President’s Report to 
McMaster University’s Board of Governors 
October 27, 2022

Spotlight on Inclusive Excellence

At our Board retreat last month, I shared an overview of the key priority areas in McMaster’s Institutional Priorities and Strategic Framework document which, as you know, are the focus for the university’s work over the next three years. I provided a few examples of the progress we’ve made in these areas and now would like to share further developments, specifically in the area of Inclusive Excellence.

McMaster’s goal with respect to Inclusive Excellence is to “aspire to embed an inclusive approach that intentionally engages and respects a diversity of peoples, perspectives and ways of knowing in everything we do.” During the consultation process that informed McMaster’s strategic plan, members of the McMaster community expressed a strong desire to take meaningful action to advance inclusive excellence, and this commitment has been reflected in the many programs and initiatives that continue to emerge across campus.

As a university, we have made significant advances in our work to embed an inclusive approach throughout our operations and to engage diverse communities. I would like to highlight and provide updates on some of these important developments.

Search for the new Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion

The search for the new Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion (EDI) is now underway. Sonia Anand, a professor of Medicine and Epidemiology in the Department of Medicine and Health Evidence and Impact is currently serving in this role in an acting capacity. Anand assumed the role after Arig al Shaibah, McMaster’s inaugural associate vice-president, Equity and Inclusion, accepted a new role at the University of British Columbia last June.

Dr. Al Shaibah played a leading role in the implementation of McMaster’s EDI Strategy and companion EDI Action Plan while strengthening the Equity and Inclusion Office. More than 60 per cent of the strategic priorities identified within the plan have been completed with another 20 per cent in progress. A new associate vice-president, Equity and Inclusion will have the opportunity to continue and expand this critical work.

Strategic Excellence and Equity in Recruitment and Retention (STEE/R) Program

The Office of the Provost recently awarded more than $2 million to fund initiatives aimed at supporting equity-deserving communities at McMaster through the Strategic Excellence and Equity in Recruitment and Retention (STEE/R) program.
The STEE/R program is a five-year pilot designed to provide seed funding for transformative initiatives that enhance student access, experience and success, and improve faculty and staff hiring, career progression and leadership advancement among equity-deserving communities at McMaster. $10 million from the University Fund was committed by the Office of the Provost to support the program over five years.

This round of funding prioritizes initiatives that support Black students, scholars and staff. Funded initiatives include:

- Support for THRIVE, an existing faculty/peer mentorship initiative
- The development of an interdisciplinary minor in African and Black Diaspora Studies
- The McMaster African and Caribbean Leadership Exchange (MACLeads)
- The Equitable Global Skills Opportunity project
- The Black Student Mentorship Program (BSMP)

This round of funding will also co-fund a Black student recruitment and career advisor in the Faculty of Engineering. This position will provide recruitment, mentorship and career supports for Black undergraduate students and create pathways for Black students to pursue graduate studies in engineering.

As well, funding was awarded to the Faculty of Humanities for the recruitment of a Black post-doctoral fellow who will serve as a research co-ordinator under professor Ingrid Waldron. This researcher will be tasked with exploring access to mental health services among Black youth in Hamilton over a two-year period.

In a previous round of funding the STEE/R program also supported the cohort hiring of 12 exceptional Black scholars and the establishment of the Black Student Success Centre. Both these initiatives have already made a significant contribution to supporting and advancing Black excellence, equity and inclusion on campus.

**McMaster’s New Manager of Research, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

McMaster’s Office of the Vice-President Research (VPR) has hired its first-ever Manager, Research Equity, Diversity and Inclusive Excellence. Emmanuel Soresong, who joined the university in September, takes on this critical new role, which is designed to advance the university’s pursuit of inclusive excellence in research and commercialization.

Emmanuel will lead the implementation of McMaster’s equity and diversity initiatives related to research and commercialization, with particular emphasis on the university’s Canada Research Chair (CRC) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan. He’ll work directly with researchers and in collaboration with the Equity & Inclusion Office, Faculty and Departmental personnel and offices within the VPR envelope.

Before Joining McMaster, Emmanuel supported researchers at Wilfred Laurier University in equity, diversity and inclusion, equipping them with tools to reflect on how EDI intersects with their scholarship and assisting with the development of EDI plans for grant applications.
I am excited to welcome Emmanuel to McMaster and confident that his leadership and expertise will be invaluable as we work to support our diverse research community.

