

Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre

2022 PARTNERSHIP UPDATE



▲ *Interim Brock President Lynn Wells (centre) accepted a community recognition award on behalf of the University at the Niagara Folk Arts Festival Kickoff Event held Saturday, June 4, 2022.*

On August 13, 2019, Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre (NFAMC) and Brock University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to solidify their continued collaboration to improve the well-being of newcomers to Canada in the Niagara region. This community academia alliance aims to address localized newcomer challenges and broader equity, diversity, and inclusion issues through a variety of interdisciplinary projects. Together they are working towards reducing barriers for diverse and marginalized communities in Niagara. The partnership represents Brock's commitments to community engagement, knowledge mobilization, experiential learning, and a mutually shared priority to foster a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Projects and Initiatives in 2022

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Research

NFAMC and Brock worked in partnership on studies and co-created research in 2022 including:

Social Isolation Among Women in Niagara

- Brock's Social Justice Research Institute worked to support a research project and the development of the project's scope and grant application led by Joanne Crawford.
- This research grant will allow Joanne to work with local community organizations like NFAMC and Tools of Empowerment for Success Niagara (TOES Niagara) to learn more about the social isolation among women in Niagara.

Service

NFAMC and Brock University supported each other in several ways in 2022 that support their shared priority of addressing challenges faced by newcomers and larger issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion through acts of service.

Initiatives included:

- Abdul Rahimi, Director of Brock's Goodman Group, served as a Director on NFAMC's Board of Directors in 2022.
- Brock staff and volunteers worked with the NFAMC to support the addition of the festival to the world heritage festival of ONIA KARA.
- Brock continues to support regional Afghan settlement efforts. The Brock Goodman Group has representation on the regional Afghan resettlement committee.



- Brock's Human Rights and Equity team created a 2SLGBTQIA+ and EDI programming support in partnership with NFAMC.
- The NFAMC supported Brock's University Secretariat's identification of candidates for Brock's Board of Directors.
- Brock was honoured by the NFAMC for its community contributions as a community partner with a community recognition award at the Niagara Folk Arts Festival Kickoff in June 2022. The award highlights Brock's efforts to assist Folk Arts' clients and enhance the multicultural centre's programs and services.
- NFAMC was one of three organizations that offered to be a volunteer mentorship organization as a part of Brock's raising awareness for National Mentorship Month in January 2022.

Student Experiential Learning

The partnership between Brock University and the NFAMC continues to provide unique opportunities for students to learn while also supporting the critically important work NFAMC does in Niagara.

Below is summary of student experiential learning opportunities in 2022:

- NFAMC hosted a practicum placement for the Political Science Internship course. They also took on one of the Faculty of Social Sciences student.
- The NFAMC and Brock's Organizational Behaviour course collaborated as Experiential Education partners. The Carousel Players project is an assessment of the workplace culture and non-financial compensation systems that help them craft compensation options reflective of a commitment to an equitable, supportive, and safe workplace.
- Dr. Liviana Tossutti, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science has worked with NFAMC in a teaching capacity when leading the course, Global Migration: Canada in a Comparative Context.
- The NFAMC took on a student as an Anti-Racism Coordinator from January to April 2022 as part of an unpaid internship.

Other

NFAMC and Brock University continue to look for ways to increase collaboration beyond research, service, and student experiential learning opportunities.

These include:

- Brock International, COSTI Immigration Services, and the NFAMC collaborated to provide programming for Brock International Students.
- Brock Athletics partnered with the NFAMC to create “The Newcomer Basketball Game” in November 2022.
- On November 28, 2022, Brock International Student Ambassadors Mateo Galindo and Stacia Jacob joined a group of fellow international students at the NFAMC to learn from staff member Zac Wang about the centre’s programs and services available to newcomers.

Next Steps

Brock University and NFAMC will continue to work closely together towards mutually beneficial outcomes in 2023. Initiatives and potential collaborations have been identified to advance the partnership between Brock and NFAMC. For example, 2023 will see Brock Creative Writing students working with Folk Arts to create a welcoming book for newcomers and their children. This also provides the potential for a collaboration with Visual Arts students as well.