President’s Awards
FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN 2019

Nominees and Recipients
PRESIDENT’S AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN 2019

INDIVIDUAL NOMINEES

Nicole Buston
Associate, Student Experience
DeGroote School of Business

Nicole Buston started her career at the University in 2009 as an Administrative Assistant in the Department of Surgery at McMaster Children’s Hospital and then moved to the DeGroote School of Business Student Experience Office as an Associate in 2017. In that role, Nicole single-handedly triages all questions, missed coursework requests and appointments for more than 3,400 Bachelor of Commerce students and more than 150 Integrated Business and Humanities students. She is also nearly legendary for her ability to remember the names of any students who revisit her office.

Nicole is passionate about removing barriers and making student services more accessible. She has undertaken a range of professional development opportunities to help her better serve as a mental health advocate for McMaster’s students. She is pursuing Professional Addiction Studies and has completed courses and workshops in subjects including Mental Health First Aid, safeTALK and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). Nicole’s sensitivity also extends to her interactions with students who require, for example, religious, Indigenous and spiritual observances (RISO) accommodations. She ensures that each request is approached with respect and she even initiated a change in the RISO procedures to help protect student privacy.

A key member of the DeGroote Project Collaboration Committee, Nicole is part of the Joint Health and Safety Committee and is co-organizing a DeGroote Health and Safety training day for which she has developed the training guide.
Kathy Greaves*
Administrative Assistant
Biology

Kathy Greaves has been part of the Department of Biology team for more than 35 years. As the Administrative Assistant, she supports the entire department, doing a job that was once— in many ways — the work of four. Throughout her long tenure, Kathy has adapted to duties ranging from hiring temporary and casual staff— including summer, co-op and work-study students — to maintaining the confidentiality of the tenure and promotion processes. She is the main contact for anyone visiting the department and she has proven to be phenomenally successful in securing private-sector financial contributions for department and student events. Kathy is also well known for her support of international visitors and post-doctoral fellows as they navigate arriving not just at a new institution, but in a new country.

A decade and a half ago, Kathy helped develop the Department of Biology Annual Report and also created the Bioweek Newsletter. She was instrumental to the restructuring of administrative support roles in the department and in the Faculty of Science by, for example, streamlining administrative forms, producing user guides and improving internal communications. She provides invaluable support to both the Biology Graduate Students Association and the undergraduate Biology Society while also connecting the biology family by leading Halloween festivities, playing Elf in the annual research lab visits by Santa and volunteering with the McMaster Children’s Party.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient
Paul Hoag*
*Executive Chef
Hospitality Services

Paul Hoag has been the Executive Chef of Hospitality Services for seven years, earning his Certified Chef de Cuisine designation – the second highest honour for a chef – and Certified Executive Chef designation as well. He is a member of the 2020 Canadian Culinary Olympic Team and has excelled in international competitions including placing eighth in the World Gourmet Society’s Best Plate video competition and earning a team bronze medal at the 2018 Villeroy & Boch Culinary World Cup. He was also invited to help prepare the 2019 Nobel Prize Awards Banquet hosted by the Swedish royal family.

At McMaster, Paul has been responsible for the outstanding culinary offerings at reputational University events including his sustainability-themed Magna Charta Gala dinner and the Indigenous menu he created to celebrate the new Chancellor’s installation at November Convocation. He also spearheaded the multiple-award winning SMPL allergen-free dining station in the Centro dining hall.

Paul oversees the Hospitality Services Culinary Apprenticeship Program and has several employees pursuing their cooking apprenticeships under his guidance. He inaugurated McMaster’s now-annual participation in the Living Rock Ministries fundraiser Soupfest and guided the McMaster team to two awards in the first year of that competition. In 2019, Paul’s innovative Cream of Buffalo Chicken Soup took the top Soupfest prize. On campus, he has been part of the Light Up the Night party and the Hungry Games competition.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient
Salina Jaffer
Administrator
Chemistry and Chemical Biology (CCB)

Salina Jaffer joined the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology (CCB) in 2018 as the Departmental Administrator after working previously with the School of Rehabilitation Science and the CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research. Arriving in CCB, Salina committed herself to understanding core facilities such as Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy and Mass Spectrometry to facilitate the handover of those operations from CCB to the Faculty of Science. Her one-on-one meetings with staff helped guide her development of more efficient processes including deploying fillable PDF forms and using the Wunderlist app. Additionally, she met with each of the faculty, reviewing their research program status and even helped many get comfortable and confident with Mosaic. Salina has also volunteered to participate in the evaluation of new administrative structures on campus, such as MacBuy and the new Business Intelligence interface.

