



McMaster University Teaching  
and Learning Review:

# Abridged Self-Study

Prepared from April - September 2018

# Table of Contents

<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0 Process for Completing the Self-Study</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.0 The MacPherson Institute: History, Mandate, Resources, Structure, and Organization</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 History and Evolution of the MacPherson Institute	6
3.2 MacPherson Institute Mandate	6
3.3 MacPherson Institute Resources, Structure, and Organization	7
<b>4.0 Governance at the MacPherson Institute</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1 The MacPherson Institute's Mandate	9
4.2 Communication Practices	9
4.3 Staff Turnover	9
4.4 Stakeholder Engagement	10
4.5 Scope of Work	10
4.6 Conclusion	11
<b>5.0 Doing and Assessing Work at the MacPherson Institute</b>	<b>12</b>
5.1. Services and Activities for Instructors, Staff, and Students	14
5.2 Services and Activities for Faculties, Departments, and Programs	18
5.3 Services and Activities for the Institution	19
5.4 Services and Activities Beyond the MacPherson Institute and McMaster	20
<b>6.0 Looking Forward at the MacPherson Institute</b>	<b>23</b>
6.1 Clarifying our Mandate and Establishing Effective Communication Strategies	23
6.2 Strengthening Partnerships and Refining Relationships	23
6.3 Enhancing Supports, Services, and Scholarship	24
6.4 Conclusion	25
<b>7.0 Teaching and Learning Work Outside the MacPherson Institute</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendix A. McMaster University Teaching and Learning Review Terms of Reference</b>	<b>33</b>





## 1.0 Introduction

McMaster University is a medical-doctoral, research-intensive university dedicated to teaching, research, and service. Located in the City of Hamilton and on the traditional territories of the Anishinabe nations and the Haudenosaunee confederacy, McMaster has a population of 26,780 undergraduate students and 4,485 graduate students from 107 countries. The University employs 949 full-time faculty members and more than 10,891 staff. McMaster has six Faculties (Business, Engineering, Health Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Science), as well as an interdisciplinary Arts & Science Program that sits outside the Faculty structure.

In April 2018, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) David Farrar formally announced and shared terms of reference for a Review of Teaching and Learning at McMaster. This review encompasses all teaching and learning activities on campus but focuses particularly on the Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching, a central service unit which supports McMaster University instructors, students, and staff in improving and enriching teaching and learning. This document is an abridged version of a longer self-study that was prepared between April and August, 2018.

Over the last five years (2013–18), the MacPherson Institute has experienced considerable growth and change. We have expanded the quality and quantity of our supports and services at McMaster and have advanced the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the University and beyond. We have also experienced change in the Institute's name and mandate, and its connections to the McMaster community. As we have evolved, we have designed and developed innovative teaching, leadership, and partnership programs for instructors, students, and staff; expanded our capacity to support the campus with technology-enhanced teaching and learning initiatives and resources; grown in scholarly output and engagement on campus and beyond; and increased our presence on the international stage. Growth has also meant expanding and refining existing services and supports, including those for the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), teaching awards, annual conferences, and our learning management system, Avenue to Learn. Our IQAP supports and our engagement with students are particularly well-regarded across campus. Our contributions to McMaster were recognized in July 2018, when a panel of international judges awarded the University with the Global Teaching Excellence Award.

# Our 2017-18 Work

87 projects as part of the Student Partner Program, with more than 200 students, instructors, and staff involved

13 newly-created instructor seminars as part of the Educator Enhancement Program with ~100% increase in enrollment between fall and winter terms

41 manuscripts by 132 authors from eight countries in the International Journal for Students as Partners

41 teaching award portfolios supported

Connection with over

70%

of new faculty members within the first year of their appointment

21

staff peer-reviewed research publications

40

staff presented research at international conferences

Support for

59

undergraduate and graduate programs in the Institutional Quality Assurance Process

A 240% increase in participation in the Instructional Skills Workshop since the introduction of Strategic Alignment Funding

Newly developed Faculty-specific technology workshops in the Faculties of Business and Engineering and the School of Interdisciplinary Science

Launch of the "Mindshift" Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), voted the top MOOC in 2017 by Class Central as well as the "DNA Decoded" MOOC

50

Leadership in Teaching and Learning Fellows across all six Faculties

400

participants in at least one graduate student EDUCATN course

83

attendees from nine different countries at the International Students as Partners Institute

4,727

Avenue to Learn tickets answered

3,881

course requests completed



Generally, the programs and supports offered by the MacPherson Institute are perceived as providing value to the McMaster community and to the individual relationships that sustain our work. While we have made efforts to communicate and engage with the campus community, we have not always ensured that our campus collaborators are integral partners and that our stakeholders have a shared understanding of, contribution to, and investment in our work. Senior administrators, instructors, and MacPherson Institute staff have raised questions about the clarity of our mandate and shared concern about the value of particular projects. There is also a perceived tension between the dedication of resources to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning relative to the resources allocated to other supports and services. Although many of our services, supports, and scholarship activities are viewed positively and provide robust avenues for engagement, we recognize that we have missed occasions to connect with the campus community and to respond to their particular teaching and learning ideas and needs.

Moving forward, we see opportunities to renew our connection to the McMaster community and enhance the relationships that are at the heart of our work. In particular, we see the need to clarify our mandate and establish sustainable

communication strategies, strengthen partnerships and refine relationships with campus stakeholders, and continue to enhance our supports, services, and scholarship activities to meet local needs. We welcome this external review as a chance to refocus our direction and ensure that our work is in line with the teaching and learning needs and goals of McMaster administrators, instructors, students, and staff.





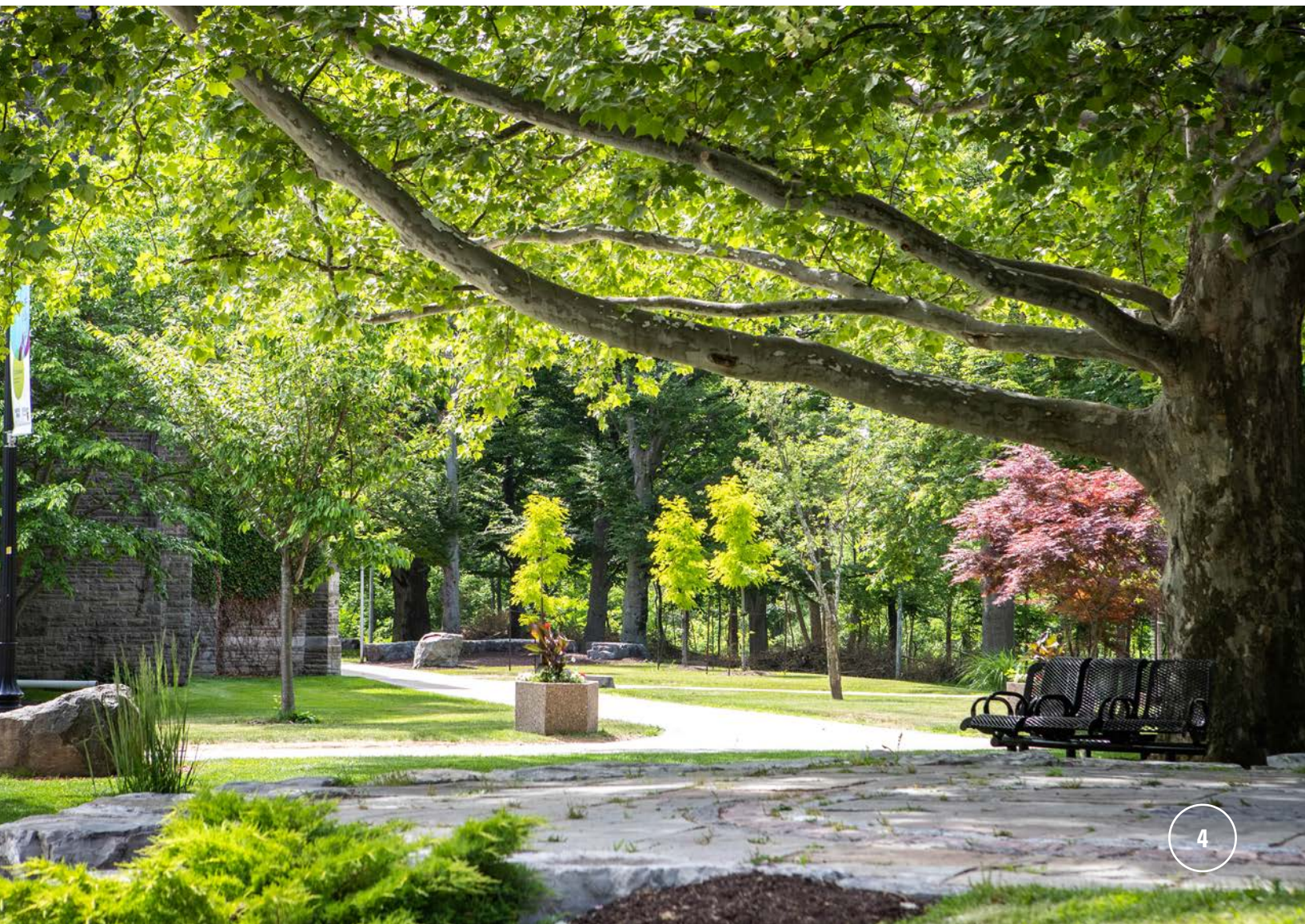
## 2.0 Process for Completing the Self-Study

The external review of teaching and learning at McMaster, and of the MacPherson Institute specifically, was formally initiated by the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) David Farrar in the spring of 2018. Guided by seven terms of reference (see Appendix A), our staff worked in consultation with the McMaster University Teaching and Learning Review Advisory Board to collect data from Deans, Associate Deans, instructors, staff, and other campus partners in teaching and learning in order to complete our self-study.

