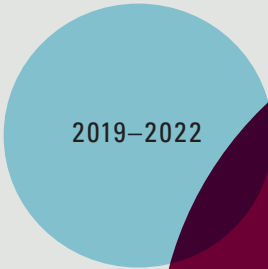


Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership,
Innovation and Excellence in Teaching

Strategic Plan



2019–2022



McMaster
University 

The three-year MacPherson Institute Strategic Plan emphasizes collaboration and partnerships within McMaster that cultivate an environment where learning deeply matters, and where teaching is valued and recognized within the university.

In developing the Strategic Plan we asked critical questions about our work and we listened to our communities. We listened to ideas from students, faculty, administrators, staff, and external partners about their priorities and hopes for the work of the MacPherson Institute.

We heard appreciation for the MacPherson Institute's leadership on the internationally renowned Student Partners Program and the provincially recognized Institutional Quality Assurance Process supports. We heard desire for greater integration and partnership with faculties, schools, and departments; and, for our existing programs and supports to be as flexible and responsive as possible. Our community asked for stronger communication and accountability. We listened.

The Strategic Plan builds on the past successes of the MacPherson Institute, while also making concrete commitments to the teaching and learning priorities of our community. By refining our mandate we identified areas to lead, partner and champion. To advance the priorities that fall outside our mandate, we are eager to contribute to a McMaster-wide Teaching and Learning Strategy in partnership with senior leadership and other units across campus.

While the Strategic Plan outlines new objectives and initiatives for the MacPherson Institute, we will continue to deliver many of the same important programs, supports and services you depend on. We will also continue to extend our leadership locally, nationally and internationally, and to celebrate and champion McMaster's teaching and learning innovations to the world.

The Strategic Plan works to respond to the needs identified by our community; however, we see this as an opportunity for ongoing conversation. We will continue to ask, listen and respond to feedback as our strategy is implemented, evaluated and iterated upon.

Mission

We collaborate to explore, enhance, support, and recognize teaching and learning experiences at McMaster.

Mandate

We partner with, support, and connect diverse groups of educators* by:

- Creating and delivering professional development that engages educators* throughout their careers in teaching and learning in order to enhance the student learning experience.
- Facilitating curriculum development and revision that fosters continuous enhancement and engagement in learning.
- Supporting, conducting, and recognizing teaching and learning scholarship** that has the capacity to develop, inform, and enhance educational initiatives and student learning.
- Encouraging and elevating the pedagogical use of educational technologies and creative solutions to enhance teaching and learning.

Vision

Cultivating an environment where learning deeply matters and teaching is valued and recognized by the collective McMaster community.

What is a Strategic Plan?

A Strategic Plan is a document used to communicate an organization's vision, values, and objectives. During the Strategic Planning process we looked ahead three to five years to identify the various initiatives that will help us achieve our vision.