Salina challenged CCB to improve its standing within the Faculty and within the Canadian chemistry community. She joined the curriculum committee for the new Sustainable Chemistry program where she did proactive research on similar programs to help raise the bar at McMaster. She also advocated for increasing the department’s profile by promoting the Magic of Molecules events, the Periodic Table alumni event and other outreach activities. Salina consistently advocates for evaluating CCB programs against external metrics and this practice has resulted in a number of departmental innovations including enhanced marketing.
Paula Johnson
Associate Registrar, Student Recruitment
Registrar’s Office

Paula Johnson, the Associate Registrar, Student Recruitment, has been part of the McMaster team for nearly three decades and through more than half a million interactions with prospective students. Paula has helped make McMaster’s first impression directly and indirectly through everything from campus tours to the Ontario Universities Fair (OUF). She has twice chaired OURA’s (Ontario Universities Registrars’ Association) Standing Committee on Student Recruitment and has served on the OURA executive. She was a member of the planning committee for the OUF and has been part of the Ontario Universities’ Application Centre advisory board. Currently, Paula chairs the Ontario Universities’ Info editorial board and is part of the Ontario Universities’ Regional Fairs task force.

One of the defining accomplishments of Paula’s tenure at McMaster is the leadership she has shown in international recruitment over the last couple of years. In 2016, the Registrar’s Office had no resources dedicated to international recruitment and international students made up just 7% of the undergraduate population. However, when the University prioritized international student enrolment, Paula prepared a coherent recruitment strategy in just three weeks and secured the funding to build the team, resources and internal campus connections to deliver on the strategy. The result is a five-person international recruitment team that has extended its reach to 36 countries and helped grow international enrolment to 20% of the first-year class.
Mary Kiriakopoulos has been a member of the McMaster community and the Faculty of Health Sciences since 1988. Her career path has seen her take on roles in the Department of Pathology, the Faculty’s Human Resources Office, and the Faculty’s Office of the Dean and Vice-President. Mary’s present role as Executive Assistant supports the Assistant Vice-President in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Soon after arriving in her current position, Mary became the team’s “go-to” person by anticipating colleagues’ needs and offering her in-depth knowledge of Faculty and University policies and procedures.

Mary has enhanced the work, efficiency and effectiveness of the AVP’s office by creating new processes and tracking mechanisms including a new system to manage safety training. She developed specialized methods for collecting, archiving and retrieving important information and built from scratch the systems the office uses for tracking complex data.

Mary has been a long-time member of the Children’s Party Committee – where she served as chair in 2013 – and of the ConnectME Committee which she chaired in 2014. She has committed significant time, even beyond normal work hours, to these volunteer efforts and to Faculty of Health Sciences activities and events including numerous gift announcements, open houses, Community of Distinction ceremonies and the Dean’s Holiday Reception.
Jared Lenover*

Marketing and Communications Strategist (Digital)
DeGroote School of Business

As the Marketing and Communications Strategist (Digital) for the DeGroote School of Business, Jared Lenover has a significant impact on McMaster’s digital presence at both the institutional and school-specific levels. In fact, his expertise is so well established he has served as an instructor in social media with the Centre for Continuing Education.

Jared led the development of the website for DeGroote’s research enterprise, building a system that allowed the DeGroote site to pull content from four other McMaster sites, thus enhancing accuracy and reducing the site management burden on the School. He redesigned the tracking system for MBA applicants, a project that fundamentally changed the way DeGroote recruits prospective students. He also used a routine assignment of updating a single display screen to create and launch a new strategy for employing public display screens to support and enhance the DeGroote culture.

