



Niagara Roots – Global Reach  
**Brock University Institutional Strategic Plan 2018-2025**

**Midterm Update**

December 2022

# Introduction

Brock's [Institutional Strategic Plan, 'Niagara Roots, Global Reach'](#), was released in December 2018 for the purpose of guiding the University into the future. Developed through a broad-based, full-year consultation process and approved by both the Board of Trustees and the University Senate, the Strategic Plan celebrates Brock's connection to the Niagara region and reflects Brock's advancing global reach and reputation.

The Strategic Plan focuses on identifying and achieving the University's academic, cultural, and community objectives, defined by developments and growth into a next-generation university with enhanced areas of strength, more experiential and work-integrated learning, advanced research activity, and activated community partnerships.

The Strategic Plan sets four priorities to guide planning and decision-making until 2025:

- Providing a transformational and accessible academic and student experience;
- Increasing the University's research capacity;
- Enhancing the life and vitality of communities across Niagara region and beyond; and
- Fostering a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation, and decolonization.

Associated with each priority area are goals and action items, which provide an added level of specificity.



# Tracking progress

The Strategic Plan includes a commitment that progress will be tracked annually and that a midterm report will be prepared in 2022.

Annual Performance and Overview Indicator reports for 2020, 2021, and 2022 can be found on the [Strategic Plan website](#). These annual reports provide both qualitative and quantitative data, demonstrating progress in achieving strategic plan goals as well as milestones in the pursuit of these priorities.

Performance and Overview Indicator reports are presented annually to the Board of Trustees and to the University Senate for information before being released to the broader University community.

# Structure of the midterm update

In contrast to the annual Performance and Overview Indicator reports, the Midterm Update provides more granular details on progress made at the level of the goals and actions identified in the Strategic Plan, rather than at the priority level. The Update focuses on milestones and other qualitative achievements, with quantitative data in support of the University's progress already available in the annual Performance and Overview Indicator reports.

Despite the level of detail provided in the Update, the data provided remain illustrative and are not intended to be comprehensive. New initiatives or achievements are also privileged over longstanding practices and programs that already work in support of Strategic Plan priorities.

Finally, the Midterm Update does not undertake the task of updating or re-evaluating the priorities, goals, or actions identified in the Institutional Strategic Plan. With a Presidential transition pending at the time of writing, this task is left to the new President & Vice-Chancellor, working in consultation with the Board of Trustees, the University Senate, and the broader University community.



# A shifting context

The University's ability to control its context is limited. As a result, Brock must turn to innovation, creativity, and out-of-the-box thinking to maintain and grow its place in Ontario's constantly evolving post-secondary sector.

Several events beyond the University's control have taken place since the approval and implementation of the Strategic Plan in 2018. These events include:

## The COVID-19 pandemic

- The pandemic created obstacles to the continuity of certain academic operations. While academic programs in health care and related fields were exempt from government restrictions and operated on campus throughout the pandemic, most courses, including labs and other experiential learning activities, needed significant revision and creative thinking to achieve the desired learning outcomes while operating in an online environment.
- The pandemic had a major impact on University finances, especially in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. The absence of students on campus meant that most of the University's ancillary services, including residences, were unable to operate and generate revenue at a level commensurate with historic patterns and planned targets. This resulted in significant financial losses that were largely mitigated by restraint in operating expenses including hiring controls, limiting capital expenditures, and a one-time \$7.9 million COVID-19 relief grant from the Province of Ontario.
- The loss of ancillary revenue, totaling \$22.67M for 2019-20, was added to a decrease in enrolments, especially international enrolments. While uncertainty around the evolution of the pandemic, its economic impact on families, and the forced shift to online learning affected domestic students, many international students were unable to travel to Canada to study. Those who tried to study online from their home country faced additional challenges, including time zone changes and internet access. The flow-through effects of decreased enrolment during the pandemic continue to affect University finances today.
- Finally, limitations on gatherings and public activities meant that the University could not recruit students in the ways in which it was accustomed, requiring greater efforts online instead. It also limited Brock's ability to deliver the on-campus student experience for which the University is known.
- When the fiscal year was complete, the impact of the global pandemic resulted in Brock experiencing a \$39.1M revenue shortfall in 2020-21 compared to pre-pandemic budget plans. Through careful administration of expenses, and thanks to the one-time grant from the Province, Brock mitigated these losses to balance the fiscal year with a nominal surplus.
- The effects of the pandemic will be felt for years to come in the form of changed student wants and needs, shifting competition in the sector, and increased inflation and macro-economic risk more generally.

## Shifting provincial policy


- The funding environment for Ontario’s publicly supported post-secondary institutions continues to be challenging, as demonstrated most notably by Laurentian University’s decision to seek creditor protection in 2021. While exacerbated by the pandemic, several provincial policy decisions continue to work against universities’ financial sustainability.
- On January 17, 2019, the Ontario government mandated a 10% cut to domestic student tuition, costing the university sector an estimated \$360 million. Tuition fees were then frozen at this reduced rate for two years. Despite signaling an openness to revisiting the Tuition Fee Framework following the freeze, the Ontario government extended the freeze by an additional year in March 2022.
- With tuition frozen, provincial grants on a per-student basis have continued to decline for close to 20 years. Brock’s provincial grant – that is, the funding it receives from the government per student enrolled – is currently frozen. Moreover, Brock’s grant funding has been the lowest of any university in the province as of 2017, the last year grant funding data was made publicly available. Essentially, this means that Brock is receiving less revenue than its competitors. At the time, this represented approximately \$6-7M in lost revenue (compared to Brock receiving the provincial average grant per student) to Brock.
- After having delayed the implementation of its performance-based funding framework for post-secondary institutions during the pandemic, the provincial government plans to tie a portion of institutional funding to SMA metrics beginning in the 2023-24 fiscal year, with the share of funding tied to metrics growing annually thereafter.
- Government policy decisions have increased competition between public colleges and universities, such as with the extension of greater degree-granting privileges to colleges, as well as with the announcement that colleges can offer stand-alone nursing programs.
- Government policy decisions have also supported the proliferation of private post-secondary options in the province, such as with the permission for Niagara University, a private American institution, to establish a new campus in Vaughan.

