

STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN SUMMARY

1. Goals and Objectives

We have identified two goals for our Strategic Research Plan and established a number of objectives to realize those goals.

GOAL ONE: To have faculty conduct high quality research, particularly in the focal areas in which we have existing expertise

GOAL TWO: To increase external and internal support for research at St. Thomas University as well as to provide researchers with information, mentoring and support and increase the contribution to research by student researchers.

2. Major Focal Areas of Research

As per Objective 1.2, *to gain increased recognition regionally, nationally and internationally as a university with distinctive focal areas in research*, we have identified six major focal areas at St. Thomas University: Qualitative Analysis, Human Rights and Social Justice, New Brunswick Studies, Narrative Studies, Global and International Studies, and Scholarship on Learning and Teaching. Our long-term goal is to ensure that a CRC or alternative source of external funding is in place to stimulate research developments in each of these focal areas.

As per Objective 2.4, *to increase the contribution to research by student researchers* and to increase the training of students as highly qualified personnel activity, the University will encourage researchers (especially our CRCs) to support students at national and international conferences. The University also hosts an annual Student Research Fair as a venue for the presentation of student research. Opportunities for student researchers will definitely increase as our JOBS programme grows, as well as with the development of the New Brunswick Graduate School.

Qualitative Analysis

To further our Objective 1.3, *to enhance the reputation of this university as a national and international leader in qualitative analysis*, St. Thomas University hosted the Canadian Qualitative Analysis Conferences in 1999, 2000 and 2007 which includes 80 faculty and student researchers. CRC Dr. D. van den Hoonaard's research program builds on her studies of marginalized (often female) populations and the process of using qualitative analysis to study groups on the social margins.

Human Rights and Social Justice

Our second CRC, Dr. Susan Machum, was chosen in the social justice component of our research priority on Human Rights and Social Justice to advance Objective 1.4 *to increase research that will promote human rights and social justice*. Her research is focused in four areas: food security, women in family-owned forest enterprises, the ecology-society relationship and a critical analysis of the New Brunswick self-sufficiency agenda. Her ongoing research projects focus on the exploration of what are the necessary social changes for the combined crisis of environmental degradation and growing social inequality.

New Brunswick Studies

Our third CRC, Dr. Tony Tremblay, conducts research in this area by taking a leading role in the New Brunswick and Atlantic Studies Research and Development Centre, strengthening the work of researchers and forging interdisciplinary and inter-institutional research partnerships for studies about New Brunswick and the Atlantic region. Dr. Tremblay’s field of interest is in literature, the languages and culture of New Brunswick. This continues to advance Objective 1.5, *increasing research that enhances knowledge and understanding about life in the Province of New Brunswick and the Atlantic region.*

Please refer to question five of the summary for descriptions of our prospective focal areas for future research (i.e., Narrative Studies, Scholarship on Learning and Teaching, and Global and International Studies).

3. Gender Representation

St. Thomas University is monitoring and exceeding its target announced to the CRC secretariat of at least 33% of its nominees being female. Two of the University’s three CRCs are female.

4. Areas of research in which the university intends to deploy Chairs and/or CFI support

Area of Research	Estimated Timeframe	Tier 1	Tier 2
Narrative Studies	2010		1
Global and International Studies	2012		1
Scholarship on Learning and Teaching	2014		1

5. During the next five years the University will redouble its efforts to assist faculty in developing strong and hopefully successful funding applications as per Objective 2.1 and 2.2, *to increase external and internal resources for research and scholarship.* This will be accomplished by: (1) increasing faculty members' knowledge of external funding sources and possibilities; 2) developing a special pool of seed funding for peer-reviewed external applications which have garnered a 4A status; and 3) deploying funding from the University’s General Research Fund for projects requiring “seed funding” in anticipation of an external grant application.

Narrative Studies

Our objective is to enhance our international reputation in narrative scholarship by expanding our interdisciplinary research in this focal area. Research and scholarship in Narrative Studies straddles the humanities and the social sciences at St. Thomas University, as evidenced by the number of different disciplines represented through and by CIRN, our Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies on Narrative. CIRN has hosted, in two years, two international conferences (Narrative Matters), an online journal (Narrative Works, to be launched this fall) and national speakers here at the University. Our plans to increase scholarship, research and publications in this focal area will be assisted by the growing faculty interest and the development of new partnerships, in practical fields such as social work, its intersections with community. These partnerships should lead to more research proposals for external funding and more scholarship that builds on research findings.