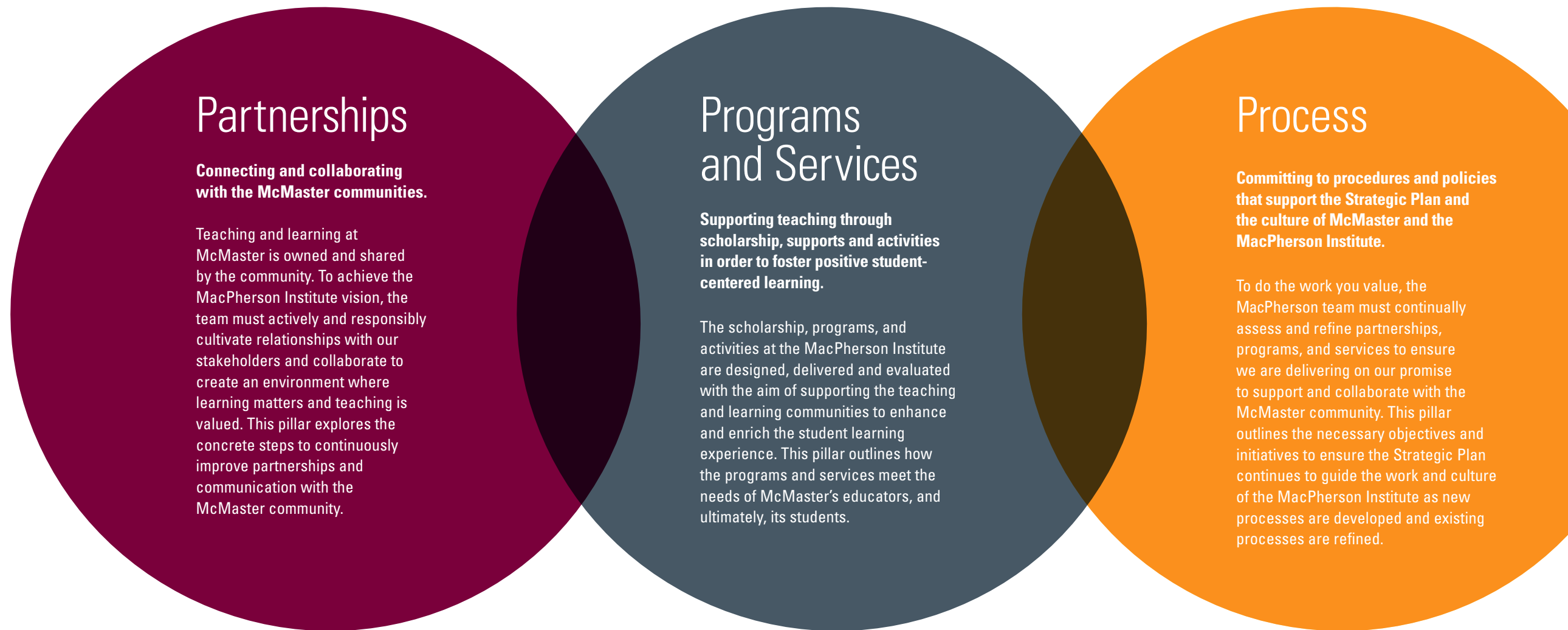
It is by no means a comprehensive look at all initiatives and tasks to be completed, but instead, acts as a road map to guide us toward the overarching strategic goals of the MacPherson Institute. A Strategic Plan identifies the "new" work to be completed; it does not replace the existing programs, services and activities you rely on and value.

*Educators is intended to include, but is not limited to, community partners, faculty, graduate students, librarians, post-doctoral fellows, sessional instructors, staff, teaching assistants, and undergraduate students.

**Given the wide range of approaches to and understandings of teaching and learning inquiry, we use 'teaching and learning scholarship' here as an inclusive, umbrella term. It is intended to encompass all kinds of scholarly work focusing on teaching and learning, including (but not limited to) discipline-based and other forms of educational research, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and scholarship of application and integration connected to teaching and learning.

The Strategic Pillars

Teaching and learning is the heart of what we do. Our Strategic Pillars: Partnerships; Programs; and Services; and Process will help guide our mission and mandate to provide ongoing support and enhancement of teaching and learning experiences for educators and students.



Partnerships

Connecting and collaborating with the McMaster communities.

Teaching and learning at McMaster is owned and shared by the community. To achieve the MacPherson Institute vision, the team must actively and responsibly cultivate relationships with our stakeholders and collaborate to create an environment where learning matters and teaching is valued. This pillar explores the concrete steps to continuously improve partnerships and communication with the McMaster community.

Programs and Services

Supporting teaching through scholarship, supports and activities in order to foster positive student-centered learning.

