President’s Awards for Outstanding Service in 2018

INDIVIDUAL AWARD RECIPIENTS

Greg Atkinson
Manager, Information Technology
Faculty of Science

John Bentley
Customs and Traffic Officer
Financial Affairs

Amber Bukata
Manager, Staffing and Administration
Faculty of Engineering

Lori Dillon
Manager, Research Communications
Office of the Vice-President, Research

Pamela Forsyth
Managing Director, Research Enterprise
Family Medicine

Pat Fraser
Administrator
Economics

Laura Jakubczyk Johnson
Administrative Assistant
Office of Interdisciplinary Studies

Simon Oakley
Creative and Web Development Manager
Media Production Services

SPHCE-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY (SLP) PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Sarah Hagens
Vanessa Killinger

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

Ni Jadon
Senior Project Manager / International Liaison Officer
Office of International Affairs

Lori Goff
Interim Director
MacPherson Institute

Susan Graci
Accounts Payable Associate
Financial Affairs

Jon Kruithof
Learning Technologies Analyst
MacPherson Institute

Diana Lefebvre
Research Manager, CHILD Study
Medicine

Nancy McKenzie
Manager, Biomedical Discovery and Commercialization
Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences

Mary Lou Schmuck
Research Assistant, Education Services
Faculty of Health Sciences

Michael Wilson
Research Technology Analyst
Research Office for Administration, Development & Support (ROADS)

COMMONS FIRE TEAM

Dine Annou
Admir Azari
Peter Broz
Ian James
Tyler Rogers
Martin Schobert
Brad Townsend
Joseph Zubek

institutional quality assurance process (IQAP) working group

Erin Aspenlieder
Stephanie Baschiera
Christina Bryce
Lori Goff
Amy Gullage
Julianne Simpson
Elliot Storm
Greg Van Gastel
Melec Zeadin
PRESIDENT’S AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN 2018

INDIVIDUAL NOMINEES

1. **Greg Atkinson***
   
   *Manager, Information Technology*
   
   *Faculty of Science*

   Greg Atkinson has worked at McMaster for 12 years and is currently the manager of information technology for the Faculty of Science, a new position created to enhance IT service delivery for the Faculty. Previously, Greg was the Faculty’s media specialist supervisor. As the manager, Greg has used initiatives such as the IT Forum to connect and inform his colleagues on IT issues. He developed the McMaster Creative Community to enhance the use of various technologies and helped launch the Faculty’s IT Newsletter. He is also an active participant in the McMaster Tech RoundTable.

   Perhaps Greg’s greatest impact on McMaster has been helping to bring blended learning to the University. He was part of the team that won an earlier President’s Award for its work on the blended Intro Psychology 1X03 course. Greg has made a significant personal commitment to helping to build the Blended Learning Community of Practice and has volunteered hundreds of hours to capture and record live lectures across campus including the TEDx talks at McMaster and Three Minute Thesis events. He was also part of the President’s Award-winning team that enhanced the McMaster Academic Planner so that students in high school would have a clearer understanding of the academic paths they wish to following in Science at McMaster.

   *Denotes Individual Award Recipient*
2. John Bentley*
*Customs and Traffic Officer
Financial Affairs

Now ten years into his McMaster career, John Bentley has become an indispensable part of the University’s immensely successful research enterprise—an accomplishment that may seem unusual for a customs and traffic officer from Financial Affairs. However, in that role, John oversees the arrival and departure of international shipments originating from or destined to McMaster. This, of course, includes many urgent and sensitive shipments that are important to biomedical research in particular. John’s unfailing ability to ensure that shipments arrive reliably and safely while keeping all affected researchers informed at every step along the way is a critical component of numerous McMaster research projects.

John consistently goes above and beyond expectations to ensure the safe delivery of research samples to labs around the world and while this important work fits well with John’s serious disposition, he is also a collegial contributor to both the Financial Affairs team and the research teams he supports. He does everything he can to make his colleagues’ work easier. In fact, he has a track record of proactively intervening in the shipment process when it looks like problems may arise and he works rigorously to ensure that every avoidable challenge is addressed before any shipment goes out the door. With shipments of particularly vital importance or difficulty, John takes over all aspects of the shipment to ensure its safe and timely passage.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient
Amber Bukata*
Manager, Staffing and Administration
Faculty of Engineering

Amber Bukata began her McMaster career in 2002 as the staffing administrator for the Faculty of Engineering, was soon promoted to executive officer and then, in 2012, assumed her current position of manager of staffing and administration for the Faculty. In that capacity, she is responsible for developing and implementing the Faculty’s human resources functions including recruitment, retention, compensation and labour relations.