Jared is a founding member of the Faculty Web Leads Committee which addresses issues such as data privacy, web accessibility and digital security and he has an impressive track record of managing work-study students. In that latter role, he personalizes the experience to each individual student so they can get the most out of their jobs. As a result, many students now seek out placements with Jared because they have learned about the depth of his expertise and the quality of the learning experience he provides.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient
Celeste Licorish
Access Program Manager
Office of Community Engagement

Celeste Licorish joined McMaster in 2019 as the University’s first Access Program Manager, leading the development of pathways for under-represented students to access postsecondary opportunities at McMaster. She has already established close partnerships with the Hamilton school boards and local community organizations while inaugurating a new access-oriented scholarship. These elements were part of the access strategy Celeste launched in June 2019 just four months after her first day. The quality of her work and working relationships was reflected in the fact that every person she invited from both campus and the community attended the launch.

Celeste has enhanced the credibility of McMaster’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. She has already established a track record of building strong relationships and of listening to the concerns of marginalized high school students and the community groups that support them. Additionally, she is connecting high school students directly to the McMaster experience through linkages with, for example, the Socrates Project and the Wilson Leaders Program. Celeste is also a founding member of an equity sub-committee recently created within the Office of Community Engagement.

Celeste founded a new community of practice to link recruiters from postsecondary institutions in Ontario and to share strategies for shifting the broader postsecondary system on issues related to access. She has also worked with McMaster’s recruiters to create and organize specific access tours for marginalized youth.

^Denotes Early Achievement Award Recipient
Lina Liu
Research Engineer
Chemical Engineering

Lina Liu has played an integral research role in the Department of Chemical Engineering for almost 15 years. While running her own projects, Lina also maintains the overall lab, works closely with students and works to develop new research methods. She has a strong track record of performing experiments that validate commercial products and has delivered exceptional work for companies including Alcon and Johnson & Johnson. She has been a big contributor to a number of other innovations in the lab, including developing everything from contact lens materials to drug delivery systems. Recently, Lina devised a novel method to radiolabel polymers to allow the lab to track polymers in vivo.

Lina’s lab colleagues affectionately refer to her as the “Oracle” because she knows where everything is, how every technique works and how to negotiate with external suppliers. She is always willing to assume extra responsibilities when needed, particularly if it helps students with their work. Recently, Lina took on the responsibility of helping the Department of Chemical Engineering deliver a lab course when the lab was unexpectedly understaffed.

Lina also plays a big role in establishing the social culture of the lab. She rode in and raised money for Cycle for Sight and brought in baked goods to help inspire donations for Fighting Blindness Canada, an organization that raises money for eye disease and vision research.
Samantha Marino
*Research Lab Technician*
*Medicine*

Samantha Marino joined the Thrombosis and Atherosclerosis Research Institute (TaARI) in 2017 as a Research Technician. Her enthusiasm for the work of the lab is infectious and motivates colleagues, students and trainees. On the administrative front, Sam does an exceptional job of keeping lab expenses in check and maintaining the health of the institute’s animal colony. She is also an important contributor to the learning processes of TaARI trainees as well as in executing experiments throughout the lab. She has even completed the training necessary to draw blood from healthy donors, an absolutely necessary skill set at TaARI. Sam acts as the student safety check point when students are working alone or late and she often gives up her weekends or evenings if students need her help. She also has a big hand in student publications as well as in national and international student presentations.

Sam, who is a co-author on a manuscript currently under revision, is a powerful innovator who has solved every-day laboratory challenges like creating custom lids that perform better than the commercially available options. As an off-site facility, TaARI has fewer personnel available for various central tasks, so Sam is always the first to volunteer to take on responsibilities that help ensure all necessary services run smoothly. One of the most vital is Sam’s volunteer oversight of the research institute’s biobar.
Karen McGlynn  
*Senior Manager, Accounting and Financial Reporting*  
Financial Affairs

Now the Senior Manager, Accounting and Financial Reporting, Karen McGlynn joined Financial Affairs in 2003 as the Manager, Accounting and Financial Reporting. Karen’s current responsibilities include oversight of McMaster’s most important external financial reporting and analysis. She is also responsible for Trust and Endowment Fund reporting and for the general accounting staff. Karen is known for the exceptional accuracy of her work and she has led several initiatives to improve service. One of Karen’s key responsibilities is managing the year-end audit, a monumental job in a billion-dollar organization. Under Karen’s leadership, McMaster has improved the audit process significantly, modernizing procedures and technology and working every year to find new ways to enhance the quality of the audit.

