

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO
McMASTER UNIVERSITY'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS
JUNE 9, 2022**

Reflections on the 2021-22 Academic Year

The 2021-22 academic year marked the first year of our new Strategic Plan. As we reach the end of the year it seems appropriate to reflect back and provide an update on progress made in a number of the key strategic areas we identified. As Board members know, the strategic plan outlines five areas of institutional priority and I will report briefly on key initiatives in each area:

Inclusive Excellence – *aspire to embed an inclusive approach that intentionally engages and respects a diversity of peoples, perspectives, and ways of knowing, in everything we do.*

We have continued our work on the implementation of the EDI Strategy and Action Plan, with significant progress being made across a number of areas. In particular, to champion this work and support decision-making, we established an EDI Network to coordinate the expanding distributed network of EDI leads and champions across the campus; the Strategic Excellence and Equity in Recruitment and Retention (STEERR) Program was launched to seed Faculty initiatives to advance inclusive excellence; and academic units have worked with the support of the Equity and Inclusion office to enhance admission practices to improve access for prospective students.

To support inclusivity in academic curricula and scholarship, the University has developed new EDI requirements for IQAP (program quality assurance) submissions, with associated guides to support inclusive excellence in the research ecosystem, including with regard to nomination and selection processes for Research Chairs. Enhancing the training available for members of the University community to build EDI capacity and awareness has also been an area of focus. Over the last year, a number of new accessibility and accommodations resources have been developed, including baseline EDI training modules, as part of a new Inclusive Excellence Leadership Series for People Managers.

To enable community building and foster a culture of inclusion where all community members experience a sense of belonging, an employee resource group for Black, Indigenous, and racialized staff members was established, in collaboration with the President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community. In addition, enhanced consultation, engagement, and support for members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community has been implemented, and work is underway to enhance accessibility and way-finding across the campus.

The Black Excellence hiring initiative, which enabled the accelerated hiring of a cohort of Black faculty across all six Faculties was a particular success, and funds have also been allocated to support the development of the Black Student Mentorship Program, driven by the African and Caribbean Faculty Association of McMaster, for the next two years. Work in all these areas will

continue, along with an ongoing focus on reviewing current policies and practices to identify and remove barriers and support inclusivity across the campus community.

Teaching and Learning – *further advance and support innovation in teaching and learning, within and beyond the classroom, and across disciplines and Faculties, to elevate teaching as a professional discipline, and equip our students with the knowledge and skills needed to make a transformative impact on our world.*

Over the last year our focus on interdisciplinary learning has continued. In addition to key interdisciplinary undergraduate programs such as iBioMed, Integrated Business and Humanities, and Arts & Science, McMaster also now offers a number of interdisciplinary minors that are open to all undergraduate students. These include Sustainability, Community Engagement, Globalization, African and African Diaspora Studies, and Latin American and LatinX Studies. The work to identify and remove barriers to interdisciplinary learning has been led by the MacPherson Institute. Following a process of discussion and consultation, a number of recommendations have been made to: (1) establish centralized structures and processes to resource and support interdisciplinary programs; (2) build community and capacity for interdisciplinary teaching; and (3) recognize and celebrate contributions to interdisciplinary teaching. These recommendations are currently with the Provost's Office for review and implementation.

Alongside this, we have continued to focus on experiential education, which enables students to advance program and/or course-based learning outcomes by applying theory and academic content to authentic experiences, either within the classroom, the community, or the workplace. Since 2016-17, the percentage of graduates of undergraduate programs who have taken at least one Experiential Learning course has risen from 87.12 per cent to 95.29 per cent in 2020-21.

