

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR FRANCOPHONIE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA PROGRESS REPORT

MAY 2021

Office of the Vice-President, International and Francophonie



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Foreword



Ten months ago, the Board of Governors approved my appointment as Vice-President, International and Francophonie. In this role, I have the ambitious task of advancing our university's leadership within the Francophonie community provincially, nationally and internationally, including within its leading organizations. When I took up my responsibilities, I pointed out that the University of Ottawa has the distinction of belonging to two worlds of great importance: the world of major research universities and the world of the rare bilingual institutions that have a special role to play in higher education within the world of Francophonie in Canada and abroad. For this reason, our Francophone character must be viewed as an asset that distinguishes and defines us.

I am committed to redefining the conversation around the role of Francophonie within our institution, to ensure it continues to grow in meaning, dynamism and engagement, so that it may be seen as a valuable and enriching asset for our community. The immediate implementation of the recommendations in the Francophonie Action Plan should enable us to reach that goal. And while the pandemic has forced us to rearrange certain priorities, the implementation of the plan has always been a central focus.

Beyond the worldwide health crisis, our University community has had to deal with a number of local challenges. These challenges, occurring against the backdrop of a series of headline-making incidents, particularly affected the Francophone community, unsettling some of its long-held certitudes. But we have not been distracted. We continue our efforts to make the University of Ottawa a beacon of hope to Francophones, increasingly aligned with their needs and concerns.

As part of this ongoing conversation with our community members, I would like to provide a clear and detailed report on the progress we have made in implementing the *Francophonie Action Plan*. As you will see, our work to fulfil our commitments has especially borne fruit in recent months, with tangible progress in numerous projects. Of course, our ongoing efforts notwithstanding, there remains much to be done.

My whole team deserves my thanks, as do all Francophonie stakeholders on campus. Because of their energy and determination, we have made much needed strides. Francophonie is woven of many threads, strengthened daily by the support and participation of all.

Sanni Yaya

Vice-President, International and Francophonie

Background

Francophonie has been at the heart of the University of Ottawa's mission since its founding in 1848, and was also included in its constituting legislation of 1965, its *Regulation on Bilingualism* of 1974, and its designation under the *Ontario French Language Services Act* in 2015.

In 2019, the University developed an *Action Plan for Francophonie at the University of Ottawa* to reform the latter's governance of Francophonie, strengthen its outreach and presence on campus, and better communicate the University's Francophone mission.

This action plan is the product of a working group, chaired by Professor Linda Cardinal, who focused reflection on the four guidelines established by the President in 2018:

- As the oldest bilingual university in North America and the largest bilingual university in the world, the University of Ottawa has been a Francophone intellectual hub since its founding.
- Francophonie is a major asset in enhancing the University of Ottawa's strategic positioning in Ontario, in Canada and abroad.
- Francophonie and bilingualism enrich the entire University community. They are important values that define the University's actions, as outlined in Destination 2020.
- The University of Ottawa affirms its unwavering commitment to dialogue between languages and cultures and, more broadly, within the international Francophone community.

The committee's report was the product of exhaustive consultations. Faculty, staff, administrators and students were invited to share their insights and make recommendations with a view to strengthening Francophonie at the University of Ottawa. The report was presented to the working group on December 12, 2018, to the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs on December 13, 2018, to the Administrative Committee on December 19, 2018, to the Senate on January 21, 2019, and to the Board of Governors on January 28, 2019.

Milestones since the launch of the Action Plan

The Action Plan for Francophonie at the University of Ottawa details a number of findings and provides a list of 41 structural initiatives.

The following pages present a short overview and summary table describing the state of implementation of each recommendation, with many already demonstrating very positive, concrete outcomes.