Amber tailors recruitment strategies to attract the best talent and has been a key player in developing and delivering the curriculum for the Faculty Development Academy’s workshop on faculty recruitment and searches. She also initiated and manages the Faculty’s Employee Engagement Program which has become a valuable platform for enhancing employee involvement and job satisfaction.

Amber’s influence is not limited to the Faculty; a number of her initiatives – including teaching agreement contracts and the Engineering Life Event Fund – have been adopted and adapted by other units at the University. Amber has also been active in campus-wide committees and working groups including the Joint Job Evaluation Committee, the TMG Total Rewards Steering Committee, the MacVIP HR Working Group, the TMG Job Evaluation Committee, the HR Mosaic Advisory Committee and the Finance Mosaic Advisory Committee. She was a Mosaic Super User and co-chair of the re-designed TMG Committee. She is also a member of the Hiring & Onboarding Working Group and is co-chair of the TMG Total Compensation Sub-Committee.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient
4. **Lori Dillon***  
*Manager, Research Communications  
Office of the Vice-President, Research*

Lori Dillon is McMaster University’s first research communicator, defining and exemplifying the role ever since the Office of the Vice-President Research was initially established in 1994. Her position is multifaceted, requiring a unique talent and a commitment to an ever-evolving research portfolio. Lori builds bridges between the hundreds of McMaster’s researchers who have compelling stories to tell, discoveries to be celebrated, and technologies to be promoted.

Lori raises awareness about the University’s research excellence to a variety of partners, ranging from funding agencies, municipal, provincial and federal governments, business, industry and the broader public. She uses her considerable networking and writing skills to communicate the significance of McMaster research, and the impact of our world-leading centres and institutes.

During her tenure as the Manager of Research Communications, Lori has developed dozens of creative products: from newspaper ads to annual reports, and from specialty publications to research magazines, her ongoing efforts have highlighted and drawn attention to the important work of researchers from every Faculty. She has also instituted a number of unique ongoing events that have promoted and celebrated McMaster’s research excellence to both our internal and external stakeholders.

Lori was instrumental in the delivery of McMaster’s first comprehensive Strategic Research Plan in April of 2018 – involved fully from concept to finished product. Her considerable institutional knowledge and expertise contributed to a guiding document that will help the University meet the complex challenges of the future, while providing a framework to enhance the University’s research enterprise.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient*
Pam Forsyth*  
**Managing Director, Research Enterprise**  
Department of Family Medicine

Pam Forsyth joined the Department of Family Medicine in 2015 in the newly established position of managing director of research operations after working as administrative director of the McMaster-hosted National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools. Since her arrival, Pam has played an important role in scaling up the Family Medicine research enterprise. In the process, she has enhanced the research team’s sense of connection through her weekly “What’s Up?” newsletter and has worked to strengthen on-campus connections through, for example, the partnership she established with the undergraduate medical education program to involve students in primary care research.

Off campus, Pam has brokered partnerships with organizations including the William Osler Health System and the Canadian Red Cross. Pam’s critical role in developing this latter relationship helped garner significant attention locally and nationally and culminated in the signing of an MOU in 2017 along with earning the CRC Partners in Humanity Award in 2018.

A dedicated member of the McMaster community, Pam consistently participates in the TMG Day of Service and the annual McMaster United Way Bus Pull. With her leadership and encouragement, the research group regularly raises funds for different community organizations including the Shelter Health Network and collects food and gifts for the North Hamilton Community Health Centre during the holidays. She has also championed the department’s participation in the “Indigenous Teaching through Art” program.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient*
6. **Pat Fraser***  

*Administrator*  
**Department of Economics**

Pat Fraser was the administrative secretary in the Bachelor of Health Sciences Program for nearly a decade before becoming the first administrative assistant for the Women’s Studies Program in 1989. There, she played a key role in building the program, developing its network of stakeholders and connecting it to International Women’s Day. Pat then joined the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics before becoming the administrative coordinator and event planner with HEALNet.