Karen has been an active member of the Council of Ontario Financial Officers Financial Reporting Group for more than 15 years, chairing the group for the last three – an illustration of the respect she has earned from colleagues across the province. Back at McMaster, Karen is a regular participant in TMG Days of Service and has advocated powerfully for others to participate as well. She was one of the first managers in Financial Affairs to embrace a ‘360 evaluation’ and the results from her staff and peers were decidedly positive. Karen also makes work fun and starts the annual audit process with the rallying cry, “Welcome to the Stanley Cup for accountants!”
Nicole McLean  
*Administrator, Graduate Program*  
Mechanical Engineering

After working in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Nicole McLean became the Administrator of the Graduate Program in the Department of Mechanical Engineering where she manages the needs of students from the application process to final defences. Nicole is remarkably good at remembering the names of every student and making each one of them feel important. She attends student competitions, organizes a weekly pizza social and helps with potluck dinners. Recently, the strength of her relationships and generosity were particularly evident when the department lost a student in the Ukraine International Airlines disaster in Iran. Nicole attended the ceremonies and vigils and made herself available to any students who needed help during a most difficult time.

Nicole has improved the systems in the Mechanical Engineering graduate program in various ways including implementing better forms and an upgraded, web-based graduate admissions file handling system. She has successfully organized the fall orientation for new graduate students and expanded the program with orientations for students who join the department at other times of year as well. She was also instrumental in updating the Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Handbook. Nicole regularly volunteers her time for after-hours events including Meet the Profs nights and student recruitment events. She is also working closely with the Engineering Recruitment and Promotions Coordinator to develop new strategies for enhancing the department’s graduate student recruitment processes.
Joanne Milne
Assistant to the Chair
Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences

Joanne Milne started at McMaster in 1986, serving initially as the Psychiatry Residency Program Assistant and since 2002 she has been the Assistant to the Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences. In that capacity, she provides support to the chair while also coordinating key departmental visits, overseeing the department’s personnel files and organizing events including the Annual Research Day and, in 2017, the celebration of the department’s 50th anniversary. The anniversary events included an expertly delivered symposium, reception and a 300-guest gala.

While consistently delivering high-calibre, reliable and timely work, Joanne is also always prepared to help when needed, such as filling in for an absent colleague, preparing materials on tight deadlines or responding to last-minute changes in event plans. Joanne has also brought a number of new approaches to the department such as adapting the monthly Chair’s Newsletter into the twice-weekly, briefer, easier-to-read Chair’s Digest. She is a leader in suggesting and developing team-building events and activities for the department’s administrative team and has also organized and decorated the office space to make it more welcoming and user friendly. At Joanne’s initiative, the department has revised the organization of its career review process and she has played a vital role in initiating and delivering the department’s new and extremely successful Leadership Program.
Khadijeh Rakie*

*Equity and Inclusion Educator*

Equity and Inclusion Office

Khadijeh Rakie has been a valuable member of the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) for the past five years. As the Equity and Inclusion Educator, she creates and delivers educational programs and workshops for the entire McMaster community, provides equity consultation and organizes the HEART (Human Rights, Equity, Accessibility, Respect Toolkit) certificate program. She also supports the President’s Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community; the Race, Racialization and Racism Working Group and the Interfaith Issues Working Group. Khadijeh developed the Let’s Talk About Race Series that she has facilitated for the past three years.

