
STUDENT PARTNERS PROGRAM GUIDEBOOK

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

Congratulations and welcome to partners in the MacPherson Institute Student Partners Program (SPP)! Within this document, you will find information for both students and staff/faculty members, including guidelines, procedures, tips and suggestions of relevance to student-faculty/staff partnership within the SPP.

Program Overview and Historical Context

In 2013-2014, the Arts & Science Program and the MacPherson Institute (then known as MIETL) collaborated to create "Student Partner" positions for students who are interested in pedagogical research and innovation. Building on current scholarship (see Appendix 1 for further details), the goal of this program is to establish meaningful partnerships between students and staff/faculty working on teaching and learning projects at McMaster, in order to enhance the quality of the work conducted, provide further opportunities for student engagement, and generate significant learning opportunities for everyone involved.

Since the Program's inception, a wide range of Student Partners have contributed to the enhancement of teaching and learning at McMaster by participating in projects through the SPP. Members of the Student Partners team have contributed to the design and development of courses and curricula, helped to create resources for staff/faculty and students, and collaborated with faculty and staff partners on research projects related to teaching and learning. Several have also co-authored research articles and conference presentations, co-facilitated events like our International Institute on Student-Staff Partnerships or worked as student reviewers or editors for the *International Journal for Students as Partners*, a peer-reviewed journal which is hosted at McMaster (<https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/ijsap>). More than 425 undergraduate and graduate students from across campus have participated in the program since it began.

What does a Student Partner position entail?

These positions provide opportunities for students and faculty/staff to collaborate on teaching and learning projects, across one or more academic terms. The specific number of hours students contribute will vary from project to project, but most involve something in the range of 5-10 hours per week. Students will fulfill a variety of roles depending on the project and its goals, as well as the goals of the people involved. In all cases, the aim is for students to work in meaningful collaboration with faculty/staff, contributing to shaping the intellectual directions of the work undertaken.

Who is eligible to participate?

Project: Any McMaster staff, faculty, or student working on a relevant teaching and learning project is eligible to submit that project for inclusion in the Student Partner Program. Please note that students submitting projects will need to do so in collaboration with a faculty/staff member at McMaster University [i.e., we cannot currently advertise student-proposed projects to potential faculty partners. Instead, interested students might consider approaching a faculty/staff member and seeing if that faculty/staff member would be interested in working with them on the project should it be accepted for the SPP. If you are a student with a project idea and are unsure to whom you should reach out, please connect with MI/SPP staff

(mi_sap@mcmaster.ca) who may be able to suggest faculty and staff who would be a good fit for your project idea].

Student Partners: Any student (undergraduate or graduate) enrolled at McMaster University is eligible to be a Student Partner or propose a project. Undergraduate students who graduate in April are eligible to work on projects funded in the Spring-Summer terms (May-August). While prior experience in teaching and learning research/practice would be an asset, it is not required. Indeed, we're interested in working with a wide variety of students with a range of backgrounds and experiences, including members of equity seeking groups. Some projects do indicate preferences for students with particular experiences, skills, or educational levels, so be sure to read the project descriptions carefully and to make the case for why you would be a good fit.

Faculty / Staff: Any faculty or staff employed by McMaster for the duration of the award are eligible to submit a project proposal and participate in the SPP.

What types of projects can be included in the Student Partners program?

Any teaching and learning project being conducted via a partnership between McMaster faculty/staff and students, and meeting the following criteria, may be submitted for consideration:

1. The project includes clear opportunities for students to contribute to the intellectual direction of the work (i.e., it is not simply an attempt to alleviate staff/faculty workload);
2. Individuals involved in the project are committed to taking a partnership approach, and able to devote the time necessary to develop partnerships;
3. The project has elements that are appropriate to and would benefit from both student and faculty/staff perspectives;
4. The project stands to make a meaningful contribution to enhancing teaching and learning practice/knowledge;
5. If new project partners are being solicited, the project is open to, and inviting of, a wide range of people, including members of equity-seeking groups. Where required experiences, attributes, or skills are specified, these are well-justified and take questions of equity and inclusion into consideration; and,
6. The number of hours requested for the project is reasonable and defensible, and significant project outcomes are likely within the funding period. (Note: this does not mean the project needs to be finished entirely within the SPP funding period; rather, it is meant to suggest that meaningful outcomes are likely *even if* further SPP funding is not available.)