## Technological change

- The COVID disruption required Brock to be flexible and innovative in the way it runs its operations. From online teaching to working from home, the lack of general access to campus led to a reliance on virtual methods. In most cases, these innovative methods were grounded in technology. This shift to remote and technology-based operations provided an opportunity to experiment with and assess the various technologies on campus.
- Some students have come to appreciate the benefits of studying online, as have some faculty members of teaching online. The Brock community needs to re-evaluate the role of online learning in its curriculum, ensuring that we have the infrastructure and competencies we need to do it well.
- For staff, the impact of the work-from-home era is similarly lasting. As Brock continues to seek a competitive advantage in the labour market, the opportunity for eligible staff to work in a hybrid work environment ensures that Brock can remain competitive, especially given the University’s proximity to the rich human resource pool in the GTHA.
- The pandemic and the migration to online learning and a fully remote workforce has elevated the need for enhanced security frameworks, policies, and standards. Brock has been quick to respond to this new evolving landscape and continues to be diligent in monitoring and managing the risk.



**Progress reporting and  
milestones by priority area**

| Brock's Strategic Priority  | Goal  |
|---|---|
|  <p><b>Offer a transformational and accessible academic and university experience.</b></p> | <p>Deliver high-quality programs that meet the interests and needs of students and support them to achieve their potential in life.</p> |

## a. Review and renew academic programs

### Milestones and achievements:

- The University continues to conduct regular reviews of its academic programs, both through its internal quality assurance processes and through its external reviews with provincial authorities.
- In Winter 2023, Brock is scheduled to complete a full quality assurance audit, a comprehensive process that takes place once every 10 years to ensure that the University has acted in compliance with the provisions of its Institutional Quality Assurance Process as ratified by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance.
- The University continues to complete regulatory reviews and approvals as appropriate given its programs, such as with the recent accreditation by the College of Nurses of Ontario of Brock's new joint BN/MN program.
- Brock renews its academic programming through the development of new areas of study in high-demand areas. While initiatives related to Engineering and Professional and Continuing Studies figure prominently in the Institutional Strategic Plan, a number of additional programs have been developed. Some examples include:
  - the new undergraduate program in Critical Criminology;
  - the Forensic Psychology and Criminal Justice undergraduate program;
  - the Minor in Africana Studies;
  - the Interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Analytics;
  - the new specialization in Leadership, Diversity, Community and Culture through the Department of Applied Disability Studies; and
  - the PhD in Sustainability Science.

Work continues to develop new programs in Cannabis Science, Social Work, Applied Ecology, and other areas.

## b. Increase and enhance programming that leverages the distinctiveness of our region

### Milestones and achievements:

- The new Master of Applied Gerontology Program educates students to work in a high-demand area of the local economy that is primed to grow given the Niagara region's demographics.
- New programs in development in Sport Management and Therapeutic Recreation build on both regional and institutional areas of strength, and further establish Brock's position as one of the top 100 institutions in the discipline.
- Increased intake for Brock's Nursing and Teacher Education programs will help serve local labour market needs.
- Brock's new joint Bachelor/Master of Nursing program will give the University a competitive edge as the province seeks to grow enrolments in health care programs.
- The new Forensic Psychology and Criminal Justice undergraduate program includes practicum placements for students in the Niagara community.

## **c. Develop programs that meet labour market needs and are aligned with current and potential areas of growth**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Program highlights in this section overlap with those outlined for (b) above.
- Additional achievements relate to Brock's evolving Professional and Continuing Studies unit, as well as the development of industry-oriented micro-credentials through academic units such as the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute, which launched Brock's first OSAP-eligible micro-credentials related to wine- and cider-making.
- Brock's Micro-credentials Working Group meets regularly to create a community of practice for academic and administrative units pursuing micro-credentials, and to lay the policy framework to facilitate their flourishing.
- Brock launched four new co-operative education programs – Sociology, Data Sciences and Analytics, and Biology – that align directly with labour market needs and growth areas. New programs are currently under development for Cannabis Co-op, Engineering, and the MA in Political Science.
- CCEE continues to build labour market-based programs with special attention given to our nationally recognized Plus programs. The Law Plus Program welcomed its first cohort into their fourth year, which will result in the first graduating class in Spring 2023.

## **d. Map learning outcomes with careers and life skills to facilitate program renewal and development**

- Brock's Centre for Pedagogical Innovation offers proactive support to faculty members with the mapping of learning outcomes in courses and programs. Aligning learning outcomes to the Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations provides clear articulation of skills and competencies in the six areas.
- The University Senate has approved a set of work-integrated learning competencies, developed by the Co-op, Career and Experiential Education (CCEE) office, to aid students in verbalizing the skills they gained to employers.
- CCEE has worked directly with all Faculties to map and embed career development into curricular offerings. Most notably, CCEE has worked with the Faculty of Humanities and the Goodman School of Business on mapping learning goals to career competencies and skills.