In 2000, Pat accepted the position of assistant university secretary and then played an irreplaceable role in establishing the unified University Secretariat. She joined the DeGroote School of Business as executive officer in 2007 and, as one colleague wrote, was the “keel that helped keep the DeGroote ship steady in rough waters” during a period of transition. In 2013, Pat joined the Department of Economics as the administrator.

An active leader in the group of administrators within the Faculty of Social Sciences and an important resource for the Faculty’s 50th anniversary celebrations, Pat has had a significant impact on her department. She spearheaded the development of a comprehensive and measurably successful departmental social media strategy and was the cornerstone in the move to introduce direct-entry admission for high school students into economics. In September 2019, the students of the first class of Economics I will begin their studies, thus enriching Pat’s McMaster legacy significantly.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient*
7. **Lori Goff**  
*Interim Director*  
MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching

Since May 2018, Lori Goff has served as the acting director and now interim director of the Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching. As director, she has enhanced communication between the MacPherson Institute and other campus areas and achieved significant improvements in the application of policy within the institute. For five years prior to taking on the director role, Lori was the associate director of MacPherson’s Program and Educational Development team. Under Lori’s leadership, the team has become a recognized leader in the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and in 2018, Ontario’s Quality Council auditors formally acknowledged the team’s excellence following a scheduled IQAP audit.

Lori previously guided the merger of two related MacPherson teams when she brought together the program enhancement and educational development units. This restructured approach – which is unique in Ontario – provides more coordinated service to McMaster departments and faculties. Lori also spearheaded the Experiential Learning in Academic Programming grant for McMaster faculty and has overseen a number of student-focused experiential learning initiatives including McMaster Children and Youth University in the City and MacChangers.

Beyond her leadership roles at the MacPherson Institute, Lori has a long track record of teaching excellence, including teaching the Science 3M03 – Applied Curriculum Design in Science course she co-developed. She is also a leader in the educational development community, serving as co-chair of the Council of Ontario Educational Developers.
8. Sue Graci
*Accounts Payable Associate*
Financial Affairs

Sue Graci has been a relationship associate working on the Accounts Payable Help Desk since 2014. The hallmark of her time at the desk is providing one-on-one assistance to McMaster employees. Sue is also well known for making herself available to anyone who needs help, whether for problem solving or training. She was particularly successful in this role as users were learning Mosaic. Sue was, for example, the go-to person for issues related to P card, non-PO vouchers and travel expenses. Clients responded extremely well to her help and she worked hard to ensure that every client was satisfied with the support he or she received.

Sue also has a track record of producing outstanding user guides, video demonstrations and webinars, always trying to give the end users as much useful information as possible. Sue is currently developing a series of short video demonstrations for the McMaster Online Resource Essentials (MORE) site. Her work as the writer and producer of these videos – each targeted at a specific, common problem – ensures that system users do not have to wait for help.

Sue is currently working on the new e-procurement MacBuy project as an assistant trainer – a project she was selected for specifically because of her success with Mosaic and the help desk. Sue also volunteered for several years on the Inspiring from Within Committee.
9. Ni Jadon**  
*Senior Project Manager / International Liaison Officer*

Office of International Affairs

Ni Jadon joined McMaster University in 1986 as a senior research coordinator with the Occupational Health Program, then moved to the Institute of Environment and Health where he oversaw the inauguration of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health. In 1996, Ni became the senior project manager and international liaison officer with the Office of International Affairs (OIA), a position he has held since, with the exception of a short time working with the Department of Family Medicine.

Ni has built an impressive legacy of contributions to the University’s local, national and international communities. He was lead organizer of the “Education City” Ontario Association of International Education conference and has represented McMaster as a director of the Canadian Higher Education Group. He made invaluable contributions to Mac’s hosting of the International Association of Universities’ Leading Globally Engaged Universities Program – an international peer-learning opportunity for higher education leaders. In 2011, he also organized McMaster’s first International Forum on Research and Development, attracting 200 delegates from 11 countries.

This past year, Ni coordinated the first McMaster-CNRS workshop on Materials Science and Applied Mathematics, an effort which led to the founding of the McMaster-CNRS Fund. He also helped drive McMaster’s recent admission into the Universitas 21, a global network of research universities. A leading proponent of the International Initiatives Micro Fund, Ni is also an active mentor with the Association of International Education Administrators.