On December 9, 2019, the Board of Governors approved the creation of a new vice-presidency, International and Francophonie (VPIF). In July 2020, Professor Sanni Yaya became the first person appointed to this position. His mandate is to carry forth the University's vision of Francophonie and ensure that we play a major role in the large, intercultural landscape of the Francophonie world throughout Ontario, Canada and abroad, and also that we continue supporting Francophone cultures and communities around the world. The creation of the new vice-presidency highlights the requirement to provide a lasting, more robust solution, better adapted to today's context and to our aspirations regarding the Francophonie community institutionally. Ultimately, it allows the University to attain the ambitious goals described in its strategic plan, *Transformation 2030*. The importance of Francophonie is well-established and it must be promoted from the highest levels of the central administration.

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In keeping with the Action Plan's recommendation to improve governance of our Francophonie institutionally, the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages has been replaced with a new body comprised of the senior managers of French services and programs. The new Council on French Services and Programs should provide better reporting and accountability on our initiatives with Francophonie. The first meeting of the council took place in May 2021.



We have undertaken a review of our administrative and academic practices in order to preserve and improve the quality of the French-language student experience. Questions relating to course offerings and scheduling, as well as teaching materials, among other things, will be examined. The Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs, the Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Associate Vice-President, Student Affairs, and the Associate Vice-President, Francophonie, will cooperate on these issues. An initial meeting with the student associations will be held in June 2021.



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Progress has also been made with regard to French-language scholarly research. The new Chaires de recherche sur le monde francophone program will strengthen the University's leadership role in advancing research on the Francophonies of Ontario, Canada and the world. Joined in a collaboration led by Professor Martin Meunier, the chairs group now includes three chairs on Ontario Francophonie, three chairs on Canadian Francophonie, four chairs on international Francophonie, one chair in Francophone mobility, and more recently its first Senghor Chair, awarded by the Réseau international des Chaires Senghor de la Francophonie (RICSF).

The Office of the Vice-President, Research, and the Collège des Chaires de recherche sur le monde francophone have established solid partnerships with various national and international organizations, including the National Centre for Scientific Research (NCSR), Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) and Acfas, with whom we will collaborate on a strategy to highlight knowledge creation in French.

The Vice-President, International and Francophonie, has established three working groups to examine, among other things, issues related to student population and recruiting, including a panel specifically dedicated to Francophonie, chaired by the Associate Vice-President, Research Promotion and Development. Presently, discussions intended to improve strategies for recruiting Canadian and international Francophones are under way with experts from inside and outside our community. This working group will present a series of structural initiatives to support Francophone student recruitment and retention. The working group has already met six times.

7

The blossoming of the French language and culture is key to a vibrant cultural and community life at uOttawa. Accordingly, physical and virtual spaces for interaction and dialogue should be created, along with activities and initiatives to promote Francophonie and highlight our unique cultural environment. As an initiative of the Office of the Vice-President, International and Francophonie, supported by the Associate Vice-President, Francophonie, the Vice-President, Student Affairs, and the Vice-President, Human Resources, a working group has been established to make this happen as soon as possible. The committee has already met twice and will propose concrete projects before the return to classes in September 2021.

8

The Teaching and Learning Support Service (TLSS) team is working closely with the Vice-President, International and Francophonie, to improve online teaching tools and resources and make them available in French. Since high-quality French tools are lacking, adapting tools originally designed in English for French use requires considerable effort. Since the launch of uOCampus and Brightspace, the TLSS and the Office of the Registrar have worked to make sure that they are fully available in French.



Objective 1: Reform the Francophonie Governance at the University of Ottawa

Francophonie Action Plan

These tables provide progress report on specific and structural measures initiated with the adoption of the *Francophonie Action Plan*, up to May 2021.

Objective 1: Reform the Francophonie Governance at the University of Ottawa

	STRUCTURAL INITIATIVES	UPDATE	
1>	Specify the Francophonie-related roles and responsibilities of all senior managers.	The University leadership reviewed its roles and responsibilities regarding Francophonie in all its various dimensions. The Board of Governors created the position of Vice-President, International and Francophonie. A new Francophonie governance body has been established. This new Council on French Services and Programs has replaced the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs, to improve reporting and accountability.	
2>	Implement an inter-faculty network of Francophonie champions promoting an inclusive approach designed for the entire University community.	The terms of this new network will be developed and approved by the Council on French Programs and Services.	IN PROGRESS
3)	Implement a system to foster cooperation among support staff across different departments who play a key role in Francophonie-related operations.	Terms of this new network will be developed and approved by the Council on French Programs and Services.	IN PROGRESS

