



May 1, 2024

VPR Report to Senate #720-May 8, 2024

Internal Call for Canada Foundation for Innovation's Innovation Fund (CFI-IF)

The Canada Foundation for Innovation has released a [draft call for proposals](#) for the 2025 Innovation Fund (CFI-IF). This fund enables global leadership by supporting world-class research and technology development and enhancing the capacity of institutions to conduct research that leads to social, health, environmental, and economic benefits for Canadians.

As we await the finalized call from CFI (anticipated early June), the Office of Research Services will be administering an internal Notice of Intent (NOI) followed by an internal Expression of Interest (EOI). Consult the [SharePoint announcement](#) for details. Contact: [Tessa Mazachowsky](#) with any questions.

Interested research teams must submit the [Brock NOI Submission form](#) by email to ors-submissions@brocku.ca by 4 p.m. (EDT) on May 15, 2024.

Any updates arising from CFI's final call for proposals will be communicated to those teams who submit an NOI.

IPON Funding

Intellectual Property Ontario (IPON) announced funding for 10 postsecondary institutions across the province, with [Brock receiving \\$299,158 for a one-year project](#) that will help to build the University's capacity for commercialization. The IPON funding will support two new staff members within Brock LINC to advance commercial opportunities and research partnerships with industry, a graduate student internship, a program to support small and medium-sized enterprises with IP protection and commercialization, and collaboration opportunities with the University of Windsor and McMaster University.

NSERC Lab to Market Funding

NSERC Lab to Market funds entrepreneurial skills training for researchers and students to transform academic research to innovations ready for the market. Brock has partnered in a project led by the University of Windsor that has received first-stage funding to develop a full application. This first stage provides approximately \$40,000 in funding for Brock to hire a Research Assistant and to support pilot training programs in Niagara.

Entrepreneurship Updates

The [Navigate program and pitch competition](#) wrapped up in early April with 12 entrepreneurs pitching for two prizes. The winners were Brock students with healthcare related ideas:

- Abbie Burchell, a second-year Medical Sciences student, won \$2,500 with her pitch for Phem, a feminine hygiene product;
- Matthew Cary (BA '08, MAG '23), a part-time student with an undergraduate degree in Psychology and a Master of Applied Gerontology, won \$2,500 for his pitch for Fawkes Consulting, which aims to provide candidate selection and services for 911 dispatch telecommunication centres.

The Brock LINC & Campus Store Contest winner was selected by social media voting at the end of March. Divit Payeng, a third year Psychology student, won with their company, The Tote Store. A total of 847 votes were submitted. The Tote Store products will be available in the Campus Store in September.

Inaugural NHKI-Brock University Summer Student Research Scholar Recognized

Third-year Medical Sciences student, Milaina Wong, was recognized at Niagara Health Research Day on May 2 as the inaugural recipient of the Niagara Health Knowledge Institute/Brock University Summer Student Research Scholarship. This \$10,000 award will fund Milaina to participate in a research-focused placement with the NHKI for a period of 12 weeks between May and August.

Students Supporting ACCRU Through Presentations on Generative AI in Research

Two Brock students have been invited to present about generative AI at the upcoming Alliance of Canadian Comprehensive Research Universities (ACCRU) annual general meeting on May 23. ACCRU brings together senior research administrators from Canada's comprehensive universities to communicate and develop best practices, to share expertise and experience, and to promote and raise the profile of research at member universities.

- Sarfarozi Yunusov, a master's student in Computer Science, will present in person on "Transparency and Fairness of Generative AI" will cover his experiences with generative AI, emphasizing concerns regarding transparency (interpretability) and fairness (bias). The VPR Office is subsidizing Sarfarozi's travel, and ACCRU has waived the registration fees.
- Chimerem Amiaka, a first-year doctoral student in Applied Health Sciences, will present via videoconference due to scheduling conflicts with another conference. The presentation, "Exploring the Advantages and Ethical Dilemmas When Implementing AI in Wearable Technologies and Biomechanics" will address machine learning techniques that can be used in wearable technologies to understand and predict certain types of movements related to falls in younger and older adults.

Events and Outreach

The National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP) visited Brock University on April 15 and met with the OVPR, Brock LINC, VPMI and

CCOVI. Six IRAP Industrial Technology Advisors (ITAs) from Toronto, Oakville, Hamilton, and Niagara toured the university to learn about research assets, services, and supports for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

I attended the Ontario Council on University Research monthly meeting on April 25. In addition to debriefing on the recent delegation to France and the European Commission, key topics of discussion included Safeguarding Research, Commercialization metrics, Indigenous Data Sovereignty, and the [Declaration on Research Assessment](#).

Brock held a ceremony on April 26 at the site of [the future research farm](#) – on Merrittville Highway south of the University’s main campus – to recognize the Ontario government’s funding for the Clean Agriculture for Sustainable Production Field Infrastructure project. President Lesley Rigg, lead researchers Sudarsana Poojari and Jim Willwerth, Interim Vice-President External Meaghan Rusnell, CCOVI Director Debbie Inglis, and I welcomed Sam Oosterhoff Member of Provincial Parliament for Niagara West to the site.

On April 26, I attended the ceremonial student exchange agreement signing with NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences. I had the pleasure of meeting NHL Stenden’s President and other representatives who visited Brock. The NHL Stenden visit included a tour of the Brock LINC and the Research Impact Hub.

Fittingly on World Intellectual Property Day (April 26), the Brock LINC team and I welcomed Intellectual Property Ontario’s CEO, Dan Herman, and Senior Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Dawn Landry, for their first visit to Brock. We discussed IP strategy and supports for Brock and across the ecosystem.

The Niagara Health Research Forum took place on April 29. Brock’s external healthcare partners from across the Region gathered and participated in a system mapping exercise, sharing the major challenges they are facing within the health system and how their organization is uniquely addressing them.

On April 29, I attended the ceremony celebrating the [renewed partnership between Brock University and the Niagara Parks Commission](#). This partnership will continue to support environmental stewardship, cultural heritage, and experiential learning in our community.

M. McGinn
Acting Vice-President, Research