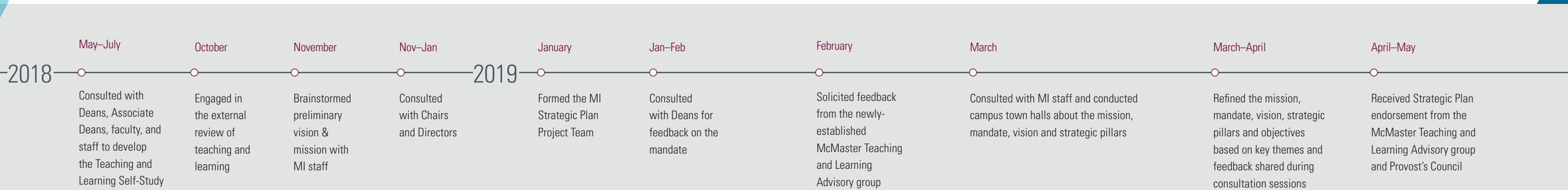
The scholarship, programs, and activities at the MacPherson Institute are designed, delivered and evaluated with the aim of supporting the teaching and learning communities to enhance and enrich the student learning experience. This pillar outlines how the programs and services meet the needs of McMaster's educators, and ultimately, its students.

Process

Committing to procedures and policies that support the Strategic Plan and the culture of McMaster and the MacPherson Institute.

To do the work you value, the MacPherson team must continually assess and refine partnerships, programs, and services to ensure we are delivering on our promise to support and collaborate with the McMaster community. This pillar outlines the necessary objectives and initiatives to ensure the Strategic Plan continues to guide the work and culture of the MacPherson Institute as new processes are developed and existing processes are refined.

The Journey



Partnerships

1

Strategic Partnerships

Develop and foster key strategic partnerships across the institution. Establish, renew, maintain, and enhance partnerships and relationships with teaching and learning communities within and beyond McMaster.

Year One Initiatives:

- » Assign roles and responsibilities within the MacPherson Institute to cultivate partnerships with internal teaching and learning stakeholders to advance the mission of the MacPherson Institute and of McMaster University.
- » Contribute to the Inclusive Teaching Guidebook with the Equity and Inclusion Office.
- » Contribute to the leadership of the Course Outline Portal with the Library and Humanities Media and Computing and seek IT Governance endorsement.
- » In partnership with key institutional partners, contribute to the professional development that enables educators to foster positive learning spaces that support student mental health and wellness.

Future Initiatives:

- » Facilitate opportunities for inter-institutional teaching and learning scholarship, collaboration and dissemination.
- » Initiate collaborative projects with educational technology teams from other Ontario post-secondary institutions.

2

A Shared Understanding of the Value of Teaching and Learning Scholarship

Collaboratively develop and communicate a shared understanding of the value of teaching and learning scholarship and why it is important for McMaster.

Year One Initiatives:

- » Develop a network of individuals and units on campus already engaged in and valuing teaching and learning scholarship in all its forms.
- » In collaboration with this network, design and conduct an environmental scan of how teaching and learning scholarship is currently recognized and perceived on campus and beyond.
- » Develop a working paper that draws on the literature and the environmental scan and makes recommendations about addressing the value of teaching and learning scholarship at McMaster.

Future Initiatives:

- » Communicate the working paper in different campus contexts and gather input about the roles and value of teaching and learning scholarship in these contexts.
- » Create a statement on the significance of teaching and learning scholarship at McMaster.
- » Work with the McMaster Teaching and Learning Advisory group and Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning to integrate this statement into relevant policies.
- » Develop and implement a strategy for communicating this statement across campus.

3

Contribution to Institutional Teaching and Learning Strategies

There are important institutional teaching and learning priorities that exceed the mandate of the MacPherson Institute. Once a Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning or designate position and portfolio is established, the MacPherson Institute is eager to contribute to the:

- » Development of an integrated institutional teaching and learning strategy.
- » Review of how teaching, teaching and learning scholarship, and teaching development are supported, assessed and recognized in faculty careers.
- » Coordination of operational issues that involve support for teaching and learning that span multiple campus units.

