

NSCAD's Strategic Research Plan Summary

NSCAD's research is driven by the goal to demonstrate its leadership in four distinct areas: **Material Exploration, Visual and Cultural Literacies, Sustainability and Adaptability, and Art/Design Education and Pedagogy** with special focus on the **Digital Infrastructures** underpinning these areas.

At NSCAD, research-creation practises are respected and encouraged. We recognize that research-creation project methodologies are unique to the projects themselves; research-creation outputs have the potential to go beyond that which is envisioned from the lens of traditional disciplinary engagement. We understand that research-creation is broadly misunderstood and advocate on behalf of the practise. Examples of research-creation expand the understanding of the method: 3D fabrication with forensic applications; visualization applied to data science; an opera based on archival research.

NSCAD seeks Canada Research Chairs in each of its 4 priority areas to complement the high caliber of faculty and sophisticated infrastructures which inform NSCAD's studio culture. The aim is to support emerging and established Arts researchers who can mediate between digital and analogue processes, are creative innovators who problem-solve within profound constraint, and are intrepid in responding to both applied and theoretical challenges in seeing ideas to fruition. At NSCAD, it is vital to stress the importance of the speculative, critical, studio-based, non-instrumental creative research work that contributes to the culture. The 4 research areas have been chosen to highlight both historical and ongoing research strength.

In its appointment of prospective Canada Research Chairs or endowed chairs, NSCAD will first appoint in each of its 4 priority areas to complement the high caliber of faculty and supporting infra-structures that already exist. Moreover, the University has determined that all future CRC appointments should ensure principles and targets of equity, diversity and inclusion are met by the four designated groups and as articulated in NSCAD's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan.

4 Research Areas/Themes

1. Material Exploration (Haptic perception/digital aspect-emerging technologies, materiality-modalities; digital and analogue; image making/mapping)
2. Visual and Cultural Literacies (reconciliation, diasporic response, social justice, aesthetic experience and art making): Tier 1 CRC in Transatlantic Black Diasporic Art and Community Engagement (**proposed**)
3. Sustainability and Adaptability (Trans-positional, migration, life science and climate change, sustainable networks): Tier 2 CRC in Interactive Media, Creative Technology and Community Engagement (**2018-19** [resignation]; **2019-22**)
4. Art and Design Education and pedagogy (modes of learning, SoftL, Experiential Learning, epistemological form and content. Facilitation epistemological explosiveness. Dealing with complexity).

INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

Library + Digital Archive: Materials Archive, Archive (Black histories), NSCAD Press Editions (Lithography Workshop)

Labs + Institutes: Art Education Collaboratory; Art + Reconciliation Project, Tier 1 Institute on the Study of Canadian Slavery and its Legacies (proposed), Dr. Sandra Alföldy Craft Institute, Tier 2 IOI -> Centre for Inter-Media Arts and Decolonial Engagement, New Materials Fabrication Lab

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As a part of its Strategic planning exercises, NSCAD University has unanimously approved its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan (December 2018) through both Senate and the Board of Governors. As a small institution with 41.5 faculty and 910 students (headcount), we are attempting to address the challenges of removing barriers to appointment.

An integral part of the EDI involves university research and the ways in which faculty appointments and the working environments respond to and reflect the broad diversity of the community. In this Strategic Research Plan 2019-21, we commit to work to three objectives as set out in the action plan.

Objective 1: Meet or exceed CRC Program institutional targets for all four designated groups (women, persons with disabilities, aboriginal peoples, and visible minorities) by December 2019

Objective 2: Demonstrate the value of diversity, inclusion, and equity throughout the management, implementation, and promotion of the university's CRC program

Objective 3: Make the campus environment more inclusive

In 2018-19, NSCAD's current student body totals 910 (headcount) or 630 (fFTE). We require 850 fFTE to meet our sustainability target. We have limited demographic statistics for the student body and for faculty.

