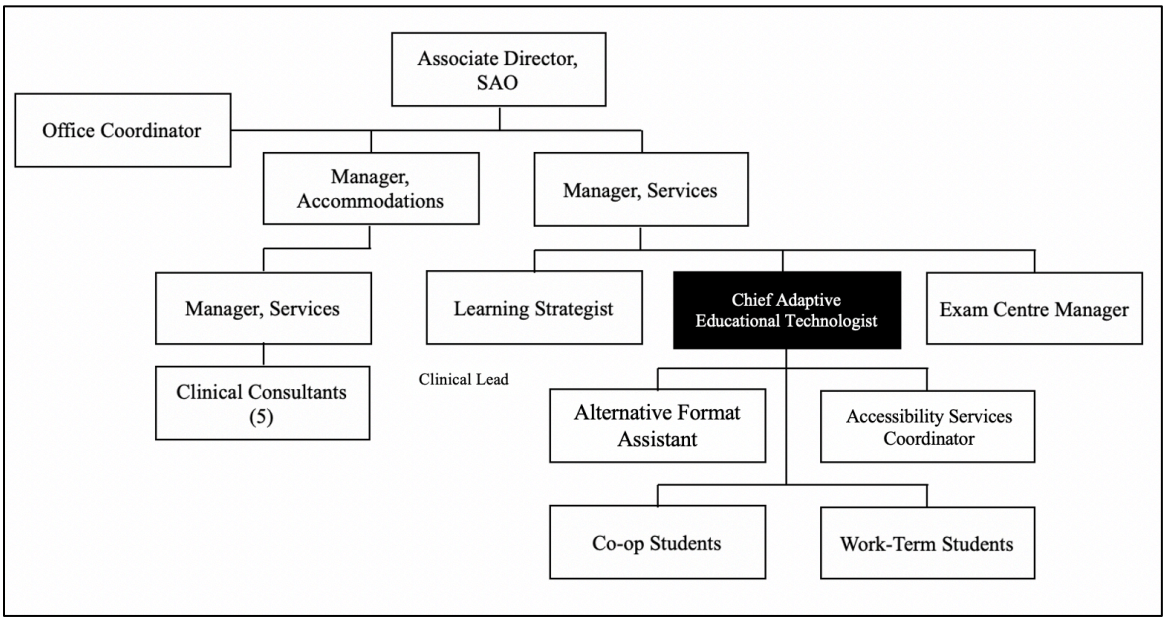


*Figure 2.* Simplified SAO Organizational Chart (OISTEM, 2019b)

The SAO consists of employees in student-facing roles, middle managers and managers. When appropriately coordinated, middle managers can mobilize power within the department to "carry out strategic initiatives" (Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols, 2016, p. 56). The collaborative nature of the SAO provides numerous opportunities for employees to work on different projects. The CAET position has a significant amount of flexibility and influence over the projects and personnel within the office. A transformational leadership approach is regularly demonstrated by my ability to lead by example and engage others in the SAO. My agency, within the SAO, continues to motivate me and has opened my eyes to the benefits that other leadership approaches, such as distributed leadership, will have in this OIP.

***Distributed Leadership.*** Distributed leadership uses the expertise of leaders, both formally and informally, within an institution by carefully coordinating those involved to create systemic change (Corrigan, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2007; Spillane, 2004). Involving

others in the problem-solving process can help shift organizational change authority away from one individual and empower others (Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, & Hopkins, 2007; Spillane 2006). Much like how the Senate and Board of Governors are representative of the University Community, projects that promote organizational change need to include other members of the university community. The scale and scope of this OIP require input from different stakeholders, including students, to ensure all ideas are considered. Spillane (2004) defines distributed leadership as ‘‘practice distributed over leaders, followers, and their situation and incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals’’ (p. 20). Leadership is distributed over many different individuals as they work to accomplish the task at hand. The relationships among campuses, buildings, faculties, academic support units, and individuals are an integral part of instilling a distributed leadership model into an organization.

After a review of meta-analyses by Leithwood and Sun (2012) and Tian, Risku and Collin (2016), it is essential to note that there are many similarities and differences between transformational and distributed leadership approaches. Building capacity, strengthening organizational culture, promotion of intellectual stimulation and increased group collaboration (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Tian, Risku, Collins, 2016) are highly evident in both leadership models.

In summary, OISTEM, like all Ontario universities, has a significant amount of work to do if they wish to comply with contemporary accessibility legislation and policies. The organizational structure of the university fosters collaboration and addressing problems in a calculated and direct manner. Transformational and distributed leadership models can empower change leaders and utilize the leadership of formal and informal leaders

(Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Özaralli, 2003). OISTEM continues to be an organization that is recognized on the world stage, founded by innovation and has the potential to address the pressing issues surrounding accessibility in post-secondary education.

**Leadership Position & Lens Statement**

The role and agency of CAETs in post-secondary institutions across Canada will vary based on the type and size of the institution but often assume a leadership role. SAOs generally serve a small portion of the student population and can be left short-staffed and under-funded (Shanouda & Spagnuolo, 2020). Although SAOs only serve students registered with a disability, approximately 10 percent of all students (Government of Ontario, 2017), these students require a high level of specialized services tools and resources. The creation of this OIP is supported by personal experiences working in different post-secondary institutions across Canada. Specifically, my experience in distance education and special education has generated a unique perspective towards the PoP. Personal experiences, combined with my educational background and intrinsic motivation, have propelled me to become a change agent within the SAO.

**Personal Position.** As the CAET at OISTEM, the primary objective of my role in the SAO is to help make post-secondary education more accessible through the use of technology for all students registered with our office. Fortunately, my passion and profession align with the ACA and AODA legislation, which aims to make post-secondary education barrier-free for students with permanent and temporary disabilities (Flaherty & Roussy, 2014; Naef & Perez-Leclerc, 2018). As a certified teacher with a specialization in special education and adult education, my educational background and experience greatly compliment the CAET role. Figure 3 represents the central accessibility policies and

legislation affecting the SAO and OISTEM as a whole.

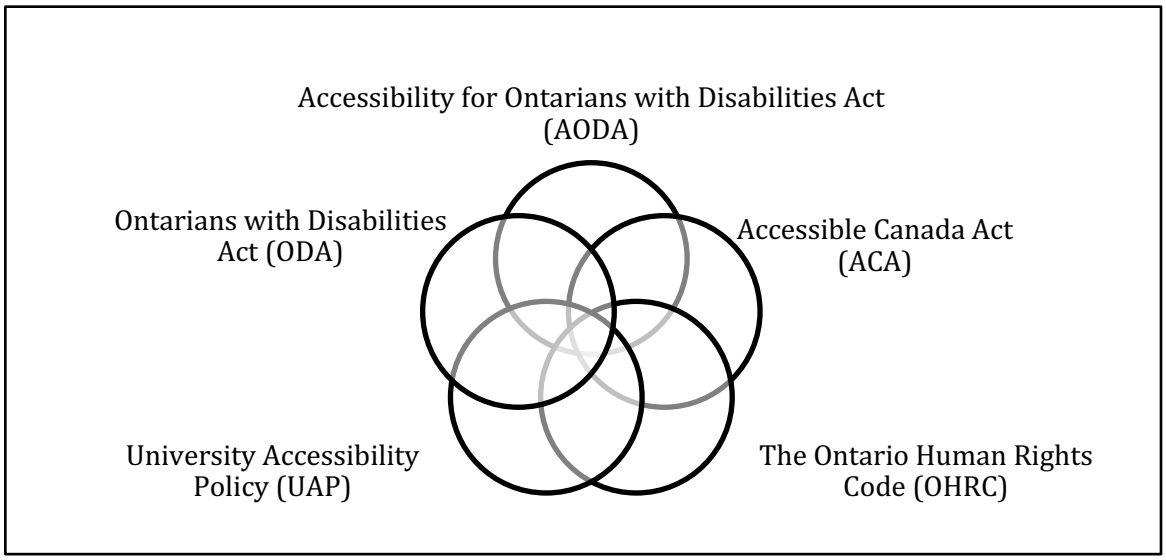


*Figure 3.* Accessibility Legislation and Policies Affecting the SAO

Ontario universities must navigate federal, provincial and university-wide policies and ensure they are adhering to them. Many of the policies surrounding accessibility in Canada do overlap and have an overarching message of a "duty to accommodate" students with disabilities (Prema & Dhand, 2019; Sokal, Woloshyn & Wilson, 2017). When considering the legislation and policies outlined in Figure 3, the AODA is provincial legislation that is placing the most significant pressure to adapt on the SAO. Although the duty to accommodate seems obvious, the implementation of equitable access to the academic environment for all students is a significant and challenging change.

Since moving into the position, the CAET role has shifted from primarily student-facing technology solutions to a role focused on innovation, building relationships, and management. The new shaping of the role has created a large degree of flexibility and freedom to lead and facilitate the change process described in this OIP. The flexibility of the

position has motivated me to use my agency and capacity to start implementing organizational change to which I am responsible.

***Agency.*** The primary focus of my position at OISTEM is to help my department change and improve by innovating how we deliver our services. Cawsey et al. (2016) define a change agent as "someone who will step up and make the change work" (p. 54). As a change agent, my analytical push for strategic changes means that I am a developmental strategist change agent (Cawsey et al., 2016). Thinking about big ideas like strategic change and environmental pressures, such as accessibility legislation, will promote a rational analysis for the need to change. My goal is to "alter structures and processes to shift the organization to the new alignment and eliminate the major gap between the organization and the environment's demands." (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 349). Critically evaluating the effectiveness of my change agency (Cummings & Worley, 2014) as CAET within the scope of my role will be vital in fully understanding my personal position. The managers in the SAO have set out an ambitious goal to become the most innovative post-secondary accessibility office across Canada. Using my passion and dedication towards accessibility, I believe we will create and instill meaningful systemic change.

Transformational and distributed leadership approaches are directly connected to my agency as CAET because of the relationships I have built and the organizational structure of the SAO. My desire to build capacity, strengthen culture and promote intellectual stimulation are aspects of transformational and distributed leadership approaches (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Tian, Risku & Collins, 2016) that I apply daily as CAET. Accurately, the SAO follows a formal organizational structure, as outlined in Figure 2, but also contains many working groups and committees dedicated to areas of interest. The goal of transformational

leadership is to promote organizational change effectiveness (Shields, 2010), which is why I wish to empower smaller working groups and committees to create change. The flexibility of my position in the SAO has enabled me to instill transformational leadership practices while concurrently distributing tasks and projects to other members of the department through formal working groups.

***Influence.*** In a large post-secondary institution like OISTEM, the CAET position is relatively low in the organizational hierarchy. However, when focusing on the SAO as an individual organization unit, the CAET position shifts more closely towards the responsibilities of a middle manager. Having two full-time staff members who report directly to me along with co-op students and work-study students below them, I have the autonomy to develop projects and utilize their different skill sets.

I believe I was hired into my role with the SAO because of my expertise in online learning, something that surprisingly is not explicitly mentioned in my job description. The OISTEM strategic plan places a strong emphasis on innovation and belonging, and I have the opportunity to implement my online learning expertise and accessibility knowledge to compliment it meritoriously. Although the SAO has a duty to provide services, tools and supports for students on a daily basis, the creation of new ideas and being innovative is fully supported by SAO senior administration.

Having employees who report directly to me has instilled a significant degree of influence when it comes to the type of projects the SAO undertakes. This formal authority can be even more useful when it is disseminated while implementing a distributed leadership approach.

Corrigan (2013) states that distributed leadership favours "leaders who can design a culture in which leadership is distributed in an emergent and benevolent way" (p. 67). Having the freedom and flexibility as CAET means that the best way to utilize the power I have is to relinquish it through a distributed leadership model.

***Positionality.*** Positionality refers to the researcher's position relative to the social and political context of the research being conducted (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). In the case of this OIP, my positionality acknowledges my position as CAET in relation to OISTEM, the SAO, and accessibility legislation. A variety of positionality contexts will influence the development of this OIP. My educational background and experience in the field of accessibility, has dramatically affected my role within the organization. Members of the SAO have an inherent and genuine interest in accessibility but may not have the same concern surrounding organizational improvement. Throughout this OIP, I will rely on my positionality to cultivate change agents. Although I work in a formal leadership position with authority to institute change, it is the interpersonal relationships that have strengthened my agency and influence.

**Lens to Leadership Practice.** The development of an effective OIP is a long and pedantic process that should consider different perspectives and scientific research. For an OIP to be sustainable and well-rounded, it is vital to consider Strebel's (1994) forces of resistance: rigid structures and systems, closed mindsets, entrenched cultures and counterproductive change momentum-driven from historical change drivers. Administrative and comparative lenses are characteristic viewpoints for educational leaders as they are continually trying to balance budgets, work with key stakeholders and be the best in the

industry. Due to the contemporary legislation surrounding accessibility, my agency as CAET, and the direction of this OIP, a social model of disability lens will also be included.

***Comparative Lens.*** From a comparative lens standpoint, the SAO provides a highly relevant context for the comparative education lens as it currently runs efficiently. When observing leadership through the comparative lens, Pollock & Murakami (2014) state that "important in the development of comparative research is the quest to compare leadership practices that promote student success…" (p. 2) and prepare for a new social order. Social justice is an underlying principle of this OIP and is highly relevant when working to improve services for students with disabilities. However, understanding that all post-secondary institutions and their respective SAOs are different is the first necessary step in considering how the OIP should be shaped. Each student registered with the SAO is unique and has different needs from our office. The type of disability, functional limitations and program of study are some of the ways we determine what resources, services and tools a student may need. Gaining a better understanding of how SAOs work in other universities and colleges provide services for students with disabilities will serve as a highly useful lens to this leadership practice.

***Administrative Lens.*** From an administrative perspective, strong university leadership is necessary to support new educational strategies or directives. Post-secondary institutions are governed by both academic and administrative bodies that must ensure the status of the institution is upheld. OISTEM continues to be a leader in innovation. The 21st-century learner framework suggests that educational leaders should be highly supportive of the integration of educational technology (Irvine, Code & Richards, 2013). Technology is integral to student learning, but merely making SAO documents available online is not a

sufficient way to make services more accessible. Technology in post-secondary institutions needs to be "learning-centered" (Schleicher, 2015, p. 73). The sensitive nature of working with students registered with the SAO means that the development of any online resources or services must be administered to reach a variety of students with different functional limitations effectively.

***Social Model of Disability Lens.*** The perception of disability has changed dramatically over the years and can be attributed to critical disability theory. Critical disability theory, grounded in critical theory (Hosking, 2009; Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009,) is a framework that outlines the significance of disability as a social phenomenon that oppresses those with a disability (Hosking, 2009). Within critical disability theory, the social model of disability is based on the principles that disability is a complex social construct and that people with disabilities are challenged by the inaccessible world around them (Shakespeare, 2006). Student accessibility offices across Canada, like the SAO, play a critical role in supporting students with disabilities and removing environmental and social barriers. Contrary to the medical model of disability, the social model of disability recognizes the challenges faced are a result of society and not the individual.

From a social model of disability standpoint, the goal is to improve the lives of people with a disability on an individual level (Oliver, 2013). Even with new legislation, it is clear that individuals with a disability are still an oppressed group in Canada (Mullins & Preyde, 2013). Post-secondary students with a disability regularly report feeling stigmatized by the education system through a one-dimensional education experience (Mullins & Preyde, 2013). Through this disability lens, I recognize the connection between individuals, the environment and policies that have marginalized this group (Shakespeare, 2006). As all

post-secondary institutions in Canada, including OISTEM, strive to promote accessibility and inclusion, much more can be done viewing leadership practices through a social model of disability lens.

While more students with disabilities are accessing post-secondary education than ever before, it is clear that many of these institutions are not equipped to meet their unique needs (Wilson, Getzel & Brown, 2000). Integrating systemic practices and policies that will promote resilience is very important when viewing the PoP through the social model of disability lens. Post-secondary institutions can support students with physical, cognitive and mental health disabilities through the promotion of services and supports that garner resilience. Delgado, Meza, Chávez and Murillo (2018) state that resilience "is understood as the human capacity of individuals or groups of these, to overcome great difficulties and grow from them" (p. 48). Students with disabilities face challenges in the areas of social and emotional wellbeing, so it is essential for institutions to be welcoming, supportive, and facilitate choice, independence and social participation (Wilson, Getzel & Brown, 2000).

With the 2025 AODA compliance deadline approaching, all SAOs in Ontario are under immense pressure to effectively provide services to their registered students (Gay, Djafarova, & Zefi, 2017). The current state of accessibility across Canada makes it clear that there are service gaps and areas that need to be addressed in the SAO. Until resources and tools are made available to students online, in an accessible format, there is still much work to do. Through comparative, administrative and disability lenses, there are significant reasons why the university should move towards the digitization of SAO resources and services. Online learning is becoming the future of post-secondary education, and perhaps increasing access through online resources can support OISTEM's 21st-century learners.

In summary, the leadership position and lens statement has placed a great deal of emphasis on my personal position at OISTEM, and the various lenses in which I wish to address this OIP. As CAET, I recognize how closely agency, influence and positionality align with the complementing leadership models, distributed and transformational. The uniqueness of the CAET role in the SAO is supported by the comparative, administrative and disability lenses that I view this problem through. While my leadership position continues to be an active and integral part of this OIP, the importance of my positionality within the SAO cannot be understated.

**Leadership Problem of Practice**

The problem of practice that will be addressed is the inaccessibility of accessibility services for students with a registered disability at a large STEM-based Ontario university. CAETs who champion and utilize post-secondary ICT such as learning management systems (LMS) can increase access to accessibility services for students registered with their office. As a member of the Ontario Adaptive Educational Technologist Association (OAETA), I have learned a lot about what other CAETs at different universities do in their day-to-day operations. The OAETA is an association of professionals who have a mandate to ensure students with disabilities have the technology to access the post-secondary environment. CAETs generally have the autonomy, leadership capacity, and skills required to work on projects outside their day-to-day interactions with students. While Ontario became the first province to implement the necessary steps to address accessibility standards for universities in Canada through the AODA (Flaherty & Roussy, 2014), research suggests that this legislation has had a minimal impact on the teaching and learning access for students (Marquis, Schormans, Jung, Vietinghoff, Wilton & Baptiste, 2016; Mullins & Pryde, 2013).

Ontario post-secondary institutions must be in full compliance with the AODA by 2025; students with disabilities are at a higher risk of leaving college before they graduate (Ferguson, 2017). With research suggesting that ICT promotes accessibility and AODA adherence (Marquis et al., 2013), how can the SAO implement a digital solution to the current delivery model of their services and tools?

Online learning has taken higher education by storm in recent years, and academic leaders are beginning to acknowledge how meaningful this type of learning is (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Lancaster, & Lancaster, 2016). Post-secondary administrators are under enormous pressure to increase connectivity and online education while maintaining the high levels of education that their institutions were founded on. In order to effectively implement online learning modules through educational technology, the improvement plan should be framed around the initial adoption of educational technology such as a LMS followed by online course development.

OISTEM currently has a minimal online presence when it comes to non-academic service-based departments like the SAO. OISTEM has a webpage on the university's website that contains staff information, location and office hours. The inadequacy of digital resources for non-academic departments has created an accessibility gap when it comes to providing student services. The current SAO website does not provide an avenue for student learning and engagement. Implementation of ICT through the university's LMS will provide a much more engaging learning experience than a static website. The integration of a LMS can provide students with a rich academic learning experience that can also be replicated for non-academic organization units like the SAO.