Khadijeh works closely with various faith- and race-based student groups including the Muslim Students Association, Black Students Association, Pride Centre and the Women and Gender Equity Network. Her contributions also include supporting students through education on equity-related topics, even when she needs to connect with students beyond regular office hours. She served as the lead on the Challenging Islamophobia on Campus Initiative and in the past couple of years, Khadijeh has volunteered as a community mentor to students in the Gender Studies and Feminist Research Master of Arts program.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient*
Marcia Reid  
*Research Coordinator*  
Electron Microscopy Facility

For more than a quarter century, Marcia Reid has been a key member of the Faculty of Health Sciences Electron Microscopy (EM) Facility team. As a Research Technician, she quickly learns and implements new processes while supporting both students and investigators in their EM projects. Though her graduate degree is in biology, Marcia is equally effective working on projects in chemistry, biochemistry, materials science and engineering. She also has a strong track record of working successfully with national and international collaborators and has earned the trust of academic and industry partners.

Marcia regularly helps students and researchers overcome difficulties in their projects by finding innovative solutions and making thoughtful modifications to protocols in order to achieve optimal results. When, for example, the EM research group faced a challenge in imaging biofunctional polymeric substrates, Marcia worked diligently to research and test different potential approaches to sample preparation, ultimately finding an effective solution. Fittingly, Marcia has been an author or coauthor on more than 60 peer-reviewed papers, government reports, conference proceedings and book chapters. Earlier in her career, she actually assisted in completing the grant proposal that facilitated the purchase of an environmental scanning electron microscope, the first of its kind in Canada. As a former supervisor said, “There is no other person at McMaster who can do what Marcia does for the ultrastructure research community on campus and beyond.”
Leanne Ruiz*
Associate Registrar, Student Services
Registrar’s Office

In her nine years with the Registrar’s Office, Leanne Ruiz served as Manager, Student Services and as Assistant Registrar for Student Financial Aid & Scholarships (SFAS) before becoming Associate Registrar, Student Services in 2019. In that role, she built a collaborative process connecting three departments in the design of a new service model. Launched in December 2019, this new approach combined the front-line, student-facing services provided by SFAS, Student Accounts and Student Services. The result is a one-stop-shop for services that receive an average of 15,000 student contacts a month. With a first-contact resolution mission and the active promotion of self-service options, the program Leanne built has revolutionized student service while also generating benefits behind the scenes through redesigned business process, consolidated services, reimagined physical space and newly developed organizational structures.

With Leanne’s leadership, the Registrar’s Office also became one of the first in the sector to launch an on-demand, online chat service – a pilot project that was a huge success with students. Leanne also has a track record of supporting students more directly as she has personally helped many students – often those facing financial issues in conjunction with other personal struggles – manage and even thrive through difficult and delicate situations.

Beyond McMaster, Leanne was the Western Regional Representative for the Ontario Association of Financial Aid Administrators for four years and a member of the University Fees Committee for two.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient
Tricia Schneider
Research Coordinator
Surgery

Tricia Schneider has been a Research Coordinator at the Centre for Evidence-Based Orthopaedics in the Department of Surgery since 2014. Her work within the Musculoskeletal Oncology Unit was an irreplaceable part of the 12-country Prophylactic Antibiotics In Tumor Surgery (PARITY) trial, the first international multi-centre randomized controlled trial in orthopaedic oncology. She was also a vital contributor to the innovative SAFETY trial where Tricia created a survey that has been translated and used around the world. The trials led by Tricia and the McMaster team are not only the first in their field, but the largest ever in orthopaedic surgery with respect to the number of countries collaborating.

Tricia’s group has twice been awarded Best Collaborative Study by the Musculoskeletal Tumor Society and the group has also received the J. Eduoard Samson Award from the Canadian Orthopaedic Association, the premier award for orthopaedic research in Canada.

Tricia also developed a survey on gender-based harassment in orthopaedic surgery in order to acknowledge and investigate the role that gender may have on the experience of trainees and practicing surgeons in the field. This project and Tricia’s work were so well regarded that the Canadian Orthopaedic Association requested to partner with the McMaster team on the study. The results will be presented at the Canadian Orthopaedic Association Annual Meeting in Halifax in June 2020.
Elaine Shuhaibar*
*Clinical Instructor
School of Nursing

Initially a part-time member of the Centre for Simulation-Based Learning (CSBL) team, Elaine Shuhaibar became a full-time Clinical Instructor in 2005. Always looking to help her students excel, Elaine founded the CSBL Peer Tutoring Program that same year. In this program, she recruits, trains and mentors upper-year Nursing students to assist junior students. Initially, the program focused on clinical skills, but based on its success it now addresses a variety of issues including anatomy study, evidence-informed decision making, writing scholarly papers and support for students whose first language is not English. Elaine was also instrumental in identifying that students needed greater access to the CSBL lab and she responded by advocating successfully to expand the lab’s hours into evenings and weekends.

