

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO
McMASTER UNIVERSITY'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS
JUNE 4, 2015**

At a number of recent Board meetings I have spoken about the planned review of the funding formula for Ontario universities. Now that the long-anticipated consultation process is underway, this is a topic that is very much to the forefront of discussions within the sector.

It is undeniable that any attempt to strengthen higher education in Ontario is a good thing, and in that regard the current initiative to revise the funding formula certainly represents a welcome opportunity. But it is also a project fraught with danger, in particular because the formula—more than almost any other aspect of university business—is technically very complex, and, because it has evolved with the universities over nearly fifty years, is inextricably tied to the character, the strengths and the weaknesses of our institutions. Simply excising it from the body of higher education in Ontario cannot be an option—at least not before we have some sort of prosthesis, at least as effective in fostering strength and with significantly fewer deleterious elements, ready for implantation.

The province is keen to ensure that there is broad public consultation on this process, and in itself that is not a problem. Indeed, as public institutions we count on an ongoing and vibrant dialogue with the constituencies we serve. The risk, though, is that the formula—that highly technical operating system for institutions—will become a site on which immediate issues of social and economic policy will be contested, and the consequences for the universities and the work that must be done in them could be disastrous, especially where the long-term mandate of those institutions is left out of consideration. Universities are the creatures of society and they exist to serve society, but they perform that role, paradoxically, by challenging society to understand itself and to make policy for the long-term good. For that very reason they have historically been buffered from political contingency, and governments have actively fostered a funding arrangement that provided consistency and predictability over time, that effectively supported their diverse and complex mandate, and that conferred the measure of autonomy required to discharge the university mandate to a high standard.

What is needed from the current reform process is a formula that does these things and more. During the consultations, however, it is unlikely that there will be unanimity on that point. It is to be hoped, however, that all parties with a direct stake in higher education—students, faculty, staff, alumni and administrators, for example—will press very hard on it, even when efforts will be made to suggest that their interests are divergent.

We have been told that the new formula must be “student-centred,” and there already is the first invitation to diverge, to have students position themselves in opposition—to what? Depending on the broader public issue invoked, the enemy might be a “full-time faculty-centred” formula, or an “administration-centred” formula, or, tautologically, a “university-centred” formula. The most pernicious of these false oppositions, and the one which received a good deal of air time during recent labour action, positions the interests of students and researchers as antagonistic. It goes without saying that students are right to be concerned about growing class size and the quality of instruction. They are also understandably concerned about their career prospects and

desirous of securing good and meaningful employment after graduation. But despite the way in which public discussion of these issues has been tending, that does not necessarily mean students regard all spending on research or investments in liberal education as an illegitimate use of university resources. In my experience most students know that research activity and institutional breadth bear in some way upon the quality of their education, even though they may not always be able to articulate how, and even when they have chosen to pursue a course of study that is specialized, or in the case of the professions, highly circumscribed and regulated. They know, in other words, why they have chosen to attend a university rather than some other sort of institution.

It is crucial for a research-intensive university such as McMaster that the outcome of this process is one that continues to support the large view of universities as places of research and discovery as well as of learning, and that underwrites the growth and development of human beings rather than merely the training of functionaries. This will be the focus of our own advocacy on this issue and I would hope that this view will also be taken up by many other stakeholders across our campus and across the province as the process of consultation and review unfolds and government deliberations on higher education reform continue.

[Note: This is an extract from an article submitted to the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) magazine.]

CAMPUS UPDATE

David Braley Health Sciences Centre opens in downtown Hamilton

As highlighted at the last Board meeting, McMaster has officially opened the \$84.6M David Braley Health Sciences Centre at the downtown Hamilton McMaster Health Campus. The 192,000-square-foot facility will be home to the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine's Department of Family Medicine, as well as the City of Hamilton's Public Health Services. About 4,000 students will take part in events and attend some classes throughout the year and its Family Health Centre will see more than 54,000 visits by more than 15,000 Hamiltonians currently without a family doctor.

McMaster Arts Community gets first look at Fitzhenry Studios and Atrium

Just a year after ground was broken on the construction site, McMaster has officially opened the Dr. Robert & Andrée Rhéaume Fitzhenry Studios and Atrium. The studios and atrium will increase existing classroom, studio and display areas by more than 1,700 square feet. This was made possible thanks to a \$3M gift from alumnus Robert Fitzhenry in honour of his late wife Andrée, who was an accomplished painter specializing in landscapes. The atrium will function as a reception area with the façade facing Stearn Drive, where campus visitors, students, staff and faculty will be able to see artists in action.