Global and International Studies

Both the Political Science Department and the History Department have launched new international and global teaching initiatives (an International Relations Programme and a world history curriculum, respectively). The University's first Research Circle (formed in May 2009) focuses on the theme of globalization. Faculty in various departments are engaged in international, transnational, and comparative and postcolonial studies that, together, focus on almost every region of the globe. A number of these research projects have secured SSHRC funding in the Standard Research Grant and Research Development Initiatives competitions. The University is also a member of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI), which will aid in the facilitation of travel, exchanges and research of our colleagues with theirs, in India.

Scholarship on Learning and Teaching

Applied pedagogical techniques and updated technological advances in teaching are routinely work-shopped here at St. Thomas through our Learning, Teaching, and Development (LTD) Committee. We develop this area with encouragement to publish in teaching journals, mentorship for future teachers, and a focus on scholarly pedagogical practices, generally. To do so, we continue mentoring with our LTD Committee, advancing 3M fellowship nominees, and introducing a graduate focus.

6. Planned inter-institutional and inter-sectoral collaborations

As per Objective 1.1, *to strengthen and extend interdisciplinary, inter-institutional and community research partnerships*, there are various plans for collaboration within our six focal areas. In **Qualitative Analysis**, we plan to again co-host the Canadian Qualitative Analysis Conference with the University of New Brunswick, as was done in 1999, 2000 and 2007. In **Human Rights and Social Justice**, The Rural Social Justice Centre for Research launched in 2009 to facilitate a greater connection and co-ordination between other faculty's work. The center has enabled greater acknowledgement of the research profile locally, regionally, and nationally. In **New Brunswick Studies**, thirteen of our disciplines have work rooted in the region. This has led to collaborations with researchers from six different universities across Canada and the United States. Additionally, CRC Dr. Tremblay continues to play a central role in the creation and development of the NBASRDC (the New Brunswick and Atlantic Research and Development Center) and is currently launching a new peer-reviewed and multidisciplinary journal. In **Narrative Studies**, researchers in four of our disciplines are collaborating with colleagues at the University of New Brunswick at Saint John (UNBSJ) and Dalhousie University to apply for Tri Council and/or regional funding for researchers to investigate the nature and application of narrative care in social and health care settings. To do this, CIRN and Dr. Baldwin will draw upon extensive community partnerships already established with St. Thomas, York Care Centre and Atlantic Institute on Aging in New Brunswick. St. Thomas University and the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Narrative (**CIRN**) have been the Principal Organizers for the (SSHRC-funded) *Narrative Matters* international conferences held in Fredericton in 2002, 2004 and 2010. Delegates from various disciplines and countries have attended. In **Global and International Studies**, the Political Science and History Departments have launched an International Relations Programme and are continuing to develop this international teaching initiative. In **Scholarship on Learning and Teaching**, inter-institutional and inter-sectoral collaborations have developed due to St. Thomas' routine presence at local, regional, and national workshops and conferences on teaching in higher education.

7. Assessing success in meeting our objectives

Success will be measured at the end of the five year period by:

- An increase in internal mechanisms to support research;
- A growth of interdisciplinary and inter-institutional research partnerships;
- A 30% increase in applications for external research funding;
- A 30% increase in externally funded projects;
- More scholarly productivity in the form of peer-reviewed books, articles, and conference presentations.

8. Planning and approval process and involvement of affiliated institutions

When a Canada Research Chair is offered to St. Thomas University, an open call is issued within the University asking for proposals for a specific area of study for the next CRC. An interdisciplinary committee, chaired by the Assistant Vice-President (Research), then reviews the applications and the most promising proposal forms the basis of the CRC position advertisement that is circulated nationally and internationally. A search committee (made up of an interdisciplinary team of University faculty members) reviews the resulting applications. The search committee oversees the interview process for the short-list of applicants. The University's Research Office then works closely with the nominee to submit the application.