UPDATE

- 4 > Redefine the mandate, accountability, functions and membership of the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages.
- 5 > Convert the Francophone University-Community Roundtable into an advisory committee on Francophonie reporting to the President.
- 6 > Mandate and assign resources to a chief Francophonie and French-language services officer, who will promote the University's vision for Francophonie and implement the action plan.

In October 2020, the Senate approved a new mandate and governance reform for Francophonie. As a result, the Council on French Programs and Services was created.

The VPIF team has developed a new system for yearly consultation with key Francophonie stakeholders, to be chaired by the President. The first annual consultation will be held in 2021-22.

The creation of the position of Vice-President, International and Francophonie, led to the creation of a new office. With additional resources available, positions were created for a new Associate Vice-President, Francophonie, a chief of staff, an Associate Director, Marketing and Communications, and a second adviser on language policy. The most recent hires arrived March 1, 2021. Considering the importance of the portfolio, we expect that the team will continue to expand.







STRUCTURAL INITIATIVES

UPDATE

Develop a "Francophone lens" through which to view all University operations.

A number of University of Ottawa experts on the breadth of Francophonie contributed to the outline of this Francophone lens. A differentiated analysis grid will be used for developing, applying and evaluating new institutional policies, as well as decision-making. The Francophone lens has been submitted to the University's Office of the Secretary General for feedback. Methods for introducing the lens into the Regulation on Bilingualism are being studied.

SPECIFIC ACTION

UPDATE

8)

7)

Update the role of the Senior Language Policy Officer to include providing administrative support to the Standing Committee. The new Office of the Vice-President, International and Francophonie, requested and was granted the creation of a second senior adviser position in support of the new Francophonie team, including the council and its subcommittees.



IN

PROGRESS



Objective 2: Strengthen the on-campus presence and promotion of Francophonie

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STRUCTURAL ACTIONS

UPDATE

- 1 > Create and implement a permanent system for student consultation led by the Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs, and the Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, to continue dialogue on the quality of course offerings, scheduling, teaching tools and any other important issues affecting the quality of the student experience in French.
- 2 > Engage with stakeholders to develop and implement an overall integrated strategy to increase and manage enrolment, covering recruitment, academic success, suitable course offerings, and the revitalization of French-language programs, including a new scholarship strategy to recruit Francophone students.
- 3 > Create an applied research group to look into increasing and managing Francophone enrolment.

The Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs, and the Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, with support from the Associate Vice-President, Student Affairs, and the Associate Vice-President, Francophonie will organize a biennial meeting with various stakeholders, including student associations, to examine questions relating to course offerings, scheduling, teaching tools and the student experience. The initial meeting will be held in June 2021.

The Vice-President, International and Francophonie, has established three working groups to examine, among other things, issues related to student enrolment and recruiting, including a panel specifically dedicated to the Francophonie community, chaired by the Associate Vice-President, Research Promotion and Development. This working group will present a series of structural measures to support Francophone student recruitment and retention. The working group has met six times to date.

The VPIF has launched discussions with key units on increasing and managing Francophone enrolment. These discussions with on-campus experts are intended to improve strategies for recruiting Canadian and international Francophones, especially for graduate studies.





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STRUCTURAL ACTIONS

UPDATE

- 4 > Review how the *Carrefour francophone* is governed and give it the resources it needs to showcase the French language on campus, including through recruitment efforts and welcome activities. This would include providing it with the resources necessary to promote its events more widely in the *Gazette*, the *Gee*, on social media and on the University's website.
- 5 > Renew the University Research Chairs program on the world of Francophonie, as proposed in the report of the working committee of the Vice-President, Academic, and Provost and Vice-President, Research.