Five Faculty Members earn University's Highest Honour

Five of McMaster's most extraordinary faculty members have been awarded the University's highest honour. Deborah Cook, Paul O'Byrne, Jamal Deen, Christine Wilson and Shiping Zhu have been named Distinguished University Professors. The title goes only to those who achieve the highest level of excellence in teaching, learning, research and service. Those recognized with

the honour are considered “complete scholars” and have demonstrated an outstanding and sustained research record, innovation in teaching and learning and a history of service that has had an impact on the community.

Deborah Cook, a Professor in Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, is a world-leading expert in intensive care medicine.

Paul O’Byrne, a Professor in Medicine, is world-renowned for his groundbreaking work on asthma and allergies.

Jamal Deen, a Professor in Electrical and Computer Engineering, is a pioneer in environmental sensing and health imaging systems.

Christine Wilson, a Professor in Physics and Astronomy, is an astrophysicist specializing in star formation in our galaxy and beyond.

Shiping Zhu, a Professor in Chemical Engineering, is a chemical engineer leading a team discovering new polymers and biomaterials.

Nine McMaster Researchers to receive University Scholar Award

Nine members of the McMaster community have been named University Scholars. The title is intended to recognize faculty members in mid-career who have already distinguished themselves as international scholars. Recipients are considered global leaders in a number of diverse research areas and academic disciplines. Each University Scholar title will be awarded for a period of four years (beginning July 1, 2015), with each recipient being provided with \$15,000 per year by McMaster Provost David Wilkinson and their Faculty Dean.

The full list of 2015 University Scholar recipients is as follows:

- Paul Ayers — Professor, Department of Chemistry & Chemical Biology
- Christina Baade — Associate Professor, Communication Studies and Multimedia
- Mohit Bhandari — Professor, Surgery; Canada Research Chair in Musculoskeletal Trauma and Surgical Outcomes
- Katherine Cuff — Associate Professor, Economics; Canada Research Chair in Public Economic Theory
- PJ Devereaux — Associate Professor, Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics
- Marie Elliot — Associate Professor, Biology; Canada Research Chair in Microbial Genomics
- Todd Hoare — Associate Professor, Chemical Engineering
- Justin Jin — Assistant Professor, Accounting and Financial Management Services
- Gregory Steinberg — Professor, Medicine (Endocrinology); Canada Research Chair in Metabolism and Obesity

Research

Researchers Map Genomes of Woolly Mammoths

An international team of researchers, including McMaster’s Hendrik Poinar, have sequenced the nearly complete genome of two Siberian woolly mammoths—revealing the most complete picture to date—including new information about the species’ evolutionary history and the conditions that led to its mass extinction at the end of the Ice Age. While scientists have long argued that climate change and human hunting were major factors behind the mammoth’s extinction, the new data suggests multiple factors were at play over their long evolutionary

history. The work was featured in media around the globe, including, The New York Times, Daily Planet, The Globe and Mail, CBC TV's The National, Toronto Star, Associated Press, Canadian Press, Seattle Times, Washington Post, Miami Herald, CBS Radio, CBS News online, CTV News, National Post, CBC online, CBC Radio's Quirks and Quarks, The Calgary Herald and The Hamilton Spectator.

Mac Researcher serves up Breakfast full of Warnings for Parliamentarians

Antibiotic resistance will soon be a full-blown public health crisis, and if we don't do something to address it, Canadians could face some serious consequences. That's the message Gerry Wright delivered to Parliamentarians, members of the media and others this spring. Wright, the Director of the Michael G. DeGroot Institute for Infectious Disease Research, spoke to the group as part of the Bacon and Eggheads series held in Parliament's Centre Block. The breakfast sessions bring Parliamentarians together with experts in science and engineering.

McMaster helps form Company to develop Cancer-Fighting Viruses

McMaster, the Ottawa Hospital, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) and the University of Ottawa (uOttawa) have formed Turnstone Biologics Inc., a biotechnology company focused on developing new treatments for cancer that harness the patient's own immune system. Turnstone combines breakthrough discoveries on cancer-fighting (oncolytic) viruses and vaccines from three Ontario researchers who have worked together for more than 15 years: Dr. Brian Lichty (from McMaster), Dr. John Bell (from The Ottawa Hospital and uOttawa), and Dr. David Stojdl (from CHEO and uOttawa).