More recently, Elaine developed a process and forms that enhance communication among teaching faculty, students and administrators. Students say the referral form, for example, helps them stay on track while faculty receive information about how their students are meeting their learning goals in the CSBL.

Elaine has been an active volunteer with the McMaster Student Outreach Committee (Mac SOC), providing front-line care to people in the local homeless community and successfully initiating a fundraising event for the program. Elaine has also volunteered for May@Mac and always provides a welcoming experience to potential students visiting the CSBL sites where they can participate in simulations.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient
Julianne Simpson  
*Quality Assurance Specialist*  
Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching

Julianne Simpson began working with the McMaster Students Union in 2005 before moving to the Provost’s Office in 2010 as the Executive Assistant to the Vice-Provost (Faculty). She took on the new position of Quality Assurance Specialist in 2015 to coordinate the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) for undergraduate programs. Following a career growth position with the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, Julianne returned to the Quality Assurance Specialist role in 2018.

Julianne, who represents McMaster at the annual Quality Council Key Contacts meeting, was the University’s lead in preparing for the 2018 IQAP audit by Ontario’s Quality Council. She developed a Sharepoint-based approach to facilitate the audit and the auditors repeatedly commented on the quality of the support provided by Julianne. They also specifically commended several McMaster projects, in particular the Student Partners Program (SPP). Julianne had played a key role in expanding the MacPherson Institute’s SPP pilot by working with colleagues to initiate a stream of SPP dedicated to quality assurance. That program is unique in Ontario and was cited as a best practice by the Quality Council. Julianne contributed to a recent presentation of this work at the Student Voices in Quality Assurance conference.

Julianne has also made valuable contributions beyond her portfolio by, for example, suggesting a number of insightful ideas related to succession planning and staff onboarding based on the human resources courses she had taken.
Timothy Stephens*
Undergraduate Lab/Research Assistant
Chemical Engineering

Tim Stephens has been the Undergraduate Lab Technician for the Department of Chemical Engineering since 2015, delivering hands-on learning to senior undergraduates and supervising the teaching laboratory. As a measure of his dedication, he has memorized every equation, calculation and concept in the teaching labs so he can provide instant support to students.

Tim has significantly improved laboratory equipment and facilities by designing his own hardware, spearheading grants and devising new teaching experiments. He also rewrote the complex laboratory instructions and has volunteered to assist research groups with commissioned instruments and developing standard operating procedures and safety protocols. Most recently, he assisted faculty from Chemical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering by getting a mercury porosimetry instrument functioning and then training graduate student researchers on how to use the instrument. He implemented and delivers a TA training program that has improved performance in the lab and increased undergraduate student satisfaction. Tim also volunteers regularly for outreach activities including May@Mac and the Engineering summer camps.

A leader in lab safety, Tim plays a key role in the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board safety evaluation, serves as the Worker Certified Member of the Engineering Joint Health and Safety Committee and regularly mentors colleagues on safety-related issues. He is also the Equity and Inclusion Champion for the Undergraduate Lab Committee and serves as a mentor to the Chem-E-Car team.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient
Adrienne Tearle*  
*Instructional Assistant  
Kinesiology  

An Instructional Assistant in the Department of Kinesiology since 2004, Adrienne Tearle has a direct influence on the teaching and learning experience of more than 1,400 students and three dozen teaching assistants annually. Adrienne was instrumental in the financial, physical and human resources planning and management involved in a recent spring/summer pilot offering of Anatomy and Physiology, a project that saw her take a lead role in creating lab experiences and a novel approach to staffing the lab. The successful pilot will be the launching pad for continuing the initiative in 2020.

