

Workforce Collective and Brock University

2023 PARTNERSHIP UPDATE



Workforce Collective engaged stakeholders in a Design Lab focused on solving workforce challenges in Niagara's non-profit sector in Niagara. Brock University provided space for the event at the Brock LINC.

On September 22, 2020, Workforce Collective and Brock University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize their long-time collaboration and commitment to producing beneficial outcomes for the local community. Together they are working toward a shared commitment to help build and nurture a prosperous Niagara through initiatives that support the health, vitality and well-being of the region.

The agreement represents a mutual advantage of working together through community-based, participatory research and knowledge mobilization to better understand and address the workforce development changes and future of work in Niagara. This collaborative partnership is reflective of Brock's commitments to community engagement, knowledge mobilization, experiential learning, and their shared priority to support the economic development of Niagara.

Projects and Initiatives in 2023

Workforce Collective and Brock University share a commitment to help build and nurture a prosperous Niagara through research, knowledge mobilization, and student experiential learning to better understand and support the future of work in Niagara.

Service

Workforce Collective and Brock University supported each other with various acts of service in 2022 to address their shared priority of building and nurturing a prosperous Niagara community.

Initiatives this year included:

- Brock's Acting Vice-President, Administration, Jennifer Guarasci, serves on the Board of Directors for Workforce Collective.
- Brock provided space for two of Workforce Collective's Design Labs, which explored:
 - Workforce Challenges in the Non-Profit Sector (May 2023)
 - Early Learning and Child Care labour shortages (January 2023)
- Together, Workforce Collective and Brock assisted in facilitating the South Niagara Chamber of Commerce's Niagara Networks & Industry Collaborative event, which was hosted at Brock University (September 2023)
- Brock shared equipment and a podcast lab to support Workforce Collective to produce six podcasts

Other

Niagara Workforce Coalition

- In November 2023, Workforce Collective hosted the annual Growing Your Workforce Conference hosted by the Workforce West Boards of Ontario. At this Conference, Workforce Collective launched the **Niagara Workforce Coalition**, an effort to utilize the connections across industries in Niagara to respond to workforce challenges.
- Brock staff and students attended the Growing Your Workforce Conference, contributing to foundational conversations around workforce and employer development.
- Brock staff, including Dean of Goodman School of Business Barry Wright, Associate Director of Career Education Shane Malcolm, and Director of Brock's Centre for Sport Capacity Julie Stevens, attended and contributed to the meetings of the Workforce Coalition.

Next Steps

Brock University and Workforce Collective have collaborated on or been connected in a variety of initiatives in 2023 to support the development and tooling of Niagara's workforce. In 2024, through the Niagara Workforce Coalition, ongoing Design Lab, and group facilitations, Brock and Workforce Collective will continue these efforts.

2024 will be an exciting period of co-creating new opportunities that build on the shared goals of these two organizations. The partnership's activities in research will develop, and additional leadership, research, and work-integrated learning opportunities will be struck to best support student learning and workforce development.