

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO
McMASTER UNIVERSITY'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OCTOBER 24, 2019**

Looking Forward: Challenges and Priorities for the 2019/20 Year

As I highlighted at the Board Retreat in September, this academic year is a highly unusual one. In addition to being a year of transition for the entire University as we search for McMaster's next President, we have a number of individuals who are either new to their roles or in acting positions. My appointment as Acting President necessitated the appointment of an Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and we are fortunate to have Susan Searls Giroux serving in that capacity. Kim Dej is serving as Acting Vice-Provost (Faculty) to support Susan in the Provost's office. In the Research portfolio, we are very pleased to welcome back Karen Mossman, who is currently serving as Acting Vice-President (Research) and Jim Dunn, who is supporting her as Acting Associate Vice-President (Research). We have also recently welcomed Santee Smith as our new Chancellor, Bradley Merkel as our new Board Chair, and Andrea Thyret-Kidd as our University Secretary. Despite all this change, I am confident that we have an excellent team in place, and the right combination of people and skills to lead us through this challenging year.

My key priority as Acting President is to navigate the University successfully through this period of transition and support my colleagues who are in acting positions, or new to their roles. Our collective goal is to ensure that, as an institution, we are as well-prepared as possible for the arrival of our new President, once the ongoing selection process is concluded.

Beyond that, as I outlined at the Board Retreat, we have a number of key areas of focus, as well as a variety of challenges to address, over the course of the coming year.

Brighter World Research Initiative (BWRI)/Revenue for Research

As Board Members know, the *Brighter World Research Initiative* builds upon the successful and ongoing Brighter World branding and marketing campaign and focuses on the University's goal of attracting and developing partnerships and funding opportunities, with the intention of increasing research revenue into the University from a variety of sources. This additional investment in support of research is both necessary and critical if McMaster is to retain its current standing as a globally-recognized research-intensive institution over the longer-term. The leadership team, working in partnership with University Advancement and a highly-experienced external consultant, is currently developing key priorities and areas of focus with a view to formally launching BWRI once the new President has been appointed.

Research Commercialization and Entrepreneurship

A core component of our revenue generation strategy relates to the commercialization of research and the development of spin-off companies and commercial entities. McMaster Innovation Park (MIP) represents a huge opportunity for the University in this regard. MIP is currently developing a strategic plan intended to animate the innovation eco-system, diversify the Park, and generate capital. This strategic plan is expected to come forward to the Board at the next meeting in December and will, I hope, generate a range of interesting opportunities for the University and for our researchers and students. Alongside this we are working on opportunities

for our students to engage in entrepreneurial activities, through extra-curricular initiatives such as *The Forge*, as well as through dedicated programming relating to commercialization and knowledge translation.

Internationalization

As the University's international reputation grows, so too do the numbers of applications from international students, as well as the range of opportunities to engage in international partnerships with peer institutions. The University has a values-based strategy for Global Engagement, which outlines key principles and a number of areas of focus. We now have the opportunity to build on this to develop a dedicated strategy drawing together enrolment planning, strategic partnerships, key research collaborations, and enhanced opportunities for exchanges and international experiences for our students and faculty. As our numbers of international students grow, it is also critically important that we are thoughtful about the additional supports and services that might be required and ensure that we have the necessary components in place to enable the success of all our students.

Negotiation of SMA3

This Fall sees the beginning of negotiations with the Ministry of Training, 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 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 agreement also covers the University's enrolment profile and planning, and other reporting metrics (which are not tied to funding) related to faculty workload and compensation.

We have our first meeting with the Ministry at the end of October and will then have a clearer sense of our notional performance/outcomes-based funding allocation, the impact of the performance targets and metrics established by the government, and the appropriate weightings assigned to each of these metrics. The government has indicated that the process will be complete by March 31, 2020, and I will keep Board Members updated as it unfolds.

HR Review

As we discussed at the Retreat, the recent HR Review, the latest in a series of administrative reviews, has highlighted a range of issues associated with payroll and other HR-related functions that we are now focused on addressing. We have developed an action plan to address the various recommendations, and the process of hiring a consultant to support the implementation of this plan is well underway. We are also searching for a dedicated senior Payroll Director and will finalize that appointment as soon as we are able to. The important work to review administrative areas of the University is supported by our work with Uniforum and the opportunity to

benchmark against our peers with regard to a detailed range of key administrative services and supports.

