

NSCAD UNIVERSITY
STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN SUMMARY
2019-21

OBJECTIVES

Through the renewal of the Strategic Research Plan (2019-21), the University recognizes that research is an integral part of NSCAD University, its community, its culture and its future success. During the period of the Plan, NSCAD intends to:

1. continue to increase year-over-year the numbers of externally funded research projects and successful applications for federal, provincial and private funds to fuel the research effort;
2. increase the number and range of graduate degree programs offered to ensure that the range and depth of faculty research and scholarly activity is commensurate with degrees offered at both the undergraduate and graduate level;
3. recognize the potential of individual and teams of researchers from across disciplines working together in research institute and centres to address complex questions in both fundamental and applied areas of endeavours;
4. identify and enhance support for emerging research clusters within the institution and encourage the formation of centres and institutes to maximize collaboration;
5. communicate and promote NSCAD's research strengths, expertise and successes as a resource to government, community partners, funding organizations, and the general public;
6. increase capacity for participation by researchers in national and international research consortia;
7. meet or exceed the Tri-Agency EDI targets for research capacity and embed best practices of EDI in research programs, staffing, and institutional support;
8. adhere to the requirements of the Tri-Agencies with respect of the Responsible Conduct of Research and any Collective Agreement with regard to intellectual property and any other requirements relevant to the research enterprise;
9. continue to foster the development of inter-institution, inter-sector, and community collaborations consistent with the university's mandate, based on principles of reciprocity;
10. continue to engage in hiring practices that give attention to the potential for contributions to research.

RESEARCH AREAS: INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

In alignment with NSCAD's *Academic Plan: Towards 2020* and as a product of a yearlong consultation through the Research Committee of Senate, the strategic research foci identified below have been identified as priorities for the period 2019-21, build on traditional strengths, and also encourage development of emergent research concentrations.

I: VISUAL AND CULTURAL LITERACIES

Broadly defined, faculty undertake research in the history and theory of modern and contemporary culture with some emphasis on Canadian art and visual culture. More particularly, faculty research includes, but is not limited to, Canadian Cinema with a focus on regionalism and trans-nationalism; criticism and theory of art and literature; the relationship between craft and architecture and craft and industrial design; Canadian art and nationalism; contemporary art from the 1970s to the present with a focus on feminist and conceptual art; the intersection between literature and the arts; queer theory; the integration of Indigenous methodologies for critical research on Indigenous art production in Canada; and, as a function of the unique and tragic history of expulsion and disenfranchisement in Nova Scotia, a special commitment to Black and Gaelic cultures and lived experience.

NSCAD's proposed Tier 1 **Canada Research Chair: Transatlantic Black Diasporic Art and Community Engagement** is assigned to this research area. If a subsequent nomination is approved, a Tier 2 **Canada Research Chair: Indigenous Art Histories and Methodologies** would be sought. NSCAD wishes to foster and advance the study of the history of, and the contemporary and multi-cultural context for the arts.

Further, NSCAD's Library and Archive is an integral research resource that needs to be understood as a vital research infrastructure to be developed. Canada's Public Policy Forum, with the support of Library and Archives Canada (LAC), has convened leaders from the private, public and non-profit sectors to discuss how Canada's memory institutions might best identify, preserve and share our documentary heritage in a digital age. NSCAD is undertaking a similar exercise with the intention of reimagining the library as a dynamic **Archive** and **research hub** which will form a bridge with the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. As one of Canada's oldest independent cultural institutions, the historic collections contained within the institution's library, art gallery, visual resource collection and administrative records represent an invaluable cultural archive dating back over 130 years. The NSCAD University Permanent Art Collection serves to identify NSCAD University as a historical, cultural, and intellectual asset to NSCAD students, faculty, staff, and administration, and the broader international arts community. NSCAD has been a conduit for exceptional arts and cultural activity; our holdings represent and promote seminal artists and rare and valuable works related to NSCAD University, including prints from the NSCAD Lithography Workshop, former faculty and

student works, local and international cultural artifacts, and gifts and purchases from visiting artists. With advances in information and digital preservation technologies, cultural institutions such as NSCAD now have the opportunity and responsibility to develop technical resources and services by which to bring cultural information to a wider audience of researchers, artists, curators and the public.

II: SUSTAINABILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

One theme that unifies faculty research interest across disciplines is sustainability. In response to the ongoing threat of environmental degradation, our researchers are seeking new materials, methods and strategies to reduce the burden on the environment and to improve the long term viability of populations. NSCAD's leadership in modeling economic sustainability within the cultural sector includes studies in professional practices in the arts, design management and a wide range of experiential learning experiences.