Projects that align with key departmental/institutional priorities are especially welcome, as are projects with the potential to engage people new to the SPP. If you are submitting multiple projects, please be sure to explain how they are different and to make a case for why both/multiple projects should be funded, given the criteria and considerations above. To see examples of past projects, please visit the 'Student Partners' page of [our website](#).

There are two alternative ways in which students can be involved as partners:

1. Course Consultant Partnership Program Stream

2. Student Curriculum Consultant Stream

The Course Consultant Partnership Program stream operates according to a particular model, which is described on the following page: <https://mi.mcmaster.ca/course-consultant-partnership-program/>. The Course Consultant Partnership Program, faculty members must take part in the Course (re)Design Workshop held in May to work with a student during the Spring/Summer months on their course design. Applications for the Course (re)Design Workshop open during the Winter semester preceding the Spring/Summer semester, and faculty will identify a student to work with towards the end of the Winter semester. More information can be found at the above link.

If you are seeking student support for an IQAP-related project, that application would belong to the Student Curriculum Consultant (SCC) program administered separately through the Curriculum Development office at the MacPherson Institute. For more information on the SCC program, please contact Greg Van Gastel (vangasgj@mcmaster.ca).

Please Note: These two streams have their own application process that is not connected to the details discussed in this guidebook.

PROTOCOL AND GUIDELINES: HOW TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

The following are general guidelines we suggest each partnership consider throughout their time together. Not every project is the same and therefore not all guidelines may be appropriate in all cases.

Before the Project Begins

1. Read this handbook, paying particular attention to the processes and procedures.
2. Students: make sure your email addresses are provided to the Student Partners Program team by emailing mi_sap@mcmaster.ca
3. Acknowledge that partnership involves true collaboration, NOT just students completing assigned tasks.
 - The traditional process wherein staff/faculty fully control projects should NOT be expected.
 - If a student does not know exactly what is expected of them, the student could brainstorm ideas and then discuss them with the staff/faculty member.
 - Consider mutually agreed-upon guidelines, working towards a true partnership.
 - Have a conversation about the level of independence and autonomy appropriate for the student.
4. Identify short- and long-term goals of the project and each partner's personal objectives.
5. Discuss how the partnership's work will translate into the final product:
 - What can be included on each team member's CV?
 - What will be the authorship on any publications (articles, presentations, posters, etc.)?
6. Consider where it is most appropriate and convenient for the student to work (office, home, other). Ensure that work arrangements are in accordance with departmental policies and fill out any applicable paperwork (e.g., signing work at home agreements and completing a home safety checklist where necessary).
7. Discuss and determine how literature and documents will be shared (e.g., Microsoft Teams, MacDrive, Zotero, Mendeley, email, other).

During the Project

1. Remember, scholarly work is often exploratory, so expectations may shift and change as the project proceeds.
 - As concerns arise, ensure they are addressed promptly and efficiently.
 - All team members should be encouraged to voice concerns about the direction/outcome(s) of the project.
2. If there are problems outside of the project that impact your ability to contribute, address them as above and have a conversation within the partnership.

