

**President's Report to
McMaster University's Board of Governors
December 15, 2011**

Following the release of *Forward with Integrity*, a great deal of discussion has taken place regarding the direction of the University, our priorities and goals, and the changes and enhancements we might make to achieve them. At the Board Retreat and also at the last Board meeting in October, members of the Board expressed their keen interest in these matters and articulated a willingness to engage in discussion regarding fundamental strategic issues confronting the University. It is my intention to provide the opportunity for such a discussion at our meetings by including a section in my report which alludes to certain fundamental questions facing the University and invites Board members to consider and respond to these issues. In addition to this new section, to better align with the University priorities outlined in *Forward With Integrity*, the balance of my report will now be divided into three areas: Community, Teaching/Learning and Research.

STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

Forward With Integrity has answered the call for “differentiation” in the Ontario postsecondary system by suggesting that both our history and our current circumstances recommend that McMaster University pursue an integrated model in the future. That model assumes continuing, indeed increasing strength in research, but seeks simultaneously to effect improvement in the learning experience at all levels by translating the ethos and activities of researchers into conditions and processes fostering fruitful student learning. Everyone within the institution is understood furthermore to be united in service to the broader good of our society—not merely as defined by the government of the day, but as understood from a transhistorical and multidisciplinary perspective.

That last is an important distinction to make, because the timeframe within which a sitting government must work will obviously predispose it to define societal “good” more narrowly than would an academic, whose sense of responsibility may well begin with the immediate, but must in some way engage with the “big” questions that are abstract, ethical, timeless and theoretical. In short, while we may reasonably expect to find a consensus within the university about the role and function of institutions such as ours, it is possible we will not find that view shared by government and the general public for which government speaks.

Before we enter into discussions with our ministry about a Strategic Mandate Agreement for McMaster University, we need to have answered in our minds a number of fundamental questions: What is a university and what does it exist to do? Or, if we suspect that even 900-year old institutions can and should change, what ought a university to be, and what might it do?

Forward With Integrity leaves no doubt, I hope, that whatever might be the specific goals of McMaster at this moment in history, the overarching purpose of the University must be timeless and general: the realization of human potential. Integrity, as the letter defines it, is nothing less than absolute truth to that mission.

Beyond the university there is undoubtedly a broad consensus about the importance of postsecondary education and the institutions that offer it; but it is obvious that the prevailing conception of the university differs markedly from that which I have just described. If these are good times in which to be an educator, that is because we find ourselves owners of currency—or, perhaps, brokers of currency—in a “knowledge economy.” Governments and the public at large look to the universities to be what Martha C. Nussbaum has called “educators for economic growth.”

A number of fundamental strategic questions arise from this: What is, or ought to be, the relationship of this view of the university to the other one—that which I will call “educators for human growth”? Are they compatible, and if so, under what conditions? What are the responsibilities of university Governors in this context?

I will make some further preliminary comments with regard to these questions at the meeting and look forward to an interesting discussion. Our distinguished guest speaker, Dr. Henry Giroux, will also offer his perspective on the societal role of the university and the challenges we face, which will provide a further opportunity for reflection and discussion of these issues. A copy of Dr. Giroux’s paper, *Higher Education and the Promise of Democracy*, is included in the agenda package and I invite you to review this prior to the meeting.

CAMPUS UPDATE

Teaching and Learning

Rhodes scholar

For the first time since 2003, McMaster is home to a Rhodes Scholar. Sheiry Dhillon, a fourth year Bachelor of Health Sciences student is one of two 2012 Rhodes Scholars from Ontario and one of just 11 from Canada.

Sheiry is completing a specialization in Global Health and her research interests centre on improving access to, and quality of, health care in low- and middle-income countries. Her current projects include piloting and evaluating a trauma team training course in Georgetown, Guyana and assessing access to obstetric care in governmental hospitals in South Africa. Sheiry has also spent a semester in northern rural India completing a primary health research project for Jagori Grameen, a local NGO. She aims to carry her research interests forward while at Oxford and hopes to eventually expand her work into the realm of policy decision-making and planning.

Congratulations are also in order to Holden Sheffield, an MD candidate in the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine and Joseph Veloce, a student in the Faculty of Engineering. Both Holden and Joseph were among the 13 finalists in the highly competitive Rhodes process.

McMaster excels in student satisfaction, teaching, education, says report

The Globe and Mail released its Canadian University Report and once again McMaster leads the country when it comes to satisfied students, high-quality education and teaching.

According to the report, McMaster - described as one of "Canada's Ivy League" schools - is tops in the country in instructors' teaching style, student- faculty interaction and providing research opportunities. The University was ranked second in student satisfaction, buildings and facilities, student residences, campus atmosphere, environmental commitment, work-play balance, recreation and athletics.

The report listed the BTech, Engineering and Management and Music Cognition programs as "programs you may not know but should", and a related news story highlights fourth-year anthropology student Ana-Maria Dragomir and Canada Research Chair and McMaster Professor Megan Brickley.