NSCAD's approach to sustainability recognizes the interrelatedness of social and natural environments, of ecological, economic, and cultural forces. The institution aims to better articulate the role of cultural practices, products, and knowledges in environmental sustainability. Research by faculty and students explores cultural and individual identity through place-based practice, public art, community engagement, and art-making that is grounded in social experience. NSCAD recognizes that by ensuring the longevity of collective cultural knowledge, it is possible to support people's opportunities to live livable lives and fulfill their potential. This requires an innovative, interdisciplinary perspective that foregrounds the importance of addressing concerns of equity, representation, and accessibility. NSCAD's current Tier 2 **Canada Research Chair in Infrastructure, Media Communications**, Dr. Jamie Allen, through the Institute of Departments and Organizations (IDO) is developing a centre for infrastructure studies that traces the ecological, institutional, territorial, and intersectional effects of the material systems of media and communications. If a subsequent nomination is approved, a Tier 2 **Canada Research Chair in Sustainability and Adaptability** would be sought.

III: MATERIAL EXPLORATIONS

New image and sound tools provided by digital technologies have and will continue to redefine the vocabulary and methodologies of the screen arts, the way screen arts are viewed and experienced, and ultimately, the society that has made cinema a primary vehicle of artistic expression for the last 100 years. Research activities in this module will engage critically and creatively with screen-based and computer-driven technology, and increasingly, with notions of interactivity. The focus of work in this area includes augmented reality, responsive and immersive environments, physical computing, locative media, mobile computing, critical gaming, animation, sound design, cinema and social media. Research questions explore the opportunities, limitations and cultural impact of

digital technologies and contribute to shaping the tools that that societies will use in the future. Projects in this area use and develop these new media technologies in co-evolution with their creative application.

A new research cluster between Jewellery and Metalsmithing, Textiles and Fashion, Ceramics, and 3-Dimensional Design is currently in development with some areas already in receipt of research funding support under a newly recognized **Craft Institute**. NSCAD is pursuing a number of other initiatives to advance this research cluster including the nomination of a Tier 2 **Canada Research Chair in Material Exploration** and the development of a **Digital Fabrication Lab** at its Port Campus location. The Institute offers individuals and organizations the opportunity to work with NSCAD faculty, staff and students to harness a growing appetite for innovative thinking by serving as both a home for the creativity that currently exists within the University, and a nexus for new regional, national and international partnerships. Research activities use and develop new technologies along with traditional and adapted materials and applications in order to further the design and fabrication of contemporary art, artifacts, and products for a wide range of uses. Activities include the application of computer assisted design and manufacturing technologies, the development of digital visualization and handling technologies, and the customization of design and fabrication methodologies. The digital translation of the imagination to material form is resulting in a re-imagination of production methods and scales and a merging of craft and industry methodologies where neither are necessarily privileged. Research in this area is expected to create new academic partnerships as well as industrial, commercial affiliations, and academic partnerships with the COVE and Dalhousie Emera IDEA HUB.

IV: ART AND DESIGN PEDAGOGY AND EDUCATION

A new Master of Arts in Art Education is launching in September 2019; it will position NSCAD as a key contributor to regional, national, and international conversations about the importance of the arts in society for health and well-being, cultural healing and reconciliation, environmental awareness, and so on. The three stream options—Community Based Practice, Applied Pedagogy in Art Education, and Museum and Curatorial—will addresses national and regional imperatives for approaches that offer inclusive and nuanced understandings of the role that art plays in society. The research in this area offers enormous collaborative potential with other faculty in the creation of mobilizing work that takes up issues of creative resilience and resistance. If a subsequent nomination is approved, a Tier 2 **Canada Research Chair: Art nad/or Design Education** would be sought.

Research activities in this cluster are directed at physical, mental and intellectual well-being and ultimately, the improvement of the quality of life in a complex and changing world. Just as Art Education provides a framework by which to understand the complex role of art in learning and

engaging, Design is an area of research that is emerging as a powerful force of resistance to static epistemologies and ontologies. Since socio-political infrastructures are what societies build their futures on, Design as a discipline plays an increasingly significant role in the consideration and response to the needs, challenges, and infrastructures of the 21st century – infrastructures which are adding indeterminate, chaotic and undemocratic characteristics to our everyday lives. With knowledge and an adaptable suite of research methodologies, Design will foster the fresh thinking and creativity required to solve or improve our cultural challenges including advances in diversity, the economy and the environment.

Research activities in this cluster are directed at using methodologies and processes to create artifacts and experiences and then position these artifacts for critique and discussion. These approaches address socio-cultural, environmental, technical and economic issues through design experimentation. The focus is on creation across all media that act as cultural agents. These agents are integral to mindful interrogation that affects not only design, designing and the design process, but also, in its widest application, prompts designers and stakeholders to consider and choose possible futures: our greatest challenge.

Planning and Approval

The planning and approval process related to research at NSCAD involves the individual researchers, the university's Research Committee, the Office of Research Services and Industry Liaison, the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic Affairs and Research), the university's system of academic governance (Senate), the Office of the President, with ultimate approval from the Board of Governors.

For further information, contact:

Dr. Ann-Barbara Graff

Vice-President (Academic Affairs and Research)

Office of Academic Affairs and Research

3rd Floor , 5163 Duke Street

Halifax, Nova Scotia

B3J 3J6

Telephone: 902-494-8123 or 902-494-8220

Fax: 902-425-4664