In particular, we consulted with 20 senior administrators, conducted an anonymous online survey for McMaster

faculty members, and administered an anonymous survey to MacPherson Institute staff to solicit feedback, ideas, suggestions, and descriptions of our work experiences. The surveys yielded 70 and 21 responses, respectively. Additionally, Andrea Thyret-Kidd (Advisory Board Project Coordinator) met with number of offices that support teaching and learning across campus to learn about the programs, services, and events they offer.

The McMaster University Teaching and Learning Review site visit will take place September 25–27, 2018.





# Teaching and Learning at McMaster University

Dr. Alan Blizzard was promoted to Director in 1978. Along with a PhD in chemistry, he had post-doctoral experience teaching with and designing individualized learning systems, computer-aided instructions and training in faculty consultation and educational development. Alan was also the second President of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education from 1988 to 1996. The office was located in the General Sciences Building and was staffed by three full-time people including Dale Roy (Educational Consultant) and Sylvia Riselay (Secretary). Alan retired in 1996.



Dr. Dick Day, Psychology Professor, was appointed the Centre's first Academic Director in 1999. His \$4 million in fundraising efforts led to the newly-expanded **Centre for Leadership in Learning**, as well as creation of the Learning Technologies Resource Centre.

The \$1.8 million grant from the McConnell Family Foundation accelerated McMaster's goal of offering active learning opportunities to all undergraduate students, and to assist faculty and graduate students to develop their skills in self-directed learning, inquiry and other innovative teaching methods. The CLL led the implementation of the Inquiry Project.



Dr. Arshad Ahmad was appointed the first Associate Vice-President, Teaching and Learning and Director of the **McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning** for a five-year term. In 2016, a \$5 million donation by Paul R. MacPherson led to the renaming of MIETL to the **Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching**. Our core mandate is to provide leadership in teaching and learning by encouraging, supporting and collaborating with the teaching community in the scholarly exploration, innovation, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of teaching and learning practices.



1972



The **Instructional Development Centre** was founded by Dr. David Humphreys, a Chemistry Professor at McMaster University.

The original goal was to work with those people directly affecting the teaching and learning environment on campus and to aid them in their attempts to ensure excellence in teaching and learning at the graduate and undergraduate levels. The IDC worked with individual instructors and departmental groups but were also committed to helping departments establish their own educational development programmes. The office was located in the Senior Sciences Building and staffed by 4 people, including Alan Blizzard as Acting Director and Consultant.

1978

1996



Dale Roy was the IDC's Acting Director for two years; he was appointed Director in 1998. He was the longest continuously serving director of an educational development centre and had a major influence on teaching at McMaster, especially though its extensive work with inquiry-based learning.

He is perhaps best known for coordinating the successful 3M National Teaching Fellowship from 1986 to 2001.

Dale did a great deal to enhance teaching and learning at McMaster University, in Ontario, and across Canada. Dale retired in 2008.

2000

2010



Dr. Susan Vajoczki was an internationally recognized award-winning teaching professor and scholar whose passion for teaching, learning and students touched every corner of our campus and beyond.

In 2009/10, she was appointed to head the Centre for Leadership in Learning as its Director and was also an associate professor in the School of Geography & Earth Sciences until her untimely death in 2012.

2013

2018



To prepare for the review, Dr. Lori Goff has been acting as the interim Director of the Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching.

## 3.0 The MacPherson Institute: History, Mandate, Resources, Structure, and Organization

### 3.1 History and Evolution of the MacPherson Institute

The historical antecedent to the MacPherson Institute, the Instructional Development Centre, opened in 1972. In 1998, it transformed into the Centre for Leadership in Learning (CLL), which incorporated the Learning Technologies Resource Centre. CLL was envisioned as a single centre that would encompass all of McMaster's units engaged in instructional development and contribute to the support and adoption of campus learning technologies. In 2013, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) David Wilkinson put forward a proposal to create the McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (MIETL). MIETL was designed to broaden CLL's reach and scope while developing an increased focus on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. On July 1, 2013, CLL was renamed MIETL and Arshad Ahmad was appointed Associate Vice-President<sup>1</sup> (Teaching and Learning) and Director of MIETL. In 2016, following a generous endowment by McMaster alumnus and long-time supporter Paul MacPherson, MIETL was renamed the Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching, or in daily use, the MacPherson Institute. Arshad Ahmad continued to serve as Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) and the Director of the MacPherson Institute until July 2018.

### 3.2 MacPherson Institute Mandate

The Provost's 2013 proposal to create MIETL identified the development of a comprehensive strategic vision for the

Institute as a key task for McMaster's Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning). The MacPherson Institute's mandate shifted several times in strategic planning documents written between 2013 and 2018, a theme that is taken up in Section 4. Our most recent mandate, from the 2018–19 Operating Budget states:

The MacPherson Institute provides leadership in teaching and learning by encouraging, supporting, and collaborating with the teaching community across campus and beyond. We pursue this mandate through the scholarly exploration, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of effective teaching and learning practices. McMaster's six Faculties are full partners in our work as we support their teaching and learning goals through a wide-ranging program built on the following pillars:

1. The integration of students as full partners in all aspects of our work.
2. A strong focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) in order to develop the next generation of best practices and to make notable contributions to the field.
3. Leveraging the Institute's technology infrastructure and tools to serve teachers and learners.
4. Strengthening and enriching the University's reputation as a national and global leader in research-based and innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

<sup>1</sup>This title was later changed to Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning).



This mandate shares several similarities with the mandates of teaching and learning centres at comparable universities, including collaboration with campus stakeholders, a role for educational technology, and a commitment to scholarly engagement. It is unique in the extent to which it foregrounds partnerships with students and the quest to enhance the University's international reputation by becoming a global leader.

[The Strategic Mandate Agreement](#) between McMaster University and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development outlines the role of the University in Ontario's postsecondary system and a plan for achieving system-wide objectives. The current agreement, which runs from April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020, identifies five objectives and priorities for differentiation:

1. Student experience;
2. Innovation in teaching and learning excellence;
3. Access and equity;
4. Research excellence and impact; and
5. Innovation, economic development, and community engagement.



### 3.3 MacPherson Institute Resources, Structure, and Organization

The MacPherson Institute is a centrally-funded unit. The MacPherson Institute budget for fiscal year 2017–18 was just over \$4 million, with approximately 85% allocated to salary and benefits and 15% allocated to other expenses. Of this \$4 million, \$3.35 million comes from our operating allocation, with the remainder coming from other revenue (e.g., internal and external grants, trust funds).

The MacPherson Institute is organized as a unit with a Director and Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning), an executive group, and four complementary and connected Teams. The executive group consists of the Director and Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning), the Associate Directors of Educational Technology, Program and Educational Development, Research in Teaching and Learning, and the Manager of Strategic Initiatives. Administrative support is provided by our Administrative and Financial Assistant, Executive Assistant to the Director, and Manager of Finance and Administration. The four Teams are:

**Educational Technology Team** — This Team works with faculty and departments to design, develop, and deliver digital teaching and learning solutions using evidenced-informed pedagogy. The Team collaborates with instructors in the (re) design of blended, online, and open learning modules and courses, and supports Avenue to Learn, WebEx, PebblePad, iClickers, MacVideo/Kaltura, and Echo360. The Team includes an Associate Director, two Learning Technology Analysts, four Digital Media Specialists, three Digital Pedagogy Specialists, a Senior Systems Administrator, and a Web Specialist.

**Program and Educational Development Team** — This Team supports teaching and learning at McMaster by working with instructors, teaching assistants, and McMaster staff to continually improve teaching and learning programs.

It also coordinates the province-wide quality assurance processes for academic programs campus-wide. The Team has one Associate Director, four Program Area Leads, six Educational Developers, one Quality Assurance Specialist, and one Community & Outreach Programs Developer.

**Research in Teaching and Learning Team** — This Team provides opportunities to enhance student learning through an integrative process, focused on both supporting and developing teaching and learning enhancement and conducting research that contributes to the growth of new knowledge. It also conducts individual SoTL consultations with faculty and students and coordinates the Student Partners Program and the Distinguished Scholar Program. The Research Team has two Associate Directors (0.5 FTE and 0.6 FTE), two Postdoctoral Fellows, one Research Coordinator, and one Educational Developer. Only the Educational Developer position is a full-time continuing appointment.

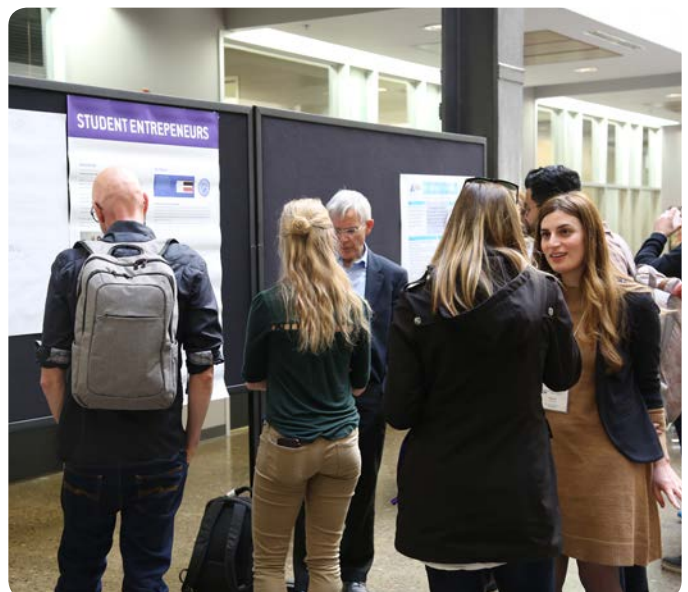
**Strategic Initiatives** — The Strategic Initiatives Team was established in October 2015 in response to the growing number of internal, institutional, and international outreach initiatives and special projects around teaching and learning. This includes the Brathwaite International Partnership with T. A. Marryshow Community College in Grenada, as well as supporting teaching awards and nominees, a variety of special events, and the MacPherson Institute DisruptED blog. The Team is composed of the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and the Events Coordinator.