The first step in the digitization of post-secondary services is to implement a LMS that is robust enough to carry out the tasks required in blended learning (Coates, James & Baldin, 2005). The LMS should include video conferencing capability, online learning modules, and student information systems (Fathema, Shannon & Ross, 2015; Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen, & Yeh, 2008; Harasim, 2000). The LMS serves as the backbone of online learning, where all data is collected and distributed. OISTEM currently uses Desire2Learn (D2L) Brightspace as its exclusive online LMS, a service that is available to all faculties and departments. D2L provides a platform for online learning where students can engage in interactive learning modules, including activities, assignments, discussion boards, lectures (synchronous and asynchronous) and more. D2L can also generate analytics about the users who are enrolled in the LMS. The LMS is only one piece of the puzzle in developing meaningful learning experiences (Fathema, Shannon & Ross, 2015; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Online courses need to be intuitive, interactive, useful and relevant to the students registered with SAO.

In summary, accessibility legislation is the driving motivational force behind the PoP. Universities must react quickly to ensure their institutions and services are accessible for all students. Fortunately, with the rise of online learning in post-secondary education, there is an opportunity to bridge the gap between what the SAO offers and how students can access it. From a leadership standpoint, my position at OISTEM, experience with online learning and knowledge of accessibility will generate an effective solution for this OIP.

**Framing the Problem of Practice**

The recent influx of online education in post-secondary institutions has improved the perceived e-learner satisfaction in recent years through flexibility and accessibility of

learning (Sun, Tsai, Finger, 2008). The accessibility of online learning is one of the most persuasive reasons to implement ICT across all facets of a university (Kumar & Owston, 2016). After accepting the job as CAET at OISTEM, I immediately wanted to connect my passion to my profession. At our first SAO departmental staff meeting, the administration, Manager of SAO Services, Manager of Accommodations and the Associate Director of SAO, made it clear to the staff they wanted to see our department as a leader in accessibility services on a national level. As I began to frame my PoP, I started to collect evidence in the form of contemporary literature, discourses, a PESTE analysis and the social model of disability.

**Contemporary Literature.** The amount of distance education course offerings in post-secondary education has increased dramatically over the last decade (Allen & Seaman, 2015). While it is often assumed that online learning is not as effective as face-to-face learning, contemporary literature would disagree. A meta-analysis by Means, Toyama, Murphy, and Baki (2013) found that on average, students in online learning conditions performed modestly better than students in a traditional classroom setting. In addition to online courses, students who use technology in a self-directed online course have a positive correlation with engagement (Rashid & Asghar, 2016). Self-directed courses allow the student to focus on topics of interest and work at their own pace, which could be especially useful in the SAO given the uniqueness of students' disabilities. Although blended learning courses "offer a highly individualised and self-managed language-learning experience..." (Medina, 2018, p. 42), this OIP focuses on the implementation of ICT to promote an individualized self-managed experience while accessing digital services and tools offered through the SAO. A literature review conducted by Castro and Tumibay (2019) notes the

access, flexibility, low-cost, and student-centeredness nature of online learning are strong reasons for implementation. From an institutional perspective, the integration of online learning is an obvious choice that is reflected in the student perspectives and attitudes (Castro & Tumibay, 2019). Due to the positive relationship of engagement, the development of a self-directed online learning course to support the learning of the SAO will be imperative to students registered with the SAO office.

**Macro, Meso and Micro Discourses.** The discourses that shape the PoP will be analyzed through the macro, meso, and micro lenses. Viewing the problem through different lenses will help determine what is happening in the university using different perspectives.

From a macro standpoint, OISTEM strives to be an innovative university that is recognized on the international stage. The macro lens helps identify and explain the social and cultural identity of an institution (Creswell, 2014). OISTEM continues to attract the brightest students through the promotion of their world-class academics and research (Bondy & Hamdullahpur, 2017) The university is now beginning to shift their focus towards student services, an area that can be improved. With the release of the new strategic plan, it is clear that the pillar of "belonging" (OISTEM, 2019a) aligns with making the SAO a world-leader.

From a micro standpoint, we can begin to look at small slices of time, space and number of people (Creswell, 2014). My role within the SAO has pushed me to look through the macro and meso lenses to determine the direction I wish to take my team. The flexibility and agency to create change as CAET has inspired me also to want the same vision my administrators do. My leadership position within the SAO has instilled a significant degree of autonomy and ability to affect the operations of our department directly. Utilization of

personnel in the SAO, especially those who report to me, will allow fair use of time, space and people to carry out this OIP.

The meso lens is a theory that "cuts across organizational levels" (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011), linking both micro and macro discourses. Since the SAO is striving to become one of the most innovative offices in Canada, there is an ongoing discussion in the office for how we can make this a reality. This OIP must consider the individual, departmental and university-wide levels to ensure all discourses are represented in the change process.

**PESTE Analysis.** Many external factors can affect an organization's ability to implement an organizational change. A PESTE analysis provides a well-rounded approach to analyzing the factors affecting the OIP specific to the context. PESTE includes political, economic, social, technological, and ecological/environmental factors (Cawsey et al., 2016). Due to the uniqueness of post-secondary institutions in Ontario, a PESTE analysis will generate contextual information about the various climates at OISTEM and how they may affect the OIP.

Many politically motivated factors can impact a university. The political party in power in Ontario can have a direct impact on funding allocated to universities. OISTEM receives part of its funding from the operating grant provided by the provincial government. In recent years funding allocated to universities, like the OISTEM, has remained relatively stable. With more pressure to make Ontario accessible, the provincial government has put a great deal of pressure on post-secondary institutions through policies like the AODA. On the surface, there seems to be a disconnect between the funding and policies connected to AODA in universities.

Utilizing OISTEM's ICT infrastructure to promote accessibility services to students in an online setting should not have a significant economic impact on the university (Castro & Tumibay, 2019). The tools to create an online course and subject matter experts are already in place at OISTEM, as many academic programs are offering some form of online learning. Being able to access SAO online will be beneficial to students who are registered with SAO, including those learning remotely or on an international cooperative education placement. Increasing the accessibility of services offered through the SAO may also lead to a positive impact in the future connected to the recruitment and retention of students that may not be physically able to attend classes on campus.

In recent years, there has been a sizeable social shift in Canada towards inclusion and diversity (Prema & Dhand, 2019). Social attitudes towards accessibility (inclusion), has been promoted by advocacy groups and contemporary issues often seen in the news. The recent passing of the ACA has solidified Canadian society's stance on accessibility for people with disabilities (Prema & Dhand, 2019). At OISTEM, new buildings are already being created that adhere to legislation and promote inclusion among all students, staff, and faculty on campus.

Technological advances are changing the way post-secondary students access their education and services when attending university. The use of distance education by universities has increased dramatically over the last decade, and the flexibility and availability of online learning is at an all-time high (Allen & Seaman, 2015; Harasim, 2000). An increasing amount of university students are taking courses online (Bozkurt et al., 2015), which opens the door for the SAO to start promoting services and tools in an online setting.

Making the services provided by the SAO available to students in an online setting should have a minimal effect on the ecological/environmental aspects of the PESTE analysis. I would speculate that the digitization of services and tools offered by the SAO may alleviate office congestion and wait times for students visiting the office in person, similar to how online courses allow universities to increase enrollment Castro and Tumibay (2019).

**Social Model of Disability** The social model of disability is highly relevant when framing the PoP for this OIP, given the significant legislative and policy-driven shift towards equity and inclusion. Legislation, like the AODA and ACA, is directly affecting how universities in Canada are changing the way they do business (Flaherty & Roussy, 2014). The social model of disability recognizes that society has created barriers for individuals with disabilities, and that is it is now the university's inherent duty to accommodate all students and employees (Oliver, 2013).

The social model of disability outlines systemic barriers, negative attitudes and social exclusion as areas that make it difficult for individuals with disabilities to have an equitable experience (Barnes, 2012). Legislation and policies have been put in place to promote accessibility but have only had a "marginal impact on the everyday experience of disablement" (Barnes, 2012, p. 24).

The SAO is dedicated to supporting students with disabilities, and the social model of disability recognizes that society has created barriers for students. The SAO is mandated to increase access to the academic environment and services for students without creating undue hardship (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018). Undue hardship within the

context of OISTEM is a circumstance where an individual cannot access the university environment due to the inability to accommodate them.

Framing the PoP through the social model of disability strengthens the necessity of this OIP by promoting social justice among disenfranchised university students and eliminating barriers that these students face.

In summary, when framing the PoP through literature, discourses, analysis and models, the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership statement become more apparent. The complexity of the internal and external factors affecting OISTEM will continue to be addressed throughout this OIP. Organizational change does not happen with perfect organizational conditions, so it is imperative to recognize the context in which the change is occurring.

**Guiding Questions**

When introducing a change project in a large post-secondary institution, often experts within the institution are available to lend their advice. Throughout the development of this OIP, many questions have begun to surface among the SAO staff. Five guiding questions will be discussed below.

Working in a large-sized university means that the organizational structure and the number of employees can be overwhelming. The university also presents a possibility of cross-departmental partnerships to facilitate the OIP process. The first guiding question from the PoP is: Which members of the SAO team will develop and maintain this project? Working with my direct reports will be my first choice; however, the involvement of middle and senior management could strengthen the implementation of this plan.

The day-to-day operation of the SAO can be chaotic, as we serve thousands of students registered with our office each month. Much like other student-facing departments, the constant flow of students can sometimes make it difficult to veer away from the daily grind to pursue new projects and ideas. The guiding question is: Are there other more important projects that should take precedent? It can be challenging to make decisions based on the strategic direction of a department. As the SAO reviews its current policies and procedures, this OIP can be approached in tandem with other initiatives.

Given the uniqueness of the SAO and its employees, there may be an opportunity for collaboration and cross-training. Different members of the SAO serve as valuable resources that can be accessed during the development phase of the OIP. The OIP may provide benefits to employees of the SAO, along with the students who require SAO services. The third guiding question is: How can this project be used to build capacity among SAO? Having different people with different perspectives engaged in the plan could help make the SAO play a more holistic role.

Implementation of ICT, such as the development of an online course, is a lengthy process and requires input from many different stakeholders. Once the online course is complete, it will be essential to reflect and review the process and the product. The fourth guiding question is: How will the success of this project be evaluated? The follow-up and review of an online course could help strengthen the overall quality and usefulness.

The SAO serves a large population of diverse students that each have different needs. When developing an online course or resource for students, it is imperative to include the end-users during the development and evaluation phases. In the case of this OIP, the end-users will be primarily students registered with the SAO. The final guiding question is: How

will we involve students registered with SAO in this project? Perhaps running focus groups or developing surveys for students registered with the SAO could provide the necessary input to ensure the course is successful.

In summary, questions will continue to surface regarding the OIP implementation process, completion and evaluation. Looking for ways to build capacity and involve different stakeholders during different times in the OIP development will prove to be important ways to make critical considerations of how the OIP is implemented.

## Leadership Focused Vision for Change

The guiding questions in the previous section outlined some of the potential areas of the PoP that need further development. This section will focus on OISTEM's priorities for change and change drivers, which will help determine the envisioned future state. The goal of this OIP is to make the services, tools and resources delivered through the SAO more accessible to students through the implementation of ICT.

Due to the complex nature of a mid to large-sized university like OISTEM, the senior leadership of the institution is tasked with developing a strategic plan every five years. The strategic plan serves as the blueprint for the institution's direction but does not provide as much detail as individual plans like this OIP.

On a departmental level, the SAO has the autonomy to develop and implement its programs and plans as long as they are aligned with OISTEM's strategic plan. In this section, the priorities for change and change drivers will be clearly defined.

**Priorities for Change.** OISTEM has a fiscal responsibility to the Board of Governors, and academic responsibility to the Academic Senate (OISTEM 2019b). Being accountable to both the Board of Governors and Academic Senate means that the university

is regularly pulled in different directions when it comes to prioritization of new initiatives. Fortunately, this OIP falls within the scope and agency of my role in the SAO, so the following three priorities will be realistically outlined.

One priority for change is to build capacity within the SAO. In this organization unit, there is a very diverse group of professionals that all have different skills to bring to the table. From an operational standpoint, the SAO is separated into two distinct sides: clinical and services, with a manager for each. There is currently limited collaboration that happens between both sides of the office; this OIP presents an opportunity where both sides can work collaboratively. The SAO operates on a referral model where the clinical side refers to the services side. The implementation of ICT by digitizing the SAO would open the door for collaboration. Both the clinical and services sides of the office have aspects of their daily operations that would not only benefit from digitization but would be complicit with the AODA requirements.

The second priority for change is to develop leadership skills within the office by using distributed and transformational leadership frameworks. Projects like the one outlined in the OIP provides an opportunity for those in non-leadership roles to take on additional responsibilities and become more motivated and intellectually stimulated.

The third priority for change is to collaborate with other departments at OISTEM. As mentioned earlier, the siloed nature of the university means that many employees do not have the opportunity to interact with other employees outside their organization unit. This project would likely open the doors to work with other technical departments on campus like the Computer Technology Department or the Centre for Online Learning (CoL).

The last priority for change would be to utilize the current resources and procedures from the SAO while leveraging the ICT available at OISTEM. The current in-person services, tools and resources the SAO provides will continue to be made available even after digitization.

**Change Drivers.** Student service-based departments like the SAO need to explore new ways to reach their students besides visiting their brick and mortar buildings. As more courses are delivered online, it can be assumed that service-based departments will soon need to make the shift. Change drivers are the leading forces when it comes to implementing organizational improvement. Internal and external pressures can force an organization to react to situations and drive the change process. In order for universities to keep enrollment up, they will need to respond to their changing environment. The two most significant change drivers affecting my OIP are legislation (external) and key stakeholders (internal). Over the last twenty years, there have been significant changes in the form of policy and legislation to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in Canada. With the relatively new legislation, the ACA and AODA have become the change drivers that are accelerating Canadian universities towards sustainable accessibility for students. Social justice decisions in the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal are also regularly favouring in need to support accessibility in post-secondary institutions. Dozens of human rights stories are available on the OHRC website, where it has become commonplace for individuals to win cases based on being discriminated against or facing undue hardship. Generally speaking, employees of the SAO are well-versed in contemporary issues and cases being taken on by the Tribunal and often make adjustments to internal policies and procedures in alignment with case decisions.

***Key Stakeholders.*** Several key stakeholders need to be engaged in the OIP to ensure that those with authority can support the process. SAO leadership, university departments, middle managers and informal leadership roles, the AODA Specialist, and the students all need to be included in the change process.

***SAO Leadership.*** Departmental leadership needs to be on board for any substantial change that will affect the delivery of our services. Strong advocacy from the SAO leadership to OISTEM leadership can help shift funding towards this new a significant organizational improvement undertaking.

***Middle Managers and Informal Leadership.*** Due to the nature of the change path models selected for the OIP, middle managers and those with informal leadership roles will be heavily relied on to create the change from the ground up. Cultivating intrinsic motivation and sharing leadership responsibilities can help increase the importance of middle managers and those with informal leadership roles as change drivers.

***AODA Specialist.*** OISTEM is fortunate enough to have an AODA Specialist on staff who can be our expertise when it comes to the AODA legislation. The digitization of the SAO is a direct response to AODA legislation. This change driver will have a direct impact on how we develop and implement digital access to our tools and services.

***Students Registered with SAO.*** Not to be understated, the students registered with the SAO will have a fundamental role to play in the development and feedback segments of this organizational shift. When working to develop change that will directly affect a specific group of people, the must be involved in the process. As the SAO shifts its service delivery model to online, students can be actively engaged in the change process. Completing questionnaires and providing feedback can help ensure the change is effective.

In summary, many change drivers are internal and external to the SAO. Distributed and transformational leadership approaches will ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to this vision for change in a meaningful way.

## Organizational Change Readiness

When considering organizational change readiness, it is essential to look backwards at the organization's history before looking forward to the desired state. A historical perspective of the organization can provide valuable insight into the culture and motives for creating change.

OISTEM's strategic plan is underway and will be using the document to set priorities, improve operational function and ensure all faculty and staff are working towards the same goals. The strategic plan at OISTEM will run for five years. Strategic planning can provide reliable information based on previous plans which help determine the future state of the institution.

**Organizational Capacity for Change.** Judge and Douglas (2009) used a meticulous approach, the eight dimensions related to readiness, to determine if an organization was ready for change. Organizational change is a "multi-dimensional phenomenon" (Judge & Douglas, 2009, p. 638) made up of the following dimensions: trustworthy leadership, trusting followers, capable champions, involved mid-management, innovative culture, accountable culture, effective communication and systems thinking.

***Trustworthy leadership.*** This OIP recognizes the importance of having buy-in from senior leadership. Implementing an OIP in an established institution like OISTEM requires support from employees and senior leadership. Fortunately, senior leadership in the SAO and OISTEM as a collective are visible, available, and open to new ideas that promote

innovation. Senior leadership is often available to converse through formal avenues like committees and informal avenues like passing by in the campus quad.

***Trusting followers.*** Perhaps the one benefit of the siloed nature of OISTEM is that nonexecutives have the willingness and power to follow new paths developed within their organizational unit. In the SAO, everything from small procedural changes to new initiatives and campus partnerships is generally supported by those who do not fall under the umbrella of upper-level management.

***Capable champions.*** OISTEM is a university that is recognized on the world stage for its innovation and ability to attract the brightest scholars (Bondy & Hamdullahpur, 2017). The same is right about the employees it attracts. Often many employees, like myself, have relocated from out of province to work at OISTEM. I believe many current employees at OISTEM were hired because they bring something extra to the table. In a university setting, often, employees are expected to stay within the purview of their job descriptions, but at OISTEM, employees have the autonomy and drive to step outside those boundaries.

***Innovative culture.*** OISTEM has a strong history of innovation at academic and institutional levels (OISTEM, 2019a). The university is home to many tech start-up incubators, which provide staff and students with the opportunity to innovate. It is also one of the only universities that let students and professors maintain their intellectual property when they create something using OISTEM's resources.

***Involved middle management.*** The university provides middle managers with the ability to connect with senior-level administration. As outlined in Figure 1, the large population of senior management means there is personnel available to share ideas with that work at arm's length from the president and provost.

***Accountable culture.*** Much like the tech incubators and start-up funding available for students, the university also recognized the importance of supporting and empowering staff to be innovative. Funding can be made available for new initiatives that promote change and innovation on campus.

***Effective communications.*** Regular correspondence, podcasts and events are shared campus-wide at OISTEM, which puts everyone on the same playing field when it comes to communication. Staff also have the opportunity to work remotely and can connect with colleagues through video conferencing and collaboration software.

***Systems thinking.*** A cooperative education program supports the university's academic programs. The public and private sectors are always in the conversation when a new program is implemented. The interdependencies of the relationships are what strengthen the university's systems thinking.

