



Office of Research, Scholarship and Community Engagement

Strategic Research Plan Summary 2016-2021

The primary objective of this Strategic Research Plan is to contribute to the achievement of the 10-year institutional goals outlined in Mount Royal University's Institutional Strategic Plan (more detail provided below). Our aim is for continued growth in externally funded research with anticipated doubling of research funding over the next five years. As a relatively young university, this marks a new phase of development in our research and scholarship that includes securing our first CRC, at least one additional CRC coupled with a CFI in the next five years.

The thematic areas identified as research strengths and priorities include: **Indigenous Studies, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Environmental Sustainability, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Social Innovation and Community Engagement, Child Well-being, Community Resilience and Disaster Response, Community Health and Wellness, Digital Technology and Visualization, and Human Physiology.** The approaches to addressing these thematic research themes include disciplinary, but more often interdisciplinary, teams and methods. Institutes at Mount Royal University play a critical role in the conduct of research on campus. They align with the priority research themes and are highly integrated into teaching and research at the institution. They act as catalysts and facilitators, bringing students and faculty together in scholarly pursuits (more detail below). The institutes complement the individual research programs of faculty members in a way that greatly increased the scholarly capacity of an undergraduate institution.

The nomination of a CRC is 'new territory' for MRU and we are committed to learning from our experience as we endeavor to grow our capacity. It is premature to put too much detail into a long-range plan until we have the benefit of first-hand learning; however, it is our intention to make this a priority area of growth in our research and scholarship portfolio.

MRU plans to make our first CRC nomination (SSHRC) for the April 25th, 2016 deadline. Our intention is to have a candidate in place for the 2017/18 academic year. If we are successful, we will follow-up with plans to initiate another CRC application in conjunction with a CFI application in the next two years (assuming an adequate allocation). The second CRC would align more with the Sciences (NSERC or CIHR) to help increase our capacity in that area. While we are seeking an external candidate for the first CRC as a way to increase our research complement, we will consider making the 2nd nomination an internal hire as a means of retaining a high quality faculty member. MRU will strive to achieve a balance of

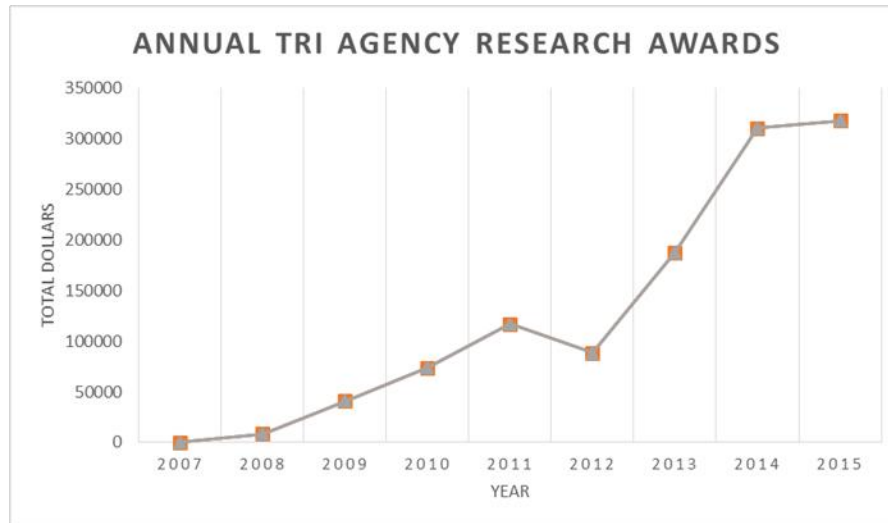
gender representation in our CRC placements. The first position in Indigenous Studies is also expected to be a First Nations individual.

MRU is dedicated to developing successful deployment and engagement of CRCs through providing direct internal support for competitive salaries, a research stipend and support for necessary research infrastructure. We have commitment from the Office of President, the Office of the Provost and the Office of Research, Scholarship and Community Engagement to provide start-up funds and annual research stipends of at least \$25,000/year. We will work with the CRCs to solicit additional external funds, particularly through CFI for infrastructure. Finally, we are exploring partnerships with other post-secondary institutions to collaborate and share resources on thematic areas of mutual interest.

