



Strategic Research and Creative Activities Plan Summary 2021

Mount Allison University is known for excellence in teaching and high quality, well-rounded liberal arts and sciences education for undergraduate students. At the same time, our researchers are well-respected for their research and creative contributions in the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences, and in the fine arts, music, and drama. Mount Allison University recognizes that continued excellence in teaching and research is best achieved through proactive and sustained efforts to identify and eliminate barriers that would otherwise limit full participation of our community members. One aspect of this is the provisions of exceptional experiential learning opportunities for our students is directly correlated to a safe, supportive, diverse and inclusive learning environment. Such an environment not only ensures that our future leaders will be capable of responding intelligently and compassionately to global challenges, but it also further stimulates innovative and impactful research and creative activities for which Mount Allison University is well known.

Mission

The creation of new knowledge—ideas, theories, practices, solutions, works of inspiration—distinguishes universities from other forms of education and learning. **Mount Allison University is committed to excellence in research and creative practices, to the support of our researchers and students in the pursuit and dissemination of new knowledge and creative activity, which includes identifying and eliminating barriers that might otherwise preclude their full participation and sense of belonging, and to the development of the next generation of researchers, creative artists, and leaders.**

Vision

Mount Allison's long history and tradition of liberal arts and science education support a diversity of research, creative, and professional activities within its faculties. **Creative practice, theoretical and applied research, community-based research, and research relating to arts and culture, public and social policy, social structures, and scientific discovery provide many opportunities for researchers and students to engage in contemporary issues across all disciplines, from both established and innovative approaches to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge.** As a small undergraduate university Mount Allison offers a special relationship between research and teaching, and a unique context for research and creative activity collaboration and partnerships across disciplines.

Moving forward, Mount Allison envisions that research and creative activity at the university will:

- Engage researchers and students in a variety of scholarly activities that produces new knowledge and creative outputs.
- Make a recognized and valued difference in the world around us.
- Raise the external research reputation of the university.
- Increase the profile of our researchers and creative artists.
- Strengthen existing, and lead to new, collaborations regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Support efforts to provide international experiences for researchers and students.
- Attract high quality faculty, librarians and students from Canada and around the world.

- Attract increasing amounts of monetary support from granting programs, governments, communities, and foundations for all types of research and creative activities.

Principles and Values

Principles and values are the foundation for identifying and acting on strategic priorities in pursuit of our research and creative activities vision. These principles and values also provide orientation to the ways in which our researchers pursue their research and creative activities. At Mount Allison, research and creative activities:

- Inform our teaching and pedagogy.
- Provide opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in research and creative processes and outputs.
- Extend and enhance our external reputation.
- Have impact on our society through dissemination to relevant audiences.
- Are supported by university investments that build the capacity of both researchers and students.
- Maximize the use of resources through collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches.

Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Over the next five years, Mount Allison University will implement actions associated with strategic objectives that will improve the capacity for, and move the university closer to achieving its vision for, research and creative activities.

Institutional Environment Objectives

1. Enhance and extend the external perception of Mount Allison University to one that excels in arts, social science, and science research.
2. Encourage and support, where appropriate, multi-, cross-, and inter-disciplinary collaboration, both on campus and externally.
3. Support faculty, librarian, and student efforts to share research results and creative activities with both academic and non-academic audiences.

Researcher Capacity Objectives

1. Enhance the unique Mount Allison environment in order to attract and support post-doctoral fellows who have their own funding (Tri-agency postdoctoral funding, or equivalent) to come to Mount Allison University.
2. Create a fund for providing matching funds to researchers who wish to attract and financially support a postdoctoral fellow to work within their research program.
3. Leverage the Marjorie Young Bell Faculty Fellowship program to provide research and creative activity resources in a strategic manner to position promising early career scholars for success in external funding programs.
4. Evaluate the appropriateness of the current tuition and funding model for graduate students to reduce the overall financial burden of faculty members to support graduate students.
5. Encourage and support faculty and librarians to seek adjunct appointments at other institutions in order to expand their capacity for accessing specialized information and collections, including research resources and supports not available locally, and for expanding the possibilities for supervision and training of students and others at all levels.

6. Build capacity in arts, humanities, and social science areas identified as having research intensity or emphasis by making strategic use of the SSHRC Institutional Grant program.

Infrastructure and Funding Objectives

1. Attract researchers with an interest in innovative and creative approaches to critical inquiry and who value the integration of research, creative activity, and teaching in an undergraduate university setting.
2. Develop a policy (and associated guidelines and processes) to manage, in a strategic manner, the distribution of internal funding support for research equipment, software and infrastructure.
3. Strengthen financial resources to invest in the upgrading of existing research and creative activities infrastructure, and to support the leveraging of financial resources for investments in new infrastructure.
4. Identify and support a solution that provides enhanced and improved facilities for biology, biochemistry, chemistry, and environmental science research.
5. Enhance and strengthen the role of the Libraries and Archives in support of the research mission of the university.

The Undergraduate Experience Objectives

1. Leverage the Independent Student Research Grant (ISRG) program for recruiting new students to attend Mount Allison University, and ensure the program has adequate financial resources to be sustainable.
2. Expand the profile of the Office of Research Services as a source of information and support for students.

