

Vision

Scholarship and learning with social purpose.

Mission

Ask challenging questions, pursue understanding, and work with others to create a more sustainable, just society.

Faculty of Social Sciences **Strategic Plan: 2021-2025**

Overarching Priority

The Faculty of Social Sciences' overarching priority is excellence in the core, timeless activities of education, scholarly research, and service to the University, to our professions, and to local, national and international communities. The way we achieve excellence in these activities, the specific aims we pursue, and the people with whom we collaborate in these activities evolve continuously. In this context, the Faculty has set the following five cross-cutting priorities: interdisciplinarity; experiential learning and career guidance; equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigenous strategies; engagement with local and global communities; and operational excellence.

1. Interdisciplinarity

Priorities

Interdisciplinarity encourages collaboration and exchange among faculty, students and staff across disciplines and fields of study. It fosters cross-fertilization of ideas and novel insights that enhance our ability to address multi-faceted societal challenges.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Offer new interdisciplinary programs, minors, diplomas, and certificates that further our educational goals
2. Encourage and facilitate combined degrees
3. Offer a robust set of cross-listed and jointly presented courses
4. Share information on research interests and activities across departments and disciplines
5. Value interdisciplinary research appropriately in Career-Progress/Merit (CPM), tenure and promotion, and related faculty development activities

Expected Results

- Increased understanding of how interdisciplinarity contributes to our educational goals
- New undergraduate and graduate interdisciplinary degree programs, minors, diplomas, and certificates
- More combined degrees
- More cross-listed courses
- New cross-program, co-taught interdisciplinary courses
- Increased research collaborations between faculty in different departments and units
- A robust portfolio of interdisciplinary research among faculty
- Interdisciplinary research is appropriately recognized and valued

Values

Integrity

We act in accord with our stated values and we seek wholeness and integrated coherence in our work.

2. Experiential Learning and Career Guidance

Priorities

Experiential learning and career guidance ensure that students “learn-by-doing” through curricular and extra-curricular activities in simulated or real work contexts ensuring that they understand career options and how best to pursue them.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Offer diverse experiential opportunities, including varied placement options.
2. Enrich in-course experiential learning opportunities
3. Develop new experientially oriented co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for students
4. Provide robust career-support programming through the Careers & Experiential Education Team
5. Provide opportunities for students to be involved in research

Expected Results

- Multiple undergraduate programs with co-op opportunities
- Experiential learning included in more Faculty of Social Sciences courses
- All social science graduates have had an experiential learning opportunity
- Students have a greater understanding of:
 - career options
 - the training and experiences that will prepare them for the careers they seek
 - how to articulate their skills, competencies and knowledge
 - job-seeking processes and behaviours that maximize their prospects for obtaining a career-furthering job
- Improved job placement rates for our graduates
- More students obtain research experience

Values

Collaboration

We are most effective and creative when we work together as diverse faculty, staff, students, and community partners to achieve our research, education, and service goals.

3. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenous Strategies (EDIIS)

Priorities

EDIIS aims to create a sense of belonging among all by increasing the representation of members of equity-deserving groups and Indigenous persons among faculty, staff, and students; increasing understanding of bias, systemic racism, and related phenomena experienced by members of equity-deserving groups while attending to strategic objectives distinct to Indigenous persons; and reducing bias and systemic racism within the Faculty, the University, and society.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Increase the representation of, and access by, members of equity-deserving groups and Indigenous persons among faculty, staff, and students, and support their success at McMaster
2. A review, through the lens of EDIIS, of policies, protocols, and practices across all areas of the Faculty's operations
3. Offer widely available, appropriately resourced, courses that incorporate ideas and perspectives of scholars from equity-deserving groups and Indigenous peoples, and content reflecting the experiences of people from equity-deserving groups and Indigenous peoples
4. Recognize and profile scholarships in EDIIS-related fields
5. Develop more funding opportunities for research on themes pertaining to EDIIS

Expected Results

- Reduced equity gaps as assessed by the University's equity censuses
- Increased representation of faculty, staff, and students from equity-deserving groups and Indigenous peoples
- Increased retention of faculty, staff and students from equity-deserving groups and Indigenous peoples
- A culture among faculty, staff and students that embodies and furthers EDIIS
- Increased representation in the curriculum of scholars from equity deserving groups and Indigenous peoples and of their experiences
- Greater recognition of EDIIS-related scholarship conducted by members of the Faculty of Social Sciences
- Increased support for and a greater amount of EDIIS-related research by members of the Faculty of Social Sciences

Values

Equity

We advance equity within our own Faculty and throughout society.

Innovation

We strive for innovation in our academic activities and in supporting positive change in society.

4. Engagement with Local and Global Communities

Priorities

Engagement that spans communities from the local to the global to foster stronger relationships, mutually beneficial partnerships, international experiences, and deeper understanding of global dimensions of local, national, and global challenges.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Respond to the needs and aspirations of local communities through our research
2. Work in partnership with community organizations to foster mutually beneficial learning opportunities
3. Provide content in social sciences courses that highlights global dimensions of local and national issues
4. Attract international students from diverse nations and support their success at McMaster
5. Provide accessible, desirable opportunities for our students to participate in international exchanges and for international students to come to the Faculty of Social Sciences on exchange
6. Foster international research collaborations

Expected Results

- More partnered research that addresses the needs of our communities and provides benefits to our community partners
- Increased opportunities for student community placements
- Students are well supported by the University in their community-based learning, and community partners benefit from their involvement with students
- Increased awareness and understanding of the interconnections between the local and the global
- Greater diversity of countries from which we draw international students
- Increased retention rate for international students
- Increased number of international graduate students
- Increased number of students who participate in international exchanges
- More international exchange students enrolled in the Faculty of Social Sciences
- Increased opportunities for students to engage with their international peers while taking courses in Hamilton
- Increased international collaborations, measured by grant investigators and co-authors
- Increased external research funding from international organizations

Values

Inclusive Excellence

We pursue inclusive excellence in our research, education, and service, on campus and beyond, by engaging with diverse peoples, perspectives, and ways of knowing.

5. Operational Excellence

Priorities

Operational excellence calls for the responsive, effective, and efficient delivery of professional and administrative support services to advance the overall mission of the Faculty.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Provide academic support services to foster student success
2. Provide administrative support for course instructors
3. Develop teaching and learning supports to help instructors integrate technologies and pedagogies in ways that serve our learning goals
4. Provide seamless, robust support for faculty applying for and administering external research funding
5. Offer effective and accessible professional development opportunities for staff
6. Regularly review Faculty administrative support services and programs to ensure effective, efficient service provision
7. Provide an integrated program of communication to enhance the reputation of the Faculty of Social Sciences and its units
8. Strengthen the Faculty's program of advancement activities to attract external funding to support the work of the Faculty
9. Align the allocation of Faculty resources and its operational activities with the Faculty's strategic priorities

Expected Results

- Increased retention and greater student success
- Reduced instructor time and effort spent on the administrative aspects of course delivery
- A greater mix of media and technologies in courses
- Improved connection between pedagogical goals and the use of technology in teaching
- Increased quality and number of external research applications submitted, leading to an associated increase in success rates
- More faculty and research staff time spent doing research rather than administering grant funds
- A professional development activity is undertaken by every staff each year
- Reduced administrative burden to achieve administrative outcomes and increased efficiency of administration
- Enhanced knowledge about and profile of the Faculty and the work of its members
- Increased external funding from advancement activities
- Better collaboration with central support units
- More effective use of the Faculty resources to achieve our strategic priorities