**Internal and External Forces.** Weiner (2009) states that "Organizational readiness for change is considered a critical precursor to the successful implementation of complex changes in healthcare settings" (p. 2). There are a variety of driving and resisting forces that can act upon an institution's ability to instill organizational change. In Figure 4, the OISTEM Force Field Analysis outlines the driving and resisting forces. The driving forces are derived from the university's inherent need to innovate. The resisting forces stem from money and time on the project. In order to ensure organizational change readiness, the driving forces need to outweigh the resisting forces. In an article by Toves, Graf and Gould (2016), factors influencing technology-enabled changed were explored. The findings of the article found that leaders need to assimilate technology and people processes equally to ensure the technology is effectively adopted (Toves, Graf, Gould, 2016).

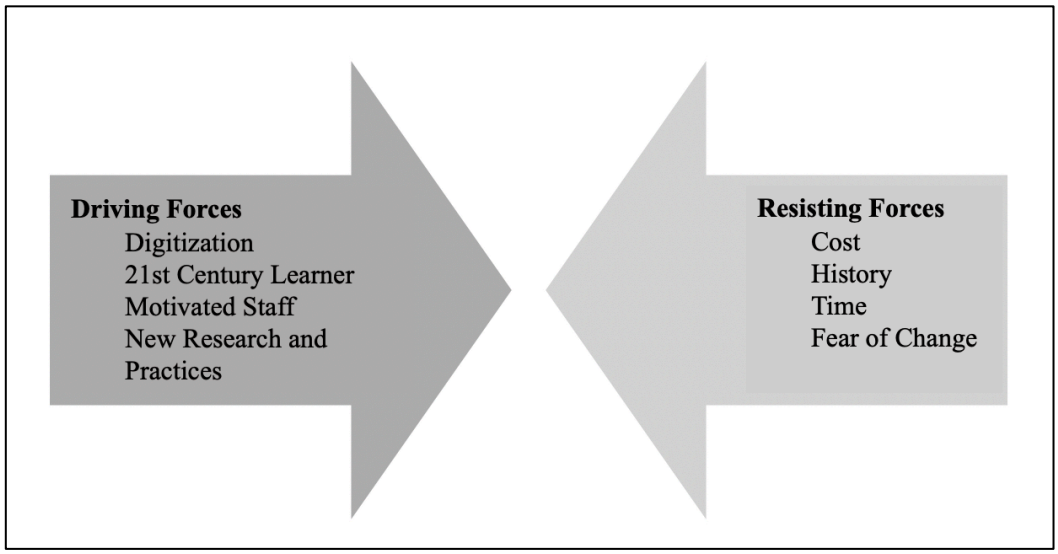


*Figure 4.* OISTEM Force Field Analysis

In summary, after reviewing the eight dimensions of organizational capacity for change, it is evident that OISTEM is poised to make a change and will continue to innovate. There are, however, many driving and resisting forces that continue to affect this OIP.

**Chapter 1 Conclusion**

With increasing amounts of legislation and policies directed at accessibility in Canada, post-secondary institutions are scrambling to make changes to the way they deliver services. As the use of ICT increases in education and beyond, there is no doubt that access to information for persons with disabilities is a "necessary human right and a core part of social justice" (Jaeger, 2015, p. 5) that supports social and emotional wellbeing. In this chapter, the organizational context, leadership position, lens statement, and the PoP were addressed. OISTEM, Canada's most innovative university, is no stranger to online courses for its undergraduate and graduate programs. Student service departments, such as the SAO should strive to create resources and tools that are available to students in a variety of

formats. Online courses offer flexibility and usage of educational technology, two dimensions of learning that many 21st century learners prefer (Irvine, Code & Richards, 2013). The implementation of ICT-based resources for the SAO will help make accessibility services accessible to more students. Chapter 2 will explore the planning and development aspects of this OIP and address the leadership approaches to change, a framework for leading the change process, critical organizational analysis, possible solutions to the PoP and leadership ethics.

## Chapter 2: Planning & Development

Chapter 1 of this OIP included the PoP, organizational context, vision, and leadership approach for organizational change that are necessary for OISTEM to become more accessible and be in compliance with national and provincial accessibility legislation. Taking the many intricacies and complex nature of OISTEM as an institution and the CAET role as a change agent, chapter 2 will address the framework for leading the change process, organizational analysis, possible solutions to the OIP and ethical considerations surrounding the follow-through of the proposed organizational change. The main goal of the SAO is to provide services to OISTEM students who have a registered disability (OISTEM, 2017a). Providing an acceptable level of access to services while adhering to legislation means that OISTEM must implement systemic change that rethinks and digitizes the way this student-facing service-based office delivers personalized service. This chapter will set the groundwork for the leadership approaches to change, a framework for leading the change process, critical organizational analysis, possible solutions and leadership ethics.

### Leadership Approaches to Change

OISTEM is an institution that has continued to be at the forefront of innovation for decades (Bondy & Hamdullahpur, 2017; Walton-Roberts, 2011) and has had robust leadership approaches that push the boundaries and promote the desire to evolve and grow. In the case of the SAO, managers and I have also taken it upon ourselves to strive to be exceptional and innovative within our daily operations and the SAO's strategic direction. When addressing the PoP for a sizeable post-secondary institution in Ontario, different leadership approaches should be considered to provide a multi-dimensional approach. Due to the organizational structure of OISTEM, consisting of a Board of Governors and an

Academic Senate (OISTEM, 2019a), the collaborative and democratic organization of leadership is evident throughout the university. The leadership approaches mentioned in chapter 1, distributed and transformational, will propel change forward while addressing the PoP. Leadership approaches tend to lack the organizational context that is specific to an institution. Fortunately, OISTEM has recognized the need for a leadership framework, and a set of leadership principles have been established to outline the university's philosophy on maintaining a productive and innovative workplace (OISTEM, 2020). The locally developed leadership principles will also be included when considering the approach to change.

**Transformational Leadership.** Increasing access to services offered by the SAO is a massive undertaking that requires significant buy-in from leadership through the qualities associated with transformational leadership styles. This particular leadership approach to change is a process that will support the OIP through collaboration. Burns (1978) contends that transformational leadership is a process where leaders and followers increase motivation and morale by helping each other. Although OISTEM is siloed in nature, any incremental or significant changes to systems will have a tremendous ripple effect across the institution. However, organizational change may also build bridges and create new relationships between different offices that may not have a formal or procedural connection. Increasing motivation and morale can help break down the walls between different organization units, like the SAO, to foster innovation and promote change. The transformational leader is integral in developing the organizational culture while empowering others (Bass, 1990).

In my role as CAET at OISTEM, I recognize the benefits of the flexibility of my position and ability to pursue new projects. With the recent reorganization of the SAO, I am now in a formal leadership position that falls between the senior management of the SAO

and the frontline staff. This reshuffling has helped give me more agency within the SAO to institute change. The SAO operates under the directive that we must accommodate students (Marquis et al., 2016) with a disability or suspected disability (OISTEM, 2017a). Although the status quo of the office is currently sufficient in supporting students, legislation is forcing the SAO to rethink how and where our services are provided. Financial constraints and the pressure to innovate means that the SAO needs to be creative and collaborative in its journey to increase and improve access to services. Increasing motivation among my team and empowering others will help promote innovative systemic change without adding to the fiscal restraints (Özaralli, 2003).

Bolman and Deal (2017) claim the central idea of transformational leadership theory is that these "transformational (charismatic) leaders use inspiration, idealized influence and the like to generate followers' trust and willingness to go above and beyond" (p. 331). The four elements of transformational leadership: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1994) will all play a role in my leadership approach to change. Transformational leadership is defined by the leader's effect on their followers and the motivation of the followers to do more than they were initially expected to do (Vinger & Cilliers, 2006).

Individual consideration refers to the degree to which the leader considers a follower's needs and appreciates their contribution (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Individualized consideration includes both supporting and developing my staff (Yukl, 1999). Coaching and mentoring my team members will serve as the development while building self-efficacy will help as support (Yukl, 1999). Onorato (2013) states, "the leader support and collaborates with the followers as they try new approaches and develop innovative ways

of dealing with organizational issues" (p. 42). Individualized consideration will force me to keep open lines of communication with my followers. As a transformational leader, I will utilize my formal leadership role over my Accessibility Services Coordinator (ASC) and my Alternative Format Assistant (AFA). I will act as a mentor who can steer the motivations and interests of my team to the task at hand (Bass & Avolio 1994; Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019). Altering my leadership style to accommodate my team will promote individualized consideration within my context and positionality.

Intellectual stimulation refers to how the leader "challenges assumptions, stimulates and encourages creativity in followers…" (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013, p. 356). Intellectual stimulation will provide me with an opportunity to learn while I navigate my followers' ideas as we look for ways to complete tasks. Having my team question their traditional beliefs and understandings of the organization will stimulate problem-solving (Yukl 1999). Currently, the PoP at hand challenges the status quo of how the SAO delivers services, encouraging a cultural shift. Providing training and development (Hallinger, 2003) that aligns with the implementation of ICT can help my team view the PoP through a new lens (Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019). "Transformational leaders encourage innovation by motivating followers" (Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019, p. 49).

Inspirational motivation refers to how the leader articulates a strategic vision while inspiring followers (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Inspirational motivation will set the stage with me as a visionary who clearly outlines future goals and supports my followers' abilities. The development and communication of the vision must be appealing to generate inspiration (Vinger & Cilliers, 2006). Recognizing the looming 2025 AODA deadline, as a leader, I can consciously shift the focus to the excitement of the innovation surrounding this new

initiative. Bass and Avolio (1994) go on to say that "the frame or lens to be used must be clearly and repeatedly communicated to followers" (p. 133). Shakespeare's (2006) social model of disability lens must effectively be applied to the project so that my team will have genuine buy-in to the success of inspirational motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The social model of disability recognizes that people with disabilities are oppressed through social exclusion; inspirational motivation can help increase resilience, motivation and inclusion among followers.

Idealized influence refers to the leader's behaviour that resonates with followers through a clear set of values (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). While there are many similarities between inspiration, motivation and idealized influence (Yukl, 1999), I believe idealized influence means I will be a role model for my team by demonstrating ethical behaviour, respect and trust. Understandably my team members may not initially be as passionate about the OIP as me. Through my role as CAET, I hold an exciting position within the SAO, where many team members look up to me because of my previous experience and charisma when it comes to educational technology and accessibility. Transformational leadership places a high degree of emphasis on shared goals. Through collaboration with my team, the SAO will ensure the collective interests of the OIP are aligned; a change will occur.

**Distributed Leadership**. The implementation of ICT to deliver services, tools and resources digitally at a large-sized university SAO takes a high degree of collegiality, cooperation and work distribution. Large-scale changes require distributed leadership due to the composition and quantity of change agents involved. Spillane (2001) suggests that distributed leadership is a framework where the work is spread across a group of individuals, and the interaction of the leaders accomplishes the goal. Distributed leadership can take on

many different forms, such as role sharing, which may be spontaneous, and does not automatically benefit organizational change (Woods & Roberts, 2015). Distributed leadership creates role interdependencies such as a "spontaneous collaboration between actors, synergistic partnerships, role constellations and so on" (Woods & Gronn, 2009, p. 440).

OISTEM has a considerable amount of complexity in its daily operations, so it is imperative to be specific when outlining how the leadership is distributed and for what purpose (Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons & Hopkins, 2007). Having four direct reports, a relatively small team, who report directly to me, will allow me to distribute leadership as needed. A study by Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon and Nashkina (2007) outlines the two essential features of successful leadership sharing: expertise and coordination. My two direct fulltime reports each have a significant degree of experience and knowledge within their specific jobs and how they related to student accessibility. The AFA works directly with students regularly in the realm of accessible format creation. Their task is to ensure students have access to course materials in an accessible format that is specific to the students' functional limitations. Accessible formats include creating accessible digital course materials that the student can access in different ways depending on their functional limitations. The ASC works more indirectly with students focusing on the development of a peer mentorship program, SAO student transportation and volunteer notetaker program for students registered with the SAO. Both employees have different, valuable knowledge bases that can be utilized through planful alignment when implementing ICT. Planful alignment is when agreements among employees and administration have been created to determine which duties are carried out by which source (Leithwood et al., 2017). From here, it will be

up to me to ensure the coordination of the distribution of leadership is well-planned to maximize their potential.

Research by Gronn (2002) suggests that the distribution of leadership may come in different informal and formal variations. This OIP will rely on me modelling collaboration strategies for my team members in more intuitive working relationships and institutionalized practice (Gronn, 2002). Organizational change needs to be highly structured with democratic methods of communication and decision making. The development of a formal working committee through planful alignment, consisting of members of the SAO, will follow the selection of an appropriate solution to the PoP.

I am using a distributed leadership model with my team to ensure collaboration (Bolden, Petrov & Gosling, 2004) throughout the OIP process. The SAO and OISTEM as a whole are very supportive of cross-training and utilizing the strengths of its employees to build capacity.

**OISTEM Principles of Leadership.** While transformational and distributed leadership models appear to be appropriate choices when it comes to organizational improvement in a large university, it is essential to consider OISTEM's principles of leadership (PoL). OISTEM has developed a PoL in-house that emphasizes on genuine leadership and its alignment with the strategic plan (OISTEM, 2020). The PoL outlines OISTEM's stance on how to effectively lead organizational units like the SAO, within the context of the university. OISTEM is strongly committed to the belief that everyone should have equal opportunity to share ideas and work together collaboratively (OISTEM, 2020).

Of the 6 PoL listed on the OISTEM website, "Think to the future" (OISTEM, 2020) has the most relevance to this OIP. Since the SAO wishes to be a leader in post-secondary

accessibility services and is striving to adhere to AODA legislation before the 2025 deadline, thinking to the future will ensure appropriate changes are being proposed in this OIP.

In conclusion, the leadership approaches to change outlined in this chapter encompass the complexity of the institution and the genuine nature in which different people and organizations need to work together for the greater good. A transformational leadership approach paired with distributed leadership correlates with OISTEM's PoL. "putting an organization's shared values into practice to develop a strong network of relationships at every level of the organization" (OISTEM, 2020).

**Framework for Leading the Change Process**

Organizational change refers to the planned altering of organizational components connected to the goals of the organization. Cawsey et al. (2016) state that "When organizations enhance their effectiveness, they increase their ability to generate value for those they serve" (p. 23). Change is derived from both internal and external pressures (Cawsey et al., 2016). When working in a highly innovative institution, there needs to be a focus placed on the direction of the institution and the current gap. With many great process-driven frameworks available, including Kotter's Eight-Stage Process, Lewin's Stage Theory of Change, Gentile's Giving Voice to Value, I feel that no single change models can serve the unique nature of OISTEM on their own. Moving forward, I propose the use of an integrated model of the Beckhard and Harris Change Model and the Cawsey, Deszca and Ingols' Change Path Model.

**Change Path Model.** The Cawsey et al. (2016) Change Path Model is a framework that combines both "process and prescription" (p. 53). This model emphasizes the mobilization of change leaders and shifting the organization to the desired new state. The

process has been organized into four steps: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization (Cawsey et al., 2016).

The first stage of the Change Path Model, awakening, begins with a "critical organizational analysis" where change leaders must pay close attention to internal and external factors that can cause a shift in the organization (Cawsey et al., 2016). Determining the gap and change drivers surrounding the organization is vital for the change leaders to understand their organization accurately. Recognizing the gap and those who can help bridge it will help determine the authenticity of the need for change. Internal and external factors may not always be distinct when undergoing a critical organization analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016).

From an external standpoint, legislation and changes to technology are two of the most critical factors facing the SAO currently. Keeping up with new educational technology can be a substantial financial burden for post-secondary institutions. Extensive changes to accessibility in Ontario, like the AODA, force institutions like OISTEM to change the way they operate. Technology and legislation are constantly changing, which can put financial and operational pressure on universities looking to remain pertinent.

From an internal perspective, I recognize the culture within my department, specifically, the desire to innovate and find efficiencies. Innovating and instituting change may initially cause management to believe that something is wrong with the institution. This "awakening" has the potential to create complicated and awkward conversations (Cawsey et al., 2016). When initiating conversations in my office with senior administration, I will make a conscious effort to focus less on the shortfalls of the SAO and more in the areas where improvements can be made.

The second stage, mobilization, is where managers can determine the root of the problem and whether existing structures and processes can be utilized. I will be assessing the power dynamics and the institutional culture as I begin building relationships with others whom I wish to involve in the change process. These relationships and the communication between different groups will be paramount in garnering support for change. Determining the need for change is rarely straightforward and recognizable as the gap between the current and the future state takes some degree of analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016). However, the change agent must ensure that the need for change is communicated across all levels of the institution. Organizational change cannot happen in a vacuum (Newman & Nollen, 1998) as employees who are blindly led will be less likely to buy-in. As CAET, my position within the organization unit is ideal for understanding the culture and pulse of the office before any drastic mobilization efforts take place. Working with my team and being engaged with the senior administration of the SAO regularly will give me a high degree of agency to mobilize the SAO.

The third stage, acceleration, requires the change leader to reach out and empower others in the organization (Cawsey et al., 2016). Developing and implementing new ideas can be challenging as the SAO will need to continue offering services to students throughout the transition to this new online service delivery model. Systematically I will be reaching out to different people within the office and strategically include them along the way. Employees with strengths in ICT will begin working in the background to bring the concepts to life. From here, my team will build momentum and manage this slow transition as needed. As excitement builds, it will be crucial to maintain a high level of service and customer satisfaction in the SAO as some team members begin allotting more time to this change.

At the tail end of the acceleration stage, I will be focusing my efforts on utilizing and directing the strengths of my team. Delivering the SAO's services and tools in an online setting will be seen as a small win that I will build on with more incremental milestones. As the project continues to grow, I will leverage myself as a motivated change agent who has an intuition for bringing out the best in other individuals by highlighting their strengths.

With all change leaders working together using the appropriate tools, the change process will transition to the final stage, institutionalization. Tracking the change and assessing needs will help ensure the change is sustainable (Cawsey et al., 2016). Actively making modifications to the plan as the institution reacts to it is crucial, as legislation, policies and technology are continually changing. The organizational change also requires the integration of new policies and procedures from the SAO that support and reflect this change (Cawsey et al., 2016). Depending on the interconnectedness of other organizations units within the university, developing new policies and procedures can significantly delay change. From here, the change leaders of the organization will continue to develop and utilize new strategies and tools to ensure the stability of the change.

**Beckhard and Harris Change Model.** The Beckhard and Harris Change Model places a strong emphasis on the gap analysis of the institution (Beckhard and Harris, 1987; Cawsey et al., 2016). Observing and analyzing the conditions is an essential first step to complete before a change can occur (Cawsey et al., 2016). This model focuses significantly on the process and the strategic direction of the organization. There are three steps.

The first step is to assess the organization and determine if a change is necessary by completing a gap analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016). The gap analysis includes defining a

desired organizational state, relative to the current status. The change agents are responsible for thoroughly understanding the organization and the different factors that are affecting it.

The second step is determining the need for change and being able to propose a solution to close the gap (Cawsey et al., 2016). This stage can take a significant amount of discussion and deliberation for change leaders. While determining the need for change may be evident for change agents, developing a compelling change vision can be complicated. The level of dissatisfaction with the status quo, the desirability of the proposed change or end state and practicality of the change must all be used to determine the need for change (Cameron & Green, 2019; Rosenbaum, More & Steane, 2018). Conversations with various stakeholders are crucial to map out the right course of action successfully. As a change agent, I must garner "...the support of those people who are vital champions of the change effort" (Beckhard and Harris, 1987, p. 54).