Maclean's magazine released its own set of rankings, which also show that McMaster is among the top universities in the country. The University maintained its sixth spot among the fifteen schools in the medical/doctoral category, and ranked highly in terms of total research dollars, student services and overall reputation.

Convocation

Nearly 1,500 students earned their degrees at fall convocation in mid-November. Anne Golden, president and CEO of the Conference Board of Canada, received an honorary doctorate at the morning ceremony. At the afternoon ceremony Business executive and philanthropist T. Robert (Bob) Beamish received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. Beamish is the co-founder and chairman of the Woodbridge Group, an international business based in Canada that produces and supplies products to the automotive industry.

Gordon Guyatt, a professor in the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, the Distinguished University Professor Award. Guyatt coined the term "evidence-based medicine" and is a leader in developing and fostering evidence-based approaches to clinical practice.

Michael Lee-Chin, an entrepreneur and philanthropist who received his Bachelor of Engineering and an Honorary Doctor of Laws from McMaster, received the 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award for the Arts. The award recognizes his business leadership and his support of the arts, culture and education.

Gary Schrobilgen, a professor in the chemistry department and a fellow of the Royal Society, was given the Distinguished Alumni Award for Sciences. He earned his PhD in inorganic chemistry from McMaster in 1974.

Mark Tarnopolsky, a three-time McMaster graduate, also received the Distinguished Alumni Award for Sciences. His research focuses on mitochondrial diseases, an area where he has developed innovative treatments and approaches to neuromuscular disease and aging. He earned his degrees in 1985, 1988 and 1991.

Community

Marauders win the Vanier Cup

The McMaster Marauders' football playoff run and Vanier Cup win resulted in an outpouring of community support. The run also resulted in a great deal of media coverage, including on TSN and in the Globe and Mail, National Post, Toronto Star and Hamilton Spectator, among others. The Vanier Cup game was the Marauders' first appearance in a national championship since losing the 1967 College Bowl game to Alberta by a single point.

Community support was highlighted when students at the Lee Academy, named for former McMaster President Alvin Lee, wore maroon and grey to school the day the Vanier Cup game was to be played. Local media also profiled the Marauders' lucky sandwiches, which were ordered from a bakery in north-central Hamilton.

Discovery Program opens avenues between community and university

A class of 22 Hamiltonians from diverse backgrounds came together in October for an educational experience that might otherwise have seemed inaccessible to them. Through the new McMaster Discovery Program, an experimental pilot project, the adult students met at the Hamilton Public Library's central branch to take part in a free university course that helps them learn about their city and about one another.

The students, who were recruited through community organizations working in partnership with the program, spent eight Saturdays in the class, called Voicing Hamilton. The course was designed as a general introduction to humanities studies, and was presented on Saturdays to make it as accessible as possible.

Members of the first class ranged in age from their 20s to their 70s. Many have faced personal barriers to education, and all share a passion for learning. The program was to foster creativity and further learning, enriching the lives of students and their families by providing access to knowledge and enjoyment of new ideas.

Education champions introduce Crown wards to campus

Nearly 40 area Crown wards in grades 11 and 12 had the opportunity to explore campus recently as part of a program designed to introduce them to post-secondary education.

Organized by the region's Education Championship Team (an initiative of the Ontario government meant to help Crown wards succeed at college and university, McMaster's Faculty

of Social Sciences and the Student Success Centre) the session included a presentation from astronaut Dave Williams and an interactive lecture on optical design and tours of campus. The visitors also spoke with PhD candidate Matt Pachai about his experience as a McMaster student, assistant professor of sociology Sandra Colavecchia about overcoming life barriers and the Student Success Centre's Alison Pereira about following the pathway to success.

New seminar series promotes discussion about role of university

The McMaster Seminar on Higher Education: Practice, Policy, and Public Life, organized by the Office of the President, the Centre for Leadership in Learning and the Public Intellectuals Project, held its first lecture November 21. The new lecture series aims to increase discussion and dialogue about the questions and challenges facing colleges and universities.

The series kicked off with a talk by Christopher Newfield titled "Rebuilding the University: From the Innovation Economy to Craft Society". The five lectures included in the series will address many of the issues outlined in *Forward with Integrity*. Two of the talks will feature winners of the President's Awards for Teaching Excellence. The series will occur annually and organizers will accept recommendations for future speakers.

New program introduces young people to university experience with free lectures

The university experience is starting a few years early for young people who sign up for a new McMaster program called Children & Youth University. The pilot program of five free Saturday-morning lectures is aimed at students between eight and 12 years old, with the goal of educating them on appealing topics while introducing them to university life.

The interactive lecture sessions are to cover a broad range of subjects, including the human body, the importance of children, the 1918 flu epidemic, aboriginal contributions to Canada and perceptions of disability. The goal is to stimulate the intellectual curiosity of young students before they reach high school, while familiarizing them with campus. The program is available to all children, and its organizers hope it will hold particular appeal to those whose families have never been exposed to post-secondary education. The monthly lecture series runs until March 17.

