



**Year 2 Performance Report
MacPherson Institute Strategic Plan
2019-2022**

After an extensive external review, the MacPherson Institute launched a [Strategic Plan for 2019-2022](#) that included initiatives within three key pillars.

Partnerships: Connecting and collaborating with the McMaster communities.

Program and Services: Supporting teaching through scholarship, supports and activities in order to foster student-centred learning.

Process: Committing to procedures and policies that support the Strategic Plan and the culture of McMaster and the MacPherson Institute.

In Year 1, [24 of these initiatives were successfully delivered](#), with another 7 carrying forward into Year 2. In Year 2, the MacPherson Institute was faced with the unexpected challenges brought on by the COVID-19 global pandemic. While new priorities emerged to address the shift to remote teaching and learning, the MacPherson Institute was able to successfully deliver 14 initiatives with 3 carrying forward into Year 3. This report outlines the work completed to accomplish these Year 2 strategic initiatives.



Strategic Plan Performance Report: Completed in Year 2

PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Partnerships

Working relationships were formed based on three areas of collaboration: strategic, support and technology tools. An online proctoring steering committee featured collaboration between UTS and MacPherson with both groups selecting and successfully implementing Respondus in October 2020. Web conferencing review was completed in May 2021, leading to consolidation of web conferencing options to simplify faculty and student choices. Avenue and Mosaic integration successfully connected the HR module of Mosaic to Avenue to Learn and changed the frequency of updates to HR training from once a day to every fifteen minutes. The Avenue-Mosaic integration work will continue as part of operations over the coming months. The Course Outline Portal project wrapped up its needs analysis phase in 2021 and is now progressing to the implementation phase by sourcing products that will fit McMaster's needs.

A Shared Understanding of the Value of Teaching and Learning Scholarship

The SoTL survey was designed and used to ascertain the breadth of teaching and learning scholarship taking place across the various faculties at McMaster University. The goal was to identify the range of ways faculty/staff name and describe systematic inquiry into teaching and learning, identify how faculty/staff engage with scholarly literature on teaching and learning, and identify how faculty/staff are motivated to engage in research on teaching and learning. A small working group from the MacPherson Institute, along with key stakeholders from across McMaster, refined the survey and obtained ethics approval (MREB# 5390) to conduct this study on an annual/bi-annual basis to evaluate any changes in perceptions at McMaster over time. The survey launched mid-May for the first time, with follow-up plans to collect data through a series of interviews. Continuing into next year will be the development of a working paper that draws on literature and the SoTL survey results and makes recommendations about addressing the value of teaching and learning scholarship at McMaster.

PARTNERSHIPS

Contribution to Institutional Teaching and Learning Strategies

Lori Goff served as a member of the Teaching and Learning strategy project team that worked closely with both a Steering Committee and the Teaching and Learning Advisory. An environment scan of the Times Higher Education top 20 universities and the Canadian U15 universities was conducted to search for universities that developed teaching and learning strategies. Consultations were conducted with 8 institutions, themes were developed, consultations with over 300 people at McMaster were conducted, and many focus groups provided feedback on the emergent priority areas. With endorsement from the Steering Committee, Advisory, President, Provost, Deans and Associate Deans, an implementation plan was developed, and the [Partnered in Teaching and Learning \(2021-2026\) strategy](#) engagement site was launched in May 2021.

Stronger working relationships were developed between the MacPherson Institute and its partners in the Library, McMaster Continuing Education, University Technology Services, Equity and Inclusion Office, Student Accessibility Services, Office of Community Engagement, Academic Integrity Office, and others. Some formal strategic work began through the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Teaching and Learning Implementation Working Group, and through the Teaching and Learning Technology Committee and Tech Round Table.

The McMaster Teaching and Learning Advisory did not meet as frequently during the pandemic, however, its meetings were strongly connected to advising and providing input on the development of the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy. In reviewing this group's function and role, it was recommended that the group become more closely aligned with the strategy implementation.

Communication

A detailed content strategy was developed to address knowledge exchange initiatives and expand on other communications opportunities to share teaching recommendations (Teaching Tips of the Week), success stories (Focus on Teaching articles), best practices (How-To articles), announcements and promotional pieces. This content is regularly posted to the [Teaching and Learning Blog](#) and the strategy will continue to evolve to include shared content between central communications and the Provost's Office.

The Communications team worked across mandate areas and with Faculty-based teams to identify and include performance metrics for Strategic Initiatives, Operational Accomplishments and Pandemic Response in Deans' Reports and Year in Review. This year Deans' Reports were created for the Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Health Sciences, DeGroot School of Business, Faculty of Engineering and the Arts & Science Program. Additionally, partner reports were created for the Library, Equity and Inclusion Office, University Technology Services, School of Graduate Studies, Continuing Education and the Provost. This work builds upon communication strategies that have been developed to build awareness, enhance perception and share back performance with campus stakeholders. Website metrics, email campaigns, social media engagement and other activities continue to be monitored to ensure communications strategies are reaching the intended audiences. These activities have been validated by qualitative data collected during the Fall Experience Survey, Staff Engagement Survey and Deans' meetings.

● PROGRAMS

Faculty Liaison Model

A comprehensive data collection process was undertaken for the liaison model and a report was completed outlining strengths and challenges. The findings indicated the liaison model had a very positive impact on the MacPherson Institute's relationships with academic campus partners, particularly its ability to support Faculties in remote teaching and learning conditions. The findings also indicated the need for some refinement to better define the roles of those involved with liaison work, enhance communication mechanisms, and consider the long-term implications of current levels of support that come from one-time funding.

