

VPR Report to Senate #703 - October 5, 2022

brocku.ca

Colleagues, it is a pleasure to find so many of us in the Brock community enjoying the energy of the new term, seeing and catching up with one another on campus, and learning what our colleagues have been accomplishing. As you go about your day, I hope you will catch a glimpse of new and very well designed light-pole banners on the main campus, created by Marketing and Communications in collaboration with Brock Canada Research Chairholders, that celebrate Brock's CRCs for campus members and visitors.

Among many welcome signs of activity around campus, I want especially to mention how delighted I was to attend the portrait unveiling ceremony for former Brock President and Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Gervan Fearon. Dr. Fearon was a major champion of research at Brock; through his leadership, the growth of research capacity was emphasized as one of just four key strategic priorities in the Brock University Institutional Strategic Plan.

Mitacs news

Mitacs has informed Ontario institutions that funding limitations on their provincial match component mean they cannot guarantee that placements will be filled for any applications not approved by August 28, 2022. Any pending or new applications as of that date are currently on pause, while those with letters of approval before that time are guaranteed (including those involving more than one placement unit). An explanatory letter from Mitacs is attached as an Appendix.

To the best of my knowledge, this situation is a function of a few factors, including Mitacs's success at increasing placements over the past year. This success has been mirrored at Brock, where we have seen a remarkable increase in activity and opportunity: there were as many Mitacs placements at Brock by mid-year as were made in the entire previous year. Discussions are ongoing between Mitacs and the province to find ways of extending this very successful trend of Mitacs activity in Ontario.

FMS graduate conference

On September 16, the Faculty of Mathematics and Science held a [graduate research conference](#) for Brock students. This showcase of Brock FMS graduate student work was largely led and organized by the graduate students themselves. I was delighted to attend and to see the remarkable research that graduate students are doing, and to see the important networking and community-building effects that the event had. Congratulations to the conference organizing team for their leadership, and to the advisors who helped make this a reality. I invite senators to browse and appreciate the conference website.

Canada Games research and academic report

Dr. Anna Lathrop, former Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Students, and Dr. Julie Stevens, Special Advisor have created a report on the research programming and teaching and learning programming related to the Canada Games. The report, attached as an Appendix, details the remarkable breadth and depth of themes, coordinating work, and outcomes of these research and academic projects.

Research revenue figures

The total research revenue recorded by the Office of Research Services in fiscal year 2021-22 was \$18.4M. This represents a modest 3.6% decline from the record-setting \$19.08M of the previous year and provides some grounds for optimism that the 2020-21 figure was not a dramatic outlier, but represents something of a stable trend.

Outreach and meetings

Dr. Marc Gervais, NSERC's Vice-President, Strategic, Corporate and Public Affairs, joined me with several of his colleagues to discuss [NSERC's](#) and Brock's strategic priorities on September 15. The resulting very helpful conversation emphasized the importance of continued and expanded support for fundamental research, effective EDI measures, expanding Canada's talent pool of scientifically trained graduates, ways of translating scientific discovery into impact, and sustainability.

On September 21 I traveled to the MaRS Innovation District to attend the Association for University Research Parks conference. The conference shares information and best practices regarding programs and spaces dedicated to enabling university researchers to collaborate with industry and community partners.

September 22 and 23 saw the Ontario Council for University Research (OCUR) held jointly in Waterloo and Guelph. In addition to meetings with senior staff in the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, VPRs toured the Centre for Cold Regions and Water Science at Wilfrid Laurier University, the Institute for Quantum Computing at the University of Waterloo, and the Ontario Dairy Research Centre at the Elora Research Station, operated by the University of Guelph. These three very different research facilities have highly distinctive partnership profiles and funding models, helping to shape a sense of what is possible for research investments and collaboration strategies.

T. Kenyon, Vice-President, Research