Brock University Faculty of Humanities

Strategic Plan: From Priorities to Actions

March 2013

The Faculty of Humanities is

- research-intensive in its scholarship and creativity and student-centred in its teaching;
- strategically focused in its graduate expansion and interdisciplinary in its intellectual reach;
- international in its ethos and community-minded in its service.

Over the next five years, our goal is to strengthen Humanities as a comprehensive Faculty

- leading in the front ranks of research and scholarship, with recognized senior faculty and promising newer members engaging in active programs of research and creative production, supported through peer-reviewed funding;
- offering innovative courses and programs in established and emerging interdisciplinary fields at undergraduate and graduate levels;
- recruiting the best students and the best faculty available, and fostering a humane intellectual community at undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral levels; and
- taking the achievements and aspirations of the Faculty to the community at large.

Overview

We offer undergraduate programs and courses in 9 departments – Applied Linguistics, Classics, Dramatic Arts, English Language and Literature, Modern Language, Literatures & Cultures (French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish), History, Music, Philosophy, and Visual Arts.

We also offer programs in 6 Centres – Canadian Studies, Digital Humanities (Gaming), Intercultural Studies, Liberal Arts, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and Studies in Arts and Culture.

The Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts and the Rodman Hall Art Centre are also housed within the Faculty of Humanities.

Our graduate curriculum includes 6 MA programs – in Applied Linguistics (TESL), Classics, English Language and Literature, History, Philosophy, and Comparative Literatures & Arts – and our innovative PhD in Interdisciplinary Humanities.

Teaching Accomplishments

- 1 3M National Teaching Fellow
- 3 Chancellor's Chairs for Teaching Excellence
- 2 Brock Awards for Distinguished Teaching
- 1 Brock University Award for Excellence in Teaching for Early Career Faculty
- 11 Faculty Awards for Excellence in Teaching

We plan to

- acquire, mentor, and retain the best teachers to teach first-year courses and upper-year programs, and to teach and supervise at Master's and Doctoral levels;
- provide a stimulating, rigorous curriculum in both foundational and leading-edge inquiry in an environment promoting transdisciplinary thinking and hands-on learning in and out of the classroom;
- engage students and faculty in experiential, service, and online learning in local and global communities;
- offer an enhanced co-curricular experience providing students with opportunities to be mentored by faculty members and in turn to peer-mentor fellow students and develop leadership skills;
- provide opportunities for students to practise leadership, whether through co-curricular student-run organizations, outreach events, university governance, or professors' research.

Research Achievements

- 2 Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada
- 2 Canada Research Chairs in Digital Humanities
- 8 Chancellor's Chairs for Research Excellence
- 1 Distinguished Research & Creative Activity Award Recipient
- SSHRC grants, other external research awards, internal research awards

We strive to create an intellectual and administrative culture that

- supports a wide range of innovative research, individual and collaborative, long term as well as shorter term, in established and emerging fields, that aspires to a high quality, and not just quantity, of productivity;
- provides opportunities for faculty members and graduate students to communicate research results to academic and public audiences through conferences, publications, performances, and other forms of engagement, bringing scholars to Brock from other universities, both national and international;
- develops international research connections and scholarly and creative partnerships;
- recognizes and rewards outstanding research, creativity, and scholarship.

Priority 1 Ensuring Brock is a preferred place to work and study

Strategic Objectives

- An engaged community for all faculty and staff
- A sense of identity and belonging for all students

Strategic Actions

Preferred place to work:

- effectively recruit and retain staff, faculty, and senior administrators
- build good employee relations in a collective agreement environment e.g., engage faculty and non-academic support staff through a new initiative called *Brock Leaders Lunches*, a bimonthly lunch-hour series, with an emphasis on leadership and teamwork in the University, using a keynote speaker and small-group discussion
- nominate faculty for teaching and research excellence awards local, provincial, national

Preferred place to study:

- increase the number of undergraduate and graduate student applications, acceptances, and registrations; increase entrance averages; increase retention and graduation rates
- create enriched scholarships and bursaries for academic high-achievers
- mentor struggling students through the establishment of a Humanities Mentorship Program
- enhance the Humanities Student Association
- promote gatherings of faculty and students outside class e.g., revive the *Brock Porch Clubs* in an age of social media to discuss literature, culture, history, the arts, current events, and community service

- annual online student, faculty, and staff engagement survey (in addition to CUSC, CGPSS, NSSE)
- 2-minute, 2-question evaluation at the end of each *Brock Leaders Lunch*
- conduct Brock-specific entrance and exit polls (in addition to NSSE) to measure student satisfaction

Priority 2

Supporting Brock's undergraduate student-centred focus while maintaining excellence in graduate education

Strategic Objectives

- Recruitment of more high-achieving students
- Delivering a high-quality educational experience

Strategic Actions

- create the *Brock 50* program, designed for high-achieving students
- complete the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts downtown project in 2015
- establish a common interdisciplinary first-year course
- offer a course for pre-university students (perhaps in summer)
- celebrate scholarship as early as first year; recognize and celebrate student achievement by having Chairs of departments send congratulatory letters to high-achieving first-year students
- make undergraduate students aware of graduate studies right from first year and encourage them to aspire
- increase entrance and in-course awards, bursaries, and scholarships
- create a Humanities Mentorship Program
- integrate graduate students into Brock's culture of undergraduate education through teaching assistantships and opportunities for independent teaching; and immerse graduate students in Brock's research culture through membership in the Humanities Research Institute, with all its benefits, including financial support for their research, and opportunities to present their own work independently