**Denotes Special Achievement Award Recipient**
10. **Laura Jakubczyk Johnson**

*Administrative Assistant, Office of Interdisciplinary Studies*

**Faculty of Humanities**

Laura Jakubczyk Johnson has been the administrative assistant in the Faculty of Humanities Office of Interdisciplinary Studies (OIS) since 2015. Working with the Graduate Program in Gender Studies and Feminist Research (GSFR) and the Peace Studies Program, Laura is the first point of contact for student inquiries and she coordinates admissions for graduate programs and also administers key grant applications and independent research projects. With a strong history of building collaborative relationships with community groups and organizations, she also schedules courses, supports faculty, assists with recruitment and helps coordinate events including the Annual Gandhi Lecture, the Bertrand Russell Lectures and the GSFR Research Symposium.

Laura’s exceptional organizational skills help her track key administrative milestones for faculty and even every student in the program. She ensures that everyone meets every important deadline, in part because she developed and implemented – on her own initiative – a tracking system that allows her to send reminders to students and flag potentially problematic issues. She has a similar tracking system for faculty. By archiving this information year to year, Laura has also created a powerful quality and accountability resource that facilitated a much simpler Peace Studies IQAP review.

Laura has been a member of the McMaster Healthy Workplace Committee since 2014 and is also a Certified Joint Health and Safety Committee member and a co-investigator for the Joint Anti-Harassment Committee. She completed the two-day Mental Health First Aid program in 2016.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient*
11. Jon Kruithof  
*Learning Technologies Analyst*  
MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching

Jon Kruithof has been a learning technologies analyst since 2011, working in the MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching to provide support to Avenue to Learn, ePortfolios and other learning technologies. He administers key teaching and learning tools including the Learning Management System (LMS) and also manages major projects such as the Learning Outcomes Assessment tool pilot.

In providing support to McMaster’s academic enterprise, Jon has established a reputation for responsiveness, creativity and reliability while also building a track record of working with the University’s teachers to help them develop their own technical expertise. In fact, Jon’s support has allowed many McMaster faculty members to establish technology-enhanced classes and courses while also establishing their own credentials in the learning technology arena. Several of Jon’s faculty clients have even presented their strategies and implementation plans at educator conferences around the world.

Jon works to stay connected to key committees and creative communities related to his work at the MacPherson Institute. He has been an active member of the Badge Alliance – now part of the IMS Global Learning Consortium – as well as the Standards Working Group, the Higher Education Policy Group, the Copyright Advisory Board and the Learning Portfolio Committee.
Diana Lefebvre
Research Manager, CHILD Study
Department of Medicine

Diana Lefebvre is the research manager for the Canadian Healthy Infant Longitudinal Development (CHILD) Study, a national consortium of researchers working under McMaster-based leadership. The study, which focuses on gene-environment interactions in the development of allergy and asthma, began in 2009 and from those early days Diana has played a pivotal role in the success of a project that has involved nearly 3,500 children and families, many of whom Diana has recruited to the study herself.

Highly respected for her calm and clear leadership, Diana is an influential mentor to junior staff and an invaluable ally for senior staff. As the leader of the CHILD National Coordinating Centre (NCC), she has been a key figure in establishing the centre’s international reputation in clinical and research activities, a reputation built in no small part upon Diana’s consistent dedication to accuracy in the collection and annotation of data and samples, the control of scientific processes, adherence to protocols and thorough documentation.

Diana’s ingenuity is a vital part of the CHILD Study as she has developed novel approaches to study management, drafted inventive testing questionnaires and created invaluable sample protocols. She also worked tirelessly in 2018 to expand the study’s data collection effort to include neurodevelopment and metabolic disorders while also – at a more nuts-and-bolts level – shepherding the program through a database system transfer.
Nancy McKenzie
Program Manager, Biomedical Discovery and Commercialization
Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences

Nancy McKenzie joined the Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences in 2014 as the manager of the new Biomedical Discovery and Commercialization (BDC) Program. Her diverse role includes administering both undergraduate and graduate courses, guiding curriculum development, making community connections and managing human resources and finances. She also leads an annual and painstaking analysis of the BDC program with various stakeholders. With these wide-ranging responsibilities, Nancy has clearly played a central role in the program’s success.