Lastly, the final step will be managing the transition for the change agreed on by the change leaders. Resistance is expected during periods of organizational change. In the previous step, dissatisfaction, vision and first steps must all outweigh the resistance faced in the institution for change to occur (Cameron & Green, 2019; Cawsey et al., 2016).

**Integrated Change Model.** While both the Caswey et al. (2016) and Beckhard and Harris (1987) models are process-driven, acceptable frameworks for instituting change at OISTEM, they both have drawbacks. Utilizing strengths from both models to create an integrated change model will effectively address the change path required for a unique institution such as OISTEM. I believe that the integrated change model outlined in Figure 5 will be the correct tool to guide organizational change. Figure 5 outlines the new stepped change process, the integrated change model.

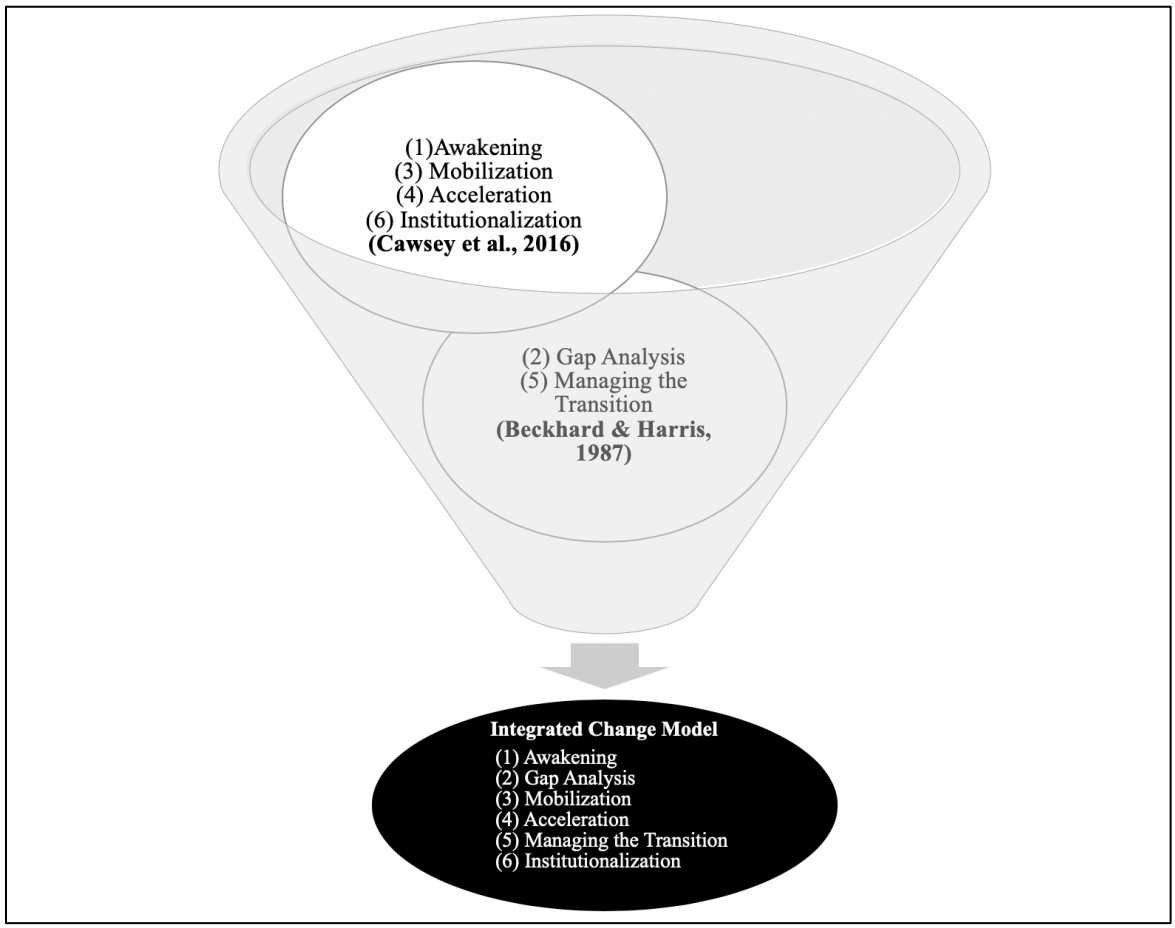


*Figure 5.* Integrated Change Model

While keeping the context of OISTEM front and center, I have chosen the most organizationally relevant aspects of Cawsey et al. (2016) and Beckhard and Harris (1987) to create the integrated change model. The first two stages, awakening and gap analysis, are intimately connected. During the awakening step, it will be essential to spread awareness of the organization's shortfalls and deflect any attempts to remain stagnant. The gap analysis step will pull information from the awakening step and direct attention to the desired future state of the organization. The mobilization step will rely on current systems structures and people in the institution, including myself, as the leading change agent. The acceleration step will empower my team to utilize their strengths to carry out the change.

Managing the transition is one of the most critical steps, especially in a student-facing department where services cannot be interrupted. Organizational change takes time, and there are many moving pieces. A critical organizational analysis will be fundamental to determine if the current situation at OISTEM is performing at an optimal level.

In conclusion, with significant changes coming to the SAO, and its respective processes, this OIP should include frameworks for leading change that are process-driven. While both Cawsey et al. (2016) and Beckhard and Harris (1987) include aspects that the SAO could benefit from, developing an integrated change model was the best way to ensure the framework for leading change was balanced and effectively meets the demands of instituting change at OISTEM.

**Critical Organization Analysis**

The current gap between the SAO's organizational state and the desired state implies the need for a critical organizational analysis. Taking a holistic approach to analyzing OISTEM is an essential step in instituting organizational change. Nadler and Tushman's (1989) Congruence Model (CM) paired with macro, micro and meso discourses is an effective way to analyze an organization using different sources of data. Information derived from the analysis can be used to develop a strategy to transform the organization.

**Congruence Model.** The CM is a tool that OISTEM can use to determine how different aspects of the institution are working together. The primary usage of this model is to determine underlying performance gaps that the organization is facing. When considering gaps in the organization, negative information may cause defensive reactions and even withdrawal (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993). In the context of the

SAO, the status quo continues to be accepted by management as we currently comply with legislation. However, the looming AODA compliance deadline paired with the desire to innovate will likely be a future cause for concern. The CM is divided into three main stages: input, transformational process and output (Nadler & Tushman, 1989).

***Input.*** During the input stage, I will be able to synthesize information from the environment by reviewing the PESTE analysis conducted in chapter 1, analyze the current resources, history and culture of the institution.

The PESTE analysis provided an overview of what environmental factors affecting OISTEM and how it operates as a system. OISTEM is a large and complex institution that must adapt to the changing environmental pressures. The PESTE analysis made it clear that political and technological factors are affecting OISTEM the most.

Politically speaking, OISTEM and all post-secondary institutions in Ontario are under tremendous pressure to adhere to legislation and become more accessible. The AODA is forcing institutions to change the way they conduct business and rethink what accessibility means for physical buildings and university-provided services.

Advancements in technology are shifting traditional lecture halls into digital classrooms. The implementation of ICT at OISTEM has proven to be affordable and accessible for a university's academic programming (Medina, 2018). OISTEM students can now access many of their courses from the comfort of their homes, and some can even complete a degree without ever stepping on campus. The importance of this massive technological shift in post-secondary institutions cannot be understated.

Although OISTEM is a large, thriving Canadian university, with an annual operating budget surpassing one billion dollars, the same cannot be said about the SAO's

operational finances. Resources such as employees and financial assets have been stretched very thin in recent years due to the increasing number of students accessing our services, with no additional financial backing. Fortunately, the SAO consists of a very collaborative group of people who like to think of low-cost, innovative ways to improve services.

The SAO staff have a great deal of autonomy and the ability to pursue projects within the context of services we offer. Management is always looking for new ways to innovate and help limit deficiencies in the office. OISTEM operates in a cyclical nature with three terms each academic year. Depending on an employee's position in the SAO, they may have time allocated to work on projects throughout the year.

In terms of history, OISTEM is a university that was founded on engineering and math programs (OISTEM, 2017b). It was this humble beginning that led the organization to solve problems by thinking outside the box. While OISTEM has flourished academically, it has yet to provide any meaningful statistics regarding student satisfaction in the area of student services. Perhaps the culture of the university and the newly announced strategic plan can provide more insight into where the university wishes to be.

OISTEM is currently in the implementation phase of its new strategic plan. The OISTEM 2020-2025 Strategic Plan titled *Linking Imagination with Innovation* (OISTEM, 2019a) is based around this era of change we currently live in and makes many acknowledgements to the importance of technology and innovation. This Plan has a direct alignment to recent legislation and contemporary issues faced by post-secondary students with disabilities. OISTEM has recognized the need to support accessibility on campus and has committed to including the pillar of "belonging" in its new strategic plan

(OISTEM, 2019a). The connection between university policy and legislation will help support students with disabilities in post-secondary institutions and this OIP - to make accessibility services more accessible for students at OISTEM.

The input stage of the CM has generated a significant amount of information and has provided me with an in-depth perspective of OISTEM. The next element of the model is the transformation process, where different components of the organization are combined to produce outputs.

***Transformational Process.*** The transformation process includes work to be completed, formal organizational structures, systems, processes, informal organization and the people (Nadler and Tushman, 1989). In the SAO, the employees all have specific roles and duties that they need to complete regularly. In the transformation process, this is known as work to be completed. In the SAO, the consulting side works directly with students in a one-on-one context and relay information regarding a student's accommodations to the services side. The services side is responsible for implementing strategies, tools, resources and support to students who require it. Throughout the SAO, there are other groups, formal and informal, that meet based on their specific needs. Team case consults regularly occur for complicated situations on the consulting side, and team projects occur on the services side. The services side of the office will play a primary role in this OIP as the opportunity to develop and implement new projects is evident.

The formal organizational structure of the SAO, as shown in Figure 2, is relatively conventional. The SAO has an associate director, two managers, 15 frontline staff, two of whom also manage staff. The office also includes cooperative education students and part-time staff, such as exam proctors. Staff in the office undergo yearly performance

reviews, which determine salary increases. The performance reviews focus on how the employee has managed their position and how they have helped support OISTEM's innovative nature. Training and development for permanent staff are also valued at OISTEM. Of the SAO, approximately 75 percent are permanent staff who have the option to partake in various professional development (PD) initiatives through the PD Office. The PD Office offers a wide variety of courses that encompass management skill-building and technology training. These courses are highly valuable for the SAO as we explore new ideas to improve our office operations.

Along with the PD Office's course offerings, SAO staff are also able to take most OISTEM courses and programs free of cost. OISTEM is also very supportive of secondments, of up to one year, for employees to gain new university experience from a different perspective. OISTEM has a well-developed and robust formal organizational structure that provides an opportunity for permanent staff to flourish and grow.

The informal organizational structure of the office is very open, caring and friendly. The SAO strives to provide top tier service to students registered with us. Typically, students registered with the SAO have a more difficult time in university due to their functional limitations, and we have to address those concerns. Working in an accessibility office attracts employees who genuinely care about the students they are serving. Much as the employees strive to improve the university experience for students, the same can be said about management towards their employees. All employees in the SAO have open-door policies that help increase communication.

The SAO's staff consists of people who have expertise in different areas of accessibility. The consultant team works with students to develop appropriate academic

accommodations and teach students how to manage them appropriately. These individuals are thorough, caring and have a high level of expertise in disability management. The services team consists of individuals who work with students after they have been set up with academic accommodations. These individuals passionately work with students regularly to build skills and ensure they can access the academic environment.

As clearly outlined by the work, people and structure, the SAO fosters a nurturing culture that is focused on helping students. The office is currently running like a well-oiled machine and can adequately support students with a disability on campus.

***Output.*** The primary output of OISTEM is to provide an educational service to students that lead them to convocation. OISTEM also strives to ensure students who graduate are ready for the workplace and have been given the proper tools to succeed. Within the context of the SAO, our output is ensuring that students with disabilities have equal access to the academic environment and that systemic barriers are removed.

In conclusion, undertaking a critical organization analysis is useful when diagnosing an institution that may not be performing at optimal levels. Determining different problem areas of an institution can be a challenging experience for change leaders to navigate. However, in the end, it is the starting point for identifying opportunities and developing a plan of action. Nadler and Tushman's (1987) CM is a framework that has helped structure OISTEM's inputs, transformation process and outputs. Taking a holistic approach to organizational analysis will ensure the organization is accurately understood as I look towards possible solutions to my PoP.

## Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

The goal of the SAO is to provide services and tools to students registered with the office that will help ensure they have equitable access to the academic environment. The increasing number of students taking online courses (OISTEM, 2016) paired with the accessibility legislation in Ontario means that the SAO needs to find innovative ways to support its students. The implementation of ICT in the shape of online learning is a way to bridge the gap. Based on contemporary research, legislative requirements and the strategic direction of OISTEM, three solutions are being proposed: development of an online course, development of a university-wide framework, and maintaining the status quo.

**Solution 1: Development of an Online Course.** As a post-secondary institution in Ontario, OISTEM must develop a plan to promote the SAO's services to students who may be unable to visit the SAO in person. New legislation such as the ACA and AODA are increasing pressure for post-secondary institutions in Ontario to become more accessible (Ross and Buliung, 2019). The Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations (ISAR) of the AODA outline the areas that the SAO must make improvements in order to comply with the Act (Ross and Buliung, 2019). The customer service and informational and communications standards are the most glaring reasons why the SAO needs to change. The AODA explicitly states that customer service and information and communication standards must be adhered to and apply significantly to the SAO's operations. The increasing number of online courses, the cooperative education program, and OISTEM's many campuses are the main reasons this change is needed.

In this solution, I propose the development of an online course that consists of the services, tools and information currently being offered in the SAO. Services being offered

through the SAO include learning strategy workshops such as time management, preparing for examinations and understanding your syllabus. Tools being offered by the SAO include assistive technology, software licenses, demonstrations and troubleshooting for technology. The information provided by the SAO includes how to manage your accommodations, using the SAO exam centre, and understanding your rights. All services, tools and information would be digitized through the use of videos, PowerPoints, interactive modules, discussion boards, and accessible documents. The goal of this solution is to digitize what the SAO is currently offering to students. An online course must be created in a meaningful way so that it provides a vibrant learning experience and is not a dumping ground for documents. Switching the service delivery model of the SAO must comply with ISAR and provide the same quality of service that students would receive in-person.

Currently, students with cognitive, physical and mental health-related disabilities are supported by the SAO through an in-person consultation with regulated health professionals. Providing the same in-person supports in an online setting can increase access and provide more accessible options for students. Many students registered with the SAO are already using some type of assistive technology, such as a screen reader, speech-to-text software, and braille displays. Students can leverage their current assistive technology to access the LMS, which also has accessibility features in place.

An online course will allow information to be presented in multiple ways through the implementation of universal design for learning (Hashey, Stahl, 2014). Hashey and Stahl (2014) state that “the combination of audio, video, text, and other means to convey

meaning has the potential to provide students, with a range of abilities and disabilities, greater access to curricula and learning opportunities…" (p. 71).

The proposed SAO course would be accessed through OISTEM's LMS, the same place where students access graduate and undergraduate courses. The key differences from a traditional course are that the SAO's course is free, requires self-registration, is self-directed and does not have assessments. Essentially, the plan is to leverage the LMS that all students use to create a direct avenue to tools, services, resources and supports.

Currently, OISTEM offers over two dozen undergraduate and graduate programs that can be completed entirely via distance (OISTEM, 2016). The majority of face to face programs offered on campus have varying ranges of online learning infused with synchronous and asynchronous components. All students at OISTEM will partake in some degree of online education during their academic journeys.

Not only does online course programming keep students off-campus, but approximately 75% of students also partake in cooperative education placements, often internationally (OISTEM, 2015). Students in the co-op stream spend one semester each year working, so visiting the SAO may not be an option.

OISTEM also has a large campus consisting of over 200 buildings, including other campuses located throughout Ontario. The sheer magnitude of how and where students are ingesting OISTEM's educational programming is a crucial indicator in need to develop an online presence for service-based offices like the SAO. The development of an online course that effectively replicates the SAO services and tools serves as a realistic solution to this significant problem.

The creation of online courses is already happening regularly on campus. The CoL oversees all credit and non-credit courses offered on the university's LMS (OISTEM, 2016). Working with the CoL to get administrative access to the LMS will serve as a starting point for the development of an online course. Aside from the initial administrative set up of the course, there will be no oversight or assistance from the CoL due to the capacity of SAO employees. Using my experience developing courses in higher education, I will collaboratively work with my team to ensure the course undergoes the proper steps of development before it is released to the public.

As CAET, I have the agency to innovate and make the SAO a leader in accessibility on a national scale. Using a distributed and transformational leadership approach, I will strive to empower my team and make them be a part of the development process. Utilizing their skills and interests, we can balance the workload and ensure the course is developed in a holistic manner that considers the different types of people who will be using it. Being able to pull service expertise from my ASC will be imperative to ensuring the services offered online match those being offered in person at the SAO. Using the experience and knowledge of my AFA, we can collectively look at ways to include tools that students will be able to use and understand, such as the use of alternative formats.

A critical analysis of solution one has helped me determine the pros and cons of developing a course for the SAO that can be used to compare and contrast other possible solutions. The benefits of solution one are the minimal project cost, the autonomy the SAO will have on the project and the accessibility of the course. The drawbacks include a

challenging development phase and maintaining team motivation and morale throughout this lengthy process.

**Solution 2: Partnership with Organization Units to Develop a Framework.** The desire to increase accessibility across the institution is not solely unique to the SAO. Other departments, faculties and organization units are also feeling the pressure of legislation and are looking towards the SAO for expertise and leadership. The SAO is mandated to address students' accessibility needs specifically and is not responsible for staff and faculty training. The AODA Specialist makes recommendations to respective groups on campus when it comes to accessibility. This split relationship surrounding accessibility highlights the reality of the siloed nature of OISTEM.

In this solution, I propose the development of a partnership to develop and Accessibility Improvement Framework (that can be spread across the OISTEM campus. The burden of this sizeable legislative pressure should not be dumped on the shoulders of one organization unit. Different groups in OISTEM should come together to work collectively to ensure accessibility is spread across campus. While the primary duties of my role are geared towards students, my agency, as CAET, also suggests that I become more involved in the university community in the area of accessibility.

The first step in this solution would be for the SAO to take a leadership role in searching out other parties in OISTEM who would contribute to creating the AIF for the school community to follow. The AODA specialist, Occupational Health, SAO and executives on the Board's Accessibility Committee would serve as an excellent starting point for creating an accessibility community of practice (ACoP). This new community of practice would develop a plan that could be replicated across campus.

The AIF would serve as a tool that could be applied to different faculties, academic support groups to ensure equitable access to services being delivered. Necessarily, the faculty of math would have to follow the same guidelines that the Student Achievement Centre would when it comes to delivering services to students on campus. The framework would be divided into five stages: consultation, adherence, planning, review and implementation.

***Consultation.*** In this step, the ACoP consults with other groups and stakeholders on campus to ensure everyone's voice is heard. Interviewing and running focus groups with students would help the ACoP determine what the most critical aspects of campus-wide student service accessibility are the most important.