Our staff members possess a breadth of skills, expertise, and experience drawn from a diverse range of academic disciplines and technology and media fields.

Close to a third of our staff have PhDs. As of August 2018, the MacPherson Institute has a total number of 41 staff:

- 18 full-time continuing appointments (plus an additional 3 who are currently on leave)
- 3 career growth appointments
- 10 full-time contract appointments
- 4 part-time contract appointments
- 2 Postdoctoral Fellows
- 1 tenure-track faculty position housed in Arts & Science and shared with the MacPherson Institute

Our work is also supported by a number of undergraduate and graduate students who contribute to our many supports and services, including in work-study roles, as Student Educational Developers, and as Student Partners who participate in projects related to the Institutional Quality Assurance Process, course design, and research on teaching and learning.





## 4.0 Governance at the MacPherson Institute

Although the data collected as part of this self-study clearly illustrate that McMaster's commitment to teaching and learning is steadfast, and although the surveys and interviews reveal some praise for the Director and Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)'s enthusiasm and support for teaching initiatives, it is also evident that senior administrators, instructors, and MacPherson Institute staff share reservations about the direction of our work. In particular, the data indicate that there is confusion, concern, and dissatisfaction about five discrete aspects of governance: the MacPherson Institute's mandate, communication practices, staff turnover, stakeholder engagement, and the scope of activities that we initiate and support.

### 4.1 The MacPherson Institute's Mandate

Administrators and MacPherson Institute staff indicated uncertainty and some discord about the overall strategic direction of our organization. Deans and Associate Deans consistently noted that our role within the University is vague and they are unclear about what we do. Senior administrators and instructors shared a perception that the transition to a research institute and the emphasis on improving McMaster's international reputation has come at the cost of the MacPherson Institute's ability or willingness to sufficiently meet the everyday teaching and learning needs of the campus community. Some staff expressed a desire for greater clarity about the strategic direction of our work. We acknowledge that developing and communicating a clear mandate, mission, and vision is a prime area for enhancement and development moving forward. We look forward to the opportunity to work in partnership with McMaster's stakeholders to create and

implement a comprehensive strategic vision and mandate that is aligned with campus-wide priorities and that will further enable us to serve the campus community.

### 4.2 Communication Practices

Confusion about our mandate is part of a larger concern, shared by senior administrators and MacPherson Institute staff, about internal and external communication practices. There is a perception that much of the activity that occurs within the MacPherson Institute is valuable, but that there is not a comprehensive communication strategy that ensures ongoing and transparent dialogue with Faculties about our supports and services, financial commitments, and project completion benchmarks. The results of this communication gap, as described by respondents, are twofold: the activities of the MacPherson Institute are not being shared with the campus community, and in turn, the needs of the campus community are not being communicated to staff. Internally, some MacPherson Institute staff feel there has been a lack of transparency regarding the prioritization of projects and an unwillingness to sufficiently address questions, feedback, and constructive criticisms of these priorities. Based on these data, it is clear that there is a very strong appetite for regular and meaningful communication between the MacPherson Institute's leader, McMaster's senior administration, and MacPherson Institute staff.

### 4.3 Staff Turnover

Surveys<sup>2</sup> completed by MacPherson Institute staff linked the issues of communication and accountability regarding project completion to staff turnover and the pervasive use of contract

positions. Some staff raised concerns about the practice of using, and sometimes renewing, short-term contracts to complete longer-term projects. Staff noted that this practice impedes the development of sustainable strategic relationships with faculty. McMaster faculty from the outside of the MacPherson Institute also commented on the negative effects of this turnover on shared projects. Several instructors noted in the survey that it can be difficult to know who to contact for support given staff movement.

---

<sup>2</sup>In the surveys and interviews, we did not ask specifically about the leadership of the Associate Directors. As a consequence, some of the comments we received are ambiguous with respect to whether they reference the Director and Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) or an Associate Director.

## 4.4 Stakeholder Engagement

Challenges with communication and staff turnover may be both a cause and consequence of what senior administrators, faculty, and MacPherson Institute staff perceive as a lack of sufficient engagement with the campus community. Respondents in all three categories strenuously insisted on the need for stronger engagement and partnership within the Faculties and for greater outreach to individuals who are not aware of our services. Senior administrators and instructors consistently suggested that supports and services for teaching and learning be integrated into the Faculties.



They urged the MacPherson Institute to place far greater priority on attending departmental meetings, participating in Faculty committees, and fostering collaborations across campus. They also proposed internal and external advisory boards made up of faculty who can help to shape the present and future of the MacPherson Institute. We recognize the need to extend our efforts in this area, including by building on existing contributions such as our facilitation of departmental retreats, Faculty-specific workshops, and discipline-specific Instructional Skills Workshops.

## 4.5 Scope of Work

Our data collection revealed some concerns among senior administrators, instructors, and MacPherson staff about some of the projects and initiatives undertaken by the MacPherson Institute. In some instances, the challenges we have experienced around communications and engagement have resulted in a failure to adequately share the value proposition of some projects, while in others, it is evident that there is greater need for improved internal communication regarding direction, clarity of purpose, roles, responsibilities, and timelines for projects and initiatives. We are aware of concerns regarding our commitment to initiatives such as the Massive Open Online Courses and the Brathwaite International Partnership, for example, and of questions about the balance between service delivery and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. We would also like to reassess how we support Indigenous teaching and learning initiatives.

As we develop more sustainable communication and engagement strategies, we are confident that the value of these projects will become clearer to our campus partners. For example, our commitment to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is in keeping with comparable teaching and learning centres across Canada. This activity is a form of educational development that allows individuals to learn about and enhance their own teaching. It provides a crucial



complement to the services and supports we provide and is consistent with the evidence-informed, scholarly approaches that many faculty value and that underpin McMaster's mission to discover, communicate, and preserve knowledge. Nevertheless, we understand that we can improve our communication of the value of SoTL research and engagement across campus.

## 4.6 Conclusion

Having raised these questions about governance at the MacPherson Institute, we wish to stress that a majority of our services, supports, and scholarship activities are well-received by administrators, instructors, and students. The data collected for this self-study highlight our particular strength in building and maintaining strong relationships with individuals who use our services and supports and who participate in our scholarship activities. While we acknowledge and are eager to address the challenges outlined above, we are confident that much of our existing work provides crucial service to the McMaster community.

## 5.0 Doing and Assessing Work at the MacPherson Institute

The MacPherson Institute's primary commitment is to support teaching and learning at McMaster through building strong relationships with administrators, instructors, students, and staff. These relationships, enabled by open communication and a desire for meaningful and sustainable partnership, encourage us to tailor our activities to meet teaching and learning needs as they arise. While each Team at the MacPherson Institute offers unique services and activities, and some divergence in methods, we share a

common commitment to fostering relationships and to contributing to evidence-informed practice that reflects and acknowledges diverse disciplinary and institutional contexts and approaches to teaching and learning. The following pages describe the services, supports, and scholarship activities in which our staff are engaged on an ongoing basis, some of which are carried out in partnership or coordination with other teaching and learning units on campus.





Services/Activities	Delivered for:	Year Initiated	Services/Activities delivered by:			
			PED	TECH	RES	SI
New Faculty Programming	Instructors, Staff and Students	2000				
Teaching and Learning Networks	Instructors, Staff and Students	2017				
Educator Enhancement Certificates of Completion Program	Instructors, Staff and Students	2017				
Feedback Services (Course Observations & Course Refinements)	Instructors, Staff and Students	pre-1996				
Instructional Skills Workshops	Instructors, Staff and Students	2003				
Leadership in Teaching and Learning Fellowship Program	Instructors, Staff and Students	2015				
Teaching and Learning Certificates of Completion Program	Instructors, Staff and Students	2015				
Student Educational Developer Program	Instructors, Staff and Students	2017				
Consultations	Instructors, Staff and Students	pre-1996				
Technology Workshops	Instructors, Staff and Students	pre-1996				
Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning	Instructors, Staff and Students	2014				
Video Production	Instructors, Staff and Students	pre-1996				
Blended and Online Course Development	Instructors, Staff and Students	2014				
E-Modules and E-Publications	Instructors, Staff and Students	2010				
Student Partners Program	Instructors, Staff and Students	2013				
Teaching and Learning Grants	Instructors, Staff and Students	2009				
Research Collaborations and Support	Instructors, Staff and Students	pre-1996				
Institutional Quality Assurance Process	Faculties, Departments, Programs	2011				
MacChangers	Faculties, Departments, Programs	2015				
Departmental Retreats	Faculties, Departments, Programs	pre-1996				
Avenue to Learn and Associated Tools	Institution	2010				
Institutionally-Supported Learning Technology Tools	Institution	2006				
Teaching Awards	Institution	pre-1996				
Teaching and Learning Forum	Institution	pre-1996				
Research Contributions	Beyond McMaster	pre-1996				
International Students as Partners Institute	Beyond McMaster	2016				
International Journal for Students as Partners	Beyond McMaster	2016				
Research on Teaching and Learning Conference	Beyond McMaster	2009				
Distinguished Scholars Program	Beyond McMaster	2015				
The Brathwaite International Partnership	Beyond McMaster	2015				
MOOC Design and Development	Beyond McMaster	2014				
Learning Technology Symposium	Beyond McMaster	2008				
McMaster Children and Youth University in the City	Beyond McMaster	2014				

## 5.1. Services and Activities for Instructors, Staff, and Students



### New Faculty Programming

New faculty programming provides opportunities for recently-hired, full-time faculty members to form teaching and learning connections with staff at the MacPherson Institute and with each other. This program provides three significant forms of outreach: the New Faculty Orientation, the New Faculty Reconnect Lunch, and one-on-one meet-and-greets with MacPherson Institute staff. In 2017-18, we reached out to all newly-hired full-time faculty, 72% of whom met face-to-face with staff in the Program and Educational Development team. Nearly a quarter of these faculty members engaged with other MacPherson Institute supports and services over the course of the following year. In the future, we would like to develop print or online resources on teaching and learning to reach a larger proportion of newly-hired instructors.