Next Steps

Over the coming months, I will be working with the senior team on all of these areas to ensure that we are well-prepared for the arrival of our new President and are ready to develop strategies to advance and support their key priorities.

CAMPUS UPDATE

Rankings Update

The University was ranked 72nd in the world in the internationally respected 2020 Times Higher Education rankings, released in September. The university advanced five places over last year, and is one of only four Canadian universities in the world's top 75. McMaster was also ranked fourth in Canada in Maclean's magazine's annual ranking – the second consecutive year the University has held this position. Among Medical/Doctoral universities, McMaster was ranked first in student services, second in total research dollars and third in library acquisitions.

Awards and Accolades

Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists

Chandrima Chakraborty, Professor of English and Cultural Studies, and James MacKillop, the Peter Boris Chair in Addictions Research, have both been admitted to the College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists, the country's first national system to recognize multidisciplinary work in emerging intellectual leaders.

Order of Canada

Former Chancellor Suzanne Labarge has been named a Member of the Order of Canada for her "exceptional business leadership and for her volunteerism and generous philanthropy." Her brother, Paul Labarge, was also named to the Order.

Canadian Academy of Health Sciences

Five professors in the Faculty of Health Sciences have been elected fellows of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, considered one of the highest honours for members of the country's health sciences community. Sonia Anand, Hertzell Gerstein, John Lavis, Mark Loeb and Parminder Raina have all been recognized for their demonstrated leadership, creativity, distinctive competencies and commitment to advancing academic health sciences.

Hamilton Gallery of Distinction

Of six outstanding Hamilton citizens named to the Hamilton Gallery of Distinction this year, four have ties to McMaster: Gordon Carruth earned distinction as an educator and a respected theatre director, writer and composer; Gordon Guyatt helped pioneer evidence-based medicine, which the British Medical Journal ranked as one of the most influential advancements in modern medical history; Bertha Skye is an Indigenous leader in both education and culinary arts; and Pat Saunders has contributed more than 60 years' service and leadership to the Hamilton community.

Research Funding

David Braley, whose gifts to the University include a \$50-million investment in McMaster teaching, learning and health-care research and delivery, has allocated \$7 million from that 2007

gift towards the new David Braley Centre for Antibiotic Discovery, dedicated specifically to tackling the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance.

The federal government recently announced the opening of the Centre of Excellence on Chronic Pain at McMaster. The Centre will receive \$20.1 million in federal funding for its first five years, with \$5 million per year after that, and will focus on finding ways to address the challenges faced by more than four in 10 Canadian veterans who deal with chronic pain. The Centre will be located in the Michael DeGroot Centre for Learning and Discovery.

McMaster researcher Randy Jackson and his research partner, Renee Masching from the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, have been awarded a \$4.8 million CIHR grant for a multidisciplinary Canadian project that will respond to the growing problem of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections among Indigenous populations.

Student Success

Integrated Business and Humanities student Julia Zakoor has won a prestigious Killam Scholarship, which will enable her to complete a semester on exchange at American University in Washington, DC, studying political science.

Erica Dao, a PhD student in McMaster's Radiation Sciences program, is the only Canadian entry among 18 other international competitors in the Universitas 21 Three-Minute Thesis competition. This is an international competition designed to encourage student researchers to communicate the significance of their work to a non-specialist audience in just three minutes.

McMaster's Experimental Reduced Gravity Team (MERGE) recently won the Overall Excellence First Place Prize at the 2019 Canadian Reduced Gravity Experiment Design Challenge. The team studied the effects of sloshing during satellite fuelling. The slat screen system they developed dampened and evenly dispersed incoming fluid, which minimized dynamic forces that could create instabilities in the satellite.

McMaster is the first Canadian university to be accepted into the Grand Challenges Scholars Program, which brings together interdisciplinary teams of students from across the University to seek local solutions to challenging societal issues. While the American version of the program focuses students on very specific goals, the McMaster version encourages students to look for problems that address the UN Sustainable Development goals, which range from eradicating poverty to climate action to improving water quality.

Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations

Both the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine and the Faculty of Science's Kinesiology program are celebrating their golden anniversaries. Kinesiology hosted a day-long event in partnership with McMaster's alumni office during September. The Medical School will be holding a series of events at the end of October, including a film screening, lectures on medical education and medical research, and a gala banquet