## **e. Increase experiential learning and high-impact practices in all programs**


- The Office of Co-op, Career, and Experiential Education is collaborating with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement to develop an Indigenous Plus program. Modeled after the successful Med and Law Plus programs, Indigenous Plus will offer Indigenous students workplace experience in any field of interest.
- In 2021, the University was gifted a teaching lodge by the NPAAMB, an Indigenous community organization providing training for Indigenous youth. The teaching lodge was birthed in the summer of 2022 and can now be used Indigenous experiential teaching.
- Brock successfully secured grants from Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL) to support over 1,750 students through funding of over \$600,000.
- CCEE and CPI collaborated to support over fifty Teaching and Learning Innovation Grants in Experiential Education to provide additional financial, logistical, and pedagogical support to instructors as they integrated experiential learning into their curricula. Each year, the University contributes \$30,000 towards supporting innovation in experiential education.



## **f. Improve and enhance pedagogical support and development opportunities for staff and faculty**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- The Centre for Pedagogical Innovation has played a critical role in facilitating online learning throughout the pandemic, including training thousands of instructors, course coordinators, and teaching assistants to assist them pivot their courses quickly.
- CPI continues to work with Faculties to develop customized professional development opportunities specific to the needs of academic units, including course and program curricular support.
- The Instructor Certificate Program was created in 2022 to meet the growing needs of instructors requiring complex professional development support including Instructional Design, Assessment & Evaluation, Educational Technologies, Inclusive Teaching, and Reflective Practice.
- Fulfilling a 2015 Senate recommendation, Brock hired its first Indigenous Educational Developer (IED) in 2021. Working out of CPI, the IED assists instructors with Indigenizing their curriculum and pedagogy. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement is working with the IED to develop training on the basics of Indigeneity, decolonization, and reconciliation for faculty and staff.

| Brock's Strategic Priority  | Goal  |
|---|---|
|  <p><b>Build research capacity across the university</b></p> | <p>Nurture a culture of research and creative excellence.</p> |

## a. Integrate research, knowledge and creative values into policy, governance, and administration

### Milestones and achievements:

- A significant amount of research at Brock has global reach and impact. For example, there have been a series of successful research projects into COVID-19, including:
  - Health behaviours of youth and adolescents
  - The impact of COVID on youth wellbeing and mental health
  - Understanding how our bodies react to COVID and other viral infections
- The University has developed a fiscal framework and budgeting process for resource allocation that appropriately reflects the importance of research to Brock's mission, including the incorporation of research as a priority in the revised Fiscal Framework in 2022.

## b. Grow application rates, success rates and overall income for grant applications

### Milestones and achievements:

- An action plan has been developed to increase grant application rates, based on Faculty and departmental strategic plans. Milestones so far have included the launch of the Research Initiative Award, the launch of the matching request portal, and the increased availability of contract grant writers to facilitate large grant writing support.
- The Building Better Research series, launched in 2020, provides mentorship and support to those applying for grants.

## c. Enhance recruitment of excellent graduate students, post-docs and visiting scholars

### Milestones and achievements:

- Steps have been taken to regularize and streamline the post-doctoral appointment process, including the creation of a joint IT/HR role.
- A guidance document on the post-doc appointment process has been designed and made available through the ORS SharePoint site.
- Despite COVID pausing activity temporarily, Brock has rebounded, welcoming 37 visiting scholars to date in 2022, representing 25 countries.

## d. Connect research and scholarly activities to global issues


### Milestones and achievements:

- In 2022, Brock saw two successful DFATD Faculty Mobility for Partnership Building Program proposals receive approval, allowing for two Brock faculty to travel to Jamaica.

## e. Expand undergraduate research opportunities

### Milestones and achievements:

- The Building Better Research seminar and workshop series, offered by the Brock Library and ORS, is available to undergraduate students. The series provides current and timely support in a complex and evolving research environment to promote a culture of research and research excellence.
- The research enterprise promotes, develops, and administers external funding opportunities for undergraduates, such as Mitacs Accelerate and NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards
- Internal funding programs support opportunities for undergraduates to be involved in research projects. These programs have included: Match of Minds, Explore grants, Canada Games Grants, Indigenous Research Grants.
- ORS staff work with Brock researchers when developing grant to include undergraduate participation in research projects.

| Brock's Strategic Priority  | Goal  |
|---|---|
| <br><b>Build research capacity across the university</b> | Invest in research infrastructure and support to ensure sustainable and accessible research services for the Brock scholarly community. |

## a. Identify and invest in strategic initiatives with the potential to enhance Brock's research intensity

### Milestones and achievements:

- Brock secured a \$5M investment from the federal government's FedDev program to launch the Brock-Niagara Validating, Prototyping and Manufacturing Institute (VPMI), which will enable area businesses to access the University's researchers, expertise, and advanced technology.
- The Brock LINC opened in 2018 as a new centre for innovation, research, and entrepreneurship on campus. Programming developed by the LINC is available both to those in the University community, as well as to businesses and individuals outside the University.

## b. Integrate research and experiential education, in part through the LINC

### Milestones and achievements:

- The LINC collaborates with a number of academic units, including the Centre for Sport Capacity in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, the Faculty of Math & Science, the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Cool Climate and Oenology Viticulture Institute (CCOVI), and the Centre for Digital Humanities to facilitate experiential education opportunities.
- The LINC collaborates with CCEE on an ongoing base and has successfully supported the launch of entrepreneurial co-op programs and awards.

## c. Invest strategically in major research tools and infrastructure


### Milestones and achievements:

- In 2019, the Brock University Library launched Omni, a new shared Library Services Platform coordinated by the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL). The system has expanded access to print collections for students and researchers, who now have access to over 23 million print books across 16 university libraries in Ontario.
- The Library’s acquisitions budget has increased roughly 40% over the course of the Strategic Plan, in line with the Fiscal Framework. This investment has provided much-needed support for digital information resources (e.g., journals, e-books, data, GIS) in support of Brock research.
- The Faculty of Math & Science continues to purchase specialized equipment in support of its researchers, including advanced instruments for physics research and new milling equipment for the University’s machine shop.