### Teaching and Learning Networks

Teaching and Learning Networks offer opportunities for groups of educators who share an interest in a specific teaching topic to learn collaboratively through informal discussions

with their colleagues. In 2017–18, the MacPherson Institute supported a total of five Teaching and Learning Networks: Teaching Professors, Level 1 Instructors, Student Engagement, Incorporating Technology into your Teaching, and Accessibility and Equity.

Participants report that they find value in interacting with faculty and staff from other parts of the University and that these networks generate practical ideas that can be applied in their own teaching practice. We are currently considering the creation of additional TLNs that align with current or emerging university priorities, such as experiential learning.

### Educator Enhancement Certificates of Completion Program

The Educator Enhancement Certificates of Completion Program is a new program designed to support instructors and staff to improve and enhance teaching and learning practices in ways that are flexible and responsive to each instructor's needs and interests. The program consists of two Certificates of Completion, one foundational and one advanced program. Instructors and staff who participate in this program select interactive seminars and practicum opportunities that they feel are most relevant to their professional development. In 2017–18, 13 seminars attracted a total of 106 participants. We are eager to continue developing and offering seminars that are tailored to meet the needs of departments and programs, and to connect with other campus partners, such as the Office of Community Engagement.

### Feedback Services (Course Observations and Refinements)

The Program and Educational Development Team provides feedback services, such as course observations and course refinements, that generate meaningful, individualized feedback for instructors. These services encourage individual instructors to reflect on their teaching practice and select

strategies to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching. In 2017–18, we conducted several course observations and 31 course refinements. Course refinements at the individual-instructor level have contributed to the planning of future initiatives at the departmental level, including a two-year initiative in the Biochemistry & Biomedical Sciences undergraduate program scheduled to begin in the Fall 2018 term.

### **Instructional Skills Workshops**

The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) is an internationally recognized certificate program that is a standard offering of teaching and learning centres across Canada. The ISW offers participants the opportunity to practice teaching with peers and receive direct, facilitated peer feedback on the aspects of teaching they would like to improve. In 2017–18, 29 instructor and staff participants completed ISW workshops. We are offering additional sessions in Summer 2018 and anticipate 40 additional graduates from these offerings, for a total of 69 participants. Our goals are to create more opportunities for partnership within all Faculties and departments and to increase the number of ISW-certified facilitators.

### **Leadership in Teaching and Learning Fellowship Program**

The Leadership in Teaching and Learning (LTL) Fellowship Program recognizes instructors who are leaders and mentors to their peers and who are advocates for continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Fellows receive up to \$15,000 (over two years) and work with a Student Partner to plan and implement a pedagogical project. Project results are disseminated within and beyond the Fellows' departments. As of 2018, 44 LTL Fellowships have been awarded to 50 Fellows across all six McMaster Faculties. Looking forward, the aim is to engage in more targeted outreach by partnering and collaborating with Faculties to determine ways to continually refine the program to meet the needs of instructors.

### **Teaching and Learning Certificates of Completion Program**

The Teaching and Learning Certificates of Completion Program provides graduate students and postdoctoral fellows with knowledge of, and training in, educational theories and evidence-informed practices in post-secondary teaching and learning. Students complete various EDUCATN graduate courses to earn a Foundations and/or Scholar Certificate of Completion. Since its inception in 2015, over 400 students have completed at least one EDUCATN course and 219 Certificates of Completion have been awarded. We are currently revising our online workshop offerings and planning outreach strategies to improve the level of participation within specific departments and graduate programs.

### **Student Educational Developer Program**

The Student Educational Developer (SED) Program offers an experiential learning opportunity for McMaster graduate students who have an interest in educational development and are keen to support teaching and learning on campus. The SED Program, which in 2018–19 employs five graduate students, combines staff and peer mentorship with structured work experiences that enhance the capacity of the MacPherson Institute to meet the teaching needs of the McMaster community. We expect the SED Program will play a significant role in developing our capacity to provide departmental teaching assistant training, a need identified by Deans, Associate Deans, and faculty.

### **Individual Consultations**

All Teams at the MacPherson Institute provide individual consultations to support instructors and teaching assistants. Consultations cover a wide range of topics, including student engagement, teaching portfolio reviews, teaching awards, technology integration, SoTL, support for Avenue to Learn



(and associated digital tools), and course design. Providing individualized, just-in-time support is key to building relationships with our stakeholders. We also offer group consultations when requested. In 2017–18, staff provided 174 consultations. In Fall 2018, the MacPherson Institute website will include a new online form to increase access to our services and make booking a consultation more accessible.

## Technology Workshops

The Educational Technology Team offers technology workshops to meet the growing need to build the University's capacity to employ educational technologies and offer blended and online learning. Workshops are available as part of the roll-out of technology tools, as part of the Educator Enhancement Certificate of Completion Program, and in response to requests from specific departments or Faculties. In 2017–18, we provided 28 workshops to support the adoption and management of educational tools like Avenue to Learn, WebEx, PebblePad, and Kaltura, as well as general workshops focused on technology-enhanced student engagement strategies and transition support for introducing blended and flipped classroom teaching models. A top priority moving forward is to identify and develop an effective communication strategy to advertise these workshops.

## Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning

We provide a range of services designed to assist instructors of all experience levels in integrating technology into their teaching practice, with the aim of creating more dynamic, engaging, and effective student learning experiences. Members of the Educational Technology Team work with instructors to incorporate technology into a single lesson, a group of learning modules, a course, or an entire program. We are currently considering how to increase the number of workshops and resources we offer in order to promote greater awareness and understanding of available tools and suggested strategies

for incorporating technology-enhanced teaching and learning strategies in the classroom.

## Blended and Online Course Development

We offer support to Faculties, departments, and instructors wishing to transform existing courses to blended or online delivery formats. We partner with instructors to determine how technology could create or enhance the types of learning experiences they wish to provide. We develop original content (including video lectures, narrated slide presentations, e-publications, and animations) while ensuring alignment between learning outcomes, instructional activities, and assessments. Since 2014, we have developed 30 online or blended courses across all six Faculties, with most concentrated in the Engineering and Humanities Faculties. As this service matures, and as our institutional culture moves toward a better understanding of blended and online delivery, we are hoping to refine the resources we use to guide faculty through the process of developing blended or online courses.

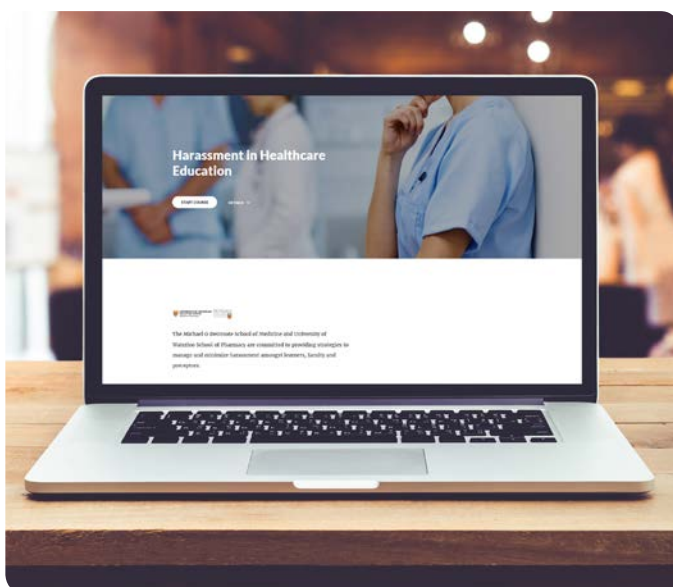


## Video Production

Video production is a service that often incorporates storytelling, animation, motion graphics, and sound and graphic design to produce engaging viewing experiences, whether

the project involves recording lectures, events, or interviews. Video production is one of the most efficient ways of sharing ideas with a large number of people, as it allows students to access content anytime, anywhere, at any pace. Demand for support from the MacPherson Institute for video production continues to grow. While video production is very time and labour intensive, we are looking forward to improving the automated captioning provided by Kaltura (a video streaming service) to meet AODA standards and improving the efficiency of the service more generally.

