

Saint Mary's University's Strategic Research Plan Summary

Introduction - The 2012 Strategic Research Plan (SRP) of Saint Mary's University re-envisioned and renews the original 1999 SRP and the numerous minor updates to the Plan which had occurred in the intervening period. Renewal of this SRP was coincident with, and connected to, the renewal of our 2012-17 Academic Plan - Building a Community of Global Learners, finalized in February 2012. Saint Mary's SRP was approved by its Senate on December 14, 2012 after more than a year-long consultation and writing process.

The Associate Vice President Research is responsible in assessing the University's progress in meeting the objectives set out in the SRP. This will be done on at least an annual basis and will be communicated to the University community through reports to bodies such as Faculty Councils, Senate and the Board of Governors, as well as the University's website.

Saint Mary's University is the second-largest university in Nova Scotia with approximately 8000 students spread over four Faculties (Arts, Science, the Sobey School of Business, and Graduate Studies and Research). Although it had been primarily an undergraduate university for many years, it now offers many Masters and PhD graduate programs in various areas of strength within the humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences. Research activity has increased significantly in the recent past. For example, externally sponsored research funding has more than quadrupled between 2001-02 and 2011-12. Saint Mary's has advanced in Canadian Research University of the Year ranking by Research InfoSource's from not being listed among the top 50 in 2002, to 35th place in 2010.

In concert with the Vision, Mission, and Core Values of the University, and our 2012-17 Academic Plan, the **Research Mission** of Saint Mary's University is:

To engage in research that applies to, and is valued by communities from around the corner, to around the world, and that cultivates intellectual curiosity and creativity of our faculty and students.

The **Major Research Objectives** of Saint Mary's University SRP are:

- To carry out high quality research that builds on existing strengths and partnerships, with particular emphasis on interdisciplinary endeavours;
- To develop research programs that are valued by, relevant to, and engage communities - locally, regionally, nationally and internationally;
- To ensure that students, both undergraduate and graduate, benefit from research activities at the University.
- To disseminate and translate the outcomes of our research to receptor communities who can best benefit from them.

The **Canada Research Chairs** (CRC) program stands at the centre of a national strategy to make Canada one of the world's top countries in research and development. Chairs are assigned by the CRC Secretariat to universities in Canada. Our current CRC status is listed in the Table below.

The assignment of CRCs within Saint Mary's University is the responsibility of the Vice President Academic and Research (VPAR). The VPAR or his/her delegate(s) will review the allocation of CRCs within the University on a regular basis, and particularly when a CRC is up for renewal, at the end of a term (i.e. for Tier 2 Chairs), or when a Chair otherwise becomes vacant. CRCs may be re-assigned within the University after such a review, and re-assignments must be consistent with the University's Strategic Research Plan.

| Year of Allocation | Chair Level | Category | Field/Major Research Theme | Status |
|--------------------|-------------|----------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Tier I | Special | Astronomy and Astrophysics (Theme 4) | Renewed (2010-17) |
| 1 | Tier II | NSERC | Astronomy and Astrophysics Theme 4) | Renewed (2012-17) |
| 2 | Tier II | Special | Atlantic Canada Studies (Theme 1) | Renewed (2008-13) |
| 3 | Tier II | Special | Management (Theme 2) | Renewed (2010-15) |
| 4* | Tier II | NSERC | Environmental Studies/Material Science (Theme 3) | Renewed (2011-16) |
| 4* | Tier II | SSHRC | Industrial/Organization Psychology (Theme 2) | Renewed (2011-16) |
| 5 | Tier II | SSHRC | International Development Studies (Theme 5) | Refilled (2012-17) |
| 6 | Tier I | SSHRC | Occupational Health Psychology (Theme 2) | Renewed (2010-15) |
| 7 | Tier II | SSHRC | Finance (Theme 2) | Filled (2011-16) |

*originally a Tier I NSERC-oriented Chair; subsequently approved for reassignment to a Tier II NSERC Chair and a Tier II SSHRC Chair

In its October 2004 letter to the CRC Secretariat on the issue of representation of under-represented groups in Canada Research Chairs, Saint Mary's set a target of at least two of the seven (29%) Chairs originally assigned the University to be filled by members of under-represented groups (i.e., particularly Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, racially visible persons and women). Saint Mary's has been allocated a further two CRCs since that time. Currently, three of our nine Chairs (33%) are filled by members of under-represented groups and the University is committed to a maintaining this as a minimum target. All advertisements for CRC positions available at Saint Mary's indicate that the University is committed to the principles of employment equity.