The Vice-President, International and Francophonie, launched a working group and convened meetings with the teams from the Associate Vice-President, Student Affairs, and the Associate Vice-President, Human Resources, to energize French-language community and cultural life both on campus and in the University of Ottawa's virtual spaces. Two meetings have already been held and concrete projects will be under way before return to class in September 2021.

In 2018, the Office of the Vice-President, Research, together with the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Social Sciences, completely revised the program. It has a new name, the Chaires de recherche sur le monde francophone. Additional chairs were created, including three chairs on Ontario Francophonie, three on Francophonie in Canada and four on Francophonie in the World. In addition, Francophone Mobility Chairs were established. The Office of the Vice-President, Research, appointed a director of the Collège des chaires de recherche sur le monde francophone and provided financing. The VPIF has worked closely on this file with the Office of the Vice-President, Research.





STRUCTURAL ACTIONS

UPDATE

6 > Establish an external advisory committee on Francophonie chairs.

7)

The Office of Vice-President, Research, is working in collaboration with the Collège des chaires de recherche sur le monde francophone to implement this recommendation.

Work with Canadian research organizations and international organizations, including the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) and the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC), to develop a strategy to highlight knowledge creation in French. The Office of the Vice-President, Research, and the Collège des Chaires de recherche sur le monde francophone have established solid partnerships with various national and international organizations (including the NCSR, AUF, Acfas, etc.), with whom we will collaborate on strategies to highlight knowledge creation in French.





UPDATE

8 > Improve the University's teaching tools, including the forms on the uOCampus and Virtual Campus interfaces, so that they are fully available in French.

The Teaching and Learning Support Service (TLSS) team has worked closely with the Office of the Vice-President, International and Francophonie, to improve online teaching tools and resources that were originally designed for English teaching environments. As French tools of equal quality are not available, adapting these tools for use in French has required considerable effort. Since the launch of uOCampus and Brightspace, the TLSS and the Office of the Registrar have worked to make sure that the two platforms are fully available in French.

The team led by the Vice-President, International and Francophonie, is working on a project with HR and the Office the Provost to develop mandatory training for support staff and managers (Phase 1), and faculty (Phase 2). IN PROGRESS

IN PROGRESS

Provide University of Ottawa employees, faculty and students with training tools on Francophonie and official languages, specifically, on the obligations arising from language laws and from regulations in effect at the University.

UPDATE

10 > Allocate the resources necessary to create a program for publishing university textbooks in French, in collaboration with Francophone publishers, including University of Ottawa Press. The University Library is working closely with University of Ottawa Press to establish tools and programs facilitating the publication of French university textbooks. Here are a few examples of this type of project:

- Open educational resources: grant programs supporting the creation of four French open educational resources (OER) in 2020-21.
- University of Ottawa Library and Press partnership: financing the transfer of two University of Ottawa Press French-language publications to open access in 2020-21.
- University of Ottawa Library and Press partnership: hosting of open access journals, nine of which are French or bilingual, on the "Open Journal Systems" platform.
- Publica/Érudit Coalition: The library is participating in this nationwide project with the CRKN (Canadian Research Knowledge Network) to make many French-language journals and books available as open access content.



UPDATE

- 11 > Ensure that students have access to a wide range of courses in French and to reasonable schedules.
- 12 > Expand the French Immersion Stream to include graduate studies.
- 13 > Assess the impact of the University's partial designation under the Ontario *French Language Services Act* (FLSA) on programs, undergraduate courses and services offered to students in French.

14 > Consider the possibility of having graduate programs designated under the French Language Services Act. This structural action has been combined with goal 2.13, as described below.

Over the next year, the Vice-President, International and Francophonie, and the Office of the Provost will examine this possibility.

The Vice-President, International and Francophonie, with support from the Institutional Research and Planning team, is assessing our undergraduate programs to determine compliance with our FLSA designation. Access to French services and the quality of community and cultural life will become part of the mandate of the working group on campus community and cultural life (See recommendation 2.4).