## E-Modules and E-Publications



E-modules and e-publications are electronic educational resources designed and developed for use both within and beyond online and blended courses. These resources extend McMaster's ability to connect theory with practice, to disseminate research to a range of audiences and to engage with local communities. Crucially, they also allow students to determine the pace of their engagement, enable instructors to embed formative assessment in resources, and invite a broad audience to connect with the material. Recent e-modules and e-publications include Essentials of Linguistics and Queer, Queering, Questioning. We are planning to improve project management by developing additional communication

strategies that will help ensure faculty members have the necessary supports to meet project timelines

## Student Partners Program

The Student Partners Program was developed in collaboration with the Arts & Science Program in 2013–2014 in response to increasing recognition among scholars of the benefits of engaging students as active collaborators in teaching and learning initiatives. Coordinated by the Research Team, the program funds projects that have been submitted by faculty, staff, and students from across campus. The program brings together students, faculty, and staff to collaborate on course design and delivery, curriculum review and enhancement, or SoTL. This program was one of the first of its kind in Canada and in 2017–18 involved more than 200 students, faculty, and staff working on 87 projects. Recent findings from our program research suggest the Student Partners Program has served to enhance teaching, learning, and SoTL at McMaster, and is making preliminary contributions to enhancing equity and inclusion on campus, an area we are eager to explore further via a recently awarded SSHRC Insight Grant.

## Teaching and Learning Grants

The MacPherson Institute, in partnership with the University and external bodies, supports instructors who seek funding for grants that improve the quality of student learning at McMaster and explore issues related to teaching, learning, and the student experience at the undergraduate or graduate levels. The grants program consists of six major grants and awards:

- the Priority Areas for Learning and Teaching Research (PALAT) Grants,
- Scholarly Connections Grants,
- the Petro-Canada-McMaster University Young Innovator Award,

- the Paul R. MacPherson Teaching Fellowship,
- the Experiential Learning in Academic Programming (ELAP) Grant, and
- Teaching and Learning Grants.

Between 2011 and 2018, we provided grant and award funding totalling \$367,525.83. We are currently considering how to more effectively communicate these funding opportunities to Faculties and departments.

## Research Collaborations and Support

Across campus, we support McMaster instructors, students, and staff interested in designing and conducting research projects about teaching and learning. This support can range from individual consultations on research design and analysis, to more formal interdisciplinary research partnerships. These collaborations are important in developing and diversifying the research mandate of the MacPherson Institute and contributing to evidence-informed practice at McMaster. For example, we are currently supporting projects in the Integrated Science program, the Integrated Biomedical Engineering and Health Science program, and Rehabilitation Science. Additionally, staff from the Research Team are leading a number of projects on the student experience. We are continuing to explore how we can improve the facilitation of teaching and learning research partnerships at McMaster.

## 5.2 Services and Activities for Faculties, Departments, and Programs

### Institutional Quality Assurance Process

In close collaboration with various senior administrators, the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) aims to facilitate holistic academic program reviews focused on

overall program enhancement. We assist with cyclical reviews of all existing academic programs and collaborate with stakeholders to develop new undergraduate and graduate academic programs and shepherd them through the approval process. In 2017, we supported 59 undergraduate and graduate programs in various stages of the external review process. Our activities closely align with McMaster's Strategic Mandate Agreement and are well-regarded on campus. A significant area for continuous service enhancement is the involvement of student perspectives; to this end we have created new opportunities for Student Partners to collaborate with faculty during various phases of cyclical reviews, including self-study preparation and implementation.



### MacChangers

MacChangers is an experiential learning program that challenges students to develop innovative design solutions that address issues affecting the local community. Students participate in workshops with guest speakers, attend panel discussions with subject matter experts, and receive coaching on a variety of topics, including problem identification, research ethics, project management, and professional communication. The program has doubled in size since it began in 2015–16, a pace of growth we anticipate continuing as Engineering students will soon have the option to take MacChangers for



credit as part of the Grand Challenges Scholars Program (GCSP). We are currently working with the Office of Experiential Education, as well as Associate Deans from other Faculties, to develop promotional materials and recruitment strategies to recruit more non-Engineering students.

### Departmental Retreats

MacPherson Institute staff facilitate departmental retreats on a variety of teaching and learning topics. Facilitators work with programs to establish the broad goals of the retreat, suggest activities to further these goals, and prepare a brief summary report identifying the retreat accomplishments and action items. Retreats offer a very tangible means of supporting academic programs directly and often provide an initial point of contact that allows MacPherson Institute staff to foster new relationships within the McMaster community. Since the introduction of our IQAP support services, we have seen a dramatic rise in the requests for departmental retreats. In 2018, MacPherson Institute staff facilitated 12 retreats in all six Faculties.

## 5.3 Services and Activities for the Institution



### Avenue to Learn and Associated Tools

Avenue to Learn is McMaster University's learning management system (LMS). Avenue to Learn supports teaching and learning activities for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education classes by providing a secure, online space where instructors can share their learning resources, link to additional resources and tools, administer quizzes, conduct online discussions, distribute interim grades, collect assignment submissions, and serve as an online hub for their course. Approximately 55% of courses offered at McMaster have a course space on Avenue to Learn, a number that has risen considerably over the last several years. The Avenue to Learn platform is built and hosted by D2L and supported by two Learning Technology Analysts and one Senior Systems Administrator. We are keen to continue to develop ways of providing a consistent user experience while still being responsive to the particular needs of Faculties, departments, and individuals.

### Institutionally Supported Learning Technology Tools

We provide systems, pedagogical, and software support for three technology tools on campus that go beyond what Avenue to Learn can provide: web conferencing (via WebEx), e-portfolios (via PebblePad), and streaming video (via Kaltura). Each of these tools enable instructors to teach in more flexible ways and offer students opportunities to cultivate digital literacy skills. We also partner with Campus Classroom Technologies to provide pedagogical and software support for Echo360, iClicker Classic, and iClicker Cloud. We look forward to continuing these partnerships, and to creating a communication pathway for instructors who are not aware of these tools.

### Teaching Awards

The MacPherson Institute provides extensive individual support for instructors and students who are nominated and/

or applying for University, national, and international teaching excellence awards. Awards include the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations Award (OCUFA), the 3M National Teaching Fellowship, the 3M National Student Fellowship, the Brightspace D2L Innovation Award, the Alan Blizzard Award, and the Christopher Knapper Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2017–18 we supported the development over 40 portfolios. To improve the efficiency of the teaching award application process, we are planning to revise existing documentation to include timing guidelines.

### **Research on Teaching and Learning Conference**

The Research on Teaching and Learning Conference was established in 2009 as a result of growing attention to the role of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning within teaching and learning centres and educational development. It has since expanded into a two-day event that focuses on contributing to the growth of a SoTL culture on campus and in the surrounding region. In 2017, the conference had over 100 attendees, 50 presentations (including workshops, posters, and oral presentations), and 19 student presenters. Feedback on the conference was positive, with participants noting that they were reenergized and appreciated the networking opportunities. We are currently in the process of planning the 2018 conference, titled Stages and Places of Engagement in Teaching and Learning.

### **Distinguished Scholars Program**

The MacPherson Institute established the Distinguished Scholars Program in 2015 to foster partnerships with renowned researchers and practitioners. Six internationally-respected scholars of teaching and learning were appointed for three-year, renewable terms: Louise McDonald (Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs), Henry Giroux (McMaster University), Torgny Roxå (Lund University), Geoff Norman (McMaster University), Mick Healey (University of Gloucestershire), and

Barbara Oakley (Oakland University). We draw upon the diversity and expertise of our Distinguished Scholars to support a wide range of initiatives that support teaching and learning on campus. We are currently thinking more systematically about how activities can complement one another to effectively support the Program's goals and the mandate of the MacPherson Institute.

### **Teaching and Learning Forum**

The Teaching and Learning Forum is an annual event held in September as part of Welcome Week offerings. The Forum offers teaching assistants, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and sessional instructors opportunities to network with their peers while attending workshops and information sessions on teaching and learning. This event is presented by the MacPherson Institute in collaboration with other campus supports and service departments, including the School of Graduate Studies, Library Services, Student Accessibility Services, the Office of Academic Integrity, and CUPE 3906. Feedback following the event consistently shows positive impact on participants' self-efficacy regarding teaching assistant duties and overall teaching skills. 380 individuals attended the 2017 Teaching and Learning Forum.

## **5.4 Services and Activities Beyond the MacPherson Institute and McMaster**

### **Research Contributions**

In addition to providing support to faculty, students, and staff, the MacPherson Institute engages in significant national, international, and inter-institutional research partnerships that advance the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. We have significant ties to organizations such as the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) and the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

(ISSOTL). For example, Associate Director (Research) Beth Marquis was elected ISSOTL Co-President for 2017–18). We also contribute to teaching and learning scholarship by serving in editorial roles on journals, acting as reviewers for conferences, journals, and book projects, and offering consultation to others in the SoTL community. In the 2016–18 period, we gave 94 conference presentations, received eight grants, and produced 48 peer-reviewed and 11 non-peer-reviewed publications. We are committed to improving understanding of the value that these collaborations bring to evidence-informed teaching and learning at McMaster. We would also benefit from a clearer articulation of the internal and external expectations relating to research.

### **International Students as Partners Institute**

The International Students as Partners Institute is an annual event that focuses on supporting individuals and teams in developing partnership initiatives. One of the first events of its kind, the Institute was developed in response to increasing recognition of the benefits of student-faculty partnerships and growing awareness of the challenges attached to developing and supporting partnership practice. Our 2018 Institute, held in June, had 33 student and 50 staff and faculty attendees. Research and evaluation suggest that the Institute inspires new ideas and creates new opportunities for community-building and collaboration across international contexts. With this in mind, we are considering how an online platform might connect participants virtually beyond the four-day duration of the Institute.

