

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO
McMASTER UNIVERSITY'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OCTOBER 28, 2021**

Looking Ahead: Focusing on the Future

At our Board Retreat in September, I shared a summary of the key priority areas that will be the focus of the University's work during the coming year. With the threat posed by the pandemic gradually receding, our community is focused on the future and on the positive advancements and areas of focus outlined in our new strategic plan. As Board Members know, the strategic plan is intended to guide the University for the next three years, beginning with the current academic year. The consultations and discussions I engaged in as part of that process were extremely helpful in drawing out the issues that members of our community care deeply about, and focusing on the specific areas where we can really differentiate ourselves as a institution.

Promoting and Accelerating Sustainability: McMaster's Carbon Neutral Goal

On that note, as Board Members are aware, one of the most prevalent themes that emerged during our consultations around the visioning process and strategic plan was in relation to climate change and sustainability. Students, faculty, and staff are dedicated to finding ways to address climate change through our research, scholarship, and academic programming and also through the actions taken on our campus to reduce our carbon footprint, manage our investments, develop and promote clean technologies, reduce waste, and engage in energy reduction initiatives. The inaugural [University-wide Sustainability Report 2020-2021](#), reviewed at the last Board Meeting in June and subsequently published on the University's website, demonstrates the ways in which this focus on environmental sustainability runs through every part of the University, from innovative teaching and research, to the campus environment and operations.

Although the report does not capture all of McMaster's sustainability-focused activities, it provides a glimpse into much of the work being done and draws on examples from across all Faculties, multiple departments, and units. Consistent with the message I heard from our campus community during the strategic planning process, the intention is to transform our campus into a living laboratory for sustainability, focusing on carbon reduction, energy reduction, and waste management, with the ultimate goal of being a carbon free campus. As a university, it is incumbent on us to lead by example in this area, and to support our local and global communities in enabling meaningful change.

The sustainability report organizes our work under three pillars:

1. *Natural Resources* - The first pillar articulates McMaster's commitment to the protection and conservation of natural resources, as well as our efforts to contribute to a sustainable food system.
2. *Reducing our Environmental Impact* - The second pillar illustrates our commitment to reducing our environmental footprint by building and operating our campus sustainably, including water, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, waste reduction initiatives, and responsible investing.

3. *Student Learning and Research* - The third pillar explores McMaster's efforts to integrate sustainability into our students' academic experiences through innovative interdisciplinary programs and experiential learning, and also details some of the many environmentally-focused research initiatives being led by members of our campus community.

Ambitious Milestones: Looking to the Future

To maintain momentum with this important work, the University has set a number of ambitious goals in key areas:

Carbon Emissions - McMaster's Net Zero Carbon Roadmap lays out an ambitious strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on campus by 75% by 2030, representing a reduction of 30,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) annually, and to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The strategy includes revised methods of power generation, energy conservation measures for our buildings, electrification and heat recovery projects, and transition to electric vehicles. Design element strategies for new construction projects include high-performance building envelopes, efficient ventilation, and LED lighting with occupancy sensors. Renewable energy production using photovoltaic installations and carbon capture strategies are also potential future elements of the plan.

Responsible Investments - The Investment Pool adopted a strategy of decarbonization in 2018, which is now being accelerated as part of McMaster's overall carbon neutral goal, and our recognition of the importance of taking a leadership position in this area. A 33 per cent reduction in carbon intensity has been achieved after just three years, with the carbon underground top 200 oil and coal reserve holding companies (CU200) representing just 2.1 per cent of invested assets as at April 2020, which is down 53 per cent from 2018. The Investment Pool also tracks its clean technology transition investments and has 24 per cent allocated to this category, with the objective to increase this figure until we reach our carbon neutral goal.

In addition to the Investment Pool decarbonization strategy, both the Salaried and Hourly Pension Plans are included in McMaster's adoption of the Task Force Recommendations for Climate-related Financial Disclosures. This ensures that each asset pool has transparent carbon measures that are publicly reported. The Hourly Pension Plan, which has \$75M in invested assets, has achieved a current position of no CU200 holdings. This important milestone was achieved through many committee discussions and while maintaining positive returns. Work will continue to evaluate the future decarbonization strategy for the Hourly Plan and the University will also continue to review the holdings of all funds to ensure that the focus on the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) is maintained. These Principles integrate environmental, social, and governance considerations into investment manager hiring and asset management processes.

