

**Brock University
Faculty of Humanities**

Strategic Plan: From Priorities to Actions

September 2014

The Faculty of Humanities is

- research-intensive in its scholarship and creativity and student-centred in its teaching;
- strategically focused in its graduate expansion and interdisciplinary in its intellectual reach;
- international in its ethos and community-minded in its service.

Over the next five years, our goal is to strengthen Humanities as a comprehensive Faculty

- leading in the front ranks of research and scholarship, with recognized senior faculty and promising newer members engaging in active programs of research and creative production, supported through peer-reviewed funding;
- offering innovative courses and programs in established and emerging interdisciplinary fields at undergraduate and graduate levels;
- recruiting the best students and the best faculty available, and fostering a humane intellectual community at undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral levels; and
- taking the achievements and aspirations of the Faculty to the community at large.

Overview

We offer undergraduate programs and courses in 8 Departments:

- Classics
- English Language and Literature
- Modern Languages, Literatures & Cultures (French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish)
- History
- Philosophy
- and the departments of Dramatic Arts, Music, and Visual Arts, which are part of the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts.

We also offer programs in 5 Centres:

- Canadian Studies
- Digital Humanities (Interactive Arts & Science / Game Design)
- Intercultural Studies
- Medieval and Renaissance Studies
- Studies in Arts and Culture (part of the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts)

The Rodman Hall Art Centre is also an integral part of the Faculty of Humanities.

Our graduate curriculum includes 6 MA programs:

- Canadian-American Studies
- Classics
- English Language and Literature
- History
- Philosophy
- Comparative Literatures & Arts

and our innovative PhD in Interdisciplinary Humanities.

Teaching Accomplishments

- 1 3M National Teaching Fellow
- 3 Chancellor's Chairs for Teaching Excellence
- 1 Brock Award for Distinguished Teaching
- 1 Brock University Award for Excellence in Teaching for Early Career Faculty
- 13 Faculty Awards for Excellence in Teaching

We plan to

- acquire, mentor, and retain the best teachers to teach first-year courses and upper-year programs, and to teach and supervise at Master's and Doctoral levels;
- provide a stimulating, rigorous curriculum in both foundational and leading-edge inquiry in an environment promoting transdisciplinary thinking and hands-on learning in and out of the classroom;
- engage students and faculty in experiential, service, and online learning in local and global communities;
- offer an enhanced co-curricular experience providing students with opportunities to be mentored by faculty members and in turn to peer-mentor fellow students and develop leadership skills;
- provide opportunities for students to practise leadership, whether through co-curricular student-run organizations, outreach events, university governance, or professors' research.

Research Achievements

- 1 Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada
- 2 Canada Research Chairs in Digital Humanities
- 9 Chancellor's Chairs for Research Excellence
- numerous SSHRC grants and other external and internal research awards

We strive to create an intellectual and administrative culture that

- supports a wide range of innovative research, individual and collaborative, long term as well as shorter term, in established and emerging fields, that aspires to a high quality, and not just quantity, of productivity;
- provides opportunities for faculty members and graduate students to communicate research results to academic and public audiences through conferences, publications, performances, and other forms of engagement, bringing scholars to Brock from other universities, both national and international;
- develops international research connections and scholarly and creative partnerships;
- recognizes and rewards outstanding research, creativity, and scholarship.

Priority 1

Ensuring Brock is a preferred place to work and study

Strategic Objectives

- An engaged community for all faculty and staff
- A sense of identity and belonging for all students

Strategic Actions

Preferred place to work:

- effectively recruit and retain staff, faculty, and senior administrators
- build good employee relations in a collective agreement environment
- nominate faculty for teaching and research excellence awards – local, provincial, national

Preferred place to study:

- increase the number of undergraduate and graduate student applications, acceptances, and registrations; increase entrance averages; increase retention and graduation rates
- create enriched scholarships and bursaries for academic high-achievers
- enhance the Humanities Student Association
- promote gatherings of faculty and students outside class – e.g., revive the *Brock Porch Clubs* in an age of social media to discuss literature, culture, history, the arts, current events, and community service

Measures of Progress

- annual online student, faculty, and staff engagement survey (in addition to CUSC, CGPSS, NSSE)
- conduct Brock-specific entrance and exit polls (in addition to NSSE) to measure student satisfaction

Priority 2
Supporting Brock's undergraduate student-centred focus
while maintaining excellence in graduate education

Strategic Objectives

- Recruitment of more high-achieving students
- A high-quality educational experience

Strategic Actions

- complete the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts downtown project in 2015 to provide new, state-of-the-art instructional, rehearsal, and performance space for 500 students in the departments of Dramatic Arts, Music, Visual Arts, and the Centre for Studies in Arts & Culture
- explore establishing a common interdisciplinary first-year course
- offer a course for pre-university students (perhaps in summer)
- celebrate scholarship as early as first year; recognize and celebrate student achievement by having Chairs of departments send congratulatory letters to high-achieving first-year students
- make undergraduate students aware of graduate studies right from first year and encourage them to aspire
- increase entrance and in-course awards, bursaries, and scholarships
- integrate graduate students into Brock's culture of undergraduate education through teaching assistantships and opportunities for independent teaching
- immerse graduate students in Brock's research culture through membership in the Humanities Research Institute, with all its benefits, including financial support for their research, and opportunities to present their own work independently