3. Students—Don't be afraid to take the initiative and make suggestions.
 - New ideas often come up during the research process. Partnership should be a place where you feel comfortable voicing your own ideas. Be sure that new directions fall within the scope of the original project.
 - When in doubt, it is best to discuss possible new directions with other project partners.
4. Plan partnership meetings together.
 - **How and where will you meet?** Discuss whether work would best be performed in-person or virtually. Consider alternatives to face-to-face meetings using web conferencing tools such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
 - **When will you meet?** Make sure meeting times are convenient for all.
 - **How frequently will you meet?** Meetings should be frequent enough to support the project without being disruptive. Frequency may change over the course of the project. If possible, it might be helpful to book a regular time slot every week or two, and then cancel meetings as needed. (It's always easier to cancel!)
 - **What kind of meeting summaries will you create?** Collate action items and appropriate deadlines for future reference.
5. Elicit regular feedback from all members of the group.
6. Work together to plan how student time on the project will be spent and to monitor hours worked.
 - Students should not work more hours than have been allocated to the project. Any work relating to the project (e.g., training, meetings, literature reviews, work at home, etc.) should be included.
 - Hours need to be worked within the time frame specified (i.e., the funding is for the specified project term only, and cannot be carried over without first consulting with MacPherson Institute staff).
7. Seek out support when you have questions! All faculty, staff, and student partners can access resources on partnership and teaching and learning research through Microsoft Teams. Staff at the MacPherson are also available for consultation (for example, related to educational technology, media design, research methods, research ethics). Visit [our website](#) for more information. Note: staff appreciate being consulted early on in a project whenever possible, rather than before a deadline, so they can be most useful within their own busy schedules!

After the Project / Partnership Has Ended

At the end of each project term, your project team needs to submit a brief report on the project and its outcomes to date. This report should include:

- A description of the project (including its aims and goals);
- A 250-word description/summary for public-facing promotional materials and cross-campus dissemination;

- A discussion of the project's outcomes and outputs to date;
- An indication of what, if anything, is planned in terms of next steps;
- A personal reflection on the value and limitations of the project and partnership process.

Submission of this final report is a prerequisite for consideration for future Student Partners project proposals. A report template will be provided (and is available on the SPP Microsoft Teams Page).

Team members should also decide what is going to happen after the project has finished. For example,

- Will the partnership stay in touch?
- Would the students like to stay involved in the following term if such an opportunity exists? What will happen with any unfinished work?

PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

The program operates on an award-based model:

1. There are TWO calls for projects: one in January (for summer projects May-August), and one in May (for Fall/Winter projects September-April). Students, staff, and faculty can submit proposals to the call for projects. Project teams can apply more than once to the program for funds, but only a maximum of 2 projects per team will be funded per cycle. Existing project teams can submit an application to extend their work to another term (these will undergo the same peer review process – funding in the past does not mean projects will be funded again in the future).
2. Projects will undergo a peer review against SPP criteria by a voluntary review committee of students, staff, and faculty.
3. The funds approved will be counted as an “award,” and can be indicated as such on your CV / annual record of activities. A maximum of up to \$2000 per project will be available to support student partners. Funds can only be used to pay for student hours. Project leads will be required to provide an account number (chartfield) for funds to be transferred. Student project leads will require funding to be transferred to their faculty or staff partner’s departmental account. Project funds will be transferred to a designated project lead and will be held in departmental accounts.
5. MacPherson will advertise projects to prospective students (in March for the Summer term and in July for the Fall/Winter terms).
6. Project leads looking to hire a student partner can select students once applications have been received by MacPherson.
7. Project leads will be required to arrange issuance of contracts and monitoring of student hours. Student hiring (issuing of contracts, monitoring of hours) will be completed by the faculty/staff partner’s department.
8. MacPherson will run Orientation events and the Annual Student Partners Symposium, as well as provide Project and Program support (including project consultations, access to resources, etc.).
9. MacPherson will require an end of term report that reports on the outputs and outcomes of your project.