## d. Increase internal research funding supports and small grants

### Milestones and achievements:

- A number of internal research funding supports and small grants have been established or expanded. These include:
  - Postdoctoral research support
  - Research Initiative Awards
  - VPR Matching (CIHR, SSHRC, NSERC, other grants) and discretionary funds, as administered through an online portal
  - Indigenous Research Grant
  - VPR Canada Games Grant
  - Grant-writing support for major program applications
  - Equipment/infrastructure matching funds
  - Open access publishing support funds
  - Support for additional research time for faculty time through course releases
- The Faculty of Social Sciences added a Strategic Funding Initiative Research Assistantship to support students in gaining new experiences and opportunities while also supporting faculty members’ research.

| Brock’s Strategic Priority  | Goal   |
|---|--|
| <br><b>Build research capacity across the university</b> | Enhance transdisciplinary research and high-impact research practices. |

## a. Support collaborative research activity

### Milestones and achievements:

- Brock increased long-term support for transdisciplinary research institutes. For example:
  - the Lifespan Development Research Institute has been provided with funds from the Vice-President, Research’s “Building Capacity” Initiative to support micro-grants among collaborative research teams;
  - the Social Justice Research Institute has been provided funds from Community Engagement Research Grants and Research Seed Grants; and
  - the Brock-Niagara Validation, Prototyping and Manufacturing Institute has been provided with funds to support their NSERC funded communication project.
- ORS created the “Next Big Thing” platform to support transdisciplinary team building for major projects.

## **b. Build on experience of transdisciplinary research**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Brock continues to develop and improve a model for sustainable research institutes based on the experiences of the transdisciplinary (TD) hubs. Two examples include the Brock-Niagara Validation, Prototyping and Manufacturing Institute (VPMI), and the Centre for Vector-Borne Diseases.
- Brock is also looking to apply its experience from the TD hub model to expand to other areas and projects. For example, several collaborative research-community-practitioner groups received eCampus Ontario grants last year to develop virtual learning strategy materials, a multi-institution microcredential on knowledge management/mobilization, and a multi-site textbook on driving change in healthcare.

## **c. Enhance transdisciplinary, impact-focused, and problems-based research**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- As described above, there has been increased long-term support for transdisciplinary research institutes and an expansion of the number of institutes.
- Brock's Department of Engineering was developed as a program with a work-integrated learning and problems-based approach to address four key themes: feeding the world; shaping the future; connecting the world; healthy communities.
- Brock's Co-op, Career and Experiential Education office works across all Faculties to provide students with hands-on opportunities to provide services, including research, to partner companies and organizations.
- To support an enhanced focus on impact and real-world problems, there has been a continued integration of authentic knowledge exchange across units. For example, Research Enterprise staff support four research-oriented community engagement committees (e.g., youth, parent, teacher, and older adult committees, who meet with researchers regularly throughout the year to provide input and feedback on research and knowledge mobilization).

## **d. Develop and promote areas of strategic focus on research**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- In 2019, Brock refreshed the 2006 CFI Strategic Research Plan to promote alignment among research capacity and infrastructure, areas of excellence, recruitment of scholars and graduate students, and capacity for Brock research to have high impact through uptake, partnerships, commercialization, and collaborations.
- Four strategic research goals were defined to build research capacity across the University:
  - Nurture a culture of research and creative excellence.
  - Invest in research infrastructure and support to ensure sustainable and accessible research services for the Brock scholarly community.
  - Enhance transdisciplinary research and high impact research practices.
  - Build awareness of Brock University as a centre of research excellence.
- Four themes were identified:
  - Cognition, creativity, and culture
  - Health, sport, and performance across the lifespan
  - Society, well-being, and social change
  - Environment, bioproducts, and physical systems



### Build research capacity across the university

Build awareness of Brock University as a centre of research excellence.

## a. Promote awareness of Brock as a destination for grad students and post-docs

### Milestones and achievements:

- Recipients of Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships receive a research stipend of \$7,500 annually for two years.
- Beginning 2021-22, the VPR Postdoctoral Fellow Grant program provides every full-time PDF with a one-time \$5,000 research grant. This serves as a recruitment incentive for PDFs globally.
- The University continues to produce regular media coverage through the Brock News and its social media accounts highlighting the successes of researchers, including graduate students.
- The Faculty of Humanities has launched Foreword, a podcast that introduces the audience to FOH researchers, including faculty members and graduate students, and their research.

## b. Enhance international research activity and partnerships

### Milestones and achievements:

- Brock's Office of Research Services (ORS) works closely with Brock International to facilitate connections to and support international research activities.
- ORS promotes research and training programs, such as Mitacs GlobalLink, supporting international research opportunities.
- Brock International and the Faculty of Education are currently working on three projects in St. Vincent and the Grenadines funded by the World Bank to support in-service teachers in the public sector.

## c. Create practices for the recognition of scholarly accomplishments

### Milestones and achievements:

- The Faculty of Applied Health Sciences has created senior research fellowships, which provide long-term course research for faculty members who are highly active in research.
- Several Faculties provide course release to recognize significant graduate mentorship and success in external research grants, as well as annual research awards to recognize outstanding researchers.
- ORS facilitates nominations to external awards and major research honours for researchers.
- Brock has enhanced its annual research celebration event.
- The Office of Research Services has organized and held Celebration of Research events to honour and showcase researchers and their work.
- Internal awards recognize research excellence. These include the Chancellor's Chair for Research Excellence, and the Early Career Research and Creative Activity Award.
- The Faculty of Social Sciences launched an interdisciplinary symposium series showcasing faculty and student researchers from across the University. The first symposium focused on the theme of mental health, the second on social justice and community collaboration. The third focuses on movement and mobility.

