

A Message To The Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour Community  
Email sent May 25, 2023

Dear Members of the Department of Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour,

As you are all well aware, approximately three (3) years ago, McMaster began investigating allegations of misconduct by certain faculty and staff within the PNB Department. While the investigations and Systemic Review were legally necessary, I appreciate that the process was a challenging period for all faculty, staff and students of the PNB Department.

I recognize that it created anxiety and uncertainty across the Department and was an extremely stressful time, particularly for those individuals who were directly involved in the investigations. I also recognize that, despite the efforts of the University administration to manage these challenging processes thoughtfully and fairly, this was not the way that members of the Department necessarily experienced these events. I understand that some members of the Department felt unsupported, or even abandoned, and in some cases believed that the PNB Department was being deliberately attacked by the University administration. Although this was absolutely not the case, I can appreciate the sense of frustration and anxiety that arose during this time and which led to the filing of a number of individual and group grievances by faculty members from the Department against the University.

The University administration has been working to resolve the various grievances and respond to the key issues raised. My focus as Provost is on supporting the PNB Department to advance its research and teaching mission and rebuild trust and a sense of shared goals and purpose between the Department and the University administration. A very positive step forward was taken earlier this year with the successful resolution of the group grievances. Through extensive and constructive dialogue, the University administration and members of the PNB Department (supported by MUFA) reached a resolution focused on building and growing the Department and those within it, restoring the Department's positive reputation, and re-building relationships. The University is deeply committed to these goals and has demonstrated this in several ways, including: removing all references to the Systemic Review from its website to facilitate positive reflection and publicity of the Department;

offering upwards of \$200,000 in financial support to the Department to hire personnel, including up to 2 post-doctoral fellows, to assist with the rebooting of stalled research programs in the Department, grant writing, as well as social media assistance and promotion;

establishing positive lines of communication, including meetings between the University administration and representative members of the Department to discuss the path forward;

enabling regular access to communicate achievements and activities of the Department broadly to McMaster community members using the Daily News; and

ensuring transparency and consultation in the review of the University's *Sexual Violence Policy* and *Discrimination and Harassment Policy* by Arbitrator Michelle Flaherty.

I am hopeful that the resolution of the grievances, and McMaster's subsequent actions, mark the beginning of a new chapter in which we can collectively focus on our shared goals of excellence in teaching, research, and service. The recent IQAP review provides an opportunity to focus on this core mission, to build on the Department's successes, and work together to strengthen areas of weakness. In the spirit of cooperation, I look forward to continued discussions, and to working with you all to make the Department and the student experience exceptional.

Sincerely,

Susan Tighe

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If you have an accommodation need for a planned meeting, please e-mail me directly and I will do my best to make appropriate arrangements. Should you require any materials sent via this e-mail address in an alternate/accessible format, please let me know.