Selecting Projects and Advertising Positions

Student Partners currently join teams twice a year—in May and September. In order to facilitate this process, we have established the following timelines and procedures:

Project Term	Call for Projects	Application Review	Call for Students	Students Notified
May to August (Summer Term)	January	February	March	End of April
Sept. to April (Full Term)	May	June	July	End of August

Call for Student Partner Projects

Approximately three months prior to the start of a new project term, a Call for Projects will be distributed broadly on campus in January (for the Summer term) and May (for the Fall/Winter terms). Individuals interested in submitting a project for consideration will be asked to provide a brief (150 word) description of the project, which outlines its central goals/purpose, the kinds of work in which students might engage, and the staff/faculty involved. If there are particular experiences/attributes students applying for the project will need, these should also be identified, though we strongly encourage those submitting projects to refrain from restricting opportunities to participate as much as possible. The submitted project description will be used both to assess the project's fit with the Student Partners Program, and to advertise the project to potential student partners (if new students are being sought).

Individuals proposing projects should also submit a brief statement explaining how the proposed work aligns with the requirements and goals of the SPP. This explanation will not be included in the call for student applicants but will be used in the selection process when deciding allocation of award funding.

Alongside these materials, project proposals must include the number of students requested and the expected size/scope of the project (including the approximate number of hours students will contribute). The total amount of award funding available per project is \$2000. Funds must be spent on student partner hours only. Further details about the award terms are available upon request (please email mi_sap@mcmaster.ca).

NOTE—The project submission deadline is firm. Projects submitted after the specified date will not be considered.

Project Selection Process

A project review committee consisting of MacPherson staff/faculty, students, and campus partners (where available) will be struck to review project proposals. This committee will be chaired by the coordinator of the SPP, and members will have had experience participating in the SPP in past wherever possible.

When projects are initially submitted, they will be vetted by the review committee and ranked according to the criteria specified above. Top ranked projects will be funded as budgetary constraints allow. Applicants will be notified about the outcome of their application at the end of February (for the Summer term) or June (for the Fall/Winter terms).

All successful projects will receive a transfer of their award funding to a departmental budget (as outlined in the Award terms will be emailed to successful project holders at time of notification of the outcome of the award. Project holders **must** provide a chartfield to the Student Partners Program team to ensure timely transfer of funds. [Note: please provide a chartfield that includes either account 480050 (department transfer) or 480925 (transfer to/from research account). The chartfield should look like this: xx (fund) – 480050/480925 – xxxxx (department) – xxxxx (program).]

Call for Student Applications

A call for student applicants will be developed and circulated in March (for the Summer term) and July (for the Fall/Winter term). This call will include general information about the SPP, as well as a list of projects for which student partners are being sought. It will be posted on the MacPherson Institute website, sent to Department and Faculty offices, and circulated via other appropriate channels (e.g., posting to the MacPherson listserv and Twitter accounts)

Interested students will be asked to select up to THREE projects from the list and to write a brief (~100-500 word) interest statement for each project. These project interest statements should include the following:

1. The project title (from the Call for Student Applications)
2. A description of why the project seems interesting/important to the applicant. (Why do you want to join the project team? What are your goals in relation to the project?)
3. A proposal for the role the applicant might play on the project team. (What might you do to develop the project and help it meet its goals? What work do you see yourself carrying out?)
4. An indication of the skills/experiences/interests/perspectives the applicant would bring to the project. (Why are you a good fit for this project?)

Students will read the project descriptions carefully, noting any requested experiences or skills. Remembering that the goal of the SPP is to develop meaningful partnerships where all participants can make intellectual contributions, applicants are encouraged to highlight their ability to partner in this way and to offer one or two of their own ideas and perspectives on their selected projects.

Student Selection Process

Following the application deadline and final project selection, individuals who submitted successful project proposals will be forwarded the student applications submitted for their project(s).

Teams may opt to interview a short list of candidates . Project leads wishing to conduct interviews must work quickly as there is a tight timeline between when applications are received and when decisions are due. Remember, some students may be away from campus , so consider conducting interviews by phone/Zoom/Teams. Project teams that elect to conduct interviews are responsible for scheduling interviews and contacting interviewees.