***Adherence.*** The mandate of the ACoP would be to adhere to provincial and federal accessibility legislation and ensure there is alignment with the feedback collected during the consultation stage. The ACoP would also need to adhere to OISTEM accessibility policies and procedures that are already in existence.

***Planning.*** Using the feedback from the consultations while adhering to legislation, the ACoP could begin working with campus partners to develop a clear-cut plan for how organization units on campus can increase the equity and accessibility of services offered. Understandably, different organizations on campus provide different services to students. Faculties and academic support groups like the SAO must ensure they adhere to the framework of the ACoP when they digitize aspects of their respective offices.

***Review.*** The first three steps of the framework must be executed meticulously as the ACoP will initiate a review process. During the review process, members of the ACoP

will review all consultation, adherence, and review documentation to ensure they have adequately prepared online deployment of services. The review will be an ongoing step in the AIF as groups improving accessibility will need to be up to date in their approach.

***Implementation.*** During the final stage, the ACoP will work closely with organization units to ensure the integration and implementation of online services is smooth and effective. When an organization changes, there are growing pains. The ACoP must regularly work with organization units weeks and months after implementations to ensure accessibility of services is valid and remains a priority.

My agency within the community of practice would utilize my skills and experience from the SAO to make recommendations in the areas of assistive technology, online accessibility and the current trends and patterns I recognized with SAO registered students. A critical analysis of this solution makes me immediately recognize the scale of the project and a large number of resources involved. Developing a framework for the entirety of OISTEM to adhere to will be an extremely long process that will consider the viewpoints from different stakeholders. While improving accessibility across the OISTEM community is a benefit, the scope and cost of the project would be an enormous drawback. This framework initially will have a significant price tag associated with making system-wide changes, primarily in the way of personnel and time.

**Solution 3: Status Quo.** At OISTEM, a high degree of customer service is applicable in all student-facing service-based departments. The SAO is no exception as it regularly provides students with leading service for its student population. Maintaining the status quo of how the SAO operates is a possible solution that will not require any organizational changes. Services and tools are provided to students effectively as strong-

focused policies back all processes and procedures. The SAO recognizes the importance of legislation affecting it and strives to accommodate students so they have equitable access to the academic environment.

Students registered with the SAO have a specific pathway they follow based on their disability and functional limitations. Meeting regularly with Accommodation Consultants (AC) and addressing the students' needs is of the utmost importance. From here, AC can develop plans for the next steps for a student who may require services, tools or information. The accommodation pathway always points the student to a person or resource that can help them. Once students can manage their disability and accommodations effectively, there is no follow-up or input from the SAO, until the students require it. This gradual release does not happen with all students due to the unique nature of disabilities.

Providing tools and services to students in a face to face setting is currently working effectively. The SAO is operating efficiently, given the current legislation and directive from the university. However, the SAO has worked effectively until the recent realization that students who are unable to visit the office physically may be getting left behind. With the increasing number of students taking on cooperative education placements and online courses, there is a growing concern that the operation of the office has unknowingly created systemic barriers for OISTEM students. The benefits of the status quo solution are that currently, students are being provided with tools and resources they need to access the academic environment. Drawbacks of this solution are that students who cannot physically visit the office have been subjected to an ad-hoc over-the-phone and digital version of our services with objectively lower service.

Table 1 outlines the proposed solutions to the PoP with their respective changes, resource requirements, benefits and drawbacks.

Table 1

Proposed OIP Solutions

| Proposed Solution | Change | Resources | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Online Course | Digitization of services and tools currently offered by the SAO | The low financial cost to the department<br>Training staff members in ICT and implementation of this service delivery model | No cost to SAO<br>No staff training required<br>No procedural changes to the office<br>No policy changes | An online course may not help serve students with higher needs requiring in-person support<br>Challenging to replicate the quality of service digitally |
| 2. Framework | Significant changes to service delivery across OISTEM<br>All campus can provide all services in person and online | Large staff population included<br>Development of new university-wide policies<br>Support from executive administration | AODA compliance<br>Equitable access to services for all students<br>Is supported by OISTEM Strategic Plan | Very long and complicated change process involving different departments<br>Challenging to attract university-wide buy-in |
| 3. Status Quo | No changes to the organization required | Not additional resources, financial, or personnel required | Not cost to SAO<br>No staff training required<br>No Procedural changes to the office | Not adequately providing service to students on cooperative education placement or distance education<br>Not adhering to AODA |

While each of the proposed solutions has advantages and disadvantages, the status quo and the developing framework solutions had too many disadvantages. The status quo, currently working for the SAO, is negligent of the AODA 2025 compliance deadline. The increasing number of students taking cooperative education and online courses also weighed heavily on the decision not to remain stagnant. The development of a university-

wide framework for accessibility requires a significant amount of time, and likely falls outside my agency and scope. This development of a framework will perhaps be revisited after the chosen solution is completed: the development of an online course. Figure 6 outlines the possible solutions and how they stack up against the agency of the CAET position.

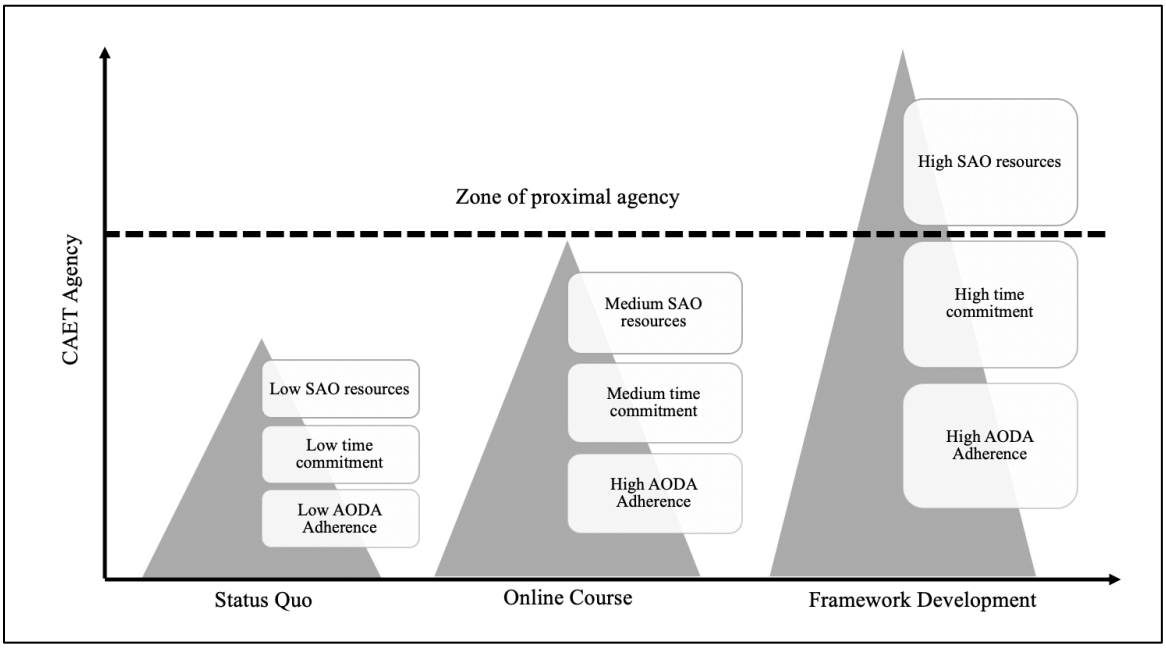


*Figure 6.* Agency-Based Solutions

I feel that the development of an online course is an appropriate and effective way to address the concerns raised in the PoP while adhering to my agency in the SAO and the resources required. The SAO sees all challenges facing students in the field of accessibility head-on. The SAO works directly with the students, and we hear their concerns. The SAO is well-versed in legislative changes and the disenfranchisement of students not on campus like those on cooperative education placement and taking online courses.

The social model of disability lens also played a critical role in informing my decision for the chosen solution. Recognizing how the environment and society have systemically created barriers for students with disabilities is essential in implementing critical disability theory. The social model of disability is closely connected with the priorities of this OIP, outlined in Figure 8.

In conclusion, it seems very fitting to pursue this project, given my educational experience and my current position with the SAO. The development of a course for students registered with the SAO is no small task but is an exciting opportunity to bridge the gap to the systemic barriers that have inadvertently been developed.

**Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change**

Ehrich, Harris, Klenowski, Smeed and Spina (2015) state that "Ethical leaders, in this professional context, are those who act fairly and justly. They are viewed as caring, honest and principled persons who make balanced decisions and who communicate the importance of ethics and ethical behaviour to their followers" (p. 199). Ethical leadership is a necessity for any public post-secondary institution in Canada. Displaying morals and values that connect to OISTEM's principles of leadership (OISTEM, 2020) will contribute to personal and organizational success. The strategic direction of an institution is decided after consultations with institutional stakeholders and is developed into a strategic plan by senior management. The choices a university makes, like which programs to offer, where a new campus is built, which research is supported, and how ICT is integrated are all derived from the ethical leadership of the institution. From my perspective, using Singh and Rathore's (2014) conceptual framework depicting the dimensions and outcomes of ethical leadership, OISTEM conclusively demonstrates

ethical leadership in relation to ICT initiatives on all levels. Rathore and Singh's (2018) article on determinants and outcomes of ethical leadership provides more insight into using scales for measuring ethical leadership in higher education. Figure 7 outlines OISTEM's dimensions and outcomes of ethical leadership.

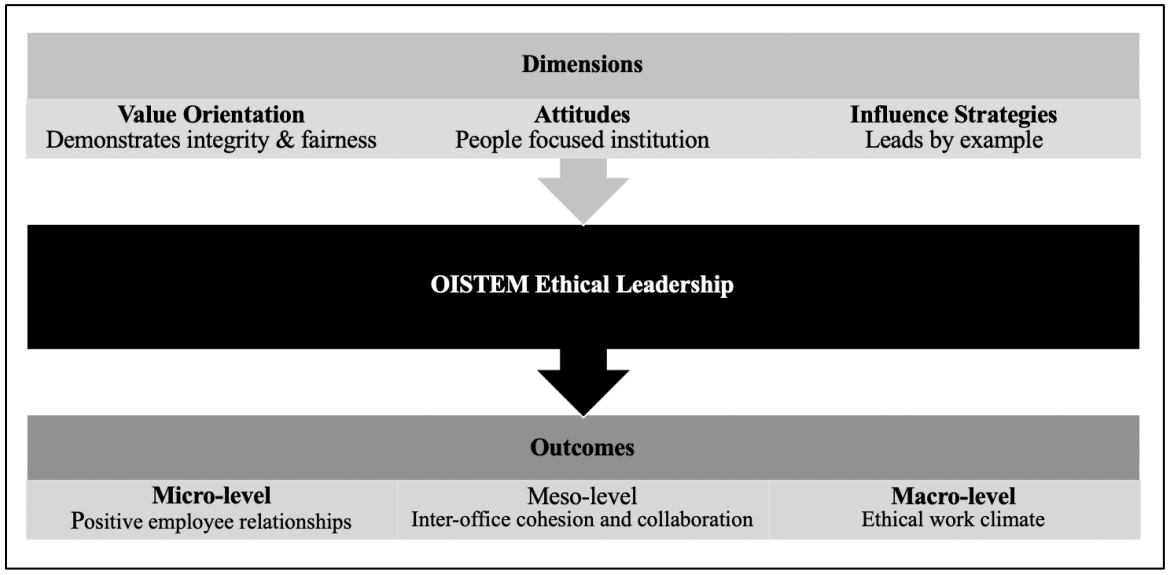


*Figure 7.* OISTEM's Ethical Leadership (Singh and Rathore, 2014)

**Dimensions of Ethical Leadership.** The dimensions of ethical leadership include value orientation, attitudes and influence strategies. The most common values and sources of values found in Sing and Rathore's (2014) meta-analysis are consistent with my experiences at OISTEM. Honesty, self-discipline, hard work and concern for people are all foundational values within the walls of the SAO. As a student-facing service-based department, the SAO's values are influenced through reliable communication systems, firm policies, leading by example, and strength of the moral character. OISTEM regularly demonstrates integrity and fairness to the university community as a people-focused institution that leads by example. Leadership frameworks used in this OIP may have an adverse effect on discipline, communication and relationships with people due to the

changing of responsibilities. As the organizational structure changes, so do employees' attitudes to their values and influences.

**Outcomes of Ethical Leadership.** Ethical leadership in a large post-secondary institution like OISTEM has a ripple effect on many micro, meso and macro levels (Rathore & Singh, 2018). From a micro-level, individuals in the SAO have similar outcomes to those outlined in Singh and Rathore (2014): the drive to go above and beyond their job expectations, have a high level of employee satisfaction and promote their ethical leadership values openly. These micro-level outcomes have been demonstrated to me personally by my ASC and my AFA. Both employees have proved their ability by exceeding expectations and shown initiative during slower parts of the year. Meso-level outcomes outlined in Singh and Rathore (2014) have also been demonstrated within my team, and the SAO teamwork, group cohesion, and strong interpersonal relationships have made this office a positive place to work. From a macro-level, ethical leadership outcomes have promoted innovation and positive energy within OISTEM. Administration supports organization units like the SAO have regularly fulfilled their mandates, which help validate the strategic plan and direction of the institution. When a university is undergoing organizational change, the ethical leadership outcomes are reflected by the employees' inputs (Rathore & Singh, 2018), which may provide insight into the success and acceptance of the change.

Jones, Gareth, George, Jennifer, Hill and Charles (2010) go on to say that ethics concerning organizational change are "…beliefs about what is right or wrong, they provide a basis for judging the appropriateness or not of behavior and they guide people in their dealings with other individuals, groups and organizations." (p. 360). The concern

for ethics in organizational change is essential when there are significant external factors that are causing the change. The SAO has continued to offer exceptional services to students with disabilities, as it is mandated to do. However, an organizational shift and changes to policies and procedures can alter the behaviour of those involved. When making changes that will affect how students receive service, I will be looking towards OISTEM's Ethics and Research Office (ERO) for guidance.

The ERO traditionally guides faculty members conducting original research with humans and animals. In the case of this OIP, there is not any original research being conducted, but ethical considerations surrounding the SAO's operations should be considered as this research informed document will change the landscape for many actors within the SAO.

In conclusion, ethical leadership has many implications for organizational improvement. OISTEM, a publicly funded post-secondary institution, has demonstrated its ethical leadership on many levels. This ethical leadership is also reflected within the walls of the SAO. Implementing organizational change may alter the way employees work and affect how students receive services. Recognizing ethical considerations and making adjustments is an essential step in organizational improvement (Rathore & Singh, 2018).

**Chapter 2 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a thorough overview of the leadership approaches to change, a framework for leading the change process, critical organizational analysis, possible solutions to the PoP and issues surrounding ethical leadership and organizational change.

Staying true to my agency as a change leader in my institution, the leadership approaches to change, transformational and distributed, were obvious choices for this project. The development of an integrated change model based off of Cawsey Deszca and Ingols (2016) Change Path Model and the Beckhard Harris (1987) Change Model was necessary to support the uniqueness of the SAO. The scope of OISTEM as a large university demonstrated that the critical organizational analysis using Nadler and Tushman's (1989) CM was obligatory. Large organizations, such as OISTEM, must undergo significant levels of analysis in order to ensure change plans are carried out with stability.

Following the critical organizational analysis, three different solutions were proposed. While maintaining focus on my position and agency within my office, two of the plans were deemed unacceptable solutions. The status quo was struck down because of the inaction that would lead OISTEM down a challenging road in future years. The university-wide framework did not work due to its misalignment with my agency. The development of a SAO-specific online course became the obvious choice as my position, my agency, and other key partners in the SAO have the potential to bring this idea to fruition.

The goal of this OIP is to develop an actionable plan that generates real results and is doable within my scope as a change leader. Through the careful analysis of the organization and selection of an appropriate solution, this plan has a high probability of success. Chapter 3 will include the chosen solution, change implementation plan, processes for monitoring and evaluation, a change process communication plan, the next steps for the OIP and future considerations.

## Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation & Communication

Chapter 2 of this OIP included leadership approaches to change, a framework for leading the change process and possible solutions to address the PoP. The chosen solution was to create an online course for students registered with the SAO. Through the implementation of ICT, a course will be developed to increase access to SAO services and tools. The development of an online course is the most appropriate solution as there is a need for post-secondary institutions to deliver services in more accessible ways. The chosen solution aligns substantially with the OISTEM's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and contemporary accessibility legislation in Ontario. In this final chapter, the focus will be on the chosen solution, change implementation plan, change process for monitoring and evaluation, communicating change and a conclusion with emphasis on the next steps and future considerations of the OIP.

### Chosen Solution

Through careful analysis of the organization and proposed solutions, the development of an online course to increase the accessibility of service delivered by the SAO is the chosen solution for this OIP. Aligning the change with my leadership approaches, an integrated change model and agency within the SAO will ensure the effective implementation of this OIP. In this section, the goals and priorities of the OIP have been defined. The development of a change-facilitation team is explained and classified into various change roles.

**OIP Goals and Priorities.** With extensive organizational analysis throughout this OIP, the CM (Nadler and Tushman, 1989) used in chapter 2 examined the performance of OISTEM and how it is affected by the work, culture, structure and people. Through

analysis, it is apparent that the SAO is operating efficiently with a high level of customer service, but there is also room to innovate and a need to comply with contemporary legislation. The SAO needs to make a conscious effort to align with the OISTEM 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

When addressing a PoP within the field of education, organizational improvement can mean different things to different groups involved. Whether the OIP focuses on making improvements geared towards students or staff, it is essential to note that organizational improvement at OISTEM will not be exclusive to one or the other. Small changes intended to improve one area of an institution will almost always have a ripple effect felt throughout other areas of the institution. This ripple effect is evident to the primary goal of this OIP: to make accessibility services more accessible through the implementation of ICT. The main goal of this OIP is shaped by many internal and external factors that need to be prioritized in order to ensure the change happens in a logical order while having a positive effect on students, staff and other stakeholders.

The priorities for this OIP in order of importance are as follows: legislative compliance, OISTEM strategic plan alignment, and social justice advocacy. Synthesizing information from chapters one and two, Figure 8 OIP Priorities outlines the order of importance and rationale behind the priorities of the OIP.