Measures of Progress

- good evaluations from both faculty and students
- increased applications from Brock Humanities students with averages above 75% to graduate and professional programs
- track student success: careers, employment rates

Priority 3

Fostering excellence in research, scholarship, and creativity

Strategic Objectives

- Support of research development for faculty and graduate students
- Greater visibility of research and creative activity

Strategic Actions

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- promote Humanities research at the annual Research & Creativity Day
- hold grant-writing and grant-using workshops
- set up a website master calendar for research and creative events
- further develop the recently established *Marilyn I. Walker Cultural Leader Series* (short-term residencies for artists, directors, musicians, and designers in the fine and performing arts)
- enhance Brock's Humanities Research Institute activities
- explore new research partnerships

Measures of Progress

- showcased Humanities research at Congress 2014 (attendance over 8,200)
- renewed the research and scholarly collaboration agreement between Brock and the University at Buffalo
- awarded the first two Banting postdoctoral fellowships (including one in Humanities) at Brock
- increased attendance at research presentations & events (from 2012-13 baseline)
- increased number of high-quality submissions, acceptances, publications and presentations by Humanities faculty & students (from 2012-13 baseline)
- increased number and value of SSHRC / NSERC / CIHR / CFI grants, other external research awards, internal research awards, Humanities Research Institute grants, CRCs
- external corroboration, demonstrated achievement, public measures of success, as seen in the quality of undergraduate and graduate program reviews; quality of productions, exhibitions, performances; Common University Data Ontario, NSSE, *Maclean's*, *Globe and Mail* Report Card; distinguished alumni, testimonials
- increased donor support of our activities

Priority 4
**Serving the social, cultural, and economic well-being of the University,
as well as the local, national, and global communities**

Strategic Objectives

- Increased Humanities presence in the community
- Increased community presence in the University

Strategic Actions

- Open the new home of the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts in 2015 (moving 500 students, staff, and faculty downtown)
- engage lifelong learners, alumni, and retirees through notices and invitations to Humanities events
- build on the successful *Brock Talks* downtown, and make available in podcast
- invite distinguished alumni to speak to students
- continue the success of co-op placements for students
- communicate the value of Brock experiences to our local and global communities

Measures of Progress

- with the opening of the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts downtown in 2015, measure its impact (economic and otherwise) in the community
- attendance at events

Priority 5

Encouraging transdisciplinary initiatives

Strategic Objectives

- Effective and inspiring transdisciplinary teaching
- Innovative and exciting transdisciplinary research

Strategic Actions

- recognize the current extent of transdisciplinary work going on at Brock in Humanities
- explore the creation of a BA in Humanities
- encourage community engagement with transdisciplinary initiatives through *Brock Talks* and the Humanities Research Institute
- hold regular events to showcase interdisciplinary initiatives (e.g., poster sessions, symposia)

Measures of Progress

- increased transdisciplinary initiatives, including the establishment of new transdisciplinary institutes and programs
- increased support for transdisciplinary fields and projects under the Humanities Research Institute
- increased team-taught courses for broad, interdisciplinary, context-credit courses
- further growth in the Marilyn I. Walker Cultural Leader Series
- fostering of interdisciplinary conferences and symposia, such as Congress 2014 (attended by 8,200 registrants)

Priority 6

Promoting internationalization

Strategic Objectives

- Participation by faculty in international initiatives for teaching and research
- Involvement by students in international exchange opportunities

Strategic Actions

- promote benefits of international exchanges for students, and international collaborations for faculty; ensure better publicity about overseas opportunities, and make it easy to participate—including enhanced bursaries for students and faculty to go on overseas exchanges
- increase participation by international visitors in teaching, research and community engagement (past visitors from Belgium, Brazil, Cuba, Germany, Korea, Portugal, Russia, UK)
- enhance international residency program for visiting artists, writers, scholars (e.g., Fulbright Visiting Research Chair in Transnational Studies)
- establish institutional and individual memberships in international organizations
- build on our relationship with the University at Buffalo – e.g., enhance existing Crossing Borders conference
- explore new opportunities with other international institutions, and build networks of international exchange and collaboration
- update International blogs and testimonials by Brock students on exchange

Measures of Progress

- increase in total numbers over 2012-13 baseline of international activities by faculty and students (collaborations, research trips, students coming to Canada for Brock Humanities programs)
- increase number of visiting professorships, keynotes, cross-cultural research grants and participation

Priority 7
Practising accountability, fiscal responsibility and stewardship

Strategic Objectives

- Effective and cost-efficient use of existing resources
- Enhanced revenue generation
- Demonstrated fiscal accountability

Strategic Actions

- explore non-credit “summer camp” opportunities as revenue generators, especially once the new Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts opens downtown in 2015 (e.g., explore Royal Conservatory of Music possibilities)
- coordinate efforts to develop a Faculty-wide framework and business plan
- ramp up Spring/Summer courses and programs; coordinate efforts across the Faculty to provide a complete & coherent slate of Spring/Summer offerings
- ensure effective and timely systems for financial and student data collection and reporting to academic units
- develop and communicate a transparent and consistent budget process
- improve skills assessment, budget training, and templates for faculty/staff
- develop metrics of efficiency
- hired a Budget Officer to improve financial oversight
- reduce expenditures; generate additional revenue; rationalize our offerings

Measures of Progress

- Faculty of Humanities’ inherited deficit has been eliminated
- balanced budget going forward
- programs that fit the available resources
- living within our means as a Faculty and a University