EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
STUDENT RECRUITMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2014

STUDENT SERVICES OFFICE
OCTOBER 2013
OVERVIEW

The 2013-2014 Student Recruitment Strategic Plan takes a new direction: a multi-year strategy that will be adjusted annually to align with the Faculty’s overall strategic plan (Faculty of Information Strategic Plan 2012-2017: Pathways to Our Future). The recruitment plan includes goals with broad action steps that will be reviewed and assessed based on their success.

Effective November 12, 2012, a full-time permanent Recruitment Officer began duties in the Student Services Office. The position represents the first staff member dedicated solely to student recruitment duties in recognition of the need to consolidate and co-ordinate initiatives.

Because of this plan’s ambitious goals, and the limited resources the Faculty can afford, we have selected specific activities under each goal for us to focus on. In addition to these main activities, we will be implementing other activities as resources permit.

For the 2013-14 recruitment campaign our three major areas of focus will be to:

- **Develop a Student Ambassador program**
  Only current students can serve as legitimate representatives of the most recent experiences in the academic programs and student life

- **Increase our social media presence**
  Hire a social media intern to assist with the upkeep of recruitment communications on the various social media platforms as well as providing an overall critique of the new promo website

- **Strengthen collaboration with iSchool faculty**
  Identify and recruit prospects attending their undergraduate classes, guest lectures/presentations, conferences, etc. Develop conduits for iSchool faculty to promote the iSchool using their network of colleagues at U of T and other universities.

Critical to a successful recruitment strategy are outcomes. The vast majority of prospective applicants are interested in one thing: jobs. Students want assurance that this degree will deliver on its promise. While we cannot guarantee jobs, we see the Careers Officer position as integral to this student recruitment strategy.
STUDENT RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

In order to attain the goals identified in the Faculty of Information Strategic Plan 2012-2017, it is necessary to appreciate the limited jurisdiction of student recruitment. In essence, student recruitment reflects and leverages what is established by the iSchool, thus it can only inform and not institute changes to program offerings and program delivery, and the services provided by other iSchool departments/offices.

ALIGNMENT WITH IDENTIFIED iSCHOOL STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

A. Continue to refine our marketing strategy for our multi-year recruitment campaign.*
B. Develop an iSchool ambassadors program.*
D. Enhance our external communication approaches.*

* Excerpted (including numbering) from the Faculty of Information Strategic Plan 2012-2017: Pathways to Our Future

Student recruitment is a coordinated effort to attract desirable candidates to apply for admission, and for successful applicants, sustain their interest until enrolment. It is best conducted alongside - rather than a substitute for – formal Faculty marketing and communication efforts. Recruitment is most effective when applied to defined audiences rather than the public-at-large.

Therefore, while the potential for promotion exists with almost every Faculty activity, care must be taken to determine which enterprise is appropriate to engage in the activity: marketing, communication or student recruitment.

THREE PILLARS
The recruitment strategy rests on three pillars: presence, messaging and relevance.

1. PRESENCE
   Establish and maintain strong levels of awareness and visibility of the iSchool education.

2. MESSAGING
   Communicate the right messages for each defined audience.

3. RELEVANCE
   Ensure that the connection to the iSchool is clearly discernible.

The appropriate Agents have been identified in accordance with their areas of expertise, for leading the consultation on the following strategies and actions.
A. CONTINUE TO REFINE OUR MARKETING STRATEGY FOR OUR MULTI-YEAR RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

1. Market Research
   This strategic plan will benefit from the development of a Faculty brand and an overall Faculty marketing plan.

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<tr>
<th>PRESENCE</th>
<th>MESSAGING</th>
<th>RELEVANCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide means to identify audience segments</td>
<td>Distinguish perceptions from realities</td>
<td>Enable the targeting of audiences to program options</td>
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   **Agent:** Marketing professional, Manager, Strategic Planning, Careers Officer, Student Services

2. Align Recruitment and Career Placement Initiatives

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<tr>
<td>tie in careers as much as possible</td>
<td>include career opportunities/outcome data/services</td>
<td>provide information on career possibilities for all program options</td>
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   **Agent:** Careers Officer

B. DEVELOP AN iSCHOOL AMBASSADORS PROGRAM – **PRIORITY**

1. Student ‘Ambassadors’
   Only current students can serve as legitimate representatives of the most recent experiences in the academic programs and student life.

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<tr>
<td>use at events, communication outreach and as promotional profiles</td>
<td>transformation theme, adopt the perspective and tone of a student</td>
<td>form a team that represents all program areas and with a diversity of educational backgrounds.</td>
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   **Agent:** Recruitment Officer, Student Services

2. Alumni ‘Champions’
   ‘Champions’ will be the alumni who are dedicated to recruitment initiatives, which should be planned in consideration of the time constraints for working professionals. Convenience and simplicity are paramount to encourage alumni participation.

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<td>use at events, communication outreach and as promotional profiles</td>
<td>employ a mix of aspiration and reassurance</td>
<td>involve alumni that represent all programs and a diversity of careers</td>
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   **Agent:** Recruitment Officer, Careers Officer, Alumni Association
D. ENHANCE OUR EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION APPROACHES - PRIORITY

These initiatives should harmonize with the overall Faculty marketing and communication plans.

**PRESENCE**  
adopt a coherent look and feel for use on multiple media platforms

**MESSAGING**  
reinforce quality while balancing the legacy with the present

**RELEVANCE**  
resonate with defined audiences

**SUGGESTED ACTION**

There are 15 suggested actions with various agents. The two priority actions identified for 2013-2014 recruitment campaign aim to:

1) Expand the use of social media to generate awareness and to encourage participation in recruitment events. *Ideally, the overall Faculty marketing and communication plans should include policies and best practices for social media outreach.*
   
   **Agent:** Recruitment Officer, Communications Officer, Information Services

2) Collaborate with iSchool faculty to identify and recruit prospects attending guest lectures/presentations, conferences and their undergraduate classes. Develop conduits for iSchool faculty to promote the iSchool using their network of colleagues at U of T and other universities.
   
   **Agent:** Recruitment Officer, Faculty

**MEASURING PROGRESS**

Measurement tools that exist will continue to be used, e.g. admissions statistics, decline of admission offer survey and new graduate employment survey conducted by the Careers Officer.

New tools will be used to establish additional benchmarks including an incoming student survey and the data to be collected from the constituent relationship management service which has recently been deployed by the School of Graduate Studies.