### **International Journal for Students as Partners**

The International Journal for Students as Partners is an open access journal that explores new perspectives, practices, and policies regarding how students, faculty, and staff are working in partnership to enhance learning and teaching in higher education. The journal was established in August 2016 and

published its first issue in May 2017. To date, we have published three bi-annual issues with a total of 41 manuscripts written by 132 authors (46 students, 86 faculty/staff) from eight countries. Two of our key ambitions for the journal include increasing its international reach in terms of authors, reviewers, and readership, and registering for the Directory of Open Access Journals, the leading quality mark for open access journals.



### **The Brathwaite International Partnership**

The Brathwaite International Partnership, or the Grenada project, is a five-year initiative meant to transform post-secondary education in the Caribbean country of Grenada. The project was initiated and formalized in 2015 through McMaster's Office of the President, Office of International Affairs, and University Advancement. It is funded by a \$1 million PETNA Foundation gift from McMaster alumnus Nicholas Brathwaite. We have helped develop capacity at T. A. Marryshow Community College by facilitating Instructional Skills Workshops and Facilitator Development Workshops, contributing to program evaluation processes, and supporting a student partnership program. We are also supporting the creation of the Brathwaite Centre for Teaching and Learning, scheduled to open in late 2018. As we move forward, we are interested in finding additional ways to streamline the coordination of this initiative and to engage senior McMaster administrators in further conversations about the project.



## MOOC Design and Development

McMaster's Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) initiative began with a partnership with online course provider Coursera in 2014. This partnership leverages the MacPherson Institute's digital design and production capacity to encourage members of the campus community to rethink course curriculum in student-oriented ways. In 2017, one of our MOOCs, Mindshift, had a total of 87,504 enrolled learners across six continents and was voted the MOOC of the year by Class Central, a MOOC aggregator. The rapid growth of MOOCs has led to increased choice for learners and has encouraged us to shift our production and recruitment emphasis to skills-based courses. This new direction has given us an opportunity to collaborate with the Faculties of Science and Health Sciences on MOOCs we were already producing, such as DNA Decoded.

## Learning Technology Symposium

The Learning Technology Symposium is an annual multi-day event that consists of sessions designed to highlight the different categories within educational technology and to allow faculty and staff to share their practices. Since 2008, the Symposium has been led by the MacPherson Institute and planned by a committee that includes representation from Humanities Media and Computing and the Learning Technologies Lab in Health Sciences. The 2017 Learning Technology Symposium had 68 registered attendees and 21 presenters, attracting faculty, staff, and students from across Ontario to

share innovations, connect about project ideas, and exchange best practices related to educational technology in higher education. The event is considered a catalyst for other opportunities to ensure that the MacPherson Institute is offering supports and services that best reflect the needs of the teaching and learning community.

## McMaster Children and Youth University (MCYU) in the City

McMaster Children and Youth University (MCYU) in the City is an experiential education and outreach program, run in collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences, which prepares McMaster students to develop and deliver inquiry-based workshops for youth ages 7-14 in Hamilton schools, libraries, and community centres. The MacPherson Institute coordinates and implements a facilitator training program and provides ongoing support to student facilitators through the workshop design and delivery phases. By participating, facilitators develop teaching and transferable skills in lesson design and delivery, knowledge translation, teamwork, communication, leadership, and community engagement. During the 2017-18 school year, facilitators delivered 106 workshops to a total of 1,090 students in the Hamilton community. MCYU in the City works closely with McMaster's Experiential Education office and has established valuable partnerships with many community organizations in the Hamilton. We are currently working on increasing student involvement from the Humanities and Social Science Faculties.



## 6.0 Looking Forward at the MacPherson Institute

The MacPherson Institute has evolved rapidly in the past five years in response to a variety of provincial and institutional developments, including a new Strategic Mandate Agreement, additional funding streams, and emerging priorities such as experiential learning and online learning. This self-study, conducted as part of the McMaster University Teaching and Learning Review, demonstrates how committed and engaged MacPherson Institute staff are to the work we do. We are driven by a fundamental commitment to student engagement and principles of student-centered learning. We pride ourselves on the quality of our relationships with stakeholders and our ability to develop, deliver, and enhance meaningful programming that responds to unique teaching and learning needs across campus.

In the weeks, months, and years to come, we see opportunities for continuous improvement in several overarching areas:

### 6.1 Clarifying our Mandate and Establishing Effective Communication Strategies

Moving forward, the MacPherson Institute needs to prioritize establishing a clear mission and clarifying its mandate while

enhancing its communication strategies about ‘who it is’ and ‘what it does.’ After these are clarified, our primary programmatic focus will need to be improving communication with our campus partners. This communication must be characterized by our willingness to listen actively to campus partners and to share information effectively about the existence and value of our supports and services. In the short term, we can continue some initiatives that are already underway, including the comprehensive redesign of the MacPherson Institute website to better showcase our services and to make it easier for individuals to determine who to contact for support.

### 6.2 Strengthening Partnerships and Refining Relationships

Our commitment to improving communication strategies highlights our goal of developing and sustaining face-to-face relationships with upper administration, instructors, students, and staff in order to meet local teaching and learning needs. As this review process has unfolded, we have discussed three possible approaches identified by administrators, instructors, and MacPherson Institute staff:

**Advisory Board:** Several McMaster administrators expressed interest in creating an advisory board. This advisory board could provide a forum for communication and input from stakeholders across campus, as well as from external vendors and experts from other teaching and learning centres. For example, the advisory board could potentially include the MacPherson Institute's Distinguished Scholars, who could offer innovative direction about critical emerging issues in higher education. Initially, this advisory board might be composed of the existing McMaster University Teaching and Learning Review Advisory Board and other individuals who are already familiar with the MacPherson Institute and the teaching and learning culture on campus.

**Faculty Liaisons:** In addition to striking an advisory board, several MacPherson Institute staff members and administrators enthusiastically suggested a liaison or distributed outreach model. In this model, staff from the MacPherson Institute would have greater presence within each Faculty, either as individuals or as subunits comprised of members of each of the Educational Technology, Research, and Program and Educational Development Teams. Liaisons could customize and deliver Faculty-specific programming, spend time on-site within Faculties, and act as a first point of contact for individuals with teaching and learning needs, questions, or ideas.

**Campus Teaching and Learning Consortium or Network:** In addition to building ongoing relationships with McMaster's Faculties, we are committed to enhancing existing partnerships and developing new ones with other service units in order to support a campus-wide culture that values teaching and learning. This consortium or network could meet regularly to exchange updates, determine shared priorities, and coordinate programming. Regularly scheduled interactions of this nature will help maintain clear and efficient channels of communication across teaching and learning service units and facilitate further collaboration.

We advance these options knowing that we must identify and adopt unique methods that resonate with the cultures, contexts, and needs of each Faculty and the campus as a whole. As we await the recommendations of our external reviewers, we have established interim working groups in order to begin conversations about what ideal communication and engagement strategies might look like within the Faculties.

## 6.3 Enhancing Supports, Services, and Scholarship

As a central teaching and learning unit, the MacPherson Institute has an obligation to serve all of its stakeholders. Strong relationships with campus partners, including those we have already established and those we seek to create, will enable us to enhance the supports, services, and scholarship activities that we provide for the McMaster campus. With a refined mandate, we anticipate being able to enhance our existing activities and to develop new programming to better meet the needs of individuals, Faculties and programs, and the campus community at large. We are also committed to maintaining our engagement with and contributions to global conversations about teaching and learning.

The data collected for this self-study confirm that many of our strongest relationships are with individual administrators, instructors, students, and staff. Whether through consultations, blended or online course development, teaching and learning grants, or the many other supports we offer independently or in partnership, these personal relationships stand out as a core strength of our work. To further enrich these relationships, we look forward to continuing our work on nascent initiatives such as an experiential learning e-module, a faculty seminar on Indigenous ways of teaching, learning, and knowing, and programming for international teaching assistants.



The process of completing this self-study has highlighted that there is significant opportunity to establish stronger partnerships with McMaster's Faculties, departments, and programs. These partnerships will require further consultation with senior administrators about Faculty-wide priorities and the specific needs of departments and programs. We plan to continue successful Faculty-specific initiatives like the Teaching Development Series @ DeGroote and to offer more sustained and consistent implementation support for programs after they have completed Quality Assurance reviews.

Our ability to provide support to individuals, Faculties, and programs will be strengthened by greater institutional coordination with other teaching and learning units at McMaster. It is important for us to consider how to establish partnerships that share common goals and that are transparent about processes and responsibilities. For example, we would like to clarify the MacPherson Institute's role in solving software licensing concerns for institutionally-supported tools. We also welcome clarity about how we can best support experiential education initiatives, including with current contributions such as MacChangers and the Student Partners Program.

McMaster is a research-intensive institution, and the MacPherson Institute is committed to the essential role of scholarship in our approaches to teaching and learning. We plan to continue to conduct and support the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning on campus, and to enhance our understanding of the campus community's teaching and learning research needs, activities, and interests. While some of the work that we do at the MacPherson Institute has a truly global reach, and while we are eager to remain engaged in that work, we would also like to extend our efforts to ensure that this work also includes dissemination, communication and knowledge mobilization at McMaster.



