

2018 Review of Teaching and Learning at McMaster

Report on Reviewer Recommendations

Prepared by: MacPherson Institute – July 2022

Overview: Reviewer Recommendations and Results

Recommendation	Result
1. Decouple the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning position from the MacPherson Institute Directorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Director Lori Goff appointed 2019 √ Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning Kim Dej appointed 2022
2. Constitute an internal Advisory Board/Network to provide input and feedback to the leadership of the MacPherson Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Teaching and Learning Advisory Board established in 2019
3. Engage in community consultation to clarify the mission and mandate of the MacPherson Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ MacPherson Institute’s mission, mandate, values and 3-year strategic plan established and launched in 2019
4. Develop an integrated, institutional-level teaching and learning strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy launched in 2021
5. Assess the MacPherson Institute’s leadership and organizational structure and determine how best to deploy resources to fulfill mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ MacPherson Institute leadership team restructured 2019 - 2021
6. Evaluate program offerings to ensure broad spectrum of support to a wide range of faculty members in flexible formats that lower barriers to engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Program Review completed between 2020 – 2021 √ Changes to offerings completed 2021 - 2022
7. Develop ways to enhance collaboration and provide “on-the-ground” support to Faculties (a.k.a. “liaison” approach)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Liaison model of service established in 2019 √ Review and refinements to model of service in 2021 - 2022
8. Increase coordination across units that provide support for teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Established partnerships and collaborative working relationships with McMaster’s Equity and Inclusion Office, University Library, Student Affairs (Student Success Centre, Student Accessibility Services), McMaster Continuing Education, Office of Community Engagement, University Technology Services, and various technologies groups/committees
9a. Articulate why research on teaching and learning is important and how findings can enhance learning experiences 9b. Refine how this research is recognized in career development, permanence, promotion and merit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Position paper completed in 2022 ⇒ In progress: Work to refine policy and process at McMaster to recognize teaching and learning
10. Review the balance of continuing and contractual positions for equity and consistency in approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Human Resources Strategic Partner hired in 2021 – 2022

Reviewer Recommendations and Results

Recommendation 1:

- Decouple the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning position from the MacPherson Institute Directorship

Result:

- √ Director Lori Goff appointed 2019
- √ Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning Kim Dej appointed 2022

Through the 2018 external review of Teaching and Learning, Dr. Lori Goff led the MacPherson Institute in an acting and then interim capacity. On April 22, Lori Goff was formally announced as the new Director of the Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching.

The Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning position remained vacant from 2018 – 2022 while other institutional and organizational changes were completed. In the meantime, the MacPherson Institute continued to support institutional priorities for teaching and learning under the guidance of the Teaching and Learning Advisory, the Vice-Provost (Faculty), the Provost and the President. In May 2022, Dr. Kim Dej was announced as the new Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning. The MacPherson Institute has worked closely with Kim Dej in her previous role of Acting Vice-Provost (Faculty) as she supported many teaching and learning priorities over the past few years, including the launch of the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy. Both Lori and Kim look forward to working collaboratively to continue cultivating an environment where teaching and learning is recognized and supported by McMaster.

Recommendation 2:

- Constitute an internal Advisory Board/Network to provide input and feedback to the leadership of the MacPherson Institute

Result:

- √ Teaching and Learning Advisory established in 2019

The McMaster Teaching and Learning Advisory Board was established in February 2019 (see Appendix A for list of committee members). In 2019 the Board met a total of 6 times and then continued to meet one to two times each term.

Lori Goff initially served as the MacPherson Institute representative on the Advisory board and attended all meetings, brought agenda items forward and offered opportunities for members of the Advisory to engage in discussion about the MacPherson Institute's strategic plan and implementation work.

Since 2019 the Teaching and Learning Advisory Board has evolved to focus on supporting the planning and implementation of the new [Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy](#).

The Advisory was chaired initially by the Vice-Provost (Faculty) for two years. A rotating co-chair model was put in place in 2021. The Director of the MacPherson Institute served as the inaugural co-chair for the first year alongside the Vice-Provost (Faculty). For 2022, this co-chair has rotated to another member, the Director of UTS, who is now serving alongside the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning).

Recommendation 3:

- Engage in community consultation to clarify the mission and mandate of the MacPherson Institute

Result:

- √ MacPherson Institute's mission, mandate, values and 3-year strategic plan was established and launched in 2019

In 2018 while the MacPherson Institute was developing its self-study, many consultations took place. These consultations became the beginnings of new developing relationships with each of the Faculties. In response to the Recommendations, the MacPherson Institute continued to reach out to many of the VPs and senior leaders, all of the Deans and Associate Deans, many chairs and faculty. During this process extensive input and feedback was received from the McMaster community. The needs and concerns that were expressed led to the development of the [2019-2022 Strategic Plan](#), which included foundational statements about the new mission, vision and mandate areas. In addition to this, the MacPherson Institute established a set of values that would help rebuild the culture and collaboration that is so critical for a thriving teaching and learning community on campus.

The Strategic Plan has been an important tool to guide the work of the MacPherson Institute and to provide clarity to the teaching and learning community about its work.