## **d. Facilitate global knowledge exchange through international symposia**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- A number of international research symposia are hosted by faculties, departments, institutes, and units. For example:
  - Lifespan Development Research Institute international speaker series
  - Social Justice Research Institute research events
  - Faculty of Social Sciences symposia
  - Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) hosted the 10th International Cool Climate Wine Symposium
- The VPR supports many of these Brock-hosted conference through discretionary funds.

## **e. Highlight the global impact of our research and scholarly activities**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- The Office of Research Services has a dedicated Research Communications and Media Relations Specialist to highlight and promote Brock research through The Brock News and other media outlets.
- Brock continues to collaborate with The Conversation to profile and promote Brock research.
- Brock supports ongoing media training across researchers and students.

## Brock's Strategic Priority

## Goal



**Enhance the life and vitality of our local region and beyond**

Increase and enhance enriching opportunities for our students, alumni, faculty, and staff to engage with the community.

### **a. Establish a mechanism to create and sustain long-term community partnerships**

#### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Brock has signed numerous MOUs and MOAs with important community partners and partners hosting students for experiential education, including Niagara Health, Niagara Public Health, YMCA Niagara, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sport organizations, etc.
- Brock has advanced the development of 16 institutional Memorandums of Understanding with community partners in the health care, education, environmental, social services, government, and transportation sectors. With a strategic imperative to build a stronger and more vibrant community, we continue to engage and partner with key allies in the region and beyond to better serve community needs through reciprocal partnerships, including the Halton region ahead of the relocation of Brock's satellite campus to increase connections with the growing Golden Horseshoe community.
- Through various community-engaged units, including its research centres, Brock is engaged in offering services and activities for the local community, and especially for marginalized members of the local community (e.g., physical activity and health programming for marginalized seniors through the Centre for Health and Well-being; programs for autistic, disabled, and mentally challenged populations through the SNAP and CHARM programs).
- Student Life maintains over 120 community partnerships with local organizations in the broader community.
- The Municipal Town and Gown Committees maintain strong partnerships and bilateral lines of communication with the cities of St. Catharines and Thorold.
- As a result of the Canada Games Academic initiative, the Brock University Volunteer Association (BUVA) was formed in order to create a formalized student volunteer club that would serve as a model for the Canada Summer Games and for future University-community engagement projects and initiatives. Matching students and community partners, BUVA increased a spirit of service through peer-to-peer mentorship, professional development sessions, and social activities. 408 Brock students volunteered at the Canada Summer Games.

### **b. Encourage and enhance community use of University services and facilities**

#### **Milestones and achievements:**

- The campus is increasingly accessible to the local community following two years of pandemic closure. Services include conferences, hosting community groups, day camps, fitness classes, etc.
- Brock secured a commitment from Metrolinx to expand GO Bus service directly to campus. This increased access to better public transit connections by opening Brock's campus up as a connection hub for Metrolinx's new GO Bus service and local transit.
- Brock's Archives and Special Collections have acquired significant donations of cultural property with a focus on the history of the Niagara Region. One of the highlights is the Alexander Hamilton Collection, which was donated in 2020 and is recognized as nationally significant by Heritage Canada.
- In the Summer of 2022, Brock was a key contributor in hosting the Canada Summer Games in the Niagara Region. Brock hosted several of the events and hosted the Athletes' Village, which had 4,680 guests stay in residence buildings



on campus. The Canada Summer Games is two weeks of competition that occurs every four years and includes athletes from all every province and territory. The legacy facilities, located on campus, will continue to be operated jointly by partners including Brock and remain open to community activities.

- The Brock campus hosted a number of sports, including rugby sevens, swimming, diving, and cycling. It also provided the training facilities for basketball, soccer, rugby sevens and volleyball.
- With the residences serving as the Athletes’ Village, the Rankin Family Pavilion was also used as the Village Services Centre. The Goodman atrium provided mission offices for coaches and social gatherings, while the Pond Inlet became the common lounge for athletes.
- Over 117,500 meals were served to delegates and guests, in addition to over \$100,000 in retail dining sales through food outlets on campus.
- Brock was active in sponsorships, providing a branded welcome package to all athletes that included a commemorative pin and recruitment materials. Brock leaders presented medals at wrestling, beach volleyball, and rugby sevens events.
- Each year, over 21,000 youth attend programs at Brock University offered by Brock Sport and Recreation, including school day and overnight programs, swimming lessons, physical activity, leadership and sport development programs, and a multitude of camps. Many youth are accompanied by a guardian or a teacher, who experience the expertise of Brock University student and staff leaders.
- Numerous sport-based competitions are held in the pool, on the fields and in the gymnasias, exposing students of all ages from across the Niagara Region and the province of Ontario to Brock University.

| Brock’s Strategic Priority  | Goal  |
|---|---|
|  <p data-bbox="167 1037 532 1098"><b>Enhance the life and vitality of our local region and beyond</b></p> | <p data-bbox="630 1031 1239 1060">Support regional economic, social, and cultural vitality.</p> |

## a. Support entrepreneurship, commercialization, and innovation

### Milestones and achievements:

- The Brock LINC functions as a hub for entrepreneurship on campus, hosting activities for both internal and external stakeholders.
- The Brock University Library opened the Makerspace and Digital Scholarship Lab in 2020, fostering creativity and curiosity through engagement with technology and new digital methods. Both initiatives encourage innovation by making new tools and technologies accessible to the community.
- CCEE, the Faculties, and the Office of the Vice-President, Research support grants for students to pursue an entrepreneurial work-term for their co-op work experiences.