Student Demographic Data				Total
UG Headcount:	M 204	F 649	O 38	891
Grad Headcount:	M 22	F 38	O 2	62
Total Headcount:	M 226	F 687	O 40	953
Currently enrolled students eligible for accommodations				140

Regular Full-Time, Pro-Rated, Faculty Demographic Data				Total
By gender:	M 21	F 23	O 0	44

We recognize that as an institution we are at an early phase of EDI capacity development. We identify barriers, in order to remove them. We must define and collect data that is S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely). In brief, we commit to 1) an employment systems review; 2) a comparative review; and 3) an environmental scan.

We recognize that we require demographic data surveys and regular employment engagement surveys in order to ensure we have robust data from which to plan. A communication strategy will be developed to promote the importance of completing these voluntary surveys as they provide NSCAD University with accurate data on the representation of diverse faculty.

NSCAD University has not conducted a bi-annual employee engagement survey, as an assessment of the working experience of our staff. We commit to performing such surveys. It will be shared with our community and the community will be strengthened by their comments, critiques and recommendations. We have a plan to regularize surveys to measure employee satisfaction, student satisfaction, program evaluation.

NSCAD University is motivated on principles of social justice and equity. With a 130+ year history, there are challenges of legacy and size which will require conviction, commitment, and resolve to meet with targets. In *NSCAD's Academic Plan: Towards 2020*, we discuss the need to address the TRC recommendations, and

because of the unique history of Nova Scotia, we have historical obligations to African Nova Scotian communities and Gaelic communities as well.

Data for Improvement and Effectiveness: We commit to using S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) data.

Unconscious Bias Training: All Faculty and Staff involved in the recruitment of CRCs are required to complete unconscious bias training. We will extend this training to all recruitment committees. Formal administrative key process check points at various stages of a recruitment can create opportunities to assess equity and diversity efforts and adjust strategies if needed.

Furthermore, all faculty and staff involved in the CRC nomination process are required to complete the [online training module](#) provided by the national CRC Secretariat. Internal administrative processes for CRC nominations have been changed to both communicate this requirement and to confirm completion of unconscious bias training.

Mentorship of Faculty and Staff: NSCAD University will form a committee through Teaching & Learning in conjunction with the Office of Human Resources that provides resources and mentorship through the areas of career development in training/education skills, work life balance, career counseling, academic leave/retirement planning, etc.

Diversity & Inclusion Working Group: Development of a NSCAD University Strategy for Diversity and Inclusion in underway.

Accessibility Site: NSCAD University is committed to providing equitable treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of University services, programs, and facilities. Under the Accessibility Act, Nova Scotia public sector facilities must meet accessibility standards to identify, remove and prevent barriers by 2030.

NSCAD University is dedicated to being accessible and compliant in all accessibility standards and in creating a welcoming, barrier-free environment for patients, staff and the community. NSCAD University is also committed to ensuring that all persons within its community are aware of their rights and responsibilities to promote an accessible and inclusive environment with and for persons who have disabilities.

NSCAD University will establish the Accessibility Committee which is comprised of a broad representation of key stakeholders. The Committee advises the NSCAD University senior management team about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards, preparation of accessibility reports, and other matters for which NSCAD University may seek advice.

Providing a supportive and inclusive workplace: Through our equity programs, services and offices, NSCAD University is working to remove a range of barriers and support our community members in fulfilling their academic, research and employment goals. Working with Human Resources, we are developing initiatives to create an inclusive environment for faculty, staff and students. We will continue to collect and post these projects to both recognize these efforts and encourage others to adopt similar initiatives.

Policies or procedures and supports in place that enable the retention of members of the FDGs: Equity considerations are an important part of our institutional approach to faculty retention issues, when these arise. Retention of CRCs has not arisen as an area of concern at NSCAD University, as we have not had any Chairholder resign.

Principal Research Infrastructure: NSCAD's Library and Learning Commons is its primary research hub. As part of our long term facilities strategy, the Library and Learning Commons will transition into the research hub linking NSCAD University and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. An integral part of the EDI capacity requires that we review acquisitions and deaccession following Review of holdings, decolonize and indigenize, formats, ontologies.