In 2022 the MacPherson Institute concluded its 3-year Strategic Plan and successfully accomplished 51 of the 59 strategic initiatives planned across 10 objective areas. The next Strategic Plan is in development and will be launched in May 2023.

Recommendation 4:

- Develop an integrated, institutional-level teaching and learning strategy

Result:

- √ Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy launched in 2021

In 2020-2021 the MacPherson Institute worked closely with the Provost and Vice-President Academic, Susan Tighe, and Acting Vice-Provost (Faculty), Kim Dej, to collaboratively develop and implement the [Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy](#). The strategy is the first of its kind at McMaster and has proven to be a unique opportunity to consider important questions about the future of teaching and learning, while also navigating the challenges imposed by the pandemic.

Since March 2020, the project team performed interviews, focus groups and initiated surveys with those connected to teaching and learning activities including the President, the President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC), the Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee, the Equity and Inclusion Office, the Indigenous Education Council, Indigenous Studies Program, McMaster Teaching Academy, McMaster Student's Union, the Technology Roundtable, as well as Deans, Associate Deans, instructors, staff and students. The plan included an "engagement" period in the spring/summer 2021 that encouraged broad contributions of ideas that would support the strategy. This broad collaboration and willingness to invite feedback and revision has ensured the strategy will support wide-ranging needs, has built trust and increased enthusiasm for the initiative within the teaching and learning community.

The goal of the strategy is to further advance and support innovation in teaching and learning, within and beyond the classroom, and across disciplines and Faculties, to elevate teaching as a professional discipline and equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to make a transformative impact on the world.

In 2022 a new grant funding process was announced to support the implementation of the objectives outlined in [Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy](#) through various departmental and university-wide initiatives. Grants include both small and large funds to inspire, enable and support McMaster's community to help drive the strategy forward within four impact areas.

Working through the pandemic highlighted the importance of taking a strategic approach to digital teaching and learning. As a result, in addition to launching the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy, a small project team from the Office of the Provost, UTS and the MacPherson Institute began working to develop a Digital Learning Strategy. The strategy will take a pedagogical and evidence-informed approach to make decisions around what pedagogies, modalities and technologies will optimize learning. The project team consulted with a wide variety of cross-campus groups during Phase 1 and 2 (Fall 2021 and Winter 2022) on refining the draft vision, principles and priorities of the strategy. A cross-representational steering committee has been formed to guide the development and prioritization of actions and initiatives over Spring 2022 with a goal of launching the strategy by Fall 2022.

Recommendation 5:

- Assess the MacPherson Institute's leadership and organizational structure and determine how best to deploy resources to fulfill mandate

Result:

- √ MacPherson Institute leadership team restructured 2019 – 2021

Based on the 2018 external review, the leadership team was reviewed to ensure it was aligned to the refined mandate. A new leadership team structure was proposed, and after consulting with and collecting feedback from staff, associate directors, the Office of the Provost, UNIFOR, and HR, a refined leadership team structure was finalized and implemented.

Additionally, an external consultant was hired to help guide the initial development of a thriving leadership team that aims to cultivate a positive workplace environment for staff to work and contribute productively to the MacPherson Institute's mission and mandate. The MacPherson Institute also undertook a collaborative and consultative approach for organizational redesign to incorporate staff input, coaching on change processes and regular communications to ensure transparency about organizational design changes.

Recommendation 6:

- Evaluate program offerings to ensure broad spectrum of support to a wide range of faculty members in flexible formats that lower barriers to engagement

Result:

- √ Program Review completed between 2020 – 2021
- √ Changes to offerings completed 2021 – 2022

A comprehensive review was conducted of the Educator Development programming including a self-study and in-depth stakeholder feedback from across campus. The Program Review Advisory Committee reviewed and endorsed recommendations for refinement, an Executive Summary was shared, and the MacPherson Institute staff planned for implementation of recommendations.

Based on these recommendations, a new “pathways” model was developed to streamline existing MacPherson Institute activities across all central programming areas, to make programming more comprehensible and accessible to stakeholders. Changes were identified to streamline program activities (e.g., the Course Consultants Program merged with the Course (re)Design workshop), to balance synchronous and asynchronous professional development and to address promotion and scheduling barriers. Further improvements will occur as part of ongoing operational review and as conversations related to accessibility and equity in our own programming continue.

After collecting feedback on the existing program review process, the MacPherson Institute refined its program review process to take a more holistic approach, to continue to invite external stakeholders to engage in that review process, and to focus on mandate areas. The schedule of reviews was refined with a goal of completing all program reviews at the same time with project management and project support from the Associate Director (Central Programming). The next review of programs will take place in 2024.

Recommendation 7:

- Develop ways to enhance collaboration and provide “on-the-ground” support to Faculties (a.k.a. “liaison” approach)

Result:

- √ Liaison model of service established in 2019
- √ Review and refinements to model of service in 2021 – 2022

A Faculty Liaison model of service delivery was designed and piloted to provide on-the-ground teaching and learning support within the faculties, departments, schools and programs. Key contacts for each Faculty were identified to ensure a deep and thorough understanding of individualized needs. This model has allowed us to make connections to our central programming and develop custom supports where appropriate.