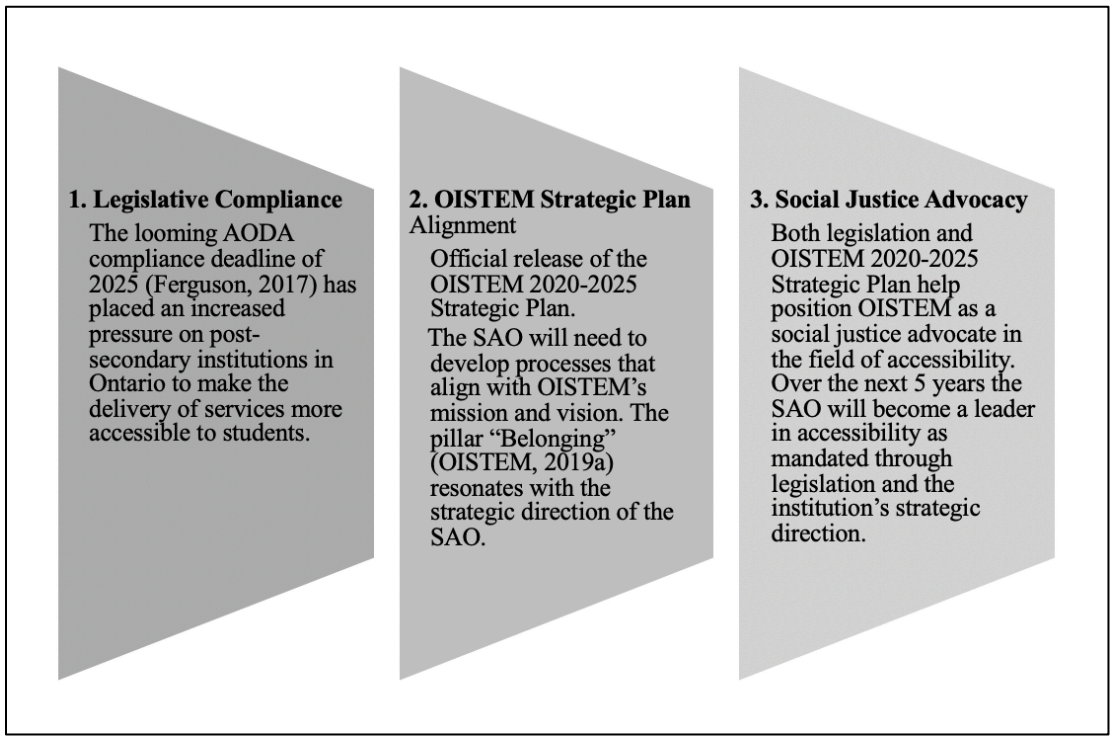


*Figure 8.* OIP Priorities

With the main goals and priorities for the chosen solution clearly defined, the addition of a change-facilitation team will be paramount in this OIP's successful implementation.

**Change-Facilitation Team.** As outlined in OISTEM's organization charts, the scale and complexity of the institution are evident. As the lead change agent of this OIP, I will be able to utilize my leadership approaches, transformational (Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019) and distributed (Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons & Hopkins, 2007) to motivate the SAO staff and empower them. Empowerment and the ability to take on new responsibilities will ensure the SAO staff have a vested interest in this project. Being scrupulous in the selection of staff for when and how they are involved in the project takes time. As a middle manager within the SAO, I have a high degree of agency to institute change and flexibility to carry it out. In the OIP, the change-facilitation team will

be separated into five main categories: change agent, change initiator, change implementer, change facilitator and change recipients.

***Change Agent.*** Cawsey et al. (2016) state that the role of the change agent is to "help organizations learn from the past and evolve systems and structures that are likely to help them succeed in the future" (p. 238). In the context of this OIP, the change agent will be me, a middle manager in the SAO who has agency to develop a plan independently and work with administration and subordinates to lead the change. In my current position as the CAET, I am in the lowest administrative position in the SAO, which means my subordinates are in non-administrative positions.

***Change Initiator.*** Having identified the need for change through the development of the PoP, I will be the change initiator of this OIP. The reorganization of the SAO and shifting of duties has increased the flexibility of the CAET position. Currently, as CAET, I am responsible for finding ways to improve the operations of the SAO. Using my educational background and experience in ICT, I have developed a PoP that fits within my scope and genuine interest. As the change initiator, I will continue to champion this change process.

***Change Implementers.*** The Services Manager of the SAO and myself will serve as the change implementers in this OIP. The implementers provide support by helping to ensure that change is happening and act as the "bridge to the desired end state" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 55). The Services Manager can be a middleman between the SAO and OISTEM's senior leadership. As the CAET, I have time allotted in my schedule to work on projects and, therefore, can take action and "champion this initiative" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 54).

***Change Facilitators.*** The two full-time staff who report to me directly, the ASC and AFA will be delegated tasks during this process as change facilitators. Change facilitators are not responsible for the implementation of change, but they will assist the change implementer and change agent throughout the process. There are also cooperative education students and work-study students who are employed under me in the SAO on a term-by-term basis. These student workers will also play a small role in supporting the change facilitators.

***Change Recipients.*** Primary change recipients of this OIP are those who are affected by the change: the students and the staff. Cawsey et al. (2016) state that often, the people being affected must change their behaviour for the change to take effect. In the case of the chosen solution, students will have another avenue to access SAO services and tools through ICT, which requires a behavioural shift. This change may not necessarily compel students to only access services online because in-person student support will still be available.

The change-facilitation team consists of full-time staff members in the SAO. In Figure 9, a hierarchical chart outlines the specific duties of the change-facilitation team members.

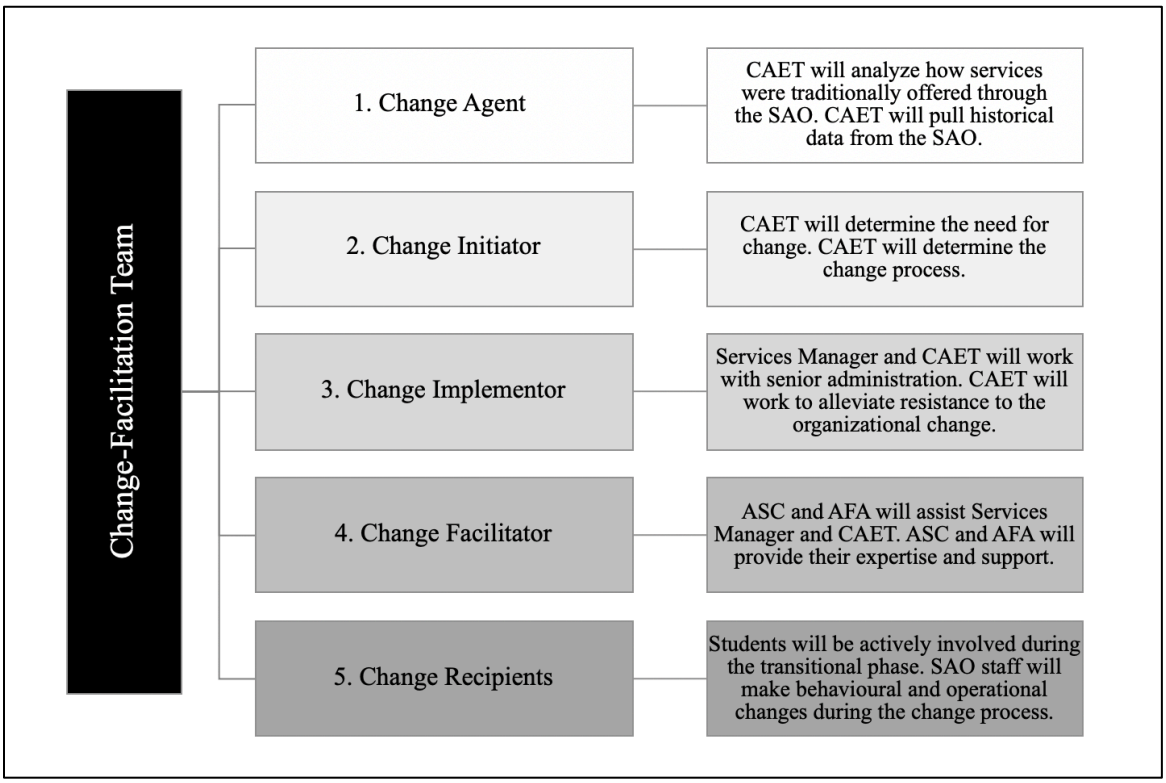


*Figure 9.* Change-Facilitation Team Members' Duties.

If employees in the SAO are not engaged in the change through formal change roles, they will become passive recipients towards the change. Passive recipients can be detrimental to the change plan as they promote helplessness, decrease efficacy and even play victim to the change (Cawsey et al., 2016). With the goals and priorities of the OIP established and the change-facilitation team in place, the change implementation plan process may begin.

**Change Implementation Plan**

The change implementation plan outlines the formal guidelines for how the OIP addresses the PoP. In a large institution like OISTEM, change cannot be implemented overnight (Cawsey et al., 2016). A robust change implementation plan considers the tasks

that need to be completed, the members involved, and the effect these changes will have on stakeholders.

The first step of the change implementation plan is the awakening step, which lasts one month. This is where the need for change is recognized by developing an initial change vision. It is important to understand how accessibility legislation will affect the SAO. The CAET and the Services Manager will develop a vision for change. This step will not have any effect on stakeholders.

Conducting a gap analysis is the second step, which lasts two months. Working with my supervisor and my team, we will articulate the gap between current and desired state. The OISTEM strategic plan and exemplary organization units will play significant roles in the gap analysis. Using the CM as a diagnostic tool, and the social model of disability will be used during all aspects of the change implementation plan. Senior management will be made aware of the gap, and the SAO will begin reaching out to other campus partners.

The third step, mobilization, will take four months. Conducting an organizational cultural analysis and recognizing power dynamics within OISTEM will be needed to communicate the need for change effectively. I will leverage my position as CAET to engage SAO staff in areas outside their formal roles.

The acceleration step will take eight months. This capacity-building stage engages members of the SAO to increase the quality and quantity of ICT. A formal course review will determine if the project meets the needs of the change recipients. Students will provide valuable feedback on the accessibility and usefulness of the course.

Managing the transition, step five will last four months. The SAO will provide formal communication to students regarding the in-person and online availability of services. SAO staff will need to be mindful of potential feedback from students during the transition.

The final step, institutionalization, will compare data from both service delivery types. Ensuring all stakeholders are benefiting from the change will be imperative to the overall success of the plan. Additional changes that are required will be communicated with the Associate Director, SAO.

As the change implementation plan concludes, the SAO will have undergone a large systemic change. As the SAO demonstrates organizational improvement, knowledge mobilization throughout OISTEM will be imperative. The implementation of ICT can be implemented in other organization units and will likely result in other departments following the SAO's lead.

Throughout the change implementation plan, Appendix A, I will be consistent with my leadership approaches to change through the use of an integrated change model while maintaining an emphasis on contemporary accessibility legislation through the lens of the social model of disability (Oliver, 2013).

A change implementation plan chart has been developed to support the organization and timelines surrounding the change and can be found in Appendix A. The chart also includes information on stakeholders and change recipients on the transition phases of service delivery by the SAO. The change implementation plan has been divided into two main sections: a strategy for change and a plan for managing the transition.

**Strategy for Change.** The strategy for change will focus on the OIP's connection to the OSITEM 2020-2025 Strategic Plan document, how conditions will improve for stakeholders, organizational restructuring, and how the plan fits within the OISTEM culture holistically.

The change-facilitation team includes members of the SAO who may not have formal experience being involved in a large-scale project. Transformational leadership includes individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealized influence (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1994). This project will move employees outside their comfort zones by inviting them to learn new skills and adapt to a new way of delivering services. Giving individual consideration to members of my team and increasing intellectual stimulation will build capacity within the SAO.

In order to successfully implement this OIP, the SAO team will need to come together and take on tasks that fall outside of their job descriptions. I will be able to disseminate tasks among my team and provide them with the opportunity to make choices and feel empowered in this change process. Senior administrative members of the SAO will also be involved in this process, though more indirectly, focusing on building relationships with OISTEM senior administration and providing support during the transition.

When viewing change through the social model of disability lens, it is clear that OISTEM needs to make changes to ensure students have equitable access to service. The development and implementation of an online course to support SAO services will be a long process that will require input from stakeholders. Encompassing the views and opinions of students registered with the SAO will strengthen this strategy for change by

providing a voice. Viewing this change through this lens will likely shed light on other departments in OISTEM and promote inclusion across the campus. Figure 10 outlines a simplified version of the integrated change model and explains the essential changes that will occur.

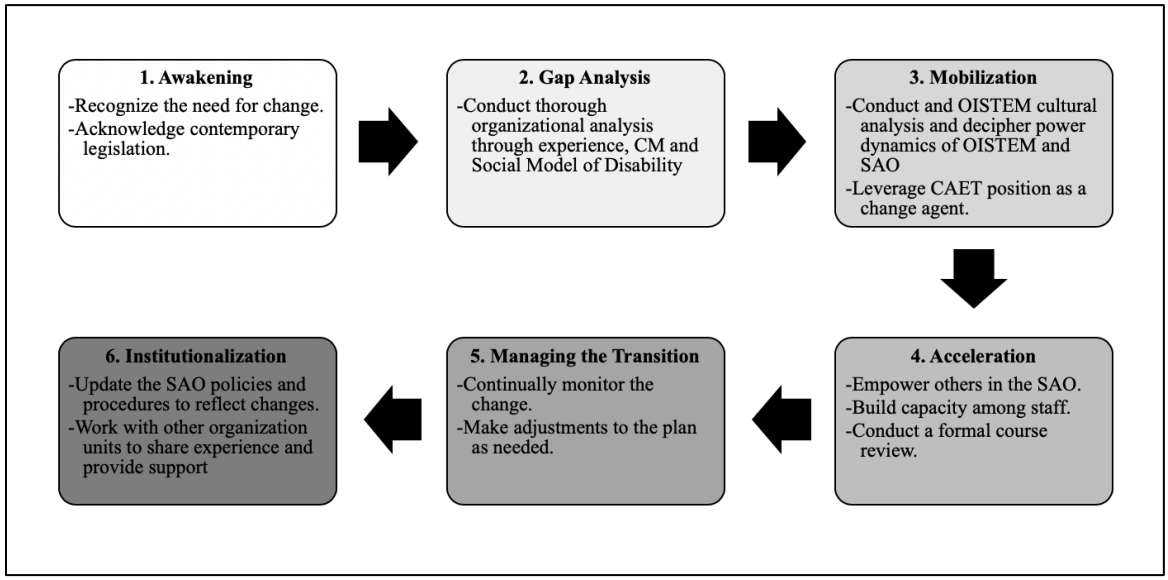


*Figure 10.* Integrated Change Model (Simplified)

***Connection to Strategic Plan.*** With the recent release of OISTEM's strategic plan, the university will be moving in a new direction that strengthens its operations and meets the needs of stakeholders. As mentioned in chapter 1, OISTEM's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan contains four pillars: inquisitiveness, bravery, involvement, and belonging (OISTEM, 2019a). Belonging is the pillar which most closely aligns with this OIP. In the context of the strategic plan, "belonging" is an umbrella term for equity and inclusion, which correlates with the plan to improve access to services in the SAO.

The development of an online course through the use of ICT will face challenges along the way. Bartoli and Hermel (2014) say that "The barriers to innovation in the management of IT are thus not inevitable and impossible to circumvent" (p. 417). In the

case of this OIP, the strategic aspects of developing an online course must be synonymous with the strategic direction of the university.

***Improving Conditions.*** This OIP supports improving conditions for students. Indirectly this organizational change is improving the situation for all organizational actors involved. Student-facing serviced-based employees in the SAO will now have another avenue to direct students for resources and tools. As the change agent, I will have access to analytical data via the online course, specific to the students registered with our office, which will provide valuable information to improve our services further. Management and senior management will now comply with legislation and the university's strategic plan, which alleviates some of the most pressing concerns they likely have.

***Organizational Restructuring.*** The SAO will likely not require a formal organizational restructuring. The recent changes to the SAO and my position as CAET were put in place to promote organizational improvement and support an undertaking like this OIP. There may be a need to update job descriptions of the ASC and AFA if this organizational change goes too far beyond the scope of their roles. The SAO will likely need to update policies and procedures to reflect the new way services can be delivered to students. Informal leadership roles and responsibilities may emerge throughout this change process and will be addressed as they arrive.

**Plan for Managing Transition.** The SAO provides services for thousands of students each semester who have registered disabilities. Students rely heavily on the high level of service that they are familiar with, as changes or disruptions to service can be detrimental to them. The plan for managing the transition will include making adjustments and reacting to stakeholders, empowering personnel, supports and resources required, implementation issues, goals and limitations of the OIP.

***Stakeholder Reaction.*** I believe there will be a positive reaction to this OIP by all stakeholders involved except for those with low computer literacy. Fortunately, the SAO will continue delivering service in-person beyond this OIP. Although this change has a minimal financial cost, it will take a lot of personnel and time to implement this plan entirely. This plan has been developed out of necessity in adhering to legislation and complying with the OISTEM strategic plan. Stakeholders with an administrative and financial vested interest can rest at ease, as this plan cultivates the skills and passion of those working in the SAO to build capacity. The students, change recipients, will also have a positive experience with this new online course as they can now access services and tools remotely. Understandably, the transitional phase of this OIP may have some wrinkles to be ironed out, which is why the traditional service delivery will remain an option for students who are able to visit the SAO physically.

***Empowering Personnel.*** As mentioned in Figure 9, the change-facilitation team will be actively involved in the implementation of the online course. The AFA and ASC will have the authority to work on a project outside of their formal job description, which will develop a sense of empowerment (Özaralli, 2003). The AFA and ASC will learn new skills and develop professionally throughout their involvement in this project.

***Supports and Resources.*** Shifting services towards online has become commonplace in business. A centralized online area for straightforward support can help alleviate the pressure and occasional line ups of students faced by the SAO reception. Having another avenue to provide support to students, like an online course, allows students to problem-solve using their computers through self-directed learning.

Time is one of the most significant resources required for this undertaking. The entire change process will take approximately two years for full implementation. During that time, countless hours of input from staff to support the change will be required. This includes the early stages of developing the course, updating the course and SAO policies, collecting data, and annual reviews of the course.

From a technological perspective, developing an online course will have zero financial cost to the department as the LMS is readily available for staff and faculty to use. My personal experience in ICT will also alleviate any required training in the online course development as I can conduct this in-house.

The only actual financial cost to the department will be the staff time used to support the project. Once completed, the online course will require minimal time and personnel to maintain it.

***Implementation Issues.*** Challenges that may arise during the implementation of the plan will be mitigated due to the continual traditional delivery of services in the SAO. Students will still have the option to attend in-person appointments, workshops and the drop-in centre. It is not to be understated that this online course does not replace or remove the SAO's current way of conducting business, but to make the current services and tools more accessible.

***Goals.*** Currently, in the SAO, students can attend accommodation appointments over the phone, vide conference and in-person. The services offered by the SAO to support the student are only available in-person. The short-term goal of this project is to leverage the ICT that students currently use for the academic courses to realize the benefit and flexibility of our course. The long-term goal of this project is to have a service pathway that can support students without having to be on campus at all.

***Limitations.*** Developing an online course to support students registered in the SAO has become a passion project of mine. Using my experience and educational background, I believe this plan is a step in the right direction for accessibility. However, when shifting traditional in-person services to an online setting, there may be resistance if the quality of service is diminished.

Being a middle manager can make it challenging to get buy-in from senior management. It will be crucial that I leverage the benefits and quality of online education to those who may not have the background knowledge.

Through the SAO's regular communication with students, a clear plan and instructions will be outlined for this change. The course will be a self-register course, so only students who want to enroll will be able to access it. Due to the self-enroll nature of the course, the SAO will still rely on other means for communicating with students and continue to deliver services in-person.

In conclusion, the chosen solution to the PoP is a step in the right direction for providing a higher level of service to students registered with the SAO. Adhering to legislation, connecting to the university's strategic plan and supporting a disenfranchised group of students are essential priorities that link to the OIP's goal: to make accessibility

services more accessible. It will take a robust change-facilitation team to implement these strategies and manage the transition of this innovative plan. Once the online course has been fully implemented, there will still be background work to do with the course to keep it from becoming stagnant. The change that is being implemented will need to continually be monitored and evaluated to ensure it has been optimized for the students it serves.

**Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation**

The goal of the change process monitoring and evaluation plan is to ensure that the change path model process is precisely detailed and assessed. The process should include tools to track change and measure progress during implementation. Monitoring and evaluating the OIP will ensure that refinements to the plan are actionable and supported by data collected during the monitoring phase. Through the use of Deming's (2000) Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) model during each step of the integrated change model, outlined in chapter 1, will ensure "the best likelihood of sustained improvements." (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015, p. 280). This OIP has been developed to improve the accessibility of services delivered through the SAO. Evaluating progress throughout the change is necessary to ensure goals are met, and that the change is effectively improving accessibility.

**PDSA Model.** The PDSA model is a tool for monitoring and evaluating a change process (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). The model has four key components: plan, do, study and act (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). The SAO must continue to provide students with a high level of service and care during the implementation of this organizational change. The PDSA model will ensure the SAO is making incremental changes that are assessed during each step of the integrated change model.

***Plan.*** The plan step is where objectives based on the needs of students registered with the SAO will be defined. These objectives include determining if the problem is affecting the SAO and determining what the office is trying to achieve through an "aimed statement" (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015, p. 279).

***Do.*** During the third step, do, the objectives developed in the plan step are completed, and results are recorded (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). Data collected is expressed as a visual, like a chart or graph. Due to the ICT-based nature of this OIP, there should be a significant amount of data for analysis.

***Study.*** Through the collection of data, results will be used to determine if there is any alignment between intended outcomes and actual outcomes (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). A critical analysis will determine if any lessons can be learned.

***Act.*** During the final stage of the PDSA model, act, improvements must be implemented. Determining if there are procedures in place to support the solution is an essential aspect of the act stage.

**Integrated Change Model & PDSA.** In chapter 1, an integrated change model was developed that pulls the necessary steps from both Beckhard and Harris Change Model and the Cawsey et al. Change Path Model to address the uniqueness of OISTEM. As a sizeable post-secondary institution, organizational change will be successful if implemented gradually. Donnelley and Kirk (2016) state that "small incremental changes within a complex system are more likely to be effective in producing overall effective outcomes." (p. 281). Addressing each step of the integrated change model with a PDSA cycle will ensure the implementation of effective change management.

***Awakening.*** The first step of the integrated change model, awakening, includes a critical organizational analysis where the change leader can evaluate the internal and external factors affecting the institution (Cawsey et al., 2016). Figure 11 describes the PDSA cycle during the awakening phase and outlines the crucial next steps.

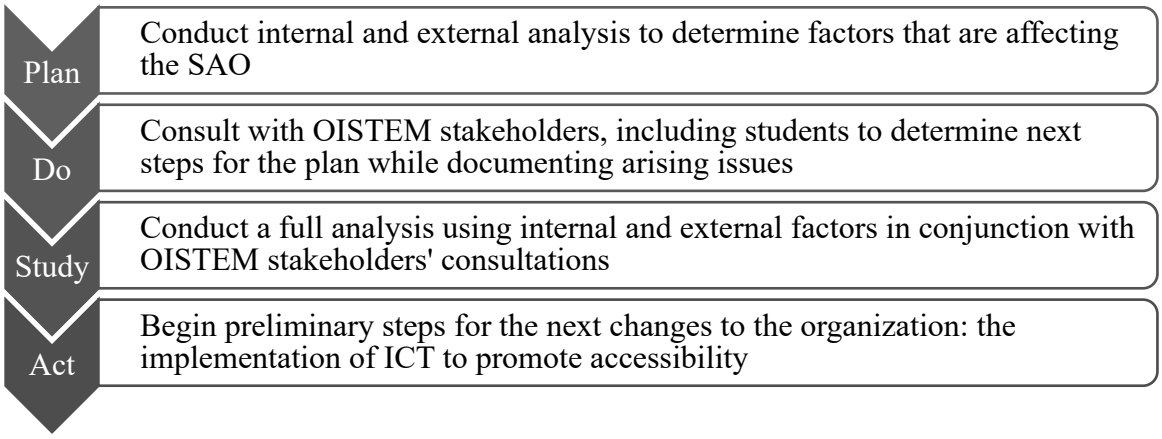


*Figure 11.* PDSA Cycle: Awakening

A vision for change is developed from the organizational analysis evidence collected during the first step of the integrated change model. “Making accessibility services more accessible through the implementation of ICT” may initially sound like an obvious and simplistic vision, but quantifying and qualifying the gap between current and desired states must also undergo a PDSA cycle.

***Gap Analysis.*** The second step is where the desired future state is clearly defined and compared to the current organizational state. The gap analysis involves collecting data from internal and external stakeholders and consultations with upper administration (Cawsey et al., 2016). Ensuring alignment of organizational goals is essential for the success of the change plan. The gap analysis needs to be used by change leaders to develop the vision for change further (Cawsey et al., 2016). Figure 12 describes the PDSA cycle during the gap analysis phase and outlines the next steps.

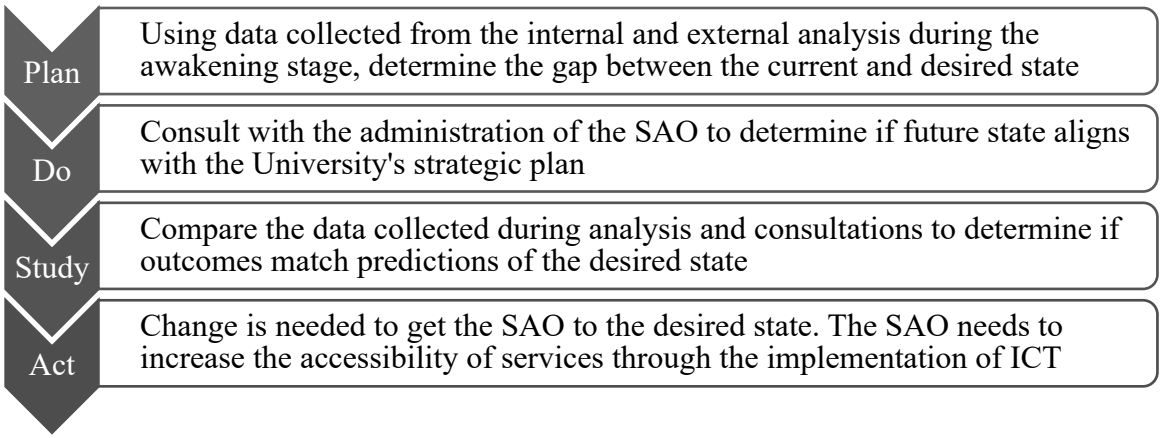


*Figure 12.* PDSA Cycle: Gap Analysis

The gap analysis justifies the need for change through an organizational analysis and determination of the desired state. The gap analysis will also determine shortfalls relative to legislation and the strategic plan. Since the gap analysis has determined the need for change, significant actions need to take place during the mobilization step of the integrated change model.

***Mobilization.*** In the third step, mobilization, consideration needs to be given to how the organization should change and the possible options for solving the problem. The change leader should also recognize potential resistance that could occur from stakeholders affected by the change (Cawsey et al., 2016). Figure 13 describes the PDSA cycle during the mobilization phase and outlines the next steps.

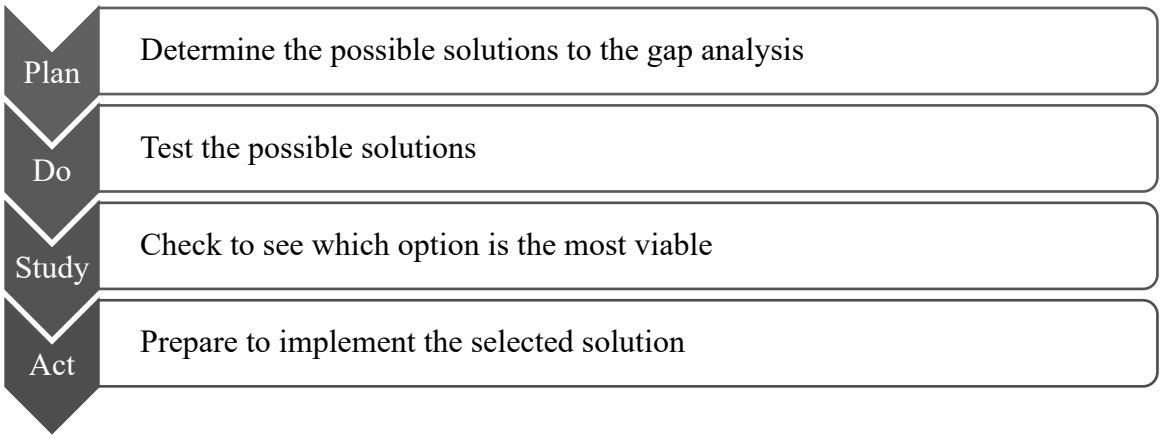


*Figure 13.* PDSA Cycle: Mobilization

With a variety of solutions to the problem, outlined in chapter 2, determining the best possible solution takes time. Testing out the different options for increasing accessibility and collecting feedback from the SAO will determine the most viable solution. The development of an online course is the chosen solution and will be implemented during the acceleration phase of the integrated change model.

***Acceleration.*** The fourth step involves planning and implementation (Cawsey et al., 2016). Planning how the selected solution will be used and building momentum will help ensure the success of the change. During this phase, members of the SAO will need to develop new skills to support the implementation. Figure 14 describes the PDSA cycle during the acceleration phase and outlines the crucial next steps.

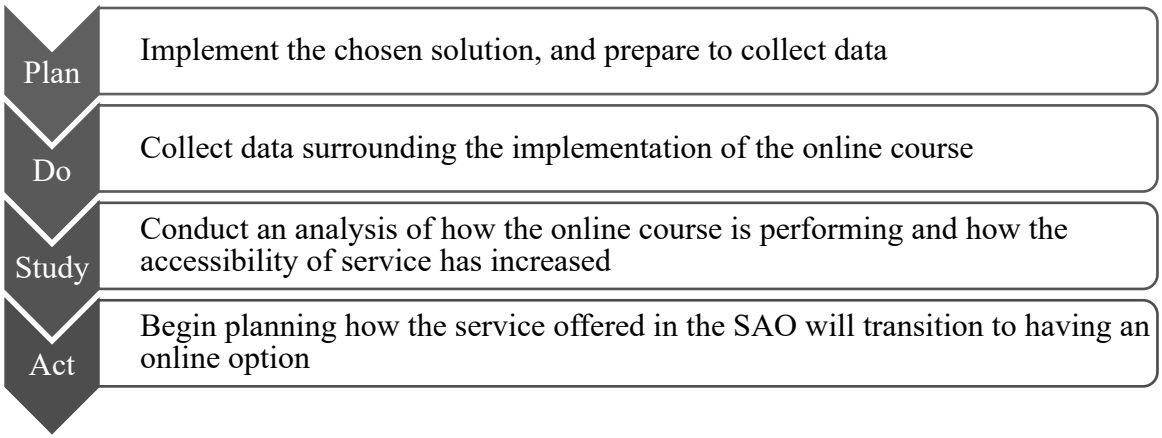


*Figure 14.* PDSA Cycle: Acceleration

During the acceleration phase, the chosen solution has been implemented, so the change leader will need to empower other members of the SAO to continue increasing capacity and building momentum. Changing how the SAO delivers services will inevitably need meaningful communication during the transition.

***Managing the Transition.*** In the fifth step, managing the transition, it will be necessary for change drivers and members of the SAO to measure the students' attitudes towards online delivery of services. The online course will likely need continual updating and review to avoid stagnation and decrease in quality. Figure 15 describes the PDSA cycle during the transition phase and outlines the next steps.

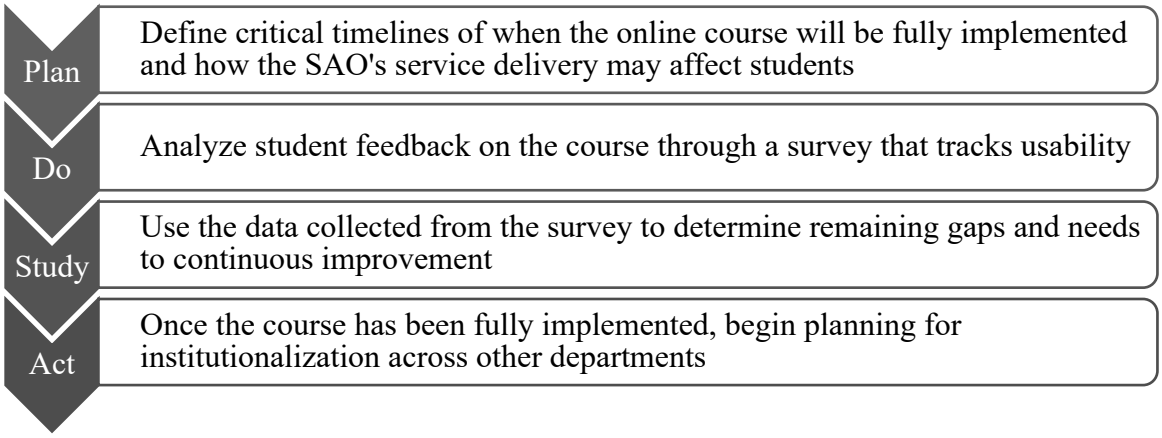


*Figure 15.* PDSA Cycle: Managing the Transition

With the course fully implemented and data regularly collected from students, the SAO will be able to determine the next steps for the project.

***Institutionalization.*** With the development and implementation of an online course, the SAO can now provide services to students in an online setting. Moving forward, the framework for this OIP can be used to promote the institutionalization of online service delivery across other student service departments. Figure 16 describes the PDSA cycle during the institutionalization phase and outlines the crucial next steps.

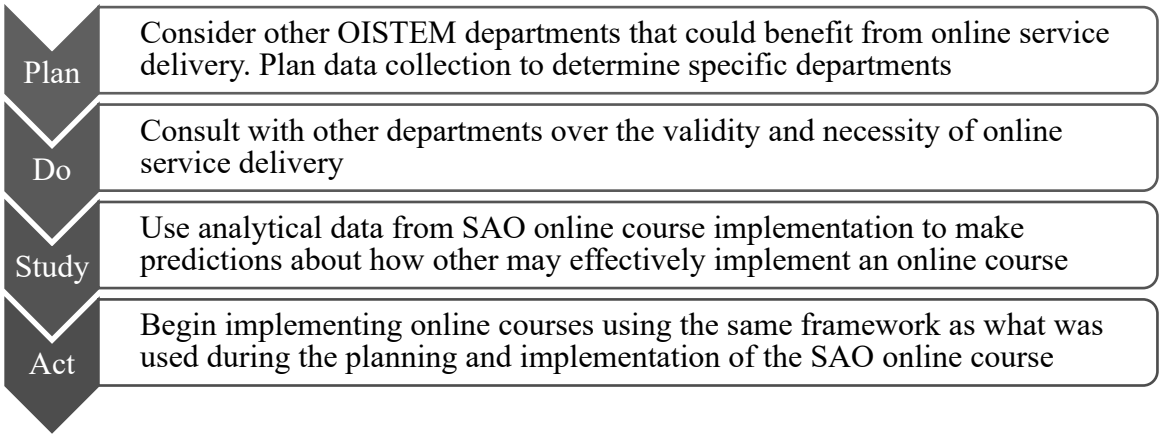


*Figure 16.* PDSA Cycle: Institutionalization

Having the online course developed and implemented will revolutionize how the SAO delivers services and how they are recognized across OISTEM. The implementation of an online course for other service-based departments will come at the discretion of each respective department.

**Assessing Change.** With substantial changes to service delivery in the SAO, it will be essential to assess change and make refinements as necessary. An online course provides a variety of ways to track change effectiveness. It is often assumed that online courses lack the quality that face-to-face learning in the classroom has (Uppal, Ali, & Gulliver, 2018; Levy, 2007). Although the SAO will be developing a course, it is not

identical to academic courses that students would traditionally enroll in. The SAO course will consist of tools and strategies for students to use at their own will. Students can self-enroll in the course and access information specific to their disability-related needs. The online course does not have any formal testing modules built-in, but there are many ways the SAO can track student usage.

***Tools to Track Change.*** With the online course up and running, the collection of feedback will be required to determine if students are still receiving the same level of support. A large amount of analytics will be available for the course administrator. The analytics will include student-specific information about course usage. Analytics will provide useful data surrounding student usage. Alongside the built-in analytics, a separate questionnaire will also be used, as outlined in Appendix B. The questionnaire is an online learning readiness questionnaire (Soydal, Alır, & Ünal, 2011). As the delivery of services shifts towards online, students will require some degree of online course experience in order to access the SAO course efficiently. In the online learning readiness questionnaire, students will gauge how prepared they are to use OISTEM's LMS. Once students have become proficient in using the SAO course, they will be asked to complete a SAO course evaluation. In the evaluation, students will be able to give feedback on the course and note where improvements can be made.

***Gauging Progress.*** The SAO collects data when students come to the office in-person. Some of the data could include: whom the student met with, for how long, documentation they have submitted, and if they attended the drop-in centre. Data collection by frontline staff is used to justify budgets and funding for departments at OISTEM, which means the online course will be an excellent tool for tracking students.

The SAO can make comparisons using historical data from previous years and the analytical data from the course. The analytical data will include, student-specific information such as time spent in the course, resources viewed and downloaded, duration of videos watched, and much more. This data collection will be used to inform if the SAO course is useful and if efficiencies in the SAO have been defined. Are more students being served? Are there fewer students physically coming into the SAO? Are these digital resources providing students with a positive and accessible experience?

***Refining Implementation.*** Using the tools to track change, the SAO can determine how well the course is helping students. Looking at analytical data and historical office data, the SAO can determine if this course has increased efficiency within the office. Data collection from the LMS is streamlined and provides real-time data that can be used to refine the course and service delivery within the SAO.

Monitoring and evaluating the OIP is necessary to ensure the plan is sustainable and effectively serving a purpose. With any new initiative, there will always be room for improvement, and data collection can help support that. Before the OIP can be fully implemented, the SAO needs to develop a change process communication plan.

## Change Process Communication Plan

Organizational change is essential for organizations to adapt to their changing environments, and this shift can have a direct impact on employees. Change is usually difficult for employees, and this can be amplified if the current state is reasonably comfortable (Klein, 1996). Within the context of the SAO, employees will be the first to notice the growing pains associated with change, which will most definitely be felt by the students. Armenakis and Harris (2002) state that negative responses to the change are

connected to how leadership delivers a communication message. “The change message both conveys the nature of the change and shapes the sentiments that determine the reactions to the change” (Armenakis & Harris, 2002, p. 169). In order to strengthen the communication of this OIP, a communication change plan has been developed using Klein’s (1996) communication principles and Armenakis and Harris’ (2002) strategies for communicating the change message in conjunction with the integrated change model. Together, both the communication principles and strategies for communicating the change message will be the underlying strengths of the communication plan and utilized throughout each step of the integrated change model. Figure 17 provides a visualization of how these components will all work together.