The Vice-President, International and Francophonie, and the Office of the Provost will examine this possibility in 2021-22. IN PROGRESS





IN PROGRESS

UPDATE

15 > Propose initiatives for ongoing improvement to French-language services on campus. This would include explaining how Francophonie is, or should be, a priority in service action plans and annual objectives. The subcommittee on administrative services, under the Senate's Council on French Services and Programs, will study how French services at the University could be improved and how the Francophone lens could be used to evaluate them. This structural initiative has also been combined with another goal, that of the working group on campus community and cultural life in French (See recommendation 2.4).

In addition to that, a working group was established in February 2021 to improve support staff bilingualism and French-language services for the University community. A guide on the active offer of services in French was produced in partnership with the directors of those services.

> IN PROGRESS

IN PROGRESS

A proposal to mandate a working group on the bilingualism of professors is being discussed with key stakeholders.

Review the bilingualism requirements

imposed on professors when they are

hired or promoted. Propose corrective

actions, as required.

16>

UPDATE

- 17 > Allocate resources so that the Carrefour francophone, the French Immersion Stream, the International Office and the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute can collaborate and jointly organize activities for Francophile and international students, to introduce them to Francophone culture on campus and in the region and to give them an opportunity to live in French.
- 18 > Establish a special fund to support the creation of new research centres that operate in French, and to hold French-language activities in research institutes and centres that currently operate only in English.
- 19 > Appoint a representative from the Office of the Vice-President, Research, to help research institutes and centres with the logistics and preparation of their external funding requests.

This structural action has also been combined with another goal, that of the working group on campus community and cultural life in French. (See recommendation 2.4).





Through the Office of the Vice-President, Research, 23 research centres and institutes were established. The VPR ensures adequate and stable financing to centres and institutes having a Francophone mission, of which two were created in 2019 and 2020 (for a total of five research centres and institutes out of 23).

The Associate Vice-President, Research (and her team), have provided systematic, ongoing financial and human resource support to research centres and institutes (23 in total).

IN PROGRESS

UPDATE

- 20 > Regularly publish articles in *Research Perspectives* on innovations and results stemming from research conducted in French or on the Francophonie.
- 21 > Provide faculty members with tools to publish in the other official language, and fund open access rights to French-language publications.
- 22 > Ensure that publication in French is taken into account when hiring or promoting professors.

The journal, published by the communication team of the Office of the Vice-President, Research, aims to promote and disseminate research conducted in French or on Francophonie.

The University Library is working closely with University of Ottawa Press to establish tools and programs facilitating the publication of French university textbooks. Four initiatives responding to this recommendation are described in Section 10 of this table.

This recommendation has been included in the mandate of the working group on the bilingualism of professors.









Objective 3: Communicate the University of Ottawa's Francophone mission better

Objective 3: Communicate the University of Ottawa's Francophone mission better

STRUCTURAL ACTIONS

UPDATE

1 > Put together a Francophone team within the Office of the Vice-President, External Relations, that will review the University of Ottawa's message on Francophonie, to make it more meaningful, dynamic and engaging in terms of both visuals and text. The Office of the Vice-President, External Relations, has undertaken a significant modernization that began in 2019. As a result, all of its portfolios, including communications, marketing, and brand image are being restructured to align with the institutional strategic priorities outlined in Transformation 2030.

The appointment by the Office of the Vice-President, International and Francophonie, of an Associate Director, Marketing and Communications, who will collaborate with the Office of the Vice-President, External Relations (fundraising campaigns, alumni relations, communications and government relations, brand strategy and positioning) will result in a new communications strategy in support of Francophonie.





STRUCTURAL ACTIONS

2>

UPDATE

Review how the Communications Directorate and the faculties' communications and marketing services operate, to better communicate the University's Francophone mission to its many target audiences. In April 2021, the University restructured the Communications Directorate, resulting in two distinct units: the Office of Communications and Government Relations; and the Office of Marketing and Brand Strategy. This decision, plus the creation and filling of a chief communications officer position (summer 2021) with additional resources dedicated to communications, should enable better communication of the Francophone mission of the University to its various audiences. It should be noted that the Chief Communications Officer will have a seat on the new Committee on Francophone Programs and Services.