Project leads hire student partners directly. Project leads are required to arrange issuance of contracts and applicable paperwork. Please work with your department administrator for assistance.

COMPENSATION & PRACTICALITIES

It is the responsibility of the faculty/staff partner's department to hire student partners (issue offer letters, register for payroll in MOSAIC etc.), once the student(s) is/are selected through the program. Please check with Human Resources for the most up-to-date Offer Letter Templates, job descriptions, and rates of pay. Where applicable, departments should use their own hiring processes and documentation.

We recommend using Job Code INT076 “Educational Research Assistant” job description for temporary, casual, or interim positions. Current rates of compensation corresponding to this job description are as follows:

- Undergraduate student partners: \$16/hour (\$18 when fringe benefits added)
- Graduate student partners: \$20/hour (\$23 when fringe benefits added)

Student partners can be hired at a greater rate of pay than listed above, but you may need to select a different job description. These are found on the McMaster University’s [Human Resources Website](#).

It will be the faculty/staff partner’s responsibility to ensure payment to the student is made following the McMaster pay schedule.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR STUDENT PARTNER EXPERIENCE

Once a candidate has been selected, they will be invited to an orientation meeting where they will meet other student partners and hear about different supports available from the Student Partners Program team at MacPherson.

The following list of tips and suggestions was compiled from the results of a survey distributed to previous MacPherson Student Partners and staff/faculty about their experiences in the program. These tips are mostly aimed at Student Partners, but it would be useful for staff/faculty to also keep these points in mind.

Establishing Goals and Relationships

We all know the months go by quickly during the school year. So, using the first few weeks of your involvement with the program to establish relationships, deadlines, and goals is crucial to the success of the overall project.

- Jump right in, particularly if the timeline for your project is short. Set up a meeting and acquaint yourself with the project and its goals as quickly as you can to leave ample time for the work itself.
- Be critical. You might feel as though your opinion isn’t valuable because you just joined the project, but your perspective as a student is valuable.
- Don’t feel constrained by the way the project is framed. Projects evolve and you should feel free to share questions and opinions that will shape the work into its final form.
- Get to know your partners early on – how they like to work, communicate, and what their schedules are like.
- Share your goals for the project and find out what your research partners’ career and personal goals are. Try to determine how you can help your group members achieve their goals.
- Set clear guidelines and expectations for the role(s) each partner will play in the project.

Communication and Accountability

Regular communication and keeping up with tasks are essential to group work. Below, you’ll find some strategies that worked for students in the past and some things they wish they’d done differently:

1. **Have regular meetings**—Although this may become harder to maintain during busier times of the year, setting up regular weekly or biweekly check ins can help make a habit of these meetings early on.
2. **Update your partners on your progress**—Keep your group members up to date about your work, progress, and any potential roadblocks. You can do this by sending out regular updates, scheduling meetings, or using a teamwork productivity application, like Slack.
3. **Set interim deadlines**—Maintain a schedule of interim deadlines to help you and your partners stay on track, especially for parts of the project that might be overwhelming and complicated. These can also be flexible and provide opportunities to evaluate the ongoing project on a macro- and micro-level.
4. **Use alternative modes of communication**—Given the time constraints we all have during the year, as well as our need to balance our school and work life with other commitments, it's important to be open to alternative modes of communicating, especially for larger groups. Create subgroups and have smaller meetings or use online communication tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.
5. **Hold yourself accountable**—While it's important to set external deadlines, you also need to hold yourself accountable. Work as a Student Partner can be flexible and independent, which requires a lot of self-directed learning and discipline. Try your best to spread the work evenly and to avoid falling behind on tasks, and make sure to let your partners know in a timely manner if you are unable to complete your work.

Making the Most of Your Partnership Experience

The Student Partners Program gives students the opportunity to be involved with academic research and teaching and learning projects, while also providing essential student perspectives for these projects. Many opportunities will become available to students throughout the year. Past students recommend seizing these opportunities as they come.