Prior to joining the BDC, Nancy spent six years as an assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology where she developed an innovative curriculum for the then-new Chemical Biology undergraduate program.

With the BDC, Nancy has taken the lead on networking and community outreach events including the Fall BDC Industry Preview and the Winter BDC Engage event. She also frequently delivers presentations off campus at events including Bayer Pharmaceuticals’ Innovation and Digital Day. She displayed tremendous creativity and skill in navigating the program through the near-simultaneous transitions to the Mosaic system, to working within the Faculty of Health Sciences instead of the Faculty of Science and to launching a new community internship initiative. She also developed a job posting and application board for the Master’s internship recruitment cycle and built a new career development and employability preparation milestone workshop into the program curriculum.
Simon Oakley
*Creative and Web Development Manager
Media Production Services

Simon Oakley joined McMaster’s Media Production Services (MPS) in 2008 as a senior designer before being promoted to the management team as creative and web development manager in 2014. His notable work with MPS includes developing several websites of University-wide importance including sites for the University brand, directories, teaching excellence and future student recruitment. These projects and others have seen Simon and his MPS design team earn awards such as the 2019 Accolades GOLD Award, the 2017 CUPMAC Production Award for Graphic Design, the 2017 2nd Prize CAUBO Quality and Productivity Awards, the 2017 SSHRC Award of Excellence for Communications and the 2016 Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education’s Best Fundraising Initiative Prix D’Excellence.

Simon’s work is about much more than simply the quality of the design, however. He and his team have also been recognized frequently for the their commitment to exceptional service. The 2018 MPS Customer Survey produced comments like, “Simon is awesome and it is always a pleasure to work with him and his team.” The team also earned the 2018 CUPMAC Accelerated Service Award, the 2016 CUPMAC Collaborative Service Award and the 2014 CUPMAC Impression Award for Distinctive Service.

Outside of MPS, Simon has earned a reputation for his commitment to broader McMaster initiatives including the Marketing Group and the Web Advisory Committee. He also championed the involvement of MPS in the Movember men’s health campaign.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient
Mary Lou Schmuck  
*Research Assistant, Education Services*  
Faculty of Health Sciences

Mary Lou Schmuck has been part of the McMaster Education Research, Innovation and Theory (MERIT) team and its antecedent organizations for nearly three decades, starting initially as a research assistant. Her work has expanded over the years and she now has critical responsibilities in support of the Undergraduate MD Program and the McMaster Community and Rural Education (MacCARE) Program.

A contributing author on numerous peer-reviewed publications, Mary Lou has devoted her career to innovation in education and has become a key contributor to the development of plans that enhance the learning experience provided by the MD program and its regional campuses. Specifically, Mary Lou’s reports have helped enhance the Internal Medicine Clerkship program and helped set the standard for evaluation reporting for all clerkship activities in the Undergraduate MD Program.

Beyond her research-related contributions, Mary Lou has long provided the kind of positive attitude that is supportive to students and early-career researchers in particular. She plays a key role in building the constructive work culture in the program and consistently sets a strong example through her impressive work ethic. Mary Lou is a quiet leader who devotes a significant amount of her own time to supporting colleagues on research, professional and administrative issues, just as she goes out of her way to ensure that the team celebrates personal milestones from birthdays to new homes and growing families.
Michael Wilson
Research Technology Analyst
Research and High Performance Computing Service

Michael Wilson has worked for the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB) for over 18 years as the research ethics officer. His unique and powerful combination of knowledge of research ethics guidelines and computing also made him the ideal project lead for the new online research ethics application submission and review system – MacREM (McMaster Research Ethics Manager).

Michael’s distinctive contributions to McMaster’s research enterprise include single-handedly adapting and streamlining the generic ethics submission and review software to suit McMaster researchers’ needs. He also integrated and automated reporting to reduce the demands of tri-council reporting and helped prepare the system for a capacity crunch he helped identify. Previously, Michael developed the first online research ethics tutorial in Canada and created online tutorials that have reduced both problems and person-to-person consultations. As a result, efficiency, processing speed and reporting quality have all increased.