We will conduct formative and summative evaluations of our first CRC as a means to measure success and improve the outcomes for future CRCs. We expect the first CRC to act as a leader and catalyst in the development of Indigenous Studies research. We anticipate the formation of at least two regional and one national research projects with engagement from First Nations Communities that includes the involvement of at least 6 other MRU faculty members and 20 undergraduate students. This work will result in internal working reports that are jointly prepared with the communities and 4-6 peer-reviewed publications. We will also evaluate our internal capacity to support the CRC and the ability of the research program to attract and grow external funding. Our expectation is that the research work and outcomes will be of international significance as evidenced by the quality of journal publications and the collaboration and attention of international partners.

Founded in 1910 as Mount Royal College, Mount Royal University has spent a century developing a reputation for teaching excellence. In September 2009 Mount Royal College became Mount Royal University, and in 2010 joined the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), completing the official part of a transformation that had been going on for more than a decade.

Research and scholarship at an undergraduate, teaching-focused university is different in nature from that undertaken at a research-intensive institution. Undergraduate students have opportunities to engage in research projects that would be supported by graduate students in other institutions. Research is woven more closely with teaching. Topics tend towards meeting practical or community needs in addition to traditional scientific goals, and faculty are more directly involved with their undergraduate students—with greater opportunity to engender that ‘spark’ that launches a new researcher on their way. As an institution, we are still in the early days of developing a research track record, but we have demonstrated positive initial successes as is evidence by our growing support from Tri Agency granting councils. Our updated 5-year Strategic Research Plan will help guide the continued growth of research and scholarship within the context of an undergraduate-focused teaching university.



Mount Royal University (MRU) recently (2015) approved its first Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP). ***Learning Together, Leading Together*** provides a roadmap for the next decade at MRU. Research and scholarship are directly addressed in three of the 10-year University Strategic Plan goals (Goals 3, 7 & 8). Mount Royal University is dedicated to excellence in undergraduate education and engaging our students in scholarship and research projects is a defining characteristic of our undergraduate education. Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan (aligns with CIP Goal 3) is to “provide and intellectually engaged learning community.” Strategy 3.3 (aligns with CIP Strategy 3.3) indicates that “every student will have the opportunity to enrich their academic experience through participation in research projects during his or her time at Mount Royal.” We expect that our graduates will gain valuable experience in conducting research and will have gained transferable analytical skills in the research process. These skills will serve our graduates well in the workforce and will also position them well for graduate school acceptance and success. This strategy requires that faculty researchers look for opportunities to secure undergraduate research support through grants and other sources of funding. We support and encourage the participation of our students in all research and scholarly activities.

Enhancing the culture of innovation is Goal 7 in our Strategic Plan. We see innovation spanning the full spectrum of activity related to the success of our faculty and students including the exploration and adoption of innovative approaches to teaching, scholarship, research, business practices and other initiatives related to the success of our students. As a knowledge seeking community, Mount Royal appreciates that intellectual inquiry benefits everyone. The sharing of this knowledge takes many forms, all of them vitally important. Be it through traditional peer reviewed publications, performances, presentations or openly accessible work, Mount Royal recognizes the contribution of our faculty in all forms of scholarly dissemination. Knowledge translation and transfer is a central element of how we conduct research at MRU.

Goal 8 is to “engage multiple communities in innovative and productive partnership activities.” We will develop new partnerships with community organizations, the private and not-for-profit sectors and post-secondary institutions across Canada while enhancing and expanding on the strength of existing partnerships. In the area of research and scholarship we are particularly interested in partnering with

other academic institutions in the development of collaborative, team-based research. Our faculty already participate as leaders and collaborators in several national research projects funded through SSHRC Partnership and Partnership Development Grants as well as CIHR team grants. Our plan is to continue to encourage the development of these partnerships. Faculty members also collaborate locally to share the research infrastructure at neighbouring institutions, particularly at the University of Calgary. This is an efficient way for MRU researchers to access specialized equipment and labs not currently available at our institution. We also collaborate with neighbouring institutions for support with research compliance activities such as Human Research Ethics review and Animal Care Committee support. A key objective over the next three years is to develop stronger connections and partnerships within Campus Alberta for more robust and extensive research outcomes.