Our Major Research Themes - Our Major Research Themes reflect Saint Mary's current research strengths and are based upon long histories of scholarly activity in the Theme areas. All have graduate programs associated with them and a long history of engaging undergraduate students in research. Each of the Major Research Themes exemplify areas of strong collaborations, partnerships and network with other institutions to help develop or maintain excellence in its priority areas of research.

Theme 1: Research for Atlantic Canada Communities:

The objectives within the Major Research Theme on Atlantic Canada Communities include:

- To contribute to the social and economic development of the Atlantic Provinces and to the health and wellbeing of Atlantic Canadians through policy-related research relevant to the region and its peoples.
- To enhance the interdisciplinary study of culture, peoples and their history, the natural environment and its resources, and health and wellbeing as it relates to and extends beyond Atlantic Canada.

- To be an Atlantic Canada resource base and data centre for universities, governments, and the private sector.
- To facilitate and enhance co-operation and collaboration between university and non-university researchers within the region and beyond.
- To enable interdisciplinary and inter-university co-operation and collaboration.
- To encourage collaborative research projects between universities and community-based groups throughout the region.
- To enhance and improve dissemination of research on Atlantic Canada Communities through publications, conferences, symposia and public forums.

Professors from across the University are engaged in the supervision of research students involved in Research for Atlantic Canada Communities within our programs in Applied Science, Atlantic Canada Studies, Criminology, History, Geography, Management, Psychology, Theology and Religious Studies, and Women and Gender Studies. The success of graduates from these programs will be indicators of the performance of this Major Research Theme, and we will look for other developments in academic programming related to this research theme.

Theme 2: Innovation in Business and Workplace Studies:

The objectives within the Major Research Theme on Innovation in Business and Workplace Studies (including Management, Finance, and Information Systems) include:

- To take a national leadership position in Human Resource Management and Industrial/Organizational (I/O) Psychology in recognition of its vital importance to a knowledge-based economy.
- To further foster research in finance with a multidisciplinary reach that will help develop an in-depth understanding of the financial markets and the decision making processes in order to optimize the interaction of corporations with their environment and enhance investor's education.
- To foster and further develop research on information systems and technology that will help local, regional, and national businesses and entrepreneurs be more successful in the marketplace.
- To continue to excel at research psychological health in the workplace, with particular attention to job-related stress, coping mechanisms and balanced-living strategies.
- To transfer new research findings on the workplace to academic and business communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Researchers from across the University are engaged in the supervision of research students involved in Business and Workplace Studies within the PhD in Business Administration - Management, the PhD in I/O Psychology, the Master of Applied Psychology) and their graduates will also be indicators of the performance of this Major Research Theme. Saint Mary's will continue to help support the research of graduate students in these programs with internal funding for student stipends. We will look for and assess other opportunities for the development of new academic and research programming related to the Theme.

Theme 3: The Environment and Natural Resources:

The objectives within the Major Research Theme on Research to Enhance our Environment and to Responsibly Harvest and Sustain our Natural Resources include:

- To continue to strengthen capacity of the University to carry out disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research on environmental and natural resource issues relevant to Atlantic Canada and beyond, with

particular emphasis on work involving an integration of technical/scientific issues with management/policy and community participation issues.

- While being attentive to social and community needs, apply the highest scientific rigour and best methodologies to improving natural resource management, utilization and conservation in Atlantic Canada and elsewhere.
- To strengthen research capacity in sustainable development in resource industries.
- To collaborate with external partners (in both the public and private sectors) in research and transfer the outcomes of our research on environmental and natural resource issues to receptors communities that can best benefit from them, including where appropriate, the transmission of products and processes generated from our research into the marketplace.