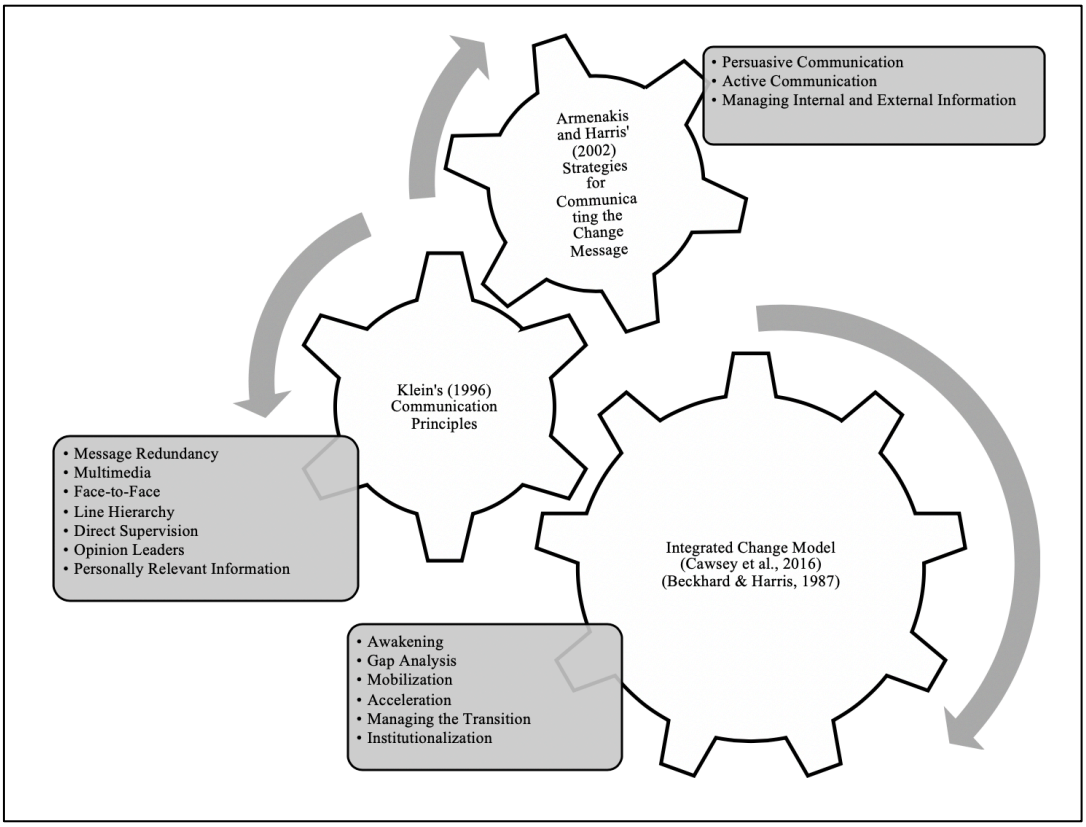


*Figure 17.* SAO Change Communication Plan

This multifaceted approach to organizational communication is necessary during a substantial organizational change. In Figure 17, the strategies for communicating the change message affect the communication principles which determine how the integrated change model is communicated. Klein (1996) states that "It seems to us that a well-planned communications process can be most helpful in easing the way to a more effective process" (p. 44).

**Communication Principles.** Communication with employees following change can be vague and cause mixed feelings among workers. While the administration does communicate that change will be happening, the degree to which they communicate, and the effectiveness will vary by organization. This OIP is centred around how the service delivery in the SAO is changing, during the change, it will be imperative that students are not affected negatively, and that staff are well informed of changes to policies and procedures. Change occurs slowly and incrementally, which allows for a time where employees can develop different attitudes (Klein, 1996). The communication plan attached to organizational change should take a holistic approach to how it informs people in the institution. Klein (1996) states that the key principles can be used to develop an effective communications strategy. The key communication principles being used in this communication plan are message redundancy, the use of multimedia, face-to-face communication, line hierarchy, direct supervision, opinion leaders and personally relevant information.

***Message Redundancy.*** The use of repetition to promote retention may seem like a standard and clear communication principle, but often management responsible for the communication plan will only state information once or twice. Research suggests that

sharing information multiple times through more than one medium will promote message retention (Klein, 1996; Bacharach & Aiken, 1977). In a large institution like OISTEM, repeating the message and using different pathways to do so will help to ensure the communication of organizational change is echoed throughout the organization. OISTEM is a university made up of many different organizational units that are highly siloed in nature, which requires message redundancy to promote the absorption of the message. Throughout the integrated change model, communication will be repeated and altered as necessary to different stakeholders. An example of this would be how students would require message redundancy during the change, so they are well informed on how the service delivery in the SAO is changing. SAO frontline staff would likely need more redundancy leading up to the change so they can be prepared for the new policies, protocols and interactions they have with students. As the OIP is slowly implemented, the repetition of messaging and the intended audience will vary.

***Multimedia.*** Communicating with the OISTEM community will need to take place over a variety of mediums to ensure the diverse group of change agents and change recipients are reached. The use of several media forms during communication is more effective than just one (Klein, 1996). With the current high usage of ICT in OISTEM, staff, faculty and students are becoming inundated with emails. Throughout this OIP, the communication plan will be shared not only across traditional emails, but through meetings, town halls, social media, posters, OISTEM's LMS, and the OISTEM Podcast. The use of different media will help change leaders target messages to specific people in ways that they would like to receive the message. For example, a recent study found that students are checking traditional email less each year and have a preference to use the

messaging service inside of the OISTEM LMS (OISTEM, 2018). Students need to log into the LMS daily for their course content and correspondence with professors, so leveraging the LMS as a primary communication tool with students is ideal. Since the SAO's online course is aligned with the OISTEM LMS, communication of this OIP will be seamless.

***Face-to-Face Communication.*** When considering all of Klein's (1996) communication principles, face-to-face communication is the most effective on its own. Face-to-face is a prevalent form of communication for important information at OISTEM because of the daily interactions staff have with each other. This type of engaging communication promotes two-way involvement of those in the conversation. Two-way communication "clarifies ambiguities and increases the probability that the sender and the receiver are connecting appropriately" (Klein, 1996, p. 34). Using face-to-face communication has different positive outcomes depending on the stakeholder who is being engaged. For senior management, face-to-face communication helps solidify the importance of the change plan and allows for potential feedback and pivoting that may be necessary. Face-to-face with subordinates may increase richness to the conversation and promote buy-in. It provides the change leader, or communicator, with an opportunity to understand different perspectives, make clarifications and ensure the correct information is received by the employees (Torppa & Smith, 2011). Face-to-face communication with students will allow the SAO to articulate the change clearly and answer any questions that students may have. From the three examples of how face-to-face communication will work in this communication plan, it should be noted that this form of communication does not mean that stakeholder feedback will be automatically accepted and implemented.

***Line Hierarchy.*** Post-secondary institutions in Canada tend to have complex organizational structures, and OISTEM is no exception. The SAO has several layers of administration, from the associate director down to the CAET. Information is communicated through line hierarchy, meaning employees receive information from those they report to, which legitimizes the communication. Line management carries a significant amount of power and credibility when it comes to communications impact (Klein, 1996). Although this OIP includes aspects of distributed leadership, it should be noted that "in no way does the use of authority interfere with the more recently popular participative or consensus-based processes" (Klein, 1996, p. 35). Using line-hierarchy to communicate will ensure that all members of the SAO are fully informed and can be made a "communications partner" (Klein, 1996, p. 35).

***Direct Supervision.*** After OISTEM's strategic plan was finalized, it was communicated to staff in a top-down approach. Members of the SAO were informed of the university's new strategic direction by the associate director, the highest-ranking position in the office. Organizational hierarchy is the most effective source of essential, official information and will be a necessity in the delivery of this OIP. My role as CAET is the last administrative level before non-administration. Making the link from administration to non-administration is crucial, as they are typically less involved in more intricate organizational decision making but are often expected to help carry it out (Klein, 1996). Due to my frequent contact with my supervisees, I have the opportunity to regularly converse using different mediums of all of the changes I have been informed on. During my bi-weekly one-on-one meetings with my supervisees, I can make all

organizational changes and directives explicitly clear, while providing an opportunity for two-way communication.

***Opinion Leaders.*** Opinion leaders carry a significant amount of influence in the workplace, as they possess a great deal of experience and knowledge of the institution from a historical perspective (Klein, 1996; Torppa & Smith, 2011). Often, opinion leaders are the most senior staff in an organization, or are in a non-administrative role, but can leverage other influence through a union or staff association. In this OIP, involving experienced staff will be paramount in generating early success and buy-in of the organizational shift. Although OISTEM is a non-unionized institution, many opinion leaders in the SAO can provide expertise based on their experience. Opinion leaders have a valuable perspective, as they have witnessed changes over the years and may recognize pivots, I may need to make to the OIP's delivery.

***Personally Relevant Information.*** While a top-down approach is often used to communicate change in an organization, ensuring the relevancy of the information is essential. From an administrative standpoint, the relevance of change is usually associated with organizational efficiency, adhering to policies or being fiducially responsible. In the case of this OIP, increasing efficiency and adhering to legislation are drivers of this change. Organizational changes will, directly and indirectly, affect others in the SAO. Communicating the change to employees while providing context will ensure the change remains relevant. Employees want to know how changes will affect their day-to-day life in the workplace (Pincus, 1986). Connecting the change to specific instances of how individuals will be affected will help strengthen communication. Klein's (1996)

communication principles lay the foundation for how they will be strategically communicated to employees.

**Communication Strategies.** Using the integrated change model in conjunction with the communication principles will help ensure the organizational change is effectively shared with stakeholders. In addition to the change model and communication principles, three strategies will be used to convey the message effectively: persuasive communication, active communication, and managing internal and external information (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). These communication strategies are highly relevant in the OISTEM context, as organizational change requires well-rounded communication to ensure all stakeholders are contacted.

***Persuasive Communication.*** The most common communication strategy in this OIP will be persuasive communication. Direct communication with stakeholders is a necessity in post-secondary institutions as organizational changes must be communicated to governing bodies. The forms of persuasive communication used in this OIP are the use of emails, internal memos, promotional material, formal announcements and videos. The change agent is primarily communicating verbally with stakeholders through direct means of communication (Armenakis & Harris, 2002).

***Active Participation.*** Creating and implementing an online course for the SAO requires a significant amount of participation from staff. Active participation is the most effective way to communicate a message because it "capitalizes on self-discovery" (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). Active participation comes in three forms: enactive mastery, vicarious learning and participation in decision making (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). Enactive mastery will be instituted from the beginning of the communication plan and

will gradually build on skills and knowledge by involving members of the SAO through distributed leadership (Hallinger, 2003). Enactive mastery refers to succeeding in a challenging task, such as developing an online course, and gaining valuable information from experience (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003) Vicarious learning will also be evident throughout the communication plan through the transformational leadership (Bass, 1996) framework used. Vicarious learning refers to learning through observation (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003). Participation in decision making will be meticulously used throughout the communication plan and the OIP as a whole.

***Managing Internal and External Information.*** Legislative changes in the field of accessibility are causing organizations like OISTEM to rethink and reevaluate the accessibility of their service delivery. Internal and external sources can both play a role in delivering communication surrounding change. Internal sources supporting change in the SAO could come from conversations or surveys with students. External sources of information are more effective and believable (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Gist, 1987), so using contemporary research and legislation can help support the need.

In conclusion, the change process communication plan focuses on the integrated change model and how communication principles and strategies can be used to communicate the message effectively. Appendix A provides some insight into how the communication principles, communication strategies and the integrated change model work together. Both communication principles and strategies can understandably help support valuable communication. Some of the principles and strategies may seem apparent, but it is how and when they are used that will ensure success. Communication

of the OIP needs to be intentional and well planned, not an afterthought. Too often, organizations make changes that have adverse effects that could have been mitigated through the use of a more robust communication plan.

**Chapter 3 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a thorough overview of the change implementation plan, processes for monitoring and evaluating the plan and a plan to communicate the need for change. Remaining faithful to my agency as a change leader in my institution, the chosen solution to the PoP and the change implementation plan seems to fit the culture of OISTEM and the contemporary legislative pressures. Delegation of SAO staff member duties in conjunction with the integrated change model helped ease the implementation of the plan. Monitoring and evaluating the change plan was completed using Donnelly & Kirk's (2015) PDSA model was used for continual improvement of the change process during each step of the integrated change model. Lastly, the change communication plan utilized the integrated change model with Klein's (1996) communication principles and Armenakis and Harris' (2002) communication strategies.

**Next Steps and Future Considerations**

Following the successful implementation of this OIP, the next steps for increasing accessibility in post-secondary institutions remains a high priority for me on a personal and professional level. The online course developed in this OIP requires a significant amount of continual maintenance to ensure the quality of services does not drop. The online course will need to undergo a yearly review, where resources and tools will be updated to reflect the needs of current students. SAO staff will require continual training as the course is refined. Students must be communicated with regularly regarding updates

to the course. The three next steps and future considerations for this OIP include institutionalization, knowledge mobilization, and continued social justice.

**Institutionalization.** Although this plan only focuses on the SAO, one department that serves a few thousand students, there is potential to replicate and spread this organizational change to other departments, other universities and become nationally recognized. Accessibility should transcend the SAO and be championed by other groups on campus.

Other organization units in OISTEM could also benefit from the digitization of their services to promote accessibility. As demonstrated in this OIP, the development of an online course in a university may not be as daunting as initially thought. Through the use of distributed and transformational leadership approaches, organization units can cultivate talent and build capacity from within the university. This OIP can be used as a framework that other departments can follow to digitize their services and increase accessibility. Writing centres, student success departments, graduate services offices are all examples of organization units that could also benefit from the digitization of services.

**Knowledge Mobilization.** OISTEM is a leader in innovation, and other post-secondary institutions regularly look towards the innovative initiatives happening here. Through conferences put on by the Canadian Network for Innovation in Education (CNIE) and the OISTEM Staff Conference, I will mobilize my knowledge of online learning and how it can be used to promote accessibility in other departments and universities. Education through collaboration will be an effective means to share this OIP with other institutions.

**Continued Social Justice.** My agency within the SAO clearly outlines my passion and drive towards social justice for students with disabilities. The creation of an online OIP is only the beginning of making post-secondary education accessible for everyone. I hope that following these next steps will not merely put the SAO on a pedestal of how to provide exemplary service, but to become an industry norm in higher education.

**OIP Conclusion**

This OIP has explicitly stated the importance of making accessibility services more accessible for students and outlined a plan to make it become a reality. Adhering to accessibility legislation like the AODA means that post-secondary institutions must comply by 2025 (Ferguson, 2017), and the SAO is well on its way. OISTEM continues to be one of Canada's most innovative institutions and relishes at the chance to grow and change. This OIP introduced the problem, planned and developed a solution and implemented, evaluated and communicated a solution.

In chapter 1, the PoP was introduced and was connected to the organizational context of OISTEM. A large university with the desire to innovate needs to improve the accessibility of services to comply with legislation. Viewing the problem through the social model of disability lens solidified the fact that it was the university that needed to change and not the students. With a transformational and distributed leadership approach to the problem, I developed a leadership-focused vision for change that targeted the strengths of different OISTEM stakeholders and built capacity from within the SAO. Determining organizational change readiness based on OISTEM's capacity for change, and the internal and external forces, meant that a change needed to occur.

In chapter 2, a leadership framework for understanding the change was developed. A combination of the change path model and the Beckhard and Harris change model was used to create the integrated change model. A critical organizational analysis was used to collect and evaluate data to select the best change path. Of the three considered solutions, developing an online course was the most suitable choice given my agency within the SAO and the OISTEM community.

Lastly, in chapter 3, the implementation, evaluation of the solution to the PoP were addressed. It was noted that organizational improvement takes a high degree of planning and collaboration. Implementing organizational change must be done slowly and communicate effectively to stakeholders.

This OIP began as a passion project in my new role at OISTEM. Connecting my educational background and work experience to the efforts of the SAO has been a challenging yet rewarding experience. I hope that this OIP becomes a framework for leading change in institutions that are looking to improve the quality and accessibility of services offered in post-secondary institutions.

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# Appendix A

Change Implementation Plan.

**Change Implementation Plan**

| *Steps* | Tasks | Change-Facilitation Team Members | Effect on Stakeholders |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1. Awakening (1 month)* | -Recognize the need for change<br>-Understand how legislation will affect the SAO<br>-Determine initial change vision<br>-Quantify areas of opportunity<br>-Develop a vision for change | -CAET<br>-Services Manager | -Students: None<br>-Other stakeholders: None |
| *2. Gap Analysis (2 months)* | -Articulate the gap between the current and desired state<br>-Use experiences, strategic plan and exemplary organization units<br>-The social model of disability lens used during all aspects of the change implementation plan<br>-Congruence Model used as a diagnostic tool<br>-Determine the viability of the project and potential campus partners | -CAET<br>-Services Manager<br>-AFA<br>-ASC | -Senior Management: Made aware of the gap in services that will grow over time<br>-SAO: Begins working with other campus partners: AODA Specialist, CoL |
| *3. Mobilization (4 months)* | -Conduct a cultural analysis of OISTEM<br>-Determine the power dynamics of OISTEM and SAO<br>-Communicate the need for change based on findings from gap analysis<br>-Leverage CAET as a change agent<br>-Utilize SAO staff skillsets | -CAET<br>-Services Manager<br>-AFA<br>-ASC<br>-SAO Staff<br>-Students | -Senior Management: Communication with employees increases<br>-SAO Employees: Being utilized in areas outside formal roles |
| *4. Acceleration (8 months)* | -Work with change facilitators and other members of the SAO to engage them<br>-Build capacity within the SAO to increase quality and quantity of ICT<br>-Conduct formal course review to ensure the project meets the needs of change recipients | -SAO Staff<br>-CAET<br>-Students | -SAO Employees: Internal ICT training conducted by the CAET<br>-Students: Provide feedback on the online course |
| *5. Managing the Transition (4 months)* | -Continued in-person SAO services<br>-Students are given communication on SAO transition to the online course for services<br>-Value student feedback to make necessary changes to the project | -SAO Staff<br>-CAET<br>-Students | -Students: Will experience change in how they access SAO services |
| *6. Institutionalization (4 months)* | -Compare in-person data with online data<br>-Ensure all stakeholders are benefiting from the change<br>-Consider additional changes for the SAO | -Associate Director, SAO<br>-CAET | -OISTEM organization units: Begin their awakening phases as this OIP framework pushes them to adapt |

## Appendix B

Online Learning Readiness Survey (Soydal, Alır and Ünal, 2011).

Name: _____ OISTEM Student ID: _____

**Online Learning Readiness Survey**

To complete the following survey, read the statements below and check the boxes for the statements that apply to your learning situation. This survey contains modified statements from research conducted by Soydal, Alır and Ünal (2011).

- ❒ I am confident using the internet to gather information
- ❒ I am confident in my ability to communicate through email
- ❒ I have experience using video conferencing software (example: Skype)
- ❒ I am comfortable using the OISTEM LMS for my academic courses
- ❒ I understand how to use web browsers
- ❒ I am confident using different file types (example: .doc, .pdf, .ppt)
- ❒ I am well versed in the accessibility features of my computer
- ❒ I am confident using software licensed by OISTEM (example: Office365)
- ❒ I have experience with e-learning (or online learning)
- ❒ I regularly use technology in my daily life

**Sum: _____/ 10**

If the sum of your checkboxes is five or higher, you are ready to use the SAO online course to access services, tools and resources. If the sum of your checkboxes is below five, please continue accessing SAO services, tools and resources in-person.