Strategy and Programming for Teaching and Learning Scholarship

In collaboration with 5 students and 3 Educational Development Fellows, the MacPherson Institute led a series of knowledge exchange initiatives including the launch of MI Picks (short collections of summarized teaching and learning articles), the development of a knowledge exchange literature synthesis paper and updated knowledge exchange metrics and tracking. New metric tracking included updating annual reports for all grant recipients to track their knowledge exchange and scholarly contributions, adding publications to Google Scholar, uploading conference presentations to MacSphere and updating the MacPherson Institute website. Knowledge exchange questions were also embedded in the

Programs, Supports and Resources

A comprehensive review was conducted of the Educator Development programming offered by the MacPherson Institute. This included a self-study and involved in-depth stakeholder feedback from across campus. The Program Review Advisory Committee reviewed and endorsed the recommendations, an [Executive Summary](#) was shared, and MacPherson Institute staff will begin implementing the recommendations in Year 3.

Over this past year, the "Professional Development for Teaching" course was developed to include 16 asynchronous, self-paced modules on topics such as: motivating and engaging students online, active learning, media creation skills, and more. The "Learning to Teach Online" course was also launched to provide foundational building blocks of an engaging online learning experience for educators.

● PROGRAMS

Educational Technologies

Virtual training sessions and drop-in sessions, held throughout the year, were aimed at building instructor confidence and competency with online teaching and included such topics as:

- accessible document creation
- preparing to teach online
- facilitating online discussions
- teaching using the various institutionally and provincially-supported technologies

More than 20 video resources and guidebooks related to teaching remotely were created to support online teaching. Additionally, a new user-friendly Avenue to Learn home page was developed to provide enhanced organization and navigation for course instructors and students. The MacPherson Institute also partnered with University Technology Services, Campus Classroom Technologies, the Equity & Inclusion Office and others from across campus to build resources on the technical and pedagogical use of institutionally supported tools and the creation of accessible teaching materials. Resources, guidance and support for provincially-licensed technologies including PressBooks, H5P and Hypothes.is was provided.

Work with the Library and the Provost's Office will continue to increase creation, adaptation and use of Open Educational Resources for the McMaster community through the OER grant program in Year 3. The OER Grant pilot program was launched in spring 2020, in partnership with the Libraries and the Provost's Office.

Three grants were awarded:

- **Zhen He**, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Economics, Open Content Adaptation Grant: Microeconomics interactive study guide and question bank as supplementary resources
- **Alex Peace**, Assistant Professor, School of Geography and Earth Sciences, Open Content Creation: A virtual geology field trip to Whitefish Falls, Ontario: Geoscience fieldwork in the age of Covid-19 and beyond
- **Felicia Vulcu** and **Caitlin Mullarkey**, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor, Dept. of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences, Open Content Creation: Interactive manual on Biochemistry Basics: Exploring modern biochemical techniques through drug discovery.

● PROCESS

Organizational Design and Culture

A plan to reflect on and assess the MacPherson Institute's organizational structure was implemented in May 2020. All staff were invited to provide input and feedback through informal pulse checks followed by a formal staff engagement survey. Results showed that the MacPherson Institute has high levels of staff engagement, strength in supervisory relationships and positive workplace satisfaction. Results also identified the need to develop mechanisms for better feedback on work performance and recognition, refreshing core values, and enhancing communications. Short and longer-term plans were developed to improve the organizational design and culture.

Based on the 2018 external review, the leadership team structure was a necessary area of focus to ensure it was aligned to the refined mandate. A new leadership team structure was proposed, and after collecting staff feedback from Leads, Associate Directors, the Provost's Office, and Human Resources, a refined leadership team structure was finalized and implemented.

Mission, Mandate and Strategic Plan

The MacPherson Institute reviewed methodologies to assess the impact of the Strategic Plan implementation and determined that the annual Strategic Plan Performance report, the Year-in-Review report and the Deans' reports would adequately outline the impact of initiatives within the Strategic Plan. A new content initiative was launched to share and celebrate success stories and risk-taking in the teaching and learning community. This initiative further shares the practical impact that educators have had on learners at McMaster. Operational activity tracking will continue with intentions to include a future metric that represents the reach of the MacPherson Institute across the campus.



Strategic Plan Performance Report: Planned in Year 3

● PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Partnerships

- Initiate collaborative projects with educational technology teams from other Ontario post-secondary institutions.
- Continue to partner with the Equity and Inclusion Office to enhance inclusive and accessible curriculum development and teaching capacity within the MacPherson Institute and across campus.

Contribution to Institutional Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Review how teaching, teaching and learning scholarship, and teaching development are supported, assessed and recognized in faculty careers.
- Contribute to the development of a clear digital learning strategy that enhances and complements the face-to-face experience.

Communication

- Plan an annual celebration of teaching and learning innovation, scholarship, enhancement and achievement.

● PROGRAMS

Programs, Supports and Resources

- Implement changes recommended by program review process in the Professional Development of Teaching area.
- Refine and streamline the program review process so that it can be applied to other mandate areas.
- Provide guidance for departments who are exploring offering micro-credentials.

Educational Technologies

- Continue to foster awareness, use, and development of open educational resources in partnership with McMaster's Open Educational Resources.

Strategy and Programming for Teaching and Learning Scholarship

- Review and renew priority areas for teaching and learning scholarship.

● PROCESS

Organizational Design and Culture

- Review the balance of continuing and contractual positions with consideration for a broadly equitable and consistent approach across the MacPherson Institute.