## 6.4 Conclusion

Sections 1 to 6 of this abridged self-study provide a critically reflective evaluation of the MacPherson Institute's work. We have aimed to highlight the breadth of our contributions to teaching and learning at McMaster University and to acknowledge areas where we can improve. We close with a reiterated appreciation for all those who contributed to this self-study, both directly and indirectly, and an invitation to learn more about the teaching and learning work that happens outside of the MacPherson Institute. The following section, Teaching and Learning Work Outside the MacPherson Institute, provides an overview of the teaching and learning activities of other units on campus. While in many cases staff at the MacPherson Institute have long-standing and positive reciprocal working relationships with individuals in these units, there are also identifiable opportunities for improved partnerships. The information in Section 7 will help inform our next steps with respect to increasing our connections to and collaborations with other teaching and learning units.

## 7.0 Teaching and Learning Work Outside the MacPherson Institute

The scope of the McMaster University Teaching and Learning Review includes the activities of the MacPherson Institute as well as other units across the campus that support or administer teaching and learning activities. Andrea Thyret-Kidd (Office of the Provost and Advisory Board Project Coordinator) met with representatives from many of these units to learn about their programming and the status of their relationships with the MacPherson Institute. The following three themes emerged from these conversations.

### 1. The need for greater technological support for teaching and learning

Conversations conducted with various campus stakeholders reinforced some of the findings of the 2016 McMaster University IT Services review. Areas of concern that were commonly identified by stakeholders include:

- The lack of a campus-wide technology strategy that supports teaching and learning, including blended and online learning;
- Problems with classroom technology and support (e.g., outdated equipment, uncertainty about how to find assistance);
- Limitations to the functionality of our learning management system (e.g., limitations on the size of file uploads, grade submission templates);
- The need to login to multiple platforms; and
- A lack of integration between platforms (e.g. Mosaic, Avenue to Learn, iClickers).

McMaster's Assistant Vice-President and Chief Technology Officer, hired in 2017, is in the process of formulating



high-level governance and strategic planning initiatives to better support the teaching and learning environment. A Teaching and Learning Technology Committee has been struck to take a leadership role in addressing some of these issues.

## 2. The need for improved classroom conditions

Focus groups with McMaster faculty highlighted significant concerns regarding classroom conditions. Participants indicated that they see a disjuncture between the University's 'student-centered' branding and the realities of most classrooms on campus. Although McMaster does have some modern active learning classrooms, faculty described most rooms as "shabby" and equipped with poor-quality audio-visual technology that is challenging to use. WiFi service is unreliable in some classrooms.

Currently, classroom management is primarily the responsibility of the Registrar's Office, the Library, Facilities Services, and some Faculty Offices. To date, conversations and discussions about classroom conditions have not included faculty members, students, the MacPherson Institute, and University Technology Services.

## 3. Lack of partnership with the MacPherson Institute

Echoing the feedback provided by senior McMaster administrators (cited elsewhere in this self-study), individuals in other teaching and learning support units across campus describe challenges partnering with the MacPherson Institute. While individual MacPherson Institute staff members were described as knowledgeable and helpful to work with, a lack of clarity regarding the MacPherson Institute's mandate makes it challenging to establish enduring partnerships. Many offices adopt the strategy of partnering with specific MacPherson Institute staff members in order to avoid managers who are perceived as obstructive. High staff turnover, due in part to

the number of contract positions, was also cited as a problem with respect to establishing and maintaining partnerships.

After meeting with individual stakeholders in the various campus units that support teaching and learning, Andrea Thyret-Kidd solicited descriptions of the specific programs and activities for which each unit is responsible. This section contains descriptions of teaching and learning activities organized by the Library, the Centre for Continuing Education, five of the Faculties (excluding Health Sciences, which is out of scope of this review), the School of Graduate Studies, the Associate Vice-Provost (Faculty), and the Equity and Inclusion Office. While the list is not exhaustive and does not capture all teaching and learning activities at McMaster, it reveals that there are many dedicated and committed individuals working to improve teaching and learning across the campus.

## A. McMaster University Library



### 1. LEARNING SUPPORT

This service is a collaboration between librarians, instructional designers, and departments/Faculties to embed information literacy content in curriculum and to provide students with a full range of support to ensure their success. There is active collaboration with the MacPherson Institute, however the partnership is problematic.

We work with the Quality Assurance area to facilitate an accurate and robust examination of library-based services and resources through the IQAP review process. Librarians work with the Educational Technology Team to ensure that all students have equitable access to the library and are successful in online learning.



## **2. MAPS, DATA, GIS DEPARTMENT**

This unit partners with course instructors, graduate programs, and students to provide instruction around McMaster's unique collection of maps, geospatial and research data and skill development for cartographic, geospatial and statistical analysis, as well as research data management. There is no partnership with the MacPherson Institute, however there is interest in partnering to assess the program.

## **3. LYONS NEW MEDIA CENTRE**

This unit provides media support, equipment, and software to anyone on campus. Equipment and rooms can be booked and consultation services teach users the skills needed for media work are available. There is no partnership with the MacPherson Institute.

## **4. WILLIAM READY DIVISION OF ARCHIVES & RESEARCH COLLECTIONS**

This service provides guest instruction to support classes which touch on the special collections held by the Library, with focused exposure to primary sources and the critical approaches and frameworks for working with them. The primary audience is undergraduate students, but we also provide instruction at the postgraduate level and offer classes to local middle and high school students. There is limited engagement with the MacPherson Institute.

## **5. LEWIS & RUTH SHERMAN CENTRE FOR DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP**

This unit provides teaching and training within the realm of digital scholarship/digital humanities. It is delivered through an undergraduate credit course in digital humanities (Human 2DH3), modules for programs, a workshop series for graduate students and faculty, and in consultation with faculty members who want to develop digital activities for their classes. There is limited engagement with the MacPherson Institute.

## **6. RON JOYCE CENTRE, NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION**

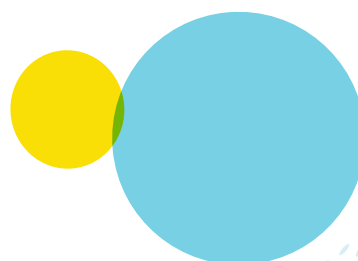
The Ron Joyce Centre is located in Burlington. The Library has developed an in-house orientation for new instructors, as they do not have the same level of support as provided at the main campus, especially for Avenue to Learn (A2L). The Ron Joyce Centre Librarian supports some MBA A2L course shells, and attends MacPherson Institute A2L workshops and receives A2L assistance from the MacPherson Institute when needed.

## **7. TEACHING AND LEARNING FORUM, NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION**

Library staff deliver sessions at the Teaching and Learning Forums organized by the MacPherson Institute. The session for new faculty consists of a brief demonstration of the library web pages and discussions with faculty on the library's services, collections and resources. The graduate student forum session consists of a live demonstration of the Library web pages and the opportunity for hands-on searching of the website, research databases, library services, etc. This is an example of the Library participating in MacPherson Institute events.

## **8. CAMPUS CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGIES**

This unit is responsible for the design, installation, ongoing support and end-user training for audio-visual equipment in all Registrar-controlled classrooms (~150 rooms). CCT delivers core technology infrastructure and support including: audio and display systems, classroom audience response systems (iClicker), classroom and lecture capture (Echo360). CCT works with the MacPherson Institute to connect the LMS to Echo360 and for assistance with organizing Echo360 sessions to showcase the technology to faculty.



## B. Centre for Continuing Education (CCE)

CONTINUING  
EDUCATION



### 1. CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Programs include academic certificates and diplomas, non-academic certificates, professional development sessions, corporate training, and community engagement initiatives. Our target audience is the adult learner. Presently, online education is the mainstay of the Centre's work, representing approximately 75% of all enrolments. We independently develop our online courses and have developed capacity for instructional design and course building including expertise in learning systems technology and multimedia. We consult with the MacPherson Institute regarding A2L matters and have participated in some of their workshops and sessions.

### 2. EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN

The Educational Development & Design team was formed to centralize the development of courseware with an emphasis in online design. We have established a solid model for the development of courses in a way that is efficient and rapid and that meets recognized quality standards. Through excellence in instructional design and LMS integration, we develop leading edge, innovative, and engaging online and blended courses. We consult with the MacPherson Institute from time to time on University policy and for WebEx account set-up for instructors.

## C. Faculty of Science, Office of the Associate Dean

SCIENCE  
Office of the Associate Dean  
(Academic)



### 1. BLENDED LEARNING SUPPORT & EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CONSULTATION:

**Blended Learning Support:** We develop and support digital teaching and learning projects within Science (and only Science). We provide ongoing maintenance, updates and publishing support to blended learning materials.

**Educational Technology Consultation:** Science 2M03. The interdisciplinary instructional team sought to bridge scientific gaps through a Kanban system that organizes articles, discussions and concepts. Our office helped guide the platform selection. We also provide support for data-collection activities and digital-literacy content for assignments.

Our office has worked with the MacPherson Institute to provide A2L support for instructors. We have also worked with them through the Student Partners Program and we consult their staff for technology evaluation and licensing guidance in the pursuit of academic objectives.

## D. School of Graduate Studies (SGS)



GRADUATE  
STUDIES

### 1. GRADUATE STUDENT & POSTDOC WRITING AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

In 2013 SGS recognized a lack of specialized supports appropriate for graduate student and postdoctoral fellow writers on campus and began to design and deliver services. We offer:

- Grad Writing Consultations (one-on-one consultations)
- Writing Bootcamps (three days of structured, uninterrupted writing time)

- Writing Accountability Groups (five-week group to support members through goal setting and writing to a schedule)
- Grad & Postdoc Study Room (designated area for grad & postdoctoral writing)
- Online Resources (online modules that serve as an introduction to graduate level writing)

There have been unsuccessful attempts to partner with the MacPherson Institute.