Michael served as the secretariat for seven Student Research Ethics Committees and has volunteered with the Health TAPESTRY program since 2014. He was a volunteer tutorial facilitator for three years for a graduate-level Health Research Methods, Evidence and Impact course on health informatics and volunteered with Digital Health Canada to write and publish guidelines on the privacy and security of personal health information. Beyond McMaster, Michael has been invited to participate in a global conference on research ethics administration and has helped establish a community of best practices with partners in Ontario.
PRESIDENT’S AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN 2018

TEAM NOMINEES

1. Commons Fire Team

On Wednesday, October 10, 2018, the exceptional efforts of several McMaster staff turned a dangerous situation into an example of professionalism, quick thinking and even bravery. At 5:52 pm that day, Admir Azari, a custodian for Housing and Conference Services, noticed flames in an area of the Commons Building that was under construction. His quick report – received at the Security Services Communication Centre by special constable Peter Broz – triggered a response that Hamilton Fire Service later credited with preventing a blaze that could have endangered lives and destroyed the Commons Building.

McMaster special constables Dine Annou, Martin Schober and Brad Townsend responded to the Commons Building. Unable to access the fire, Aaron and Martin breached a window to unlock the door and begin fighting the rapidly spreading fire. Putting themselves in harm’s way, they contained the blaze and limited the associated damage and danger.

Special constable Tyler Rogers, along with staff sergeant Joe Zubek, who reported to campus from home, as well as staff sergeant Ian James who reported on his day off, conducted the subsequent investigation.

Even with the demands of having to think and act quickly under duress and facing a tremendously dangerous situation – this group of McMaster staff responded to and contained a potentially life-threatening fire in just five minutes.

Team Members

Dean Annou
Admir Azari
Peter Broz
Ian James

Tyler Rogers
Martin Schober
Brad Townsend
Joe Zubek

Since 2014, the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Working Group has been the foundation of a collaboration between the MacPherson Institute and the School of Graduate Studies in support of cyclical academic program reviews, the design of new academic programs and major program modifications. The new level of coordination the working group has achieved has helped reduce department and faculty anxiety around the rigorous review process. The team now provides personalized supports along with consultations, departmental retreats and program-specific curriculum maps. The team has also developed tools – including guidebooks and information sessions – to help academic units through their reviews.

In 2018, McMaster’s IQAP approach was subject to a regularly scheduled audit by the provincial Quality Council. The IQAP Working Group spearheaded the preparation for this audit and the auditors were so impressed with McMaster’s process that they requested that the team prepare special presentations for the annual Quality Council provincial forum.

The IQAP Working Group’s innovative approaches – including the collaborative use of Sharepoint technology and the unique involvement of student curriculum partners in the IQAP process – have made McMaster an identified centre of excellence in quality assurance. Members of the team are now sought-after experts on program reviews and are often-invited presenters at conferences. Members of the team also currently lead the Council of Ontario Educational Developers curriculum group and represent McMaster at provincial quality assurance meetings.

**Team Members**

Erin Aspenlieder  
Stephanie Baschiera  
Christina Bryce  
Lori Goff  
Amy Gullage  
Julianne Simpson  
Elliot Storm  
Greg Van Gastel  
Melec Zeadin
3. **Speech Language Pathology (SLP) Program Administration*  

Vanessa Killinger, program coordinator, and Sarah Hagens, program assistant, worked closely with the assistant dean to develop and launch McMaster’s Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) program within the School of Rehabilitation Science. Vanessa and Sarah played critical roles with the faculty and assistant dean throughout the process of building the inaugural curriculum. They have consistently demonstrated the creativity, enthusiasm and determination required when doing everything for the first time.

Vanessa, for example, created the SLP program orientation week, ensuring the week would meet incoming students’ needs from learning the campus to being informed about available mental health supports. Throughout the planning and execution of the week, she welcomed feedback from students and faculty and adjusted the program accordingly. Sarah was instrumental in working with the director of clinical education to create the processes and forms required to successfully roll out students’ clinical placements.

Vanessa is often the first contact for prospective SLP students and her professional, warm and knowledgeable style sets the tone for the program. Vanessa and Sarah reliably respond to every program request with careful attention to detail and in a manner that builds collaborative relationships. Together, they played central roles in ensuring that the inaugural year of the SLP program was a great success by working together as a seamless unit, bringing unfailing energy and personality to their work.

*Denotes Team Award Recipient

---

**Team Members**

Sarah Hagens  
Vanessa Killinger