Year One Initiatives:

- » Establish the role of the MacPherson Institute representatives on the McMaster Teaching and Learning Advisory group.
- » Communicate with the McMaster Teaching and Learning Advisory group about the implementation of the MacPherson Institute Strategic Plan and invite discussion on future objectives and initiatives.

Future Initiatives:

- » Pending appointment, support the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning in the: (1) development of an integrated institutional teaching and learning strategy; (2) review of how teaching, teaching and learning scholarship, and teaching development are supported, assessed and recognized in faculty careers; (3) coordination of operational issues that involve support for teaching and learning that span multiple campus units.
- » Contribute input on the function of the McMaster Teaching and Learning Advisory group.

4

Communication

Implement a communication strategy for the MacPherson Institute.

Year One Initiatives:

- » Develop a collaborative and consultative communications strategy for both internal and external stakeholders.
- » Launch a redesigned MacPherson Institute website.

Future Initiatives:

- » Review and refine communications strategies.
- » Plan an annual celebration of teaching and learning innovation, scholarship, enhancement and achievement.

Our hope for the future...

Alicia is a master's student and new to the McMaster community. She wants to know how to become a successful graduate student and teaching assistant. During her first week she attends the **Teaching and Learning Forum**, an annual event that provides networking opportunities as well as a variety of workshops focused on teaching skills.

She meets many passionate graduate students and connects with other campus resources that will help enhance her teaching, learning and well-being. She learns that there are many supports for her as she embraces her new grad student and teaching assistant positions and as she works towards building superior learning experiences for her students.

Programs and Services

1

Faculty Liaison Program

Provide embedded, collaborative teaching and learning support in diverse ways that are sensitive to the varied Faculty/Program contexts, while also enhancing access to MacPherson Institute resources.

Year One Initiatives:

- » Design and pilot a Faculty Liaison program that provides on-the-ground teaching and learning support within the Faculties, departments, schools and programs.
- » Develop and implement a communications plan for the Faculty Liaison program.

Future Initiatives:

- » Evaluate and refine the Faculty Liaison program.

2

Programs, Supports, and Resources

Evaluate the MacPherson Institute's broad range of program offerings and resources to ensure they provide a broad spectrum of support to a wide range of educators in flexible formats that lower barriers to engagement.

Year One Initiatives:

- » Determine the methodology to conduct a review of existing programming and engage in comprehensive program review and evaluation and ensure clear communications with the campus community on our activities.
- » Develop and curate an online library of resources on a broad variety of teaching and learning topics, including educational technologies and teaching and learning scholarship.
- » Develop and pilot a mentorship program for new faculty.
- » In partnership with other units, support educators in embedding experiential and community-engaged learning in courses.

Future Initiatives:

- » Implement changes recommended by program evaluation activities.
- » Develop online learning opportunities on a broad variety of teaching and learning topics.
- » Support educators in addressing the needs of international students.
- » Consider support for micro-credentials, badging and digital certificates.
- » In partnership, develop a shared understanding across the MacPherson Institute of the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and determine how the MacPherson Institute can best contribute to efforts to decolonize the academy.

3

Educational Technologies

Establish, renew, and maintain partnerships and relationships across the institution related to educational technology.

Year One Initiatives:

- » Launch a project intake process for our support with online and blended course development and media production.
- » Conduct a review of McMaster's Learning Management System (LMS), Avenue to Learn, and plan for ongoing collection of instructor and student LMS needs.
- » Develop a business model for online and blended course development and media production support.

Future Initiatives:

- » In partnership with McMaster's Open Educational Resources Committee, foster awareness, use, and development of open educational resources, including the creation of an online repository of openly-licensed teaching and learning materials created at McMaster.
- » Develop workshops, resources, and consultative approaches to foster flexible, technology-enhanced learning options.

4

Strategy and Programming for Teaching and Learning Scholarship

Design, implement, and evaluate a strategy for supporting, conducting, and recognizing teaching and learning scholarship, and review and refine related programming available through the MacPherson Institute.