## b. Increase access to programs that will increase the employability of students

### Milestones and achievements:

- The University has advanced the development of a new Department of Engineering. The Department of Engineering will support the economic vitality of the region by being responsive to local needs while increasing the engineering capacity in the region and furthering the employability of students.
- The intake for MedPlus was doubled in order to ensure access for more students looking to enter the field of medicine.
- The LawPlus Program was established in order to ensure a path for students who are looking to enter into Law school upon graduation.

- Fit Link was established to ensure students looking to enter into rehabilitation services could more easily bridge into careers.
- Offering hybrid, flexible access to all career education programming has allowed for students to engage with employability coaching and access to employers and industry.
- Brock launched a non-weight-bearing credit called “Work Experience” that would allow all students to access a four-month paid work-integrated learning experience. This program will continue to grow to increase access for all students to a “co-op-lite” experience which will increase their employability and skill development.

## **c. Co-create knowledge of local and global opportunities and challenges in partnership with our communities**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Like many academic programs, the Master of Applied Gerontology was developed in consultation with the community to ensure that graduates have the knowledge and skills to serve the needs of local industry.
- Brock works closely with the provincial government to develop academic programming in areas of need, such as the expansion of enrolments in Nursing and Teacher’s Education.
- The Niagara Community Observatory is currently undertaking two projects funded by the Ontario Agri-Food Research Initiative to help strengthen Ontario’s industry. The NCO has also recently released policy briefs relating to issues of local importance such as safe and affordable housing for women, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural sector and on remote work.
- Brock is an active participant in Niagara Adapts, a partnership between Brock’s Environmental Sustainability Research Centre and seven Niagara municipalities to address climate change.
- The Indigenous Research Grant has funded a number of projects in partnership with local and national organizations working to address relevant challenges:
  - Drs. Liam Midzain-Gobin and Joanne Heritz are working on a study on affordable housing with the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre.
  - Dr. Connie Shumacher is working with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to examine health data collected from the community.
  - Dr. Kevin Turner is working with Indigenous communities near Old Crow, Yukon to document climate change.
  - Dr. Sheila O’Keefe-McCarthy is working with Indigenous communities in the Niagara region to explore Indigenous-specific early warning signs of heart attack.
  - Dr. Liette Vasseur is working with Plenty Canada to identify Indigenous plants along the Laura Secord trail.



**Enhance the life and vitality of our local region and beyond**

Enhance engagement with Indigenous communities in the spirit of reconciliation.

## a. Build a welcoming and respectful environment on and off campus

### Milestones and achievements:

- Brock has undertaken a review of its Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy (RWLEP) to incorporate lessons learned in the application of the policy and to ensure that it continues to serve the needs of the University community.
- Brock has recognized September 30, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, as a non-instructional day, allowing Indigenous students, staff, and faculty to be with their families and communities on this day.
- Brock University offers an array of extra-curricular Indigenous programming that makes the campus welcoming to Indigenous peoples. These include:
  - Cultural teachings, such as beading, drum making, and dot painting;
  - Teachings led by Indigenous Elders and other knowledge carriers;
  - The Decolonial Reading Circle, which offers guided discussions of the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and other Indigenous content; and
  - The annual installation of the ReDress project and commemoration of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
- Brock University flies the Two-Row wampum flag as one of its core flags and has an official land acknowledgement that is recited during meetings and events.
- Brock University has pursued the strategic hiring of Indigenous faculty and staff to increase Indigenous presence on campus which, in turn, makes Indigenous students more likely to come to and stay at Brock.
- Brock University welcomes Indigenous ways of knowing and being into its institutional culture:
  - Traditional Indigenous openings are offered at major events (i.e., convocation, welcome day) and meetings;
  - Brock University is home to a traditional Anishinaabe teaching lodge, gifted to us by Npaamb;
  - The current BUFA collective agreement treats Indigenous knowledge as equivalent to a Ph.D.;
  - Brock University regularly hosts events that feature Indigenous knowledge carriers and Indigenous ways of knowing and being;
  - Brock courses offer Indigenous land-based learning opportunities;
  - Indigenous languages (i.e., Mohawk, Cayuga, and Anishinaabemowin) are taught;
  - Brock University has a healing garden that features key Indigenous medicines; and
  - Smudging is permitted on campus.
- With the hiring of our new Director, EDI Culture & Education in Human Resources, HR is exploring ways to include Indigenous ways of knowing and doing into our employment practices.
- Human Resources is working to build a program that will see 'EDI champions' in every unit on campus, who will work together to help identify, implement, and measure EDI-related programming.

## **b. Promote two-way dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- The Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement was created to lead Indigenous initiatives at Brock and to help increase the University's interactions with local Indigenous communities.
- The Aboriginal Education Council has been created as an advisory committee to the President on Indigenous issues and institutional relations with local Indigenous communities.
- The Two Row Council has been created as an advisory committee of Senate on Indigenous issues.
- The Decolonization working group of PACHRED (President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity and Decolonization) was created to advise the President on decolonization, Indigenization, and reconciliation.
- Brock has committed financial sponsorship to key Indigenous community events, including the annual FirstOntario PAC's Celebration of Nations and Niagara Regional Native Centre's Pow Wow.