Origins Institute adds another dimension to study of space

McMaster's Origins Institute recently re-opened a 3D theatre in the Michael G. DeGroot Centre for Learning and Discovery. One of the first of its kind in Hamilton, the theatre – which doubles as a lecture hall – gives community members and local students the opportunity to explore and engage with astronomy in a new way. The shows include question and answer periods with researchers and have all been nearly sold-out.

Research

Polanyi award

McMaster researcher Graham Scott has won the prestigious Polanyi prize for physiology and medicine for his work on how environmental extremes affect animals in the wild - research that could provide valuable insight on the impact of global climate change.

Scott, an assistant professor in the Department of Biology, explores how certain animals - those that are exceptionally tolerant of environmental extremes - adapt to their surroundings and the physiological systems that are key to fitness in the wild. He has studied several different species, including birds thriving at high altitudes and fish that live in various challenging environments.

Government of Canada invests \$6.7M in Canada Research Chairs at McMaster

The federal government announced the University's latest allocation of funding for four new Canada Research Chairs, an advancement of one Chair to Tier 1 status and three Chairs renewed for another term.

McMaster now boasts 62 Chairs from an allocation of 69 CRCs - the third highest allocation in Ontario and ninth in Canada.

The Chairs announced were:

Sonia Anand, Canada Research Chair in Ethnic Diversity and Cardiovascular Disease
Sigal Balshine, Canada Research Chair in Aquatic Behavioural Ecology
Brian Coombes, Canada Research Chair in Infectious Disease Pathogenesis
Tom Maibaum, Canada Research Chair in Foundations of Software Engineering
Prashant Mhaskar, Canada Research Chair in Nonlinear and Fault Tolerant Control
Yurij Mozharivskyj, Canada Research Chair in Solid State Chemistry of Responsive Materials
Ravi Selvaganapathy, Canada Research Chair in Biomicrofluidics
Tim Whelan, Canada Research Chair Breast Cancer Research

McMaster ranked among Canada's best for research

McMaster University has maintained its spot in the annual "Top 50 Research Universities", holding its rank of sixth overall in Canada and second overall in research intensity. The survey by Research Infosource ranks Canada's universities based on sponsored research income from both government and non-government sources. McMaster attracted more than \$395-million in 2010, an increase of almost \$20-million, based on financial data obtained from Statistics Canada.

The Research Universities of the Year rankings try to obtain a balanced picture of how universities perform by taking into account both financial input and research output and impact measures. The financial input measures are: total sponsored research income and research intensity. The research output and impact measures are: total number of publications, publication intensity and publication impact.

Researchers develop tools to resolve fitness dilemma for Canadians with spinal cord injuries

Kathleen Martin Ginis and a team of researchers have developed a comprehensive toolkit to be used as a resource for people with spinal cord injury, for whom finding a way to get fit can be difficult. The toolkit provides guidance on appropriate aerobic activity, how to develop a plan to get fit, sticking to that plan and how to work out safely.

Program helps nurses get research experience

A McMaster program that gives undergraduate nurses the opportunity to conduct research has received high praise from Ontario's chief nursing officer.

Debra Bournes recently lauded the pioneering efforts of McMaster's Nursing Health Services Research Unit for its one-of-a-kind Undergraduate Student Research Internship Program. The internship program offers undergraduate nursing students at McMaster the chance to be involved in research that focuses on nursing workforce and patient care issues.

The program creates opportunities for all nurses to lead their own research studies, an area many nurses shy away from despite their knowledge of patient care and the health-care system.

SOCS donate \$20,000 to cancer researchers

The Society of Off-Campus Students gave bone marrow and leukemia researchers at McMaster a boost with a \$20,000 donation to the Bone Marrow/Leukemia Research Fund during its 30th anniversary reunion.

The money is the result of nearly a decade of fundraising following the death of SOCS member James Kuss in 2001 of non-Hodgkin's lymphoblastic lymphoma, a cancer of the lymphatic system, just days before Welcome Week. The Bone Marrow/Leukemia Research fund, administered by Irwin Walker and Brian Leber in the Faculty of Health Sciences, is used for start-up research, staff education and patient care.

Worth Noting

McMaster climbs international rankings for medical schools

McMaster University jumped to 16th in an international ranking of post-secondary institutions offering clinical, pre-clinical and health programs.

The annual world ranking of universities is compiled by Times Higher Education World University Rankings in the U.K. Other Canadian universities in the top 50 for 2011-12 were McGill University (11th), University of Toronto (17th), University of Montreal (47th) and University of Alberta (49th).

The areas measured in making the ranking include teaching, which shows the learning environment; research volume, income and reputation; citations, which show research influence; industry income which shows innovation; and international outlook in students, staff and research.

Staff celebrate 25 years of service to University

Nearly 100 staff members were inducted into McMaster's Quarter Century Club at a dinner held on campus.

The staff members, from all areas of the University, represent a total of 2,425 years of service to McMaster.

After enjoying dinner with friends and colleagues at CIBC Hall, inductees were each given a gift and a personalized biography broadcast on-screen which touched on their accomplishments over the past quarter century.