I have updated Board Members previously with regard to our focus on mental health supports, which extends to equipping faculty and other educators with the tools needed to support student mental health, inclusion, accessibility, and safety needs. In addition to the extensive training and resources made available by the Equity and Inclusion Office, a dedicated Inclusive Teaching Resource web-page has been developed in collaboration with the MacPherson Institute, the McMaster Accessibility Council and staff, students, and faculty. Alongside this, the IDEAS (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Sustainability) grant allows for the provision of funds to McMaster instructors seeking to make their courses more accessible and equitable. In support of mental health literacy, the Professor Hippo-on-Campus Student Mental Health Education Program has now been completed by 592 faculty and staff across the campus. Additional modules relating to the virtual learning environment and specifically aimed at graduate Teaching Assistants have been added, with approximately 20 per cent of Teaching Assistants choosing to complete this optional training in 2021-22.

Our work to recognize and value teaching as a professional practice continues. The focus this year has been on reviewing the ways in which teaching and teaching development are supported, assessed, and recognized in faculty careers. Three projects are currently underway which will review McMaster's teaching portfolio guidelines, seek to adjust the focus of end-of-term course evaluations, and support peer review, peer observation, and peer feedback on teaching. In terms

of assessments for students, the pandemic accelerated the need for alternative means of assessment. The MacPherson Institute developed a number of new resources for instructors, with alternative assessment options such as the use of Student Reflective Journals, and Facilitated Online Discussions, and this will continue to be an area of focus over the coming year.

The pandemic also brought to the fore the need for a Digital Learning Strategy to leverage technology to enhance teaching and learning, foster inclusive excellence, and cultivate innovative learning spaces. Work on this is well underway and is being led by a project team from the Provost's Office, University Technology Services, and the MacPherson Institute. The goal is to take a pedagogical and evidence-informed approach to guide decisions around those pedagogies, modalities, and technologies that will optimize learning. The strategy is expected to be launched over the Summer of 2022.

Research and Scholarship – *be the go-to place for world-class researchers and collaborators who share our values and commitment to working together across disciplines, sectors, and borders to develop knowledge, tackle global issues, and advance human understanding.*

Our focus over the last year has been to amplify the positive impact of the work of our researchers at the local, national, and international levels, to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and to establish McMaster as a key partner for research expertise for governments and agencies. A great deal of advocacy has taken place, and support garnered, for Canada's Global Nexus for Pandemics and Biological Threats, and we have been successful in building national and international collaborations to further extend the impact of this critically important work. Alongside this, strategic funds have been provided to Faculties in support of new initiatives intended to advance research intensity, as well as to support large partnership grants, and provide matching funds for summer students.

In my last report to the Board (April 2022) I highlighted our work to support economic prosperity and social innovation, including the launch of the McMaster Seed Fund, the ongoing development of the innovation ecosystem in Hamilton and within Southern Ontario, and the opportunities and supports available to both faculty and students to engage in entrepreneurial activities. McMaster has also developed a Commercialization Policy Framework, as required by the provincial government, and work is underway on a dedicated McMaster Commercialization and Innovation strategic plan.

Despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic, we have been able to continue to expand our international research collaborations, and are re-thinking our approach to ensure that strategic goals for such collaborations are clearly articulated and met. Over the last year, McMaster has been able to develop and finalize a number of strategically important new partnerships, including with Lund University, the University of Birmingham, and the University of Liverpool, as well as developing joint PhD programs with strategic partners in key areas of shared interest, such as virology.

A great deal of progress has also been made with regard to oversight of McMaster's Research Centres and Institutes, with inactive Centres and Institutes being closed, the development of annual reporting mechanism for all active Centres and Institutes, including data and metrics, and

the instigation of five-yearly external reviews. Work is also underway to develop a sustainable support model to ensure the ongoing viability of these critically important research activities. The successful implementation of the core facilities and platforms policy over the last year, and the distribution of infrastructure support through the University Research Infrastructure Oversight Board, has helped to ensure the financial sustainability of a number of key research facilities, in addition.

As part of our work to raise the profile of McMaster's researchers and amplify the impact of their research, increased attention has been given to nominating faculty for awards. In 2020-2021, McMaster faculty were recognized with the award of an Order of Canada, election to the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists, a Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Award, the John Charles Polanyi Prize in Economics, the John L. Synge Award in Mathematics, and the Alice Wilson Award from the Royal Society of Canada. Five faculty joined the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences as Fellows, and three faculty were elected as Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada.