In the Future, finding Clean Water might be as easy as Snapping a Photo

Researchers at the Biointerfaces Institute have created a mobile app that can determine just how contaminated a sample of water might be. Using tiny pills — also developed by McMaster researchers — containing contaminant-detecting enzymes, users can first determine if their water is clean or not. If the water is clean, the pills will change the colour of the water. If it is contaminated with pesticide, heavy metals or bacteria such as E. coli, it will remain clear. The app complements the pills by analyzing a series of photos of the water to determine just how contaminated the water is. It also allows users to upload information to a central database, allowing others to quickly and easily find hot spots of water contamination.

Adaptation the focus of this year's Ontario Climate Consortium Conference

Humans will need to adapt to Earth's changing climate if they are to continue living on the planet. That's why adaptation was the focus of this year's Ontario Climate Consortium conference, held at McMaster during May. The gathering of researchers, policy-makers and members of the NGO community featured discussions on the business of climate resilience and adaptation as well as how those in the social sciences can work with those in the natural sciences. The conference, hosted by McMaster's Centre for Climate Change, also included a graduate research poster conference and an art exhibition. Ontario's Minister of the Environment, Glen Murray, gave a keynote address.

Ambassadors from three Nations tour Infectious Disease Lab

Ambassadors from Portugal, Slovakia and the Philippines joined MP David Sweet for tours of two campus facilities in May. Jose Fernando Moreira da Cunha of Portugal, Andrej Droba of Slovakia and Petronila Garcia of the Philippines toured the Michael G. DeGroot Institute for

Infectious Disease Research. Lori Burrows, Professor of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences, led the tour of the lab, in which researchers are working to combat antimicrobial resistance. Earlier in the day, Mo Elbestawi, Vice-President, Research and International Affairs and Peter Mascher, Associate Vice-President, International Affairs, met with Sweet and the ambassadors to discuss McMaster's areas of research expertise and the University's interest in creating and expanding international research partnerships.

Canada's top Astronomers gather in Hamilton for National Conference

McMaster hosted some of the brightest stars in academia in May for the Canadian Astronomical Society conference. More than 250 researchers, teachers and graduate students from coast to coast attended the conference, which offered a wide range of lectures, informational showcases, group discussions and social activities.

Community

Chancellor Emeritus and Alumni named Community Pan Am Torchbearers

Past Chancellor Melvin Hawkrigg is among the seven people chosen as Hamilton's Community Torchbearers for the Pan Am Games Relay. Hawkrigg was a four-sport athlete during his time as a student at McMaster and later served three terms as Chancellor. Science alumnus and competitive swimmer Alex Parent will also carry the torch during the relay. Parent swam for McMaster and is now with the Ancaster Masters Swim Club. He has continued swimming even after having his leg amputated at the knee. Phys Ed alumna Susan Palmer-Komar was also named a Community Torchbearer. Palmer-Komar won a silver medal in cycling at the 2002 Commonwealth Games and was on the Canadian team at the 1996 Olympics. Social Sciences alumna and Paralympic and Parapan Am multi-medalist in swimming Chelsey Gotell was previously announced as a Parapan Am torchbearer.

Award Winning Instructors help Students make a Lasting Impact in Hamilton

Sarah Glen and Margaret Secord have spent the last seven years helping students make a lasting impact on the Hamilton community. Now they're being recognized for their work as the first-ever recipients of the MSU Community Engagement Teaching Award. Since 2008, Glen and Secord, both instructors in the Faculty of Health Sciences, have taken a unique approach to community-engaged learning, matching fourth or fifth year students from all Faculties with community organizations in need of research expertise. Once they've completed the course, students have the option of working on a senior research project or on a community-based thesis in partnership with a community organization.

WWII Photo Archive captures the realities of the World at War

The Hamilton Spectator has donated its extensive World War II Photo Collection to McMaster Library's William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections. The collection contains thousands of black and white photos taken by the Associated Press and other news wire services that illustrate the pivotal battles, political events and human tragedies that took place during WWII.

Teaching and Learning

Student-created App helps you find Sporting Events and Buddies

MBA candidate Hatem Tawfik has developed an innovative app called SportBuddy, which matches up users based on their preferred sport, proximity to other users and time availability. You can use SportBuddy to search for places to play and buddies to play with, join sport events in the community, find a court, gym or park, and schedule time with a friend or a new SportBuddy.

McMaster Hybrid Electric Race Car finishes 2nd at Formula Hybrid Competition

McMaster's hybrid electric race car has had its best ever finish. The car - overseen and operated by a team of 50 students - finished second at this year's Formula Hybrid competition, held at New Hampshire Motor Speedway. The team was awarded the GM Best Engineered Hybrid System Award and the IEEE Engineering the Future Award. The car also had the fastest lap time and the fastest average lap time.