Adrienne’s work in coordinating the senior thesis course KINESIOL 4RR6 introduced new activities to enhance science communication skills, facilitated an annual undergraduate student research day in Kinesiology and supported student attendance at the National Undergraduate Research Conference.

Adrienne has revised and refined numerous practices over the years including the recent migration from a web-based platform to a lab-based platform (ADI LT Lab Station) for all physiology experiments. She also partnered with a major publishing company to produce a professional-quality lab manual for students that launched in late 2019. An active volunteer at Mac, Adrienne is a regular contributor to recruitment events like Fall Preview and May@Mac and she is always ready to step forward to serve, for example, on the ad hoc Undergraduate Course Mapping Committee and the associated hiring and lab improvements committees.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient
Alastair Tracey  
*Undergraduate Coordinator / Instructional Assistant*

Biology

In 2008, Alastair Tracey started at McMaster as a Course Coordinator/Instructional Assistant in the Department of Biology where he coordinated instructional activities in level 1 Biology courses. He recently assumed similar responsibilities for level 2, but for 11 years he was the keystone of courses serving more than 1,500 students per semester. As part of the BIO1A03 Blended Learning team, Alastair has played a pivotal role in lab equipment renewal and the design of learning resources. He even created experiential lab workshops to help first-year Life Sciences Gateway students acclimatize to the lab environment. He was also integral to the total redesign of the Cell and Molecular Biology course. The renewal of BIO1A03 – in which Alastair played such a crucial role – has received national and international recognition from biology faculty at other universities.

Alastair always supports the implementation of evidence-based approaches in teaching and learning and recently completed a research project with Dr. Rosa da Silva to evaluate the impacts of blended learning on student outcomes. Reflecting this kind of work, Alastair was recently named a MacPherson Institute Leadership in Teaching and Learning Fellow.

Alastair, who assumed additional responsibilities when his replacement with the level 1 courses departed abruptly, also sits on the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Steering Committee, contributes to recruitment events like Fall Preview and May@Mac and was a key collaborator on the Plant Molecular Genetics workshop for high school students.
PRESIDENT’S AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN 2019

TEAM NOMINEES

Bring Your Own Device Piloting Team

With a mission to move students away from the restrictive computer-terminal, computer-laboratory learning experience, the Bring Your Own Device Pilot Team overcame a number of technical obstacles to allow students to use their own laptops inside and outside of class. The pilot project, which was supported by the Faculty of Science and the IT Executive Governance Committee, provided the framework that allows students to use their own computers to run programs delivered via the cloud.

The team researched available technologies and skilfully balanced student needs with instructor needs. Then, under significant time pressures, the team rolled out the pilot in the 2019 winter term to 165 students in an undergraduate statistics course. The team overcame both broad and specific technical challenges including, for example, addressing individual students’ device configurations. The team’s skill in tackling these obstacles allowed the instructor to focus on content and the student experience.

The result of the team’s work is a revolutionized course and a group of students with the kind of sophisticated computer knowledge demanded by so many postgraduate and professional opportunities. This also gives the students a skills edge when applying for experiential research and thesis positions. Additionally, the results of the pilot are now spreading across campus with the MacPherson Institute co-organizing an information session to present the work, process and results of the Bring Your Own Device pilot project.

Team Members

Brendon Cleland
Andrew Dolibog
Laura McBride

Sue McKinlay
Michael Thompson

BRIGHTER WORLD
CAUCE Conference Organizing Committee

The 2019 Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE) Conference Host Organizing Committee was formed in June 2018 when McMaster’s Centre for Continuing Education was awarded the conference. The committee was responsible for everything from managing the conference budget and recruiting sponsors to managing volunteers and preparing the hosts of the 2020 conference.

The conference was a tremendous success, selling out before the early bird deadline and bringing 225 participants – 128 of them first-time attendees – to the three-day gathering. Additionally, sponsorship packages and exhibit space were also sold out well in advance.

The conference took place primarily at McMaster’s One James North facility, highlighting the University’s downtown presence and its connection with the local community. Additional events took place at the David Braley Health Sciences Centre, Hamilton Art Gallery and Liuna Station. The committee also constructed an exceptional program that included addresses from McMaster alumna Melody Adhami, the founder of Plastic Mobile and now CEO of Havas Canada, and from Craig Kielburger, co-founder of WE Organizations.