Engaging Local, National, Indigenous, and Global Communities – *further develop and expand our network of longstanding and respectful partnerships with communities, partners, research collaborators, and supporters for the benefit of all.*

The Office of Community Engagement has worked throughout the pandemic to develop and maintain meaningful partnerships with community partners. Since September 2021, the Office has supported the development and operationalization of 37 different community partnerships. This includes work undertaken by the McMaster Research Shop, which builds connections by enabling interdisciplinary teams of students to work with community partners and respond to local community research needs. Between September 2021 to August 2022, McMaster undergraduate and graduate students contributed approximately 5,760 student volunteer hours to address 18 research projects developed with community partners.

We have also been working to expand the range of experiential and community-engaged opportunities, both curricular and co-curricular, available to our students, and have made notable progress in a number of areas. The Interdisciplinary Minor in Community Engagement offers 164 courses related to the Theory and Skills-Development for community engagement, and 13 community-engaged upper-level undergraduate courses available to all students across all Faculties; the Research Shop mentioned above engages approximately 30 student volunteers, supported by five paid graduate student team leads per term; and the MacChangers program, co-hosted by the Faculty of Engineering and the Office of Community Engagement, offers experiential learning opportunities to approximately 100 students each year. Students work to propose collaborative solutions to some of the most complex and pressing problems facing our City and community.

McMaster is also committed to building partnerships with our local Indigenous communities and operating as a trusted and respectful partner, recognizing the unique position of Indigenous peoples within our society. The launch of the Indigenous Education and Research Strategy, developed under the leadership of the Indigenous Education Council, was a major step forward, and the University is committed to supporting the implementation of the strategy. The approval

of the Indigenous Studies Department has also been a critical step this year. The new Department will be home to the Indigenous Studies undergraduate program, a planned graduate program, and research and community-focused activities. As a further aspect of our work to support Indigenous colleagues, the Vice-President (Research) is collaborating with the new Director of the McMaster Indigenous Research Institute on strategic visioning and coordination with other Indigenous-led strategies at McMaster, and is also engaged in discussions with Chief Mark Hill of Six Nations on collaborative research projects.

I referred to international research collaborations earlier in this report. In addition to these critically important research partnerships, we are also committed to providing global learning opportunities for our students, intended to help foster a sense of global citizenship. While the International Exchange Program was paused during the pandemic, participation is already beginning to resume with a total of 74 inbound students participating in the McMaster Exchange program, either virtually or in person, in 2021-22. A total of 60 outbound students participated in this program, with 58 of those students travelling to partner universities around the world. We expect these numbers to steadily increase over the coming year as travel restrictions continue to ease.

Over the last year the Student Success Centre has worked to provide virtual global experiential learning opportunities to students through its Global Experience Program. This included providing funding and support for attendance at virtual global conferences, volunteer, and internship opportunities. In addition, students also had the opportunity to engage with peers across the world to address specific challenges faced by Canadian and international companies. By pursuing virtual global opportunities, some students were able to fulfill their experiential program requirements, while others used this as a co-curricular opportunity to gain global awareness, establish industry connections, and attain work experience when in-person options were limited.

Operational Excellence – *enable the administrative operations of the University to most effectively support the institutional vision and aspirations of our community of researchers, scholars, teachers, and learners.*

One of the critical areas of support for our academic mission throughout the pandemic has been ensuring that the necessary digital technologies were in place and fully functional to support hybrid teaching and learning. Alongside this, we have introduced enhanced security for teaching, learning, research, and working environments by implementing a Multi-Factor Authentication adoption policy, expanding the Information Security Services team, and strengthening the partnership with the Canadian Shared Security Operations Centre (CanSSOC) to provide additional cyber-security support for McMaster and other members of the U15 research-intensive group of universities.