Professors from across the University are engaged in the supervision of research students involved in environmental research within the MSc in Applied Science and the MA in Atlantic Canada Studies programs as well as both the Environmental Studies (Faculty of Arts) and Environment Science (Faculty of Science) programs, under the new rubric of the School of Environment at Saint Mary's. Saint Mary's will continue to help support the research of graduate students in these programs with internal funding for student stipends. Opportunities for new graduate programming and research exist and are being pursued within this Research Theme, including an MA in Geography and a PhD in Applied Science.

Theme 4: Research in Astronomy, Computational Sciences, and Subatomic Physics:

The objectives within the Major Research Theme in Astronomy, Computational Sciences, and Subatomic Physics include:

- To further develop the Institute of Computational Astrophysics as a national centre for this field
- To further develop research opportunities for undergraduate, Master and PhD students, post-doctoral and visiting researchers within the fields of Astronomy, Computational Sciences, and Subatomic Physics
- To take full advantage of the research opportunities flowing from Saint Mary's being a major node in the regional high performance computing network (ACEnet) and to further develop our involvement in the national HPC consortium, Compute Canada.
- To further develop our relationships with TRIUMF, the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator, and other centres of research for subatomic physics.
- To further develop our relationships with researchers in the computational sciences and subatomic physics at other Universities and Institutions in the regional, the nation, and internationally.

Researchers in the areas of Astronomy, Computational Sciences, and Subatomic Physics, have opportunities to host research student researchers at the MSc and PhD levels within our MSc in Applied Science, MSc in Astronomy and PhD in Astronomy programs. These programs have been very successful at finding funding from external granting agencies to support graduate students, as well as post-doctoral fellows. Saint Mary's will look to continue to support these programs with internal funding for graduate student stipends. It is also anticipated that new opportunities will arise for graduate student research at the PhD level in some fields of Computational Sciences and Subatomic Physics as the PhD in Applied Science continues to be developed.

Theme 5: Research in International Development and Human Migration Issues:

The objectives within the Major Research Theme on International Development and Human Migration Issues include:

- To facilitate research opportunities for faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and visiting researchers in a wide range of international development research within the political economy of globalization by emphasizing gender, the environment, rural social movements, migration, development theory, labour, or any combination of the foregoing.
- To facilitate research opportunities for faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and visiting researchers in a wide range of issues related to human migration, including research of immigration, population migrations, economics, education, and cultural diversity – particularly as it applies to the Atlantic Canada experience.
- To produce tangible and significant research outcomes that are adopted in international development and human migration policies.
- To utilize our research in international development and human migration issues to further the of internationalization of our campus and to strengthen and develop new research relationships and partners external to our campus.
- To disseminate the results of our research international development and human migration issues through the most effective means to maximize the impact of this research.

Researchers in the areas of International Development have opportunities to host student researchers at the undergraduate, Master and PhD levels within our International Development Studies Program. Scholars working on Human Migration Issues can host undergraduate and Master levels research students in numerous programs (e.g. Atlantic Canada Studies, Economics, History, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Sociology and Criminology, and Women and Gender Studies). Saint Mary's will look to continue to support these programs with internal funding for graduate student stipends and pursue support for these student researchers from external funding agencies.

Funding and Expected Outcomes of the Major Research Themes - To fund and further develop research within these Major Research Themes, Saint Mary's has allocated Canada Research Chairs as identified in the Table above. Research funding will also be pursued vigorously through Government of Canada Tri-Council Agencies (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC) as well as the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI). As appropriate for each individual Theme, funding will also be pursued through the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation (NSHRF), the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust (NSRIT), Nova Scotian Productivity and Innovation Voucher Program, Springboard Atlantic, Inc., Innovacorp, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canadian International Development Agency, the Canada's International Development Research Centre, and other relevant governmental departments and agencies, as well as non-governmental funding organizations.

Expected observable outcomes of achieving our objectives within the Major Research Themes will include recognition of our researchers, and particularly our Canada Research Chairs, as leaders in their respective areas of research. We will monitor student demand and the success of graduates from the related graduate programs. We will look for further development and enhancement of our Research Centres and Institutes related to each of the Major Research Themes. Performance will be measured by the attraction of research funding, the output and impact of scholarly articles, the success of our research students in these fields, and the number and success of conferences, symposia, workshops, and public forums to which Saint Mary's researchers contribute within each of the Major Research Themes.