1. **Approach people at MacPherson**—MacPherson Institute staff members are welcoming of students and are involved in the field of education through research, technology, or development. It's a great place to get to know professionals in the field if this is a career or academic path you're considering.
2. **Learn about different projects**—Although your project will take up most of your time, learning about projects that other people are participating in will give you a broader understanding and appreciation for the work done through the SPP and on teaching and learning at McMaster.
3. **Use the dedicated space to work in the office**—MacPherson has limited office space available to Student Partners during the year. Feel free to book a space during business hours as a place to work on your research tasks. It can be a nice and quiet break from your other work environments. Please contact MacPherson staff if you need assistance

booking a space.

4. **Participate in papers and conference presentations**—As you work on your project, opportunities might arise to participate in writing a paper or presenting your scholarship at a conference. Seize these opportunities when they come up; they are extremely educational experiences and can provide you with an in-depth understanding of the process of disseminating research/project findings.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1—Recommendations from the Literature on Staff-Student Partnerships

Increasingly, universities and colleges are seeking to engage students as partners in their own learning and in the enhancement of both teaching and research. Throughout the higher education literature, there are numerous references to the importance of faculty and student partnerships, as well as to challenges and best practices for faculty and students working together. In addition, the literature notes that student-faculty partnerships can take many forms and can have various meanings. Therefore, in this context, it is important to define what is meant by partnerships.

How do we define partnership?

Partnerships involve the formation of reciprocal relationships between students and academic staff. More specifically, as Healey, Flint and Harrington (2014, pp. 12) state, partnerships are “... a relationship in which all involved—students, academics, professional services staff, senior managers, students’ unions, and so on—are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together. Partnership is essentially a process of engagement, not a product. It is a way of doing things, rather than an outcome in itself.”

Benefits of Partnership

The benefits of partnerships in higher education settings have been well documented (Barnes, Goldring, Bestwick, & Wood, 2010; Healey, Flint & Harrington, 2014; Jarvis, Dickerson & Stockwell, 2013). For example, partnerships in teaching and learning can:

- Build research capacity through joint enquiry;
- Increase engagement with teaching and learning;
- Develop students’ and staff members’ knowledge and skills;
- Foster a sense of personal and social responsibility;
- Increase personal and professional confidence; and,
- Lead to a greater sense of belonging and community within the university setting.

“I’ve enjoyed the opportunity to work with [student partners] on this project, and think we’ve managed to develop a collaborative relationship that is supportive, constructive, and enjoyable. ... I think we’ve all demonstrated ownership of and responsibility for the work, and I find it very gratifying to see this kind of collaborative work play out in practice.” (Faculty, 2018 Case Studies)

“Working with [faculty] has been an extremely rewarding experience, and certainly a highlight of my undergraduate career. I feel that we have formed a genuine partnership that overcomes the traditional power dynamic between staff and students, in large part due to [my faculty partner’s] willingness to treat me as [their] equal.” (Student, CC Book Chapter)

Challenges in Partnership

Engaging students as partners in teaching and learning is a highly contextual and complex process, both in theory and practice (Healey et al., 2014). Critical reflection throughout the partnership on the challenges and tensions that arise is integral. It is particularly important to reflect critically on the issues listed below within one's own context—whether it is at the “initiative, module, programme, faculty or institutional level” (Healey et al., 2014, p. 30).

Navigating Power Relationships

Common in pedagogical literature on student-staff partnerships in teaching and learning is the issue of power relationships (Bovill et al., 2011; Cook-Sather, 2014; Healey et al., 2014; Marquis et al., 2016). In particular, “negotiating existing power dynamics” is listed as a major issue in one case study (Marquis et al., 2016) that explored the experiences of students and staff in their partnerships at McMaster University's Student Partners program. While participants in both groups articulated their interest in taking on non-traditional roles, both groups tended to return to their conventional positions. Healey et al. (2014) recommend that staff reflect critically on the implications of these power relationships within their own contexts. For example, ask yourself the following questions: in the partnership, who is responsible for decision making, acquiring access to resources, etc.?