**Employment Equity Census Report**

Earlier this month, McMaster released its Employment Equity Census Report, which showed an increase in representation among all equity-deserving groups across the university’s senior leadership and other full-time and continuing employee groups as of 2021. The report also highlighted remaining gaps in representation at the institution, particularly for Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.

The report is prepared biennially by Human Resources Services, in collaboration with the Equity and Inclusion Office and with support from Institutional Research and Analysis. It provides a snapshot of the composition of McMaster’s workforce and supports the planning and implementation in support of employment equity and is a critical part of the university’s commitment to advance equity, diversity and inclusive excellence in the workplace.

Human Resources Services will continue to engage with key stakeholder groups on the development of action plans, and with the broader McMaster community to provide updates on current and upcoming initiatives, as well as programming to help advance inclusive excellence.

**Lincoln Alexander Hall**

On October 20, McMaster officially announced the new student residence planned for Main Street West will be named Lincoln Alexander Hall in honour of the Honorable Lincoln Alexander.

Alexander, a graduate of McMaster earning a BA in 1949, was Canada’s first Black MP who represented the riding in which McMaster is located. He was also the first Black member of cabinet, Ontario’s first Black lieutenant-governor, a member of the Order of Ontario and a companion of the Order of Canada, whose life-long dedication to learning, racial equality, and civic leadership serves as an inspiration to us all.

Lincoln Alexander Hall will be a “living and learning” community built on the pillars of inclusive excellence, sustainability and wellness, and self-discovery and learning. As in all McMaster residences, Lincoln Alexander Hall will include leadership programming, address accessibility barriers faced by equity-deserving communities and ensure an elevated standard of environmental responsibility. The floorplan will encourage a sense of community through extensive communal spaces and an interior green space.

The residence will also welcome members of our local community through a unique program developed by the McMaster Institute for Research on Aging that will connect students with older adults.
The residence will be built through public-private partnership between McMaster University and Knightstone Capital Management, similar to our graduate residence being built downtown. McMaster’s Housing and Conference Services will manage the new residence to ensure this new living facility will support our students, both personally and academically. I look forward to sharing updates with Board members as the construction progresses.

**Institutional Priorities and Strategic Framework Report**

McMaster has published the 2021-22 Institutional Priorities and Strategic Framework Report. This annual report is designed to highlight activities and developments taking place across the university that support McMaster’s five key priorities as outlined in our strategic plan: Inclusive Excellence; Teaching and Learning; Research and Scholarship; Engaging Communities; and Operational Excellence.

The report contains detailed information about the many programs, initiatives and strategies that have been developed by Faculties and areas across the university over the past year that are advancing McMaster’s key priorities. Read the report.

**CAMPUS UPDATE**

**McMaster ranked among the world’s top 85 universities**

McMaster continues to be ranked among the world’s top 100 universities in the 2023 Times Higher Education World University Rankings, a key international ranking of nearly 1,800 institutions. In this ranking, McMaster emerged as one of only four Canadian universities in the global top 100 and placed first in Canada and 66th globally for Industry Income, which reflects the university’s ability to attract funding in the commercial marketplace.

**McMaster among Canada’s top universities in MacLean’s ranking**

McMaster has retained its top-tier placement in Maclean’s annual ranking of universities with a broad range of research and PhD programs, including medical schools. For the fifth consecutive year, McMaster ranked fourth in the country. McGill, the University of Toronto, and the University of British Columbia also held steady 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.

**McMaster honours Nobel laureates at special street naming ceremony**

Nobel laureates and McMaster alumni Myron Scholes and Donna Strickland were honoured at a special street naming ceremony held on Tuesday, Oct 4. McMaster renamed two streets on campus to honour the lasting impact of the Nobel laureates in economics and physics. A portion of Stearn Drive, the roadway that runs across the south side of the David Braley Athletic Centre, was named Scholes Way, and a stretch of road near the Arthur N. Bourns Building and John Hodgins Engineering Building was named Strickland Way.
McMaster to open new location at 180 Bloor in Toronto

McMaster University is opening an 8,000-square-foot event and collaborative learning space at 180 Bloor St. W. in Toronto. One hundred and thirty-five years ago, the university’s first home was across the street at 273 Bloor St. W., now the site of the Royal Conservatory of Music. “While Hamilton will always be home, McMaster’s presence in downtown Toronto will be a place to welcome students, alumni, business, government leaders and the world,” says McMaster president David Farrar.

Renovation of the space is underway with anticipated opening in early 2023.