Next Steps

While there are a number of different aspects to the overall carbon neutral goal for McMaster, I see all these areas as inextricably connected and am committed to advancing them all as a key priority under our institutional strategic plan. This is vitally important if we are to make a positive impact on the ongoing climate crisis and play our part in addressing it in every way we

can. As a critically important next step, the University has just launched a campus-wide sustainability survey to gather feedback and opinions about McMaster's sustainability efforts and areas of focus. The responses will help inform McMaster's inaugural Sustainability Plan and further accelerate our work in this area.

Inclusive Excellence

In my last written report I provided an update on the Black Excellence Cohort Hiring Initiative and am very pleased with both the number and calibre of Black scholars we are attracting as a result of this forward-looking initiative. In addition to the ongoing work to hire, support, and retain excellent Black faculty and staff, we are also focused on supporting the success of our Black students. Plans are well underway to launch McMaster's Black Student Success Centre later this Fall. The Centre is dedicated to supporting and championing the holistic success and overall well-being of Black/African students and fostering a positive Black student and student-athlete experience. It is intended as a safe space where students can meet, share, socialize and access specialized support and services, and will be staffed by a full-time manager supported by an administrator. In the interim period prior to the opening, virtual programming for the upcoming term has developed in collaboration with students to support well-being and the transition back to campus.

Launch of Indigenous Strategy

Through a campus-wide collective effort by Indigenous groups, a new strategy has been developed by the Indigenous Education Council and McMaster Indigenous Research Institute.

Indigenous Strategic Directions was formally launched on September 30, and represents a major step forward. It will act as a guide for the University as a whole, with four main strategic goals of research, education, student experience, and leadership and governance. The overall aim of the strategy is to enhance the visibility and impact of the Indigenous community on campus and further the University's commitment to a culturally safe campus for Indigenous students, staff, and scholars.

The strategic goals and directives were developed using a range of engagement strategies. To ensure that all feedback aligned, input was evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Advances and empowers Indigenous scholars, students, staff, and communities;
- Guards and protects Indigenous cultural integrity at McMaster;
- Responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action; and
- Upholds the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

I look forward to working with Indigenous colleagues over the coming year to help advance and support this important strategy.

Return to Campus: Back to Mac

Our Provost, Susan Tighe, has been leading our gradual return to campus, which has seen more students, faculty, and staff making use of our labs, classrooms, equipment, libraries, and campus-based resources. We expect on-campus activity to continue to increase over the coming months

and into the winter term. Dr. Tighe will provide an update on this work and planning as part of our Board Meeting on October 28.

CAMPUS UPDATE

THE Rankings Update

McMaster has been ranked 80th in the world in the 2022 Times Higher Education rankings released in September, one of only four Canadian universities in the world's top 80. McMaster has been placed within the world's top 100 universities by THE, a key international ranking that includes more than 1,600 institutions worldwide, for five consecutive years.

Maclean's University Rankings Update

For the fourth consecutive year, McMaster has ranked fourth in the Maclean's medical doctoral category for universities with a broad range of research and PhD programs, including medical schools. McMaster stands alongside McGill, the University of Toronto, and the University of British Columbia in Canada's top four. Among medical doctoral universities, McMaster is ranked first in student services, second in total research dollars and grants, and second in library acquisitions.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – Commemoration at McMaster

McMaster's Indigenous Studies Program, Indigenous Research Institute, Indigenous Student Services, and Indigenous Health Learning Lodge hosted a commemorative event on September 30 to honour the children who never made it home from residential schools and those who survived. The commemoration recognized the ongoing legacy and intergenerational trauma caused by the residential school system, and was livestreamed on McMaster's Daily News website.

McMaster joins Canada's Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

As part of McMaster's ongoing commitment to advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, the University has recently joined the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Canada. Part of a global network of SDSN organizations, the Canadian chapter has 52 members across universities and colleges, all seeking to advance sustainability research and collaboration. McMaster's membership in this network creates additional supports for researchers and students tackling the UN Sustainable Development Goals. With an institutional membership, researchers will get advanced notice for sustainability-related funding, instructors will have access to online communities of practice, and students will be supported by a student SDSN representative on campus.