A comprehensive data collection process was undertaken and a report was completed outlining strengths and challenges of the model. Findings indicated the model had a very positive impact on the MacPherson Institute’s relationships with academic campus partners, particularly in terms of our ability to support faculties in remote teaching and learning conditions. Findings also indicated the need for some refinement to better define the roles of those involved with liaison work, enhance communication mechanisms, and consider the long-term implications of increased support pressures as a result of the pandemic.

Feedback was gathered in Year 2 and refinements were made in Year 3. The model has received overwhelmingly positive responses from Faculty partners and, as a result, the MacPherson Institute plans to continue supporting the faculties using the Faculty Liaison model of service delivery with plans for regular assessment and refinement of processes and supports as an ongoing initiative.

Recommendation 8:

- Increase coordination across units that provide support for teaching and learning

Result:

- Established partnerships and collaborative working relationships with McMaster's Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO), University Library, Student Affairs (Student Success Centre, Student Accessibility Services), McMaster Continuing Education (MCE), Office of Community Engagement (OCE), University Technology Services (UTS), and various technologies groups/committees

Staff roles and responsibilities within the MacPherson Institute were assigned to cultivate partnerships with internal teaching and learning stakeholders to advance our mission and of McMaster University. This resulted in the development of various resources, workshops and projects. Below are some highlights from the partnership work:

Equity and Inclusion Office

- The MacPherson Institute enhanced relationships with EIO through shared training sessions, cross promotion of resources and the co-development of the IDEAS (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Sustainability) grant.
- The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – Teaching and Learning Implementation team was also formed, including staff from the MacPherson Institute and EIO, to advance the strategic priorities of the 2019- 2022 EDI Action Plan.
- The Inclusive Teaching Guidebook was developed and launched with EIO.
- The MacPherson Institute and EIO also worked together to complete recruitment for new educational developer positions (accessibility, anti-racist pedagogies, and Indigenous andragogies) at the MacPherson Institute.

University Technology Services

- The MacPherson Institute collaborated with UTS on strategy, support and technology tools for a number of initiatives including: the selection and implementation of Respondus, an online proctoring tool; a web conferencing review and consolidation process to simplify choices for

faculty and students; integration of Avenue to Learn and Mosaic HR modules; and the needs analysis phase of the Course Outline Portal project.

McMaster Libraries

- The MacPherson Institute collaborated with McMaster Libraries to promote and support Open Educational Resources (OER) and to build resources and training sessions on effective use of Echo360's lecture capture and video engagement platform.

Recommendation 9:

- Articulate why research on teaching and learning is important and how findings can enhance learning experiences
- Refine how this research is recognized in career development, permanence, promotion and merit

Result:

- Position paper completed in 2022
- ⇒ Work to refine policy and process at McMaster to recognize teaching and learning is in progress

A network was developed that was comprised of individuals and units on campus already engaged in and valuing teaching and learning scholarship in all its forms.

A survey was designed and used to understand the breadth of teaching and learning scholarship taking place across Faculties at McMaster University. The goal was to identify the ways faculty members and staff name and describe systematic inquiry into teaching and learning, how they engage with scholarly literature on teaching and learning, and how they are motivated to conduct research on teaching and learning.

Through the analysis of the survey, and follow-up qualitative interviews conducted with instructors at McMaster, a working paper was completed. This process highlighted that teaching and learning scholarship is primarily recognized and valued as "Research on Teaching and Learning."

Connected to the working paper, a statement on the significance of "Research on Teaching and Learning" was also developed. The paper and statement will help advocate for taking steps to embed the recognition of teaching- and learning-related research into policies and procedures at McMaster and across Faculties.

Next steps include disseminating and presenting the key findings from the working paper with different stakeholder groups and campus partners to help ensure there is advocacy for valuing teaching and learning research at all levels across campus.

Recommendation 10:

- Review the balance of continuing and contractual positions for equity and consistency in approach

Result:

- Human Resources Strategic Partner hired in 2021 – 2022

In 2021 the MacPherson Institute identified a need for human resources support to help address several items noted by the reviewers.

In collaboration with the HR Strategic Partner the MacPherson Institute considered ways in which equitable and consistent approaches could be applied to all staff positions across the department, regardless of type of appointment.

Two pressing areas were identified that were being implemented inconsistently:

- Use of flexible time and flexible working arrangements
- Onboarding and offboarding processes

With the support of the HR Strategic Partner, a Flexible Work Arrangements Guide was drafted, refined and launched to provide definitions and explanations of different types of flexible working arrangements, example scenarios, and considerations for communication.

Additionally, a hiring and onboarding guide and an offboarding guide were created for use by all MacPherson Institute supervisors that includes checklists, flowcharts, and templates to bring consistency to the processes.

Appendix A: Teaching & Learning: Advisory Group

Members:

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Past Members:

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- Diana Maltese
- Ishwar Puri
- Emad Mohammed
- Lisa Dyce
- Andrea Cole
- Fatima Kijera
- Sharon Garden
- Andrea Perco
- Elizabeth dos Santos