However, despite the wish to avoid staff and faculty dominance over partnerships and projects, it is also imperative to strike a balance between guidance and self-direction for students. In one case study, students commented upon their need to have a clearer set of objectives in order to concentrate their efforts (Marquis et al. 2016). It is important to develop effective and collaborative relationships that will result in meaningful roles and responsibilities for those involved and will allow for members to feel comfortable to ask for more guidance, if required.

As someone who continues to struggle with when to ‘lead’ partnership experiences and when to step back, I appreciated [my student partners’] willingness to let me know when they needed more guidance or support, and I think this openness... helped to solidify our collaboration and move the project along.” (Staff, CC Book Chapter)

Inclusivity and Diversity

It is important for those engaging in pedagogical projects to strive to maintain a diverse and inclusive working environment. Much of the literature points to the need to widen the involvement of students and staff as co-inquirers, and to thus include more diverse voices and identities (Felten et al., 2013; Healey et al., 2014; McLeod, 2011; Marquis et al., 2016). Marquis et al. have noted that opportunities for partnership often extend to only a limited number of academically ‘strong’ students, a practice that restricts the number of perspectives brought to the table. Healey et al. (2014) suggest creating a strong sense of community is key to building sustainable partnerships and encourage members to examine current practices and to reflect critically on whether there are structural or cultural barriers preventing certain groups from participating. Felten (2013) offers a number of recommendations to generate a more inclusive

environment, including engaging with students in flexible places on campus to counter the power asymmetries of the traditional classroom, and encouraging the expression of diverse voices.

Time and Sustainability

Differences in the length of time students and staff are typically connected to a project, and issues connected to sustainability and transitions, are also potential challenges to partnership (Healey et al. 2014, Bovill et al. 2014; Marquis et al. 2016). In particular, Marquis et al. note that time as a limiting factor can contribute to other challenges—including difficulties in finding times to meet, and increased stress and uncertainty due to rushed timelines. Healey et al. (2014) recognize it takes time for students to move from being peripheral to full members of the teaching and learning community, and encourage staff and student peers to provide support and encouragement to incoming students, as they become active members within the community. Bovill et al. (2014) discuss the importance of building a planned ending to the shared aims of the partnership, a decision that may make it easier for individuals to agree to collaborate.

For further discussion on student-staff partnerships, refer to Healey et al. (2014).

Recommendations

Starting Partnerships (Bovill, Felten and Cook-Sather, 2014)

1. Create a shared set of goals and objectives from the beginning. Staff: provide students the opportunity to develop some of the objectives (Marquis et al., 2016). Understand things might not proceed as planned, so it is crucial to be patient throughout the process.
2. Staff: be attentive to the language used when communicating with the student. Students may not be familiar with academic jargon or may be from a different academic background. Try to establish mutually agreed upon modes of communication.
3. Staff: create a support system by meeting with other staff members who are interested in student-staff partnerships or have experience partnering with students. If this is your first encounter with scholarship of teaching and learning, more experienced staff can be a great support.

Building Partnerships

1. Provide rewards for those working in partnership, to encourage continued collaboration (for both students and staff) (Bovill et al., 2014).
2. Recognize the contributions students make (Marquis et al., 2016). Students may not have recognized experience, but they can offer unique, unexpected, and practical insight.

Providing rewards and encouragement can be mutually beneficial during a project.