Research

Major Federal Investment renews National Research Platform on Aging

In August, Labour Minister, Filomena Tassi, announced grants totalling \$61.5M to support the next phase of the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) hosted at McMaster. The funds include \$52M to support research activities at McMaster, including funding for all the

participating institutions across Canada. This will ensure the collection of data from CLSA participants until 2027.

Social Sciences launches Initiative for Advanced Research on Mental Health and Society

Researchers in the Faculty of Social Sciences have launched the Initiative for Advanced Research on Mental Health and Society (ARMS), with a mission to highlight and bring awareness to the social dimensions of mental health. ARMS will provide a hub for interdisciplinary collaboration on mental health research among academics, students, and community members.

Four Professors named to the Royal Society of Canada (RSC)

This year, three McMaster researchers were elected as Fellows of the RSC, a highly prestigious award for Canadian academics. Fellows are elected by their peers for their outstanding scholarly, scientific, and artistic achievement. The newly-elected McMaster faculty members are:

- Narayanaswamy Balakrishnan, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics;
- Bonny Ibhawoh, Professor of History and founding Director of McMaster's Centre for Human Rights and Restorative Justice; and
- Harriet MacMillan, Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences.

Ryan Van Lieshout, Canada Research Chair in the Perinatal Programming of Mental Disorders, was named to the incoming class of the RSC College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists, which recognizes the achievements of academics in the earlier stages of their careers.

McMaster Professors join Canadian Academy of Health Sciences

Five professors from the Faculty of Health Sciences are joining the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) as Fellows. This election is considered the highest recognition of excellence in Canadian academic health sciences. The five new McMaster CAHS Fellows are Lori Burrows, Maureen Dobbins, Alfonso Iorio, Mitchell Levine, and Maureen Markle-Reid.

Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) awards nearly \$3.3M to McMaster Researchers

Eleven McMaster researchers have been awarded nearly \$3.3M from the Canada Foundation for Innovation to advance their work in health, materials, and electrification research. The CFI funding helps universities attract and retain top research talent from around the world by providing researchers with the highly specialized infrastructure they need to be leaders in their field. McMaster's CFI funding recipients span the Faculties of Science, Engineering, and Health Sciences.

Students and Learning

\$1M gift will create Innovative Learning Lab at the DeGroote School of Business

McMaster's DeGroote School of Business has received a \$1M gift from the KPMG Foundation and KPMG in Canada's Regions East offices to develop a new lab that will embrace digital technology and promote experiential learning among students. The KPMG Ignition Lab will be a

dedicated innovation, analytics, and advanced technology space housed within the new McLean Centre for Collaborative Discovery.

McMaster's 2021 Schulich Leaders Awarded

Out of 1,500 applicants, 100 Schulich scholarships were awarded this year to students going into STEM programs at 20 partner universities across Canada. For the second year in a row, 10 scholarships were designated for McMaster— five students within the Faculty of Science, and five within the Faculty of Engineering. The scholarships are awarded based on academic excellence, leadership, creativity and charisma, with strong consideration for financial need. Schulich Leaders are entrepreneurial-minded students looking to pursue careers in technology, entrepreneurship and business enterprise, engineering or scientific research.

McMaster Externs help Hospital with Nurse Shortage

To help with the hospital nursing shortage during the pandemic, 87 McMaster nursing students are working as externs in Hamilton's two hospital systems. The externships are paid roles for the students to gain work experience while finishing their studies. Ontario's Ministry of Health launched the extern program in February to support nursing capacity while the province responds to the pandemic.

McMaster Student Start-Ups claim Prizes in The Forge Startup Survivor

Four student-founded start-ups working with McMaster's Forge Business Incubator have won top prizes and \$31,000 in cash awards for their innovative business ventures. The awards were given out earlier this month during a Survivor-themed virtual pitch competition before a panel of industry judges. Founded in 2015 and funded by McMaster, the Forge Business Incubator program serves startups in the Hamilton, Greater Toronto, and Niagara Regions. Clients receive expert mentorship, funding, investor introductions, and other entrepreneurial support. So far, 233 companies have been through program and have raised over \$36 million while selling products in 50 countries.