As greater numbers of students, faculty, and staff return to our campus, we are continuing our focus on enhancing the physical environment. As Board Members know, an important component of this is our goal of transforming our campus into a living laboratory for sustainability, accessibility, and inclusion. The launch this year of McMaster's inaugural University-wide Sustainability Strategy: *A Living Laboratory for Sustainability* was a landmark

moment and signals our collective commitment to this important area. Collaborations between students, faculty, and staff, such as the ACCESS Tech used technology drive, McMaster's community fridge, water bottle refill campaign, sustainable procurement, and the native bee project on campus are just some examples of the initiatives currently away. We are also focused on reducing our carbon footprint and ultimately achieving net zero carbon status. Our original goal was to reduce carbon in university investments by 45 per cent by 2030 but we have been able to accelerate this and are now striving to achieve a 65 per cent reduction by 2025 and 75 per cent by 2030. Investment managers are also required to ensure that companies held within their investment pools are aligned with carbon-reduction strategies and environmental sustainability. The University's updated investment policy is aligned with UN goals and was developed after completion of an international best practice research study. A recent study by the C.D. Howe Institute ranked McMaster first in Canada, along with UBC, for our endowment emission reduction plan, governance, and disclosure of our plan and progress.

Our commitment to operational excellence in all of the University's administrative functions continues. Following completion of the HR Review, a number of important milestones have been achieved, including the reconfiguration of PeopleSoft/Mosaic through the position management project, which has improved accuracy in payroll, accounting, and headcount reporting; and the Mosaic eForms project, which introduced "smart eForms" supported by streamlined, standardized approval processes to increase efficiency and accuracy in payroll, hiring processes, and HR reporting. The combination of these two projects resulted in the ability to ensure accuracy and efficiency in processes that impact payroll and HR and Finance reporting across the entire University. In addition, changes to the way in which HR services are delivered, including the focus on specialist roles in pay and benefits, and the expansion of the HR Partner role in Faculties and Departments, has allowed for customized strategic and operational support to leaders across the University. Work is ongoing on the remaining recommendations and we will continue to streamline processes and support efficient operations across the administrative function of the University.

The University also remains focused on financial stewardship and risk mitigation, with the Enterprise Wide Risk Management review complete, and work underway to implement the recommendations. As is clear from the University's consolidated budget, which is in a surplus position for both 2021-22 and 2022-23, McMaster has been able to retain a strong and sustainable financial position, despite the uncertainties and challenges of the pandemic, and to invest in key areas to advance our academic and research mission. I look forward to further advancing these priorities over the coming year and to continuing our progress against the strategic plan

CAMPUS UPDATE

McMaster Ranks Sixth in the World for Impact on Health and Well-Being

McMaster's established record for advancing better health solutions, care, equity, and growth has earned the University the top rank in Canada and sixth worldwide for impact on health and well-being in an international ranking of more than 1,400 universities. Overall, McMaster ranked 37th in the world in this year's Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings, which recognizes the contributions of universities working to make the world a more sustainable place.

Convocation and Legacy Ceremonies to Celebrate Classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022

McMaster welcomed graduates and their families and friends to celebrate convocation in-person for the first time in more than two years. In the month of May, six legacy events were held to honour students who did not have the opportunity to participate in an in-person celebration during the COVID-19 pandemic. Convocation ceremonies were also held for 2022 graduates of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the School of Nursing in late May. The remaining ceremonies will take place in mid-June. During this convocation season the University is recognizing 10 honorary degree recipients, who are being honoured for contributions ranging from working to break the cycle of child poverty; advancing evidence-based medicine; supporting the sharing of traditional Indigenous epistemology, language, and culture; to advancing inclusive excellence in the technology sector.

Research

\$32M invested in National Heart Failure Research Network

Researchers at McMaster's Population Health Research Institute will play a foundational role in a new, coast-to-coast, patient-driven network tackling the challenge of heart failure, a common condition that is often fatal and on the rise in Canada.

