

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO
McMASTER UNIVERSITY'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS
DECEMBER 12, 2019**

Negotiation of SMA3: Update on Process and Key Issues

As mentioned in my last report, this Fall we began the negotiations with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities for our third Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA3). Running from 2020-2025, this document is essentially the funding contract that the provincial government will enter into with each University and College. The document outlines agreed areas of program focus and includes a range of metrics by which institutions will be measured. SMA3 is different to previous iterations of the SMA process in that it is much more focused on performance and outcomes, and includes significant adverse funding consequences for institutions that do not meet the agreed performance metrics.

The negotiations are being led from the Provost's office, in close collaboration with the Deans, and supported by the President's Office, Institutional Research and Analysis, and Communications and Public Affairs. To date we have had one meeting with the Ministry, which enabled us to raise a number of questions and concerns about the metrics being used, and also allowed us to seek clarification on areas that were unclear. We are required to submit an initial draft document to the Ministry by December 17 and work on this is well underway.

The performance metrics focus on two key areas: Skills and Job Outcomes, which includes graduation rates, experiential learning, skills and competencies, and graduate employment and earnings; and Community and Economic Impact, which includes local community impact, economic impact, federal tri-council research funding, and research revenue from private sources. The measures to be used for each of these areas have been specified by the Ministry and pre-populated workbooks have been provided to us, which are being reviewed and verified by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. This means that in most cases there is no opportunity to influence the areas of focus, or the data that will be used.

There is just one institution specific metric, relating to economic impact, where the University is able to determine the actual measure to be used. Following discussions between the Vice-President (Research), the Provost's Office, McMaster Industry Liaison Office and others, McMaster is proposing invention and copyright disclosures as the basis for this metric. In our meeting with the Ministry we also explored the possibility of using co-op placement numbers, or even a blend of two or three economic impact measures. The Office of Institutional Research and Analysis is reviewing historic data for these areas to calculate the most beneficial and stable figure to use and we also expect to receive further guidance from the Ministry on this issue.

The most problematic area for McMaster is the requirement to define a limited number of areas of institutional program strength, based on student enrolment, and linked to areas of growth. With only six Faculties, McMaster is already highly focused in terms of our areas of program strength. Our focus on collaboration between Faculties and the interdisciplinarity of our programming also sets us apart. Given that we are already uniquely differentiated, we made the case in our first meeting with the Ministry that everything we do can be considered an institutional strength and that our longstanding commitment to interdisciplinarity makes it impossible to isolate specific areas of our campus.

Although the Ministry has an appreciation of our position, they are insisting on a much more focused approach than that taken in relation to SMA2. For SMA3 they are looking for us to define areas of strength and growth that relate to no more than fifty per cent of our student enrolment (and ideally less than that, it seems). The Provost's Office is working through this with the Deans to identify areas of program growth, as well as those areas in which each Faculty can contribute to interdisciplinary programming, which we also plan to identify as an area of strength and growth. Even though we are not able to reference every program area directly in this metric, we will make use of the explanatory narrative to make the case for our interdisciplinary and interconnected approach, and emphasize the excellence of programming across the entire campus.

In considering potential growth it is also important to be aware that, while we are being asked to define areas of growth, the fixed enrolment and funding corridor that we are held to severely restricts our ability to grow within the current model. A relaxation of the enrolment corridor would provide some much-needed flexibility, and this is a case we have made to the Ministry.

The other challenge we face relates to our ability to demonstrate continuous improvement in those areas where we are already performing at an extremely high level. Throughout the first round of meetings with universities the Ministry received consistent feedback on this theme, and a range of alternatives have been proposed. We are waiting for the outcome of those discussions but will have to be very thoughtful in the way we assign weightings to the different metrics. In these discussions we are cognizant that, while poor performance can have adverse funding consequences, no additional funding is being made available to reward excellence.

It is important to recognize that although the SMA discussions and agreement play a crucial role in terms of our funding model and relationship with government, the SMA document does not establish or vary the University's mission and vision, nor does it constitute our strategic plan. As indicated previously, my expectation is that once the University is through this current period of Presidential transition we will move into a more intense period of strategic planning. This is likely to include some of the broader conversations I alluded to at the Board Retreat around overall enrolment numbers and demographics, the development of a dedicated international strategy, an enhanced focus on commercialization and entrepreneurship across our campus, and the launch of our research-focused revenue-generation initiative, the *Brighter World Research Initiative*.

Next Steps

The government has indicated that the SMA3 process will be complete by March 31, 2020, and I plan to keep Board Members, as well as the broader campus community, updated and engaged in conversations as it unfolds.

CAMPUS UPDATE

Santee Smith Installed as McMaster's 19th Chancellor

Santee Smith, an internationally recognized artist, dancer and choreographer, was installed as McMaster's new Chancellor on November 21, at the first fall convocation ceremony. Ms. Smith, who is from the Kahnien'kehàka (Mohawk) Nation, Turtle Clan from Six Nations of the Grand

River, is a two-time McMaster graduate, holding degrees in Physical Education and Psychology, along with a Master of Arts in Dance from York University.