## **c. Enhance programming and research that promote the understanding of Indigenous cultures and histories**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- The Office of the Vice-President, Research has launched the Indigenous Research Grant, which offers up to \$7,500 to help researchers develop their research programs and creative activities so they can apply for Tri-Council funding. Projects led by or undertaken in partnership with Indigenous communities are given priority.
- The Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement is collaborating with the University Senate to define Indigenous learning outcomes for academic programming at Brock.
- The University and the Faculty Association agreed on a cluster hire of Indigenous faculty members to increase the contingent of Indigenous faculty members on campus.
- An Indigenous educational developer has been hired within the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation to assist instructors with Indigenizing their curriculum and pedagogy.
- The Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement is collaborating with the Indigenous educational developer to create training for non-Indigenous staff and faculty on Indigeneity, decolonization, and reconciliation.
- The Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement launch the annual Decolonial Reading Circle (DRC) in 2017. Open to all Brock students, faculty, staff, and community members, the DRC operates between September and April. It consists of two circles that collectively read and discuss Indigenous content: the first circle focus on the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the second focuses on content (articles, books, films) created by First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.
- Since 2018, Brock University has hosted an annual installation of the ReDress project and hosted public events raising awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.



**Enhance the life and vitality of our local region and beyond**

Cultivate outstanding relationships with our alumni starting with their earliest interactions with the University.

## **a. Enable graduating students to transition to active alumni status**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Re-design alumni celebration events during Convocation to include 'Alumni Alley', where graduates can celebrate with friends and family and also receive alumni network information, update addresses, etc.
- Re-imagine key alumni connection points, including Homecoming and the Alumni Awards program, to emphasize meaningful engagement and interactions.

## **b. Enhance outreach to alumni and develop new ways to get involved in campus life**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Expanded opportunities for alumni to come together and connect with students, including mentorship opportunities, speaking at events, or participating in surveys or forums.
- Create new on-campus events (particularly during Homecoming) to welcome alumni back on to the campus, with an emphasis on using new campus infrastructure (e.g., Canada Games Park) as a venue.
- Continue to support off-campus events, including the Steel Blade Classic and the Niagara Grape and Wine Festival, to invite hundreds of alumni back to the Region.

## **c. Celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Implemented a more robust content strategy across Brock platforms and externally to highlight alumni success, including the Alumni Profile series on the Brock News and a redesigned SURGITE alumni magazine with a new editorial focus on alumni success and connection to Brock.
- Re-designed the Alumni Award program to emphasize outstanding accomplishments of honourees and featuring a deepened pool of nominees.
- Submit a number of alumni nominees for consideration for a variety of awards, including for consideration to receive honorary doctorates.
- Hold a series of workplace events hosted by the President and by corporate leaders in organizations that employ a high percentage of Brock graduates.

## **d. Build experiential learning, research, and community engagement partnerships with alumni**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Worked in partnership with Co-op, Career, and Experiential Education to broaden employment opportunities for current students via alumni connections.
- Launch the Alumni Business directory to connect students, community and alumni.

## Brock's Strategic Priority

## Goal



**Foster a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation, and decolonization**

Strengthen relationships of trust with Indigenous communities and partners across all sectors and activities of the University.

### **a. Enhance recruitment and supports for Indigenous, international, and first-generation students**

#### **Milestones and achievements:**

- The Indigenous Scholarship Award in the Faculty of Math & Science supports the recruitment of Indigenous students at all academic levels.
- The Faculty of Applied Health Sciences has created an Anti-Racism Taskforce (ART) led by the Associate Dean and consisting of students and faculty who identify as BIPOC or as allies to develop immediate action plans to make FAHS a more welcoming and supportive environment for BIPOC students.
- In 2021, Brock created 25 Black or Indigenous Heritage Student-Athlete (BIHS) bursaries, which provide up to \$2,000 in support for student athletes who demonstrated financial need.
- CCEE and Hadiyadagénhahs First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Centre have launched Indigenous Plus, a four-year co-curricular program that supports Indigenous students throughout their academic programs and bridges their learnings and skills to various industries.

### **b. Recruit outstanding students from Niagara and from diverse regions and background from around the world**

#### **Milestones and achievements:**


- With strategic funding from the President, Provost, and Vice-President, Research, Brock created the Horizon Graduate Scholarships, which allocate \$5,000 annually to 10 recipients. The Scholarships were designed to help ensure that Brock attracts stellar researchers and students from various fields while building a diverse and inclusive University community.
- The Niagara Principal's Scholarship is awarded annually to two students per local high school (at the recommendation of school principals) aimed at retaining high-achieving students in the region.

### **c. Enhance programming for under-represented and marginalized groups**

#### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Learning Services' Ontario Postsecondary Access and Inclusion Program (OPAIP) project focuses on the retention of students who typically face challenges transitioning to and persisting at Brock University. Initiatives include opt-in peer-led and course-embedded academic and life skills events, as well as one-to-one referrals for more extensive coaching support from a learning specialist. Since 2017, over \$1.65M in funding has been secured for these student support initiatives, including a three-year grant of over \$850,000 awarded in 2022.

- Other examples of relevant programming include:
  - Brock participation in and programming dedicated to Orange Shirt Day, REDress, Pride Week, Black History Month, etc.
  - EDI-oriented programming through HRE and the Student Justice Centre
  - Culturally responsive training programs for TAs, Marker/Graders, and Lab Leads through CPI
  - CPI/HRE Intercultural Certificate on the learning management system
  - Islamophobia prevention events through PACHRED

| Brock's Strategic Priority   | Goal  |
|--|---|
|  <p><b>Foster a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation, and decolonization</b></p> | <p>Promote effective human resource practices and philosophies that improve inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation, and decolonization.</p> |

## **a. Ensure that structures serve the values and strategic priorities of the University**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Creating the Director of EDI Culture & Education role in Human Resources to provide innovative vision and leadership for the development, coordination, and implementation of administrative and educational institutional initiatives to advance Brock University's equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) goals.
- Brock has signed onto the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Flourishing.
- Brock is adopting recommendations from the Black Community Forum at Brock (BCFaB) and PACHRED's anti-racism subcommittee, including implementation of the Dimensions Program EDI plan to engage a Black faculty cluster hire.
- A formal review of the Employment Equity Policy is underway, which will ensure alignment to the University's strategic priorities and goals.
- A review of the Mentorship Program lead by HR is exploring how the program can ensure greater participation from equity-deserving groups in both mentor and mentee roles, to introduce new ways of thinking and challenge limiting assumptions.