UPDATE

3 > Include a French-language component in media monitoring of mentions of and interventions by the University, its representatives and its professors, and ensure they are recorded systematically.

 Improve the quality of French on the University's website through continuous, systematic review.

5 > "Bilingualize" the University's official social media account names and the messages uOttawa posts in the Twitterverse. Issues relating to Francophonie are receiving renewed attention by the Media Relations team. After a procurement process in 2020, the Media Relations team acquired a more advanced and effective (qualitative and quantitative) media monitoring tool. This will lead to greater visibility and better understanding of our internal and external outreach activities, especially by and for the Francophone community.

The Office of the Vice-President, External Relations, recently acquired and implemented new technologies (content management platform, translation memory, request processing protocols, etc.) intended to optimize productivity as well as the quality of content on the University's website. Next steps include revising the mandate and business protocols of Language Services (late 2021), as well as updating their terminology and writing guides and making them more widely accessible to the University community (late 2021).

We are looking at the University's central accounts as well as messages sent from its central accounts to ensure they are bilingual. This project is being actively pursued.





IN PROGRESS

UPDATE

6 > Add a section to the *Gazette* on news, research and events specifically related to the Francophone community on campus. Since the creation of the new Office of the Vice-President, International and Francophonie, all aspects of Francophonie continue to be a priority for content production and promotion (Franco-Ontarian Day, *Mois de la francophonie*, Saint Jean Baptiste Day, research, etc.). Many key Francophonie-related events have gained greater visibility in the *Gazette*.

We will continue to be open to suggestions from our community regarding our goal of improving the visibility and promotion of Francophonie.

As part of the modernization of the University website (Web Perspective Project) and pending full establishment of the VPIF, the Office of the Vice-President, External Relations, has taken responsibility for updating web content and promoting pages related to the Francophonie and Bilingualism site. Substantive progress will be made in this file as it is a priority for the Associate Director, Marketing and Communications.

The Office of the Vice-President, External Relations, through the Alumni Relations Office, is working on this and continues to ensure high quality bilingual programming for our alumni community. IN PROGRESS

IN PROGRESS

IN PROGRESS

7 > Showcase the University's Francophonie web page and make it more accessible to its target audiences.

8 > Ensure that high-quality alumni activities are organized in both French and English.

9)

UPDATE

Seek proposals for funding of the Alex Trebek Forum for Dialogue activities in French. Since the 2015 creation of the Alex Trebek Forum for Dialogue, many calls for proposals have been launched and our efforts to attract more French-language proposals have led to a number of notable French-language events (for instance, the *Journée d'étude* | *Le Québec et la francophonie canadienne : un avant et un après Doug Ford?* and the Alex Trebek lecture with Bernard Kouchner). Over the last two years, the objective of the forum has changed. Now under the administration of the Vice-President, Research, the forum highlights public policy and has three main ongoing projects involving researchers from the Francophone community.



UPDATE

10 > Identify donors and create a fund dedicated to organizing activities focusing on dialogue between languages and cultures within the Francophone world. The Francophonie component was identified and integrated into the University-wide case for support for our fundraising campaign, which is almost finalized.

In addition to University and faculty/project level cases for support, our ongoing efforts to segment the donor base have allowed us to target its specific interests, including structural programs and major events related to Francophonie. In coming weeks, the segmentation work will continue and be taken further. The goal is to better position the University in its ability to create and sustain philanthropic projects and initiatives that support Francophonie institutionally.

Discussions between the University's strategic communications team and the Associate Director, Marketing and Communications for the Office of the Vice-President, International and Francophonie, have begun joint development of a strategy and action plan to promote research on Francophonie, particularly by centres and institutes. The Office of the Vice President, Research, is also involved in this dialogue.



IN PROGRESS

11 > Mandate a representative from the Office of the Vice-President, External Relations, to help the directors of centres and institutes write, disseminate and translate their communication products.

Office of the Vice-President, International and Francophonie **uottawa.ca**