- new enrolments in both *Brock 50* & the first-year interdisciplinary course
- good evaluations from both faculty and students
- increased applications from Brock Humanities students with averages above 75% to graduate and professional programs
- track student success: careers, employment rates

Priority 3 Fostering excellence in research, scholarship, and creativity

Strategic Objectives

- Support of research development for faculty and graduate students
- Greater visibility of research and creative activity

Strategic Actions

- hold a Humanities Research & Creativity Day or Humanities Research & Creativity Week
- hold grant-writing and grant-using workshops
- set up a website master calendar for research and creative events
- establish visiting scholar programs/positions
- establish the *Marilyn I. Walker Cultural Leader Series* (short-term residencies for artists, directors, musicians, and designers in the fine and performing arts)
- enhance Brock's Humanities Research Institute activities
- renew the research and scholarly collaboration agreement between Brock and the University at Buffalo
- explore new research partnerships

- increased attendance at research presentations & events (from 2012-13 baseline), with 2-minute, 2-question evaluation at the end of workshops
- increased number of high-quality submissions, acceptances, publications and presentations by Humanities faculty & students (from 2012-13 baseline)
- increased number and value of SSHRC / NSERC / CIHR / CFI grants, other external research awards, internal research awards, Humanities Research Institute grants, CRCs
- external corroboration, demonstrated achievement, public measures of success, as seen in the quality of undergraduate and graduate program reviews; quality of productions, exhibitions, performances; Common University Data Ontario, NSSE, *Maclean's*, *Globe and Mail* Report Card; distinguished alumni, testimonials
- increased donor support of our activities

Priority 4

Serving the social, cultural, and economic well-being of the University, as well as the local, national, and global communities

Strategic Objectives

- Increased Humanities presence in the community
- Increased community presence in the University

Strategic Actions

- engage lifelong learners, alumni, and retirees through notices and invitations to Humanities events
- offer *Brock Talks* downtown, and make available in podcast
- enhance our digital presence
- confer certificates on people auditing courses
- invite distinguished alumni to speak to students
- promote co-op placements for students
- communicate the value of Brock experiences to our local and global communities

- attendance at events
- comments section and suggestion box on website
- tracking how many people audit how many courses and which ones
- with the opening of the MIWSFPA downtown, measure its impact (economic and otherwise) in the community

Priority 5 Encouraging transdisciplinary initiatives

Strategic Objectives

- Increased transdisciplinary teaching
- Increased transdisciplinary research

Strategic Actions

- recognize the current extent of transdisciplinary work going on at Brock in Humanities
- create a BA in Humanities
- encourage community engagement with transdisciplinary initiatives
- hold regular events to showcase interdisciplinary initiatives (e.g., Transdisciplinary Days at Brock poster sessions, symposia)
- explore the creation of a *TransHumanities Centre*, amalgamating current interdisciplinary programs and research

- increased transdisciplinary initiatives, including the establishment of new transdisciplinary institutes and programs
- increased support for transdisciplinary fields and projects under the Humanities Research Institute
- increased team-taught courses for broad, interdisciplinary, context-credit courses
- creation of the Marilyn I. Walker Cultural Leader Series; have exit surveys of participants
- fostering of interdisciplinary conferences and symposia, including Congress 2014

Priority 6 Promoting internationalization

Strategic Objectives

- Increased participation by faculty in international initiatives for teaching and research
- Increased involvement by students in international exchange opportunities

Strategic Actions

- promote benefits of international exchanges for students, and international collaborations for faculty; ensure better publicity about overseas opportunities, and make it easy to participate—including enhanced bursaries for students and faculty to go on overseas exchanges
- increase participation by international visitors in teaching, research and community engagement
- enhance international residency program for visiting artists, writers, scholars (e.g., Fulbright)
- establish institutional and individual memberships in international organizations
- build on our relationship with the University at Buffalo e.g., establish a new binational MA in Canadian-American Studies; enhance existing Crossing Borders conference
- explore new opportunities with other international institutions, and build networks of international exchange and collaboration
- create International blogs, with "Brock Ambassadors" students on exchange

- increase in total numbers over 2012-13 baseline of international activities by faculty and students (collaborations, research trips, students coming to Canada for Brock Humanities programs)
- increase number of visiting professorships, keynotes, cross-cultural research grants and participation

Priority 7 Practising accountability, fiscal responsibility and stewardship

Strategic Objectives

- Effective and cost-efficient use of existing resources
- Enhanced revenue generation
- Demonstrated fiscal accountability

Strategic Actions

- explore non-credit, online, "summer camp" opportunities as revenue generators
- coordinate efforts to develop a Faculty-wide framework and business plan
- ramp up Spring/Summer courses and programs; coordinate efforts across the Faculty to provide a complete & coherent slate of Spring/Summer offerings
- ensure effective and timely systems for financial and student data collection and reporting to academic units
- develop and communicate a transparent and consistent budget process
- improve skills assessment, budget training, and templates for faculty/staff
- develop metrics of efficiency
- improve financial oversight by hiring a Budget Officer
- reduce expenditures; generate additional revenue; rationalize our offerings

- elimination of the Faculty of Humanities' inherited deficit
- balanced budget going forward
- programs that fit the available resources
- living within our means as a Faculty and a University