## **b. Provide EDI training for search committees**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Unconscious bias training is provided via HRE for all search committees on campus, including CRC search committees.

## **c. Broaden the scope of training programs for new and continuing Chairs and Directors**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Human Resources and the Office of the Provost worked together to enhance the new faculty orientation process and the onboarding provided to Chairs and Directors.
- Several academic leaders have participated in two leadership development programs introduced in 2021, which help to identify and support emerging leaders and increase institutional leadership capacity.
- The Faculty of Social Sciences has initiated a pilot project that provides professional development funds for Chairs and Directors to attend leadership conferences

## **d. Use recommendations from the HRTF, including a workplace climate survey and an equity census**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Brock continues to implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Task Force.
- A campus climate survey was completed in collaboration with Rankin & Associates in 2020.
- A demographic census of the Brock community is planned for 2023.
- Brock promoted kindness in order to create a welcoming campus environment through a year-long initiative offered by HR, “Making Kindness the Norm”. This initiative is a campaign developed by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation with a theme each month, such as mindfulness, kindness, gratitude and self-awareness inspiration.

## **e. Coordinate the efforts of PACHRED across campus**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- PACHRED continues to operate as an advisory committee to the President, with student, staff, and faculty participation in a number of sub-committees.
- Dedicated administrative support for PACHRED through the President’s Office was provided beginning in 2021.
- PACHRED is developing an appreciative inquiry into what EDI practices, insights, and activities are occurring within departments and divisions.
- PACHRED executive members have assisted senior leadership with defining approaches and commitments to implementing the Scarborough Charter.

## **f. Foster internationalization so that students from around the world feel welcome**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- An Intercultural Certificate Program was developed and offered online, with 141 certificates.
- Brock has developed an open educational resource on intercultural awareness and competence, making it available to other institutions in the province through E-Campus Ontario.



## **g. Recruit and retain a diverse group of outstanding staff**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Brock was named as one of Hamilton-Niagara's Top Employers for the third time in a row and the fourth time overall in 2022.
- Employees continue to be supported through the Employee Wellbeing Framework developed by HR, including expanding access to the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) to all Brock employees, work-life balance resources, and offering wellness programming and The Working Mind manager and employee training sessions virtually.
- Brock University will hire four new Indigenous faculty members, continuing work towards its goal of fostering a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation, and decolonization. The new positions align with Brock's strategic priorities, which include the strengthening of relationships with Indigenous communities and partners across all sectors and activities of the University.
- Brock University, in partnership with the Brock University Faculty Association (BUFA), will hire a group of 12 Black faculty members and/or professional librarians as part of its continuing efforts to increase diversity and foster a culture of inclusivity on campus. The cluster hiring of 12 scholars will begin in 2023.

## **h. Develop ongoing training and expand programs for professional development**


### **Milestones and achievements:**

- Human Resources has launched a mentorship program for staff and faculty, matching peers to facilitate career development.
- Flagship leadership development programs, such as 'Emerging Leaders' and 'Leading at Brock', had 100% participation rates in 2021, with a waiting list for entry into the 2023 cohort.
- In 2022, Brock launched a pilot to explore options to expand leadership development offerings. The pilot is conducted in partnership with HarvardManage Mentor and will be available to graduates of Brock's two leadership development programs.

## **i. Continue to provide competitive offers of employment, compensation, and benefits**

### **Milestones and achievements:**

- An external review of the compensation program for the AP&E employee group has been launched in 2022, with a view to enabling the design and implementation of market-aligned and fiscally sustainable pay structures to ensure effective recruitment and retention of excellent people talent.
- Brock joined the CAUBO Benefits Collaborative (Green Shield Consortium option) in July 2022, obtaining administrative savings and allowing opportunity to participate in initiatives and projects such as benchmarking and training programs, and share in group best practices.
- Brock introduced flexibility to allow ongoing AP&E staff to move temporarily into other positions for short-term appointments while maintaining benefits, to provide opportunity to expand skills and knowledge and support career development.

| Brock's Strategic Priority   | Goal  |
|--|---|
|  <p><b>Foster a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation, and decolonization</b></p> | <p>Further celebrate the success of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni.</p> |

### **a. Provide better communication as well as career and recognition opportunities**

**Milestones and achievements:**

- A new positivity recognition page was developed in a collaboration with HR and Development & Alumni Relations, for faculty and staff to highlight the lasting impact colleagues have had on them. The positivity page allows staff and faculty to send a note to a colleague to give thanks, share positivity or acknowledge their personal and professional attributes and accomplishments.
- In 2021, the President introduced the Brock University Outstanding Team Service Award that annually recognizes a team of faculty and/staff members for their outstanding contributions throughout the year beyond what is normally expected of them in their roles. This award supplements the existing annual service awards conferred at a holiday celebration each year.

### **b. Increase scholarship and award opportunities for exceptional students**

**Milestones and achievements:**

- Brock has re-weighted the thresholds for its scholarship program in response to changes in grading at the high school level during COVID, to ensure that the program continues to benefit students with the highest grades.

### **c. Ensure that reporting to university ranking organizations reflects our strengths as a PSE**

**Milestones and achievements:**

- The Registrar's Office, Marketing and Communications, and Institutional Planning, Analysis, and Performance continue to collaborate annually to ensure that Brock is well represented in annual rankings and that student participation in satisfaction surveys remains high.