## **2. ELS PROGRAMMING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS AND POSTDOCS**

McMaster Effective English Courses (MEEC) are free, non-credit, intensive ESL modules focused on the daily language needs of graduate student and postdoctoral fellow learners at McMaster. Each module entails 24 hours of classroom instruction. A new module starts every other month. There is no partnership with the MacPherson Institute.

## **3. POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW TEACHING PORTFOLIOS**

The service helps postdoctoral fellows write or improve their teaching portfolio, which they will be using to apply to academic positions. The workshop is delivered by a MacPherson Institute employee as a lunch and learn session with a PowerPoint presentation and time for the postdocs to work on their portfolios. We partner with the MacPherson Institute on this workshop.

## **4. TEACHING AND LEARNING CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION PROGRAM**

The Teaching and Learning Certificates of Completion Program was developed by the MacPherson Institute in collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies. The current version was developed in 2015.

## **E. Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty**



### **1. NEW FACULTY WORKSHOPS**

A series of eight workshops are delivered, one each month during the academic year (September to April). Workshops are organized thematically to clarify the various senior management structures of the University and involve appropriately chosen guest speakers from the faculty members and various supporting units from across campus. Speakers are asked to address key topics relevant to first-year researchers/teachers. Some workshops are taught by the MacPherson Institute and we also partner on the New Faculty Orientation, a 1-day event offered in late August or early September. In 2017 we collaborated on a faculty needs assessment called the McMaster Professional Development Survey.

### **2. TENURE, PERMANENCE & PROMOTION WORKSHOPS**

The sessions provide the audience with an overview and understanding of the Yellow Document (McMaster's tenure and promotion document) and familiarize attendees with the expectations, process, timing, available resources and roles and responsibilities to enable a successful outcome. A representative(s) from the MacPherson Institute provides an overview of the Tenure and Permanence Teaching Portfolio requirements.

## **F. Faculty of Engineering**



### **1. NEW FACULTY WELCOME AND ORIENTATION**

It is important to the Faculty that our new faculty recruits feel well supported and prepared to teach, in addition to build-



ing their research groups. Each new faculty hire receives a welcome email with information on the Faculty-specific orientation and university-wide orientation as well as links to other helpful information. The Faculty provides a one-day orientation which includes a mentoring panel, information on branding and communications, and an overview of research and scholarship from the Faculty perspective, the McMaster Industry Liaison (MILO), and the Research Office for Administration, Development, and Support (ROADS). The new faculty members also attend a three-day Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW), delivered by facilitators from the MacPherson Institute.

## **2. FIREBALL ACADEMY (FORMALLY THE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY)**

The Fireball Academy is important for information sharing and community building within the Faculty. It serves as an opportunity to improve teaching and learning within the Faculty and impart key information on tenure and promotion, graduate student recruitment and supervision, and a variety of other workshops. The Fireball Academy provides workshops of varying lengths from one hour to half-day or full-day sessions or multi-day workshops and provides an opportunity for discussion, collaboration, teaching and learning, and community building. We have begun working with the MacPherson Institute to provide workshops to assist our faculty in the transition to a blended and online learning format.

## **3. TEACHING ASSISTANCE (TA) TRAINING**

The Faculty of Engineering began offering the 5-hour workshop in September 2017 and again in January 2018. It will continue to be offered twice annually at the beginning of the Fall and Winter terms. It serves as an opportunity to provide TAs with an understanding of university policies and procedures related to accessibility, harassment, implicit bias, and best practices in content delivery, test design, and marking/

grading. We consulted with the MacPherson Institute during the development of the TA training workshops.

## **G. Faculty of Humanities – Media and Computing (HMC)**

HUMANITIES



### **1. ELECTRONIC COURSE EVALUATIONS**

The Faculty of Humanities developed and piloted this system for internal use in 2007-2008. The system has been used campus-wide since 2011. The process is used to administer undergraduate course evaluations in accordance with the senate policy on the 'Assessment of Teaching' at McMaster University. The system is also used to evaluate graduate courses, TAs and lab sections. The process is electronic and (almost) entirely automated. We attempted to partner with MIIETL with very limited success. No attempts have been made in the last two years (post-MIIETL).

### **2. MOODLE**

In 2015, the Department of Classics requested a separate instance of Moodle to be used for the newly evolved Medical Terminology (Latin) course. This server now houses several courses including the Medical Terminology course. Classics Moodle serves the unique needs of the Medical Terminology course (guest instructors and students from other institutions) and now also several other courses in the Department of Classics. Moodle is provided/delivered electronically – hosted in Humanities Media and Computing. There is no partnership with the MacPherson Institute.

### **3. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGY CONSULTATION, TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

This role provides dedicated educational systems and learning technology consultation and support to instructors and

staff in the Faculty of Humanities. The role provides support for a wide range of technologies including those offered centrally and those discovered during an individual's research and exploration. Some staple expectations of the role include training, support and course administration for Learning Management Systems (LMS) Moodle and Avenue to Learn; classroom technology training for the active learning classrooms in the L. R. Wilson building; ongoing work for administrative projects (e.g. course evaluations); keeping up to date with learning technology administrative information (accessibility, copyright, etc.). There are multiple examples of partnerships and collaborations with the MacPherson Institute.

## H. Faculty of Social Sciences: Teaching Technology Services

### SOCIAL SCIENCES



#### 1. SERVICES, ACTIVITIES OR PROGRAMS

Our Faculty supports two specific Educational Technology support roles: the 'Learning Technologies Consultant', and the 'Pedagogy and Technology Classroom Support Expert' role. Both of these roles engage in classroom design initiatives, workshops, face-to-face faculty and staff training, technology support for teaching, pedagogical and technical consultation, as well as regular information sharing initiatives and committee work. There is an ongoing collaborative partnership with central units (e.g. the MacPherson Institute) and our Faculty to address and resolve issues with online teaching resources, the pedagogical concerns of instructors, and classroom infrastructural issues as they relate to teaching.

## I. Equity and Inclusion Office

### Equity and Inclusion Office



#### 1. EDUCATION, OUTREACH AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

The educational services assist the University to meet its goal of 'building an inclusive community with a shared purpose'. They also ensure that the campus community is aware of its rights and responsibilities under human rights legislation and the University's human rights policies. The educational services are provided via presentations, workshops, consultations, remedial educational 'sanctions,' and information sharing via social media and posted on our website: [equity.mcmaster.ca](https://equity.mcmaster.ca)

In 2017-18 we delivered approximately 60 workshops and two special events, reaching 4,000 people. We have partnered with the MacPherson Institute on a workshop.

#### 2. ACCESSIBILITY HUB WEBSITE

The initial Accessibility Hub website was created approximately 10 years ago. The Hub has since been redeveloped and re-released. This service is not only important but necessary to support the campus community in reaching compliance schedules for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), as well as to move McMaster forward in building accessible and inclusive communities. We have partnered with the MacPherson Institute on:

1. The Flex Forward Accessible Education Training (housed on site)
2. A Revamp of the AODA/Human Rights Code Training (video development, housed on site)
3. User testing for an accessibility Student Partner project

# Appendix A. McMaster University Teaching and Learning Review Terms of Reference

The key questions that form the Terms of Reference for the external review were developed by the Advisory Board and were shared with relevant stakeholders and the external reviewers. These questions guided the completion of the self-study. We ask reviewers to consider these Terms of Reference:

1. Review the mission and mandate of the MacPherson Institute. Is MacPherson's mandate aligned with McMaster's teaching and learning priorities in our Strategic Mandate Agreements? Is the mission appropriate to other current institutional priorities? Is the mandate comparable to or distinctive from other centers of teaching and learning, and is that appropriate?
2. Review the structure, organization, governance and leadership of the MacPherson Institute. Does the current leadership, structure and operation of MacPherson meet the needs of the McMaster community? Does the structure and operation support an outstanding teaching and learning environment at McMaster?
3. Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the services, supports and programs offered by the MacPherson Institute. What are the strengths and the balance between strategic initiatives, services and programs currently offered to support:
  - a. the development of faculty in their capacities as teachers across a variety of contexts, e.g. community engaged, experiential, research embedded, inclusive and other forms of pedagogical innovation,
  - b. the evaluation and improvement of faculty in their capacities as teachers,
  - c. the institutional quality assurance processes and the use of those processes to improve programs and curriculum,

- d. technology-enhanced teaching and learning, and
- e. the scholarship of teaching and learning

What are the opportunities for improvements? Are there mechanisms for reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of services and programs on a regular basis?

4. Review the way in which MacPherson partners with Faculties, departments and other service units across McMaster. How effective are the outreach models employed by the Institute in establishing working relationships with other units? Are partnerships encouraged, appropriate and effective in supporting teaching and learning?
5. Review the alignment of MacPherson services and programs with other educational services offered across McMaster. Are there functions currently in MacPherson or in other units (e.g. writing center and other initiatives within Student Services, University Library services including technical classroom support of teaching) that could or should be aligned or coordinated in a more effective manner?
6. Review and evaluate how McMaster engages, motivates, and supports students in the context of McMaster's teaching and learning enterprise (including postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, undergraduate and graduate teaching assistants). Is there a strategy based on best practices? Are the needs of these communities well understood? What are the opportunities for improvements?
7. Suggest opportunities for future development and enhancement. What should be prioritized moving forward? What are the best opportunities for enhancement?





---

**BRIGHTER WORLD**