



November 7, 2023

VPR Report to Senate #714 - November 15, 2023

### **Validation Prototyping and Manufacturing Institute (VPMI) Grand Opening**

October 11 marked the [Grand Opening of VPMI](#). I joined President Rigg and other senior leadership at Brock in welcoming community partners, Brock community members, and local political representatives, including Vance Badawey, Member of Parliament for Niagara Centre, and Chris Bittle, Member of Parliament for St. Catharines, both of whom were strong supporters of the VPMI proposal from its earliest days. Enabled through funding from the Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario (FedDev), first announced in 2019, the VPMI connects industry partners with insights and competitive advantage provided by collaboration with Brock researchers and access to some of the most sophisticated biochemical analysis instruments available today.

Dr. Joshua Clarke, Lead Chemist at Destiny Copper and a Brock PhD alumnus, gave an excellent presentation on his work and on the role that VPMI plays in supporting industry partners. Dr. Clarke leads an R&D team at Destiny Copper that entirely comprises current and former Brock students. I encourage Brock researchers to explore ways of being involved in VPMI and to welcome community members to explore partnership opportunities with it.

### **Opening of Research Impact Hub, RFP 216**

The Research Impact Hub, located in Rankin Family Pavilion room 216, is the Office of Research Services' dynamic space designed to cultivate collaboration, fuel insightful discussions, and drive the awareness, conversation and uptake of impactful research. The Research Impact Hub serves as a focal point for readings, artifacts, video displays, and live presentations regarding Brock researchers and the impact their work has in the world. This bookable workspace is designed for researchers to convene, brainstorm, and advance ideas collectively or book the space for workshops, speakers, seminars, and social gatherings. It is a knowledge hub, where expertise on knowledge mobilization, research impact, and how to build research capacity is shared.

The interactive showcase of artifacts related to Brock research has tailored tours available to align with individual interests and goals. I am happy to invite researchers, the Brock community, and all external community members to visit and explore research impact. A particular invitation goes out to Brock researchers who wish to have some example of their own research impact communicated or displayed through this space; please reach out directly to Jayne Morrish ([jmorrish@brocku.ca](mailto:jmorrish@brocku.ca)) in the Office of Research Services.

### **New Initiatives at the Brock LINC**

The Brock LINC is introducing a new event to support awareness of research commercialization supports on campus. The [Idea to Impact Conference: Skills for Researchers on the Path to Commercialization](#) will be held on Thursday November 23rd. The event features academic-turned-entrepreneur Dr. Beau Standish as the keynote speaker, workshops on the different pathways to research commercialization, and the opportunity to mix and mingle with research colleagues. Faculty, students and staff are encouraged to attend.

Also in the LINC, the [Brock Student Freelance Directory](#) has officially launched. This directory aims to connect university and community partners with student freelancers for projects that are too small for a part-time job or co-op position. This provides students with an opportunity to explore entrepreneurship through freelancing. The Brock LINC has provided students with a training workshop and resources on how to be a freelancer.

### **SSHRC Canada Research Chair Tier 1 - Racial Justice and Health**

I am happy to announce this [Canada Research Chair \(Tier 1\) posting](#), as part of Brock's Black Cluster Hire initiative. The posting will remain open until December 9. This SSHRC CRC Tier 1 position is intended for a researcher whose work addresses the health and well-being of racialized populations, and in particular the social factors influencing health in Black populations, with an underlying emphasis on racial justice. Given the Chair's expertise, their research focus will prioritize social factors that underlie systemic racism and prejudice and how they intersect with health-related experiences and outcomes. Illustratively, the CRC's research could include focus on social and/or structural determinants of health that lead to inequities; or on implicit bias, stigma, and aggressions that compromise health and well-being. Transdisciplinary research that utilizes a critical and/or social justice framework to evaluate how race intersects with other socio-demographic factors to influence the health and well-being of racialized populations is a possible research area for this position.

### **Research Management System (RMS) Progress**

Alongside the ongoing RMS design and development efforts, plans for user testing have been prepared. The planned testing will involve gathering feedback from end-users (Researchers and Research Administrators) to ensure the system meets the intended requirements and functionality and provides an optimal user experience. The first phase of testing will focus on the compliance processes (Research Ethics, Animal Care, Lab Safety) and the testing period is planned to begin in December. In the coming weeks, invitations will be sent out to principal investigators, who have recently completed a previous application with a compliance component, requesting participation in pre-launch testing. This approach will enable a robust testing phase and limit the functional issues once fully launched.

The scope of participation includes re-submitting an approved study/submission for one or more of these processes and providing feedback. Beyond contributing to the Research Management System development, participants who opt in will be the first to view the new system and have their feedback influence system refinements. All participation can be completed remotely or in person, at the participant's preference, and access to system support will be available. Please express your interest in participating to RMS Implementation Project Manager, Ramsey Bediako Apau via [rbediako@brocku.ca](mailto:rbediako@brocku.ca).

### **Meetings and Outreach**

The past month has seen a range of outreach engagements, including the Ontario Council for University Research (OCUR, October 19), as well as OCUR Executive Committee (October 12), the Innovate Niagara Board (October 17) and the Niagara Economic Summit (November 1). Also taking place October 17 was a visit to Brock and tour of CCOVI and VPMI by a delegation from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, as part of their survey of science capacity in Ontario universities to support Ag and AgFood initiatives.

On October 30<sup>th</sup> the office of VPR hosted a meeting with Brock's CRC Chairholders to discuss strategic priorities and provide the opportunity for shared experiences and perspectives on the university's CRC operations and practices.

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