“As a proud Onkwehon:we – Mohawk woman – and a proud McMaster alumna, I couldn’t be more thrilled to offer my insights,” said Ms. Smith in her convocation address. “It’s a privilege to be in service to McMaster – upholding the mission and values of the university, and expanding upon the principles of understanding and cooperation of the Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas, on whose land we now stand, work, play, learn and share.”

McMaster recognizes two Honorary Degree recipients at Fall Convocation

McMaster recognized Eva Egron-Polak, a global leader in postsecondary education policy, and Mary Law, former Director of McMaster’s School of Rehabilitation Sciences, with honorary doctorates at the recent fall convocation ceremonies. Honorary degrees are awarded to recognize individuals who are distinguished scholars, have made outstanding contributions to the arts, have distinguished reputations in public service or have made important contributions to McMaster.

Times Higher Education Rankings on Employability

McMaster ranked 5th in Canada and 78th in the world overall in the 2019 Times Higher Education Global Employability Rankings. The international ranking is based on the responses of 6,000 firms from 22 countries about which universities produce the “best graduates in terms of employability” in their own countries and abroad.

Research

Fourteen McMaster Researchers included on 2019 list of Highly Cited Researchers

The list, compiled by Clarivate Analytics, recognizes researchers whose papers rank in the top one per cent of citations in *Web of Science*, a citation index. More than 6,000 researchers were named to the 2019 list: almost 4,000 in specific fields and more than 2,000 for interdisciplinary work. This year, 183 Canadian researchers were named to the list, making Canada sixth in the world for research influence.

Researchers discover Antimicrobial that shows promise in fighting Staph Infections

Research led by McMaster scientists has yielded a potent antimicrobial that works against *staphylococcus aureus* diseases, which are the leading cause of antibiotic-resistant infections. “Although it will be a long road between this discovery and clinical use, we feel we’re expanding our arsenal for combating drug-resistant staph infections,” says first author Omar El-Halfawy, a Postdoctoral Fellow who worked with senior author Eric Brown, a Professor of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences.

High Intensity Exercise improves Memory and wards off Dementia

Research by Kinesiologist, Jennifer Heisz, has suggested that physical inactivity contributes to dementia risk as much as genetics, and that higher intensity exercise produced better results for sedentary seniors who embarked on a new exercise program.

Student Success

McMaster Medical Student named a 2020 Rhodes Scholar

Nina Acharya, a first-year medical student, has been awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University. Originally from Ottawa, Ms. Acharya completed her undergraduate degree at Cornell University where she was named one of its most outstanding graduates. She hopes to complete a Master of Philosophy in International Development with an emphasis on childhood nutrition.

Engineering Student's Project in Global Competition

Lianna Genovese, a third-year Biomedical and Mechanical Engineering student, has developed a device to help those with limited hand function draw, paint and use a tablet. Now, her product has been entered in the Universitas 21's international RISE Showcase and Awards.

DeGroote School of Business Students win first place in Ted Rogers Ethical Leadership Competition

Out of eight teams from across Canada, a team of undergraduate DeGroote students won first place and the \$4,000 grand prize in the fourth annual Ted Rogers Ethical Leadership Case Competition. The competing teams from business schools across Canada had one week to analyse the case and present their findings to a jury, with four teams advancing to the finals.

Community Engagement

Hamilton's Postsecondary Institutions reaffirm commitment to Principles of Cooperation

Representatives from the City of Hamilton's three postsecondary institutions – McMaster, Mohawk College and Redeemer University College – have re-signed the Postsecondary Principles of Cooperation with the new city manager, Janette Smith. The principles, originally signed in 2016, lay out “a vision for a long-term relationship that promotes and supports cooperation for the benefit of our citizens and broader society.”

Additional Space for The Forge and Innovation Factory

The Forge, McMaster's startup incubator, and Innovation Factory, Hamilton's business accelerator, welcomed Filomena Tassi, MP for Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, as they opened their new co-located space at the McMaster Innovation Park. The space is home to 25 start-ups as well as Innovation Factory's Centre for Integrated Transportation and Mobility.

McMaster contributing to a new direction for the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre

McMaster is working with city and community partners to help set a renewed vision and direction for the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre. The Centre, which was opened in April 2018 by the City of Hamilton, McMaster and the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion had been paused by the three partners this February to review and improve its structure and governance.

Students collecting used University Computers to Donate to the Community

Students in the Sustainable Future program are aiming to provide 100 children in Hamilton with a refurbished computer – by asking faculty and staff to donate their department's used computers for a second life. greenBYTE, a Hamilton-based social enterprise, will refurbish the computers and distribute them to children in need.