3. Staff: provide most direction in the beginning and as the partnership progresses, become less directive (Delpish et al., 2010; Marquis et al., 2016).
4. Ensure a diverse range of participants are involved (Bovill et al., 2014). Ensure marginalized identities are represented, especially if a project concerns students' lived experience.
5. Provide further learning and development opportunities for all those involved (Bovill et al., 2014). In particular, aim to find opportunities for students to grow (e.g., attending and presenting at conferences/staff meetings, co-authoring a paper, providing ideas that help shape a project, etc.) (Delpish et al., 2010; Marquis et al., 2016).
6. Reflect on and value the process of partnership throughout the collaboration (Bovill et al. 2014).
7. Understand when and how to end partnerships formally (Bovill et al., 2014). Not all partnerships work, so it is equally important to "be honest about when partnership is not appropriate or desirable (Healey et al. 2014, pp. 9)." If students or staff have concerns during a partnership, please feel free to reach out to MacPherson for support.

Extending Partnerships (Bovill et al. 2014)

1. View the collaboration as a reciprocal relationship.
2. Staff: consider and reflect upon your own attitudes regarding power dynamics within the student-staff relationship.
3. Staff: Develop ways to negotiate and share responsibility with student co-collaborators.
4. Staff: Recognize, discuss, and be honest about where the power imbalance lies.

For more information on recommendations for student-staff partnerships, refer to Marquis et al. (2016) and Bovill et al. (2014).

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APPENDIX 2—First Meeting Document

This document is intended as a guide to follow during the first meeting of your partnership. The points listed are not exhaustive but are rather intended to get you started.

Potential Agenda Items

1. Introductions

- Begin to get to know one another professionally and personally.
- Ask questions that prompt discussion. Academic interests, experience with MacPherson, and past projects are all good topics to encourage further conversations.

2. Goals Discussion

- Discuss the short- and long-term goals of the project, including any plans for publication/presentation.
- Invite and offer additional perspectives on further or complementary directions.
- Discuss student and staff/faculty personal goals for the project. What experiences do you bring to the project? What skills do you hope to learn? What tasks would you like to complete?
- Determine what is possible in terms of tailoring work to these interests.

3. Expectations

- Discuss the expectations for all partners. Who will take on what tasks? How will you assess the project's development and success? What deliverables might come out of the project, and who will be involved in those? Is publication/presentation an option, and—if so—what is necessary for authorship credit? How much independence/autonomy will students have?

4. Communication Plan

- Discuss what tools you'd like to use for communication, completing work (e.g., particular kinds of analysis software), meetings, document sharing.
- Determine who will set up shared documents, virtual meeting spaces, etc.
- Discuss individual workflows. For example, staff may work within a strict 9-5 schedule, whereas students may be in class during the day and unreachable.

5. Schedule and Practicalities

- Discuss the work schedule. How should time be spent and when? Where can students work?
- Go over the compensation processes discussed in the orientation.
- Determine the frequency and timing of meetings and set an initial meeting schedule if possible.
- Confirm that necessary paperwork has been filled out and submitted, and that training requirements are understood.
- Introduce team members to others (e.g., MacPherson Staff) with whom they might connect on the project.

- Discuss available resources (e.g., access to software, support for conference presentation).
6. **Questions**—Take a few minutes to ask and answer any outstanding questions.
 7. **Next Steps**—Determine specific action items to be completed before next meeting.

APPENDIX 3—Further Resources

Building and Sustaining Partnership

Mejia, Yeidaly "Carrying Partnership Skills Beyond Formal Partnerships: When Conflicts Grow into Connections," *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education*: Iss. 26 (2019), <https://repository.brynmawr.edu/tlthe/vol1/iss26/6>

Elon University Center for Engaged Learning. (2013). Best Practices for Integrating Student Voices in SoTL [video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11OuxzmTGso>

Student Perspectives

Diallo, Carol L. "How Participating in Pedagogical Partnership Helped Me Grow as a Person and as a Student," *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education*: Iss. 26 (2019), <https://repository.brynmawr.edu/tlthe/vol1/iss26/7>

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Journals

[International Journal for Students as Partners](#)

[Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education](#)

[Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership, & Change](#)

[Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal](#)