An update in the construction of the MacLean Centre for Collaborative Discovery

Construction of the new McLean Centre for Collaborative Discovery (MCCD) officially began at the end of August 2021, but the most dramatic transformation of this new state-of-the-art 10-storey facility began in June 2022 with demolition of the old building. “The MCCD is the new home for undergraduate and graduate business students, and students from all across McMaster. This important milestone means we are one step closer to transforming business education for the future,” says Khaled Hassanein, dean, DeGroote School or Business.

A conversation on Truth and Reconciliation

I recently sat down with Savage Bear, an assistant professor in the newly created Department of indigenous Studies and director of the McMaster Indigenous Research Institute, for a video conversation on the meaning and importance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and how the McMaster community can take steps toward reconciliation, including educating themselves about Indigenous history and cultures.

RESEARCH

McMaster Research Projects receive $2M in federal funding

Seven McMaster researchers have received more than $2 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation’s John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF). The fund is designed to help universities recruit and retain the very best researchers by providing them with the foundational equipment and facilities they need to become leaders in their field. McMaster’s funded projects include studies on the mental health impacts of long-COVID, the creation of a new quantum materials lab, and the development of ultrasound tools for assessing muscle health in breast cancer patients.

Dominik Mertz named new Michael G. DeGroote Chair in Infectious Disease

Dominik Mertz, director of the division of Infectious Diseases in the department of Medicine at McMaster, is the newly named holder of the Michael G. DeGroote Chair in Infectious Diseases.
The chair, established in 2010 through a gift from DeGroote, is awarded to highly accomplished researchers who contribute significantly to the body of scholarship around infectious diseases through teaching and research.

**McMaster’s Basil H. Johnston Archives added to UNESCO Canada Memory of the World Register**

The Basil H. Johnston Archives at McMaster University are now part of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO’s Canada Memory of the World Register. Johnston (1929-2015) was an Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) author, linguist and teacher. Widely considered one of the leading North American Indigenous authors of the 20th century, he wrote about Anishinaabe traditions, language and modern life. The Canada Memory of the World Register, created in 2017, promotes the diversity of the country’s significant documentary heritage, which extends from the initial settling of the land by Indigenous Peoples up to the present time.

**CIHR funds major McMaster study on pandemics’ impact in child health**

A McMaster-led interdisciplinary team of researchers, policy and community partners is launching a major investigation into the pandemic’s impact on Canadian children and youth. The study of almost 27,000 children and youth, ages five to 21, is being supported by a $3.1 million grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and was announced by Filomena Tassi, MP for Hamilton West – Ancaster – Dundas, on behalf of Minister of Health Jean-Yves Duclos.

**McMaster sociologist receives Fulbright Canada Research Chair to study Ukrainian diaspora in the U.S.**

Sociology professor Victor Satzewich has received the Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Peace and War Studies at Norwich University in Northfield Vermont. Norwich is a senior military college and home to the prestigious John and Mary Frances Patton Peace & War Centre. Satzewich will spend the fall term at Norwich, researching how the Ukrainian-American community will mobilize support during Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

**STUDENTS, TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**Largest gift to the liberal arts in Canada will create unique leadership college at McMaster**

McMaster University is launching Canada’s most comprehensive leadership college with a $50-million gift from Chancellor Emeritus Lynton “Red” Wilson and the Wilson Foundation. Wilson’s support will establish the Wilson College of Leadership and Civic Engagement, with the goal to develop outstanding young leaders who understand the myriad challenges facing our world and who will be committed to strengthening our societies.

Work is underway on the process to approve the creation of the program, recruit an External Director, create the Academic Director and Endowed Chair positions and prepare for the Senate process to approve the curriculum.
Ignite Program gives first-year international students tools to thrive at McMaster

The Ignite Program, a program offered by the Student Success Centre to help first-year international students living in residence, helps students get acquainted with campus and the city, and get help with necessities like cellphones and bank accounts. In addition, the program offers students the opportunity to meet others and connect with resources that will help them thrive during their time at McMaster.

Groundbreaking course focuses exclusively on Indigenous historians and their work

The undergraduate class, developed by Allan Downey, associate professor in the Department of Indigenous Studies and a citizen of the Dakelh Nation (Nak’azdli Whut’en, Lusilyoo Clan), focuses exclusively on Indigenous historians and their work — something that’s unique in Canada, and possibly in North America. It’s rare for reading lists to include Indigenous historians, and they’re not cited as often as non-Indigenous researchers. “We’re attempting to decolonize and rewrite the accepted histories as they’ve been taught in the past,” says Downey.