Areas of Research Intensity and Emphasis

Mount Allison University's Areas of Research Intensity and Emphasis reflect thematic areas where we have a critical mass of researchers and impact, or where there are latent and emerging opportunities on which researchers can build. These are also areas where future Canada Research Chair appointments, and future Canada Foundation for Innovation investments, will be made. The areas of research intensity and emphasis are listed below in alphabetic order.

Aquatic Sciences

Researchers make use of two key laboratories and several outdoor field sites to explore issues related to habitat change, species health and development, and much more. These critical research programs contribute significantly to our understanding of how changes in our environment have real life impacts on species, livelihoods, and communities.

Citizenship, Culture, and Civil Society

Researchers investigate who we are as citizens, about our place in the world, and the personal, human, economic, political, and structural conditions which shape our interactions with each other. These explorations take place at many different scales – local, regional, national, and international – and in historical and contemporary time periods. Social justice, gender, culture, Indigeneity, social inclusion, and political power and resistance are key issues that inform these interactions and explorations.

Climate Change

One area is clustered around phytoplankton research; members from several departments investigate key issues associated with climate change by examining how this key element of the ocean's

composition responds to, and changes with, changes in our climate. Another area is clustered around coastal changes and resource use and protection, and corresponding community and government policy and program response. Researchers explore the intersection of science and human activity, and develop community and government response options.

Creative Practice and Performance

Our fine arts, drama, and music programs draw exceptionally talented students who are motivated by the creative works of our award-winning researchers and creative artists. The fine arts and drama programs are supported by a new, state-of-the-art teaching and production space within the Purdy Crawford Centre for the Arts. The fine arts program benefits from the presence of the oldest university-based art gallery. The drama program creates high quality productions which challenge society's thinking about economic, social, and environmental issues. Music teaching and production is located in the Marjorie Young Bell Music Conservatory, a music-dedicated space for performance, teaching, and student practice. Our music faculty mount performances in multiple genres, create high-quality audio and video recordings, and contribute to current Canadian musical discourse through many channels.

Health and Aging

Researchers examine how we manage our individual health, how we age and how our systems respond to needs – whether we are talking about our physical health, our mental health and well-being, our individual and collective program supports for an aging population, or end-of-life care issues. Our researchers explore how we are recognizing, accommodating, and integrating those with disabilities – physical, cognitive, and other – as part of a comprehensive and holistic examination of society.

Material Science

As we are challenged to develop new solutions to our environmental challenges and energy needs, our researchers explore the creation of new materials and processes that can offer necessary and sustainable solutions to these pressing problems. These processes include developing greener routes to more effective anti-bacterial and anti-cancer treatments, developing better materials for devices, and understanding how current materials can interact with different environments (natural and/or biological). Innovation and creativity, and the engagement of talented undergraduate students, are the foundations of the ongoing search for new solutions.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Researchers across many disciplines link their research and creative activity outcomes with their teaching curricula, providing undergraduate students with unique and grounded learning experiences. Many engage in purposeful and reflective research on their own teaching as a way of improving the student experience and enhancing student learning. As a small institution with a focus on high-quality undergraduate experiences, we are poised to be leaders in the field of scholarship of teaching and learning.

Visual and Material Culture

Our world is full of objects and artifacts of our existence here on earth; our researchers take unique approaches to the telling of relationships between people and what they have created. The story of the making, history, preservation, and interpretation of objects in many different temporal periods and cultural settings is fertile ground for our researchers and creative artists. The university archives hold a unique collection of materials from across the disciplines and offer many interesting possibilities for in-depth research, and the Owens Art Gallery holds a vast collection of visual material that is incorporated into many teaching and research and creative activity programs.

Strategic Use of Canada Research Chair Allocations

Our Canada Research Chairs allocations are used to build a diverse and inclusive research enterprise across the campus. Our nominations for Chairs are designed to build on our Areas of Research Intensity and Emphasis, as outlined in this document, and to foster cross-disciplinary collaborations. We will continue to use a hybrid approach for identifying and nominating Chair appointees:

- Selective internal appointments coupled with new bridging faculty appointments made possible by the liberation of salaries.
- Selective nomination of externally recruited researchers, where opportunities, resources and circumstances permit.

Our processes for new nominations will adhere to university tenure-track hiring practices, which include provisions to address employment equity, diversity and inclusion. Our efforts will meet or exceed the equity, diversity and inclusion requirements of the Canada Research Chairs program, and will be informed by best practices in these areas.

As of March 2021, our current Canada Research Chairs are as follows:

- Tier 1, Phytoplankton Ecophysiology (expires April 30 2025)
- Tier 1, Green Boron Chemistry (expires Nov 30 2025)
- Tier 2, Intercultural Encounter (expires April 30 2022)
- Tier 2, presently vacant; an external recruitment and nomination is currently underway

Strategic Use of Canada Foundation for Innovation Allocations

We will continue to use our Canada Foundation for Innovation funds to primarily support the needs of Canada Research Chair holders and researchers working in tandem with them. We will also provide new tenure-track appointees who require equipment and infrastructure with CFI allocation support. These approaches will permeate benefits across the institution and enhance our research capacity and profile.

Plan Approval, Review and Update

This strategic plan was developed by the Senate's Research and Creative Activities Committee and adopted by Senate on November 15, 2016. It is a living document and will be reviewed and updated regularly, at least once every two years, by the Research and Creative Activities Committee. This plan was last updated in September 2021.