

Strategic Plan 2016-2021

Vision

Working together for an Inclusive, Sustainable Greater Hamilton

Mission

McMaster University is a committed member of the greater Hamilton community and broader society and recognizes that true excellence can only be achieved when we are working together with our community partners. We are mindful of the interconnectedness of our globalized world. We value community and public engagement that is mutually beneficial, supports our academic, research, service and civic outreach missions, and collaboratively leads to meaningful outcomes and sustained actions and relationships. Regardless of the discipline, graduates of McMaster will be citizens engaged in multiple communities in multiple ways but we recognize that our relationships within the community we call home are paramount to supporting the vitality and well-being of the greater Hamilton area.

Institutional Principles of Community Engagement

1. Community engagement will be aligned with all facets of the mission of McMaster University.
2. The University will value collaborative endeavours such as research, teaching, service and advocacy activities with community stakeholders.
3. McMaster University will value working with the community for mutual benefit, build relationships based on reciprocity, trust and respect, and recognize global interconnectedness.
4. The University will respect that there are multiple definitions of “community” and that different disciplines/communities will experience, value and learn about CE differently.
5. The University will support, recognize and reward community engagement among faculty, staff, students, alumni and retirees.

Action-Oriented Principles of Community Engagement

Our Foundational Principle: Relationships Build Community

We can't have community without relationships—these are the connections that build community. Any successful partnership must be built on trusting and respectful relationships guided by integrity. We realize that relationships take time to develop and thus we commit to providing opportunities to connect people across communities, sectors, and disciplines to foster a genuine and interconnected network of colleagues to work together for an inclusive, sustainable Greater Hamilton Area. The following principles are central to our work:

1. **Reciprocity:** From design, to participation, to the outcomes of a project, we strive to work together for mutual benefit.
2. **Equity:** We are conscious of the historical and structural inequities that exist in society and strive to provide access and opportunities to all residents and members of our communities.
3. **Continuity:** Acknowledging that different communities work on different timelines and schedules, we strive to consider both the short and long-term implications of our work together.
4. **Openness to Learning:** Change takes time. We are committed to continually learn from and evaluate our work together, reflecting on and sharing both our successes and failures to grow as individuals, partnerships, and communities.
5. **Commitment to Act:** We aspire to make a positive difference in our community by sharing and acting on our knowledge to contribute to the greater social good.

Goal 1: Establish the Principles of Community Engagement as the foundation of community-campus partnerships.

Objectives:

1. Uphold both the institutional and action-oriented principles in all of our work, partnerships, and resources.
2. Embed the principles into undergraduate and graduate curriculum where it relates to community engagement.
3. Share principles across disciplines and communities to ensure that all community and University partners are aware of and can consider how to apply these principles in their partnerships.
4. Incorporate principles into the research ethics process as appropriate.
5. Encourage the adoption of principles within the University's formal and informal policies and frameworks.
6. Recognize and reward work done by faculty, staff, students, and community partners that aligns with the principles.

Goal 3: Align with neighbourhoods, community groups, governments, and institutions to partner on joint ventures and collaborative projects that respond to community-driven issues and priorities.

Objectives

1. Aspire to respond to community-driven issues and requests through collaborative approaches that align with the University's areas of strength in research, education, and service.
2. Align funding opportunities and distribution strategies with partnership development and collaborations.
3. Develop a rapid response mechanism to respond to short-term community requests.
4. Negotiate curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities with community partner priorities and projects.
5. Increase McMaster's presence as an active, collaborative, and supportive partner within the community.
6. Encourage McMaster faculty members to proactively engage with communities beyond the campus as public intellectuals by contributing their expertise and knowledge to public dialogues and action plans.

Goal 2: Build bridges between the University and the greater Hamilton community, embedding the University in the community and inviting community into the University.

Objectives

1. Improve access, navigation, and openness
 - a. To McMaster's main campus, including the use of available spaces on campus by community members and partners.
 - b. To McMaster's virtual spaces.
 - c. Between people, places, and spaces.
2. Develop a clear protocol for community engagement of which both community and University partners are aware.
3. Support regular opportunities for community-campus connections such as events that are hosted both on McMaster's main campus and at satellite campuses, as well as events hosted in community settings.
4. Explore emerging opportunities that support community-campus connections.
5. Encourage consistent use of plain language in communicating with campus and community partners.

Goal 4: Assess and learn from the outcomes and impacts of our work on an ongoing basis.

Objectives

1. Involve the Network for Community-Campus Partnerships in ongoing evaluation of and reflection on partnerships and collaborative projects to support continued learning.
2. Create an evaluation structure that considers outputs that are valued by different communities (e.g. academic publications, community action plans, strategic plans).
3. Communicate about our impact and outcomes of McMaster's community engagement initiatives:
 - a. Across all areas of the University
 - b. Across the greater Hamilton community
 - c. Nationally and globally
4. Recognize, celebrate, and reward the success of community-campus partnerships.