Professor Emeritus receives Life Sciences Ontario Award

Jack Gauldie is the winner of Life Sciences Ontario's community service award for his contributions to health sciences and medicine. Dr. Gauldie, a Professor Emeritus and previously Chair of the Department of Pathology and Molecular Medicine, is best known for discovering how immune signalling molecules called 'cytokines' affect responses to infections, auto-immune diseases, and chronic conditions, including cancer.

\$1M Gift from LiUNA creates new Chair in Global Labour Issues

A new gift will establish the LiUNA/Enrico Henry Mancinelli Chair in Global Labour Issues in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The donation will be supported by the Faculty, transitioning the existing LiUNA/Enrico Henry Mancinelli Professorship in Global Labour Issues to a prestigious research chair with renewed scope and increased capacity.

Two McMaster Researchers receive Funding through Race, Gender, and Diversity Initiative

Two researchers received a combined \$812,000 from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's (SSHRC) new Race, Gender, and Diversity Initiative. An interdisciplinary team led by Beth Murray-Davis, Associate Professor in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, will study the use of gendered language in healthcare systems with the aim of supporting transgender, gender non-binary, and Two-Spirit people in reproductive care. Carmela Laganse, Associate Professor in the School of Arts, will investigate how the media arts industries can support inclusion and anti-racism through the creation of a digital platform.

McMaster Partners with other Nuclear Leaders to drive Research

As Canada looks toward a low-carbon future, McMaster, Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation (USNC), and Global First Power (GFP) have embarked on a new partnership to advance

research, innovation, and training in small modular reactors (SMRs) – a clean energy technology that will play an essential role in Canada’s Net Zero by 2050 goal.

Six McMaster Researchers Recognized as University Scholars

This award recognizes the achievements of mid-career researchers who are considered global leaders. The 2022 recipients are Olufemi Ayeni, Surgery; Chelsea Gabel, Health, Aging and Society; Maryam Ghasemaghaei, DeGroote School of Business; Jose Moran-Mirabal, Chemistry and Chemical Biology; Mehdi Narimani, Electrical and Computer Engineering; and Zena Samaan, Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences.

McMaster Researchers share Global Impact of their work in Queen’s Baton Relay

Ahead of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, McMaster welcomed the Queen’s Baton Relay and a delegation from the University of Birmingham — the educational partner of the Games — to campus in late May. The Baton, which has a high-tech core that analyzes atmospheric and environmental conditions, passed through the hands of researchers at several research locations across McMaster’s campus. The relay featured both athletes and researchers, and highlighted the potential for meaningful partnerships between the universities in shared areas of research, as well as the power of sport to unite.

Student Experience and Community Engagement

McMaster’s Inaugural Day of Giving raised more than \$2.8M

A one-day, University-wide fundraising campaign, the Day of Giving engaged 1,220 members of the University community through giving and participation in events. The campaign focused on supporting Black student excellence, Indigenous priorities, and equity-deserving communities at McMaster.

Student-led Community Fridge Launched on Earth Day

After learning food insecurity is a concern for many of their peers, an interdisciplinary group of students collaborated with the McMaster Student Wellness Centre and the MSU Food Collective to develop a logistical plan to operationalize the first community fridge on campus.

Sustainability Students Procurement Project

Together with procurement staff and industry partners, a group of four students enrolled in a McMaster SUSTAIN course created the university’s first Sustainable Procurement webpage, complete with resources to support social and environmental purchasing. The undergraduate student team members: Aryan Patel, Helena Teng, Joy Xu, and Sara Tamijdi, come from a multidisciplinary background, spanning science and health studies.

McMaster Partners with U.K. Law Schools on Student Exchange Opportunity

McMaster’s Department of Political Science and the Law Schools of the University of Birmingham, the University of Glasgow, and the University of Liverpool have partnered to create a new student exchange opportunity. The initiative targets political science students interested in studying issues related to government and politics from a legal perspective, while also spending either one or two semesters abroad.