Year One Initiatives:

- » Further develop and refine MacPherson Institute strategies for supporting, funding, conducting, and recognizing teaching and learning scholarship.
- » Develop a network of McMaster scholars engaged in teaching and learning scholarship.
- » Finalize the integration of the LTL Fellowships Program into the MacPherson Institute Research Area and streamline and enhance Fellowships and Grants processes.
- » Develop strategies for disseminating teaching and learning scholarship across campus.
- » Develop initiatives that support engagement with and application of teaching and learning scholarship.

Future Initiatives:

- » Review and renew priority areas for teaching and learning scholarship.

Our hope for the future...

After meeting with his Chair and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Rashid learns that he is expected to develop his teaching in partnership with the MacPherson Institute to support his application for tenure. At first, he is skeptical about what he will gain, but after attending an **Educator Enhancement** session called "*Increasing Student Interactions Online*," he realizes there are many ways he can make the online experience more impactful for his students.

He gains confidence knowing there are various digital learning spaces at McMaster and many supports to help him build his online strategy for his large first-year course. Rashid now looks forward to participating in events and programs at the MacPherson Institute because he knows they are easy-to-access, timely and relevant to his students needs.

Process

1

Mission, Mandate and Strategic Plan

Operationalize, communicate and evaluate the MacPherson Institute mission, mandate, vision and Strategic Plan.

Year One Initiatives:

- » Launch and operationalize the Strategic Plan.
- » Develop methodology to assess the impact of the Strategic Plan implementation.
- » Report on year one initiatives of the Strategic Plan and finalize future initiatives.

Future Initiatives:

- » Annually assess and communicate the impact of the Strategic Plan implementation and refine future initiatives as necessary.
- » Refine assessment and communication strategies related to the impact of Strategic Plan implementation.

2

Organizational Design and Culture

Renew the organizational design and culture to align with the execution of the mission, mandate, vision and the Strategic Plan.

Year One Initiatives:

- » Develop and implement a collaborative, consultative process of organizational design that incorporates staff input and coaching on change processes.
- » Embody the MacPherson Institute core values by embedding these in hiring decisions, individual staff meetings and all staff meetings.
- » Build a thriving leadership team that cultivates a positive workplace environment for staff to work and contribute to the Institute's mission and mandate.

Future Initiatives:

- » Review the balance of continuing and contractual positions with consideration for a broadly equitable and consistent approach across the MacPherson Institute.
- » Reflect on organizational design changes and refine as necessary.

Our hope for the future...

As an new instructor, Søren is eager to refresh his new course with elements of experiential learning, but he is unsure where to start. He attends the **Course (re)Design Workshop** and learns how to structure elements of experiential learning into his teaching. He likes the ideas that emerge during the workshop but wants to ensure his course will still achieve his academic goals.

Søren requests further support from the MacPherson Institute to collect student feedback to validate his new approach. He works closely with a representative from the **Student Partners Program** who helps him assess his course, iterate his strategy and immediately implement changes. Søren now shares his experience with others in his department and is considering applying for a **Teaching and Learning Grant** to help bring further hands-on experiences to his students.

Core Values

The following values were developed as a part of our strategic planning process. They guide our work in partnership with our communities.



Educators at McMaster care about the classroom spaces in which they teach.

While the Library administers the hardware and physical structure of classrooms, the MacPherson Institute provides support and strategies for teaching in different classroom spaces (e.g. Active Learning classrooms, online spaces and traditional lecture halls).

If you want to discuss teaching strategies for your assigned classroom space, please reach out to mi@mcmaster.ca.

The process for developing this Strategic Plan includes many voices and perspectives. We want to thank all of those who contributed to the development of this plan by sharing their experiences of working with us and their hopes for our future. And, thank you to all those who chose to remain anonymous or who are still sharing their input.

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