Reviews of the conference were outstanding, with 98% of attendees indicating their satisfaction with the conference through survey results and key national leaders in the continuing education sector recognizing the committee’s work. Ian Allen of the University of New Brunswick and the CAUCE Executive said, “The organizing committee’s efforts were exceptional. ... I was confident the conference would exceed expectations, and it did.”

Team Members

Rand Anderson
Lorraine Carter
Anne Dwyer
Karen Hamilton
Diane Mountain
Dan Piedra

Jennifer Rutkowski
Steve Sears
Alix Stosic
Jenna Tziatis
Andrea Zdylowski
Finance2Go Team

The Finance2Go project started in 2019 to address the 20% of Mosaic financial transactions – including travel claims and journal entries – that were being sent back for revision by approvers in the Faculty of Health Sciences. With hundreds of different individuals entering the transactions, the process was highly decentralized and frustrating. Sonya Caissie and Kathy Pfeiffer were assigned to develop a new “hubbed” approach to entering these financial transactions. The plan involved training teams of undergraduate students to become experts in Mosaic. These student teams would then visit individual departments to log financial transactions according to a consistently high standard.

Sonya and Kathy brought their own expertise to the project, working directly with finance-focused students recruited from the DeGroote School of Business. The nature of the work demanded a high degree of precision and focus from Kathy and Sonya and they delivered. They not only developed the program and plan, but led communications within the Faculty, refined the project based on feedback and collected data to measure impact.

Although the project is still in pilot, the team’s approach is proving successful. Error rates have fallen by as much as 50% for certain transactions and one department has identified five-figure savings due to the new procedures. The pilot project has also reduced staff frustration and freed people to devote more time to their core work.

Team Members

Sonya Caissie
Kathy Pfeiffer
International Summer Learning/Training Program Team

Since 2004, the Office of International Affairs (OIA) has managed international summer experiential learning and training programs at McMaster. Initially these programs centred on language training, but over time their mandate has expanded to include a variety of McMaster’s strongest subjects including Problem-Based Learning along with a component focused on allowing participants to experience Canadian culture.

The team of OIA’s May Zhai and Paul Leegsma is instrumental in all aspects of the summer program including marketing, recruitment, planning, logistics and support. The team has been particularly innovative in the cultural program and has added components including mentorships, social events and peer competitions. During the program, May and Paul have made themselves available 24/7 to support the participants as required.

The results of Paul and May’s work have been exceptional as the International Summer Learning program has grown from fewer than 100 learners to more than 350 from countries including China, Iran, Japan and Russia. The program has also served as a catalyst for stronger connections between McMaster and other leading global universities such as Japan’s Meiji University and China’s Fudan University. As one partner from Shanghai Jiao Tong University said, “The high regard in which this program is held is evidenced by the longevity of the program and return of new delegates every year. The support from the [...] team is integral for the training program’s success.”

Team Members

Paul Leegsma
May Zhai
Master of Health Management Administrative Team

Michelle Benjamin and Robyn Patchett form the dedicated team that is responsible for supporting the students and faculty of the online Master of Health Management (MHM) Program. If there is a motto for this two-person team, it’s flexibility. Michelle and Robyn need to be available to support students and faculty using the online program outside of business hours and they have been known to rush to faculty members’ offices to guide them through challenges with Mosaic or Avenue to Learn.

The first full-time cohort in the MHM Program started in September 2018. This generated a wave of interest that Robyn and Michelle handled professionally and enthusiastically, establishing a tone and building the foundation that helps create a sense of community for the more than 150 students in the program. The team has developed strong social and networking aspects within the program and the benefits of these kinds of community- and team-building efforts are particularly apparent during the residency component of the program and in the willingness of program alumni to become ambassadors for McMaster’s MHM.

Working on one of the earliest online masters programs at McMaster, the MHM team had few precedents upon which to draw, but still found solutions to unique situations like having one student – who was on active military service – deployed during the mandatory residency component of the program.

Team Members

Michelle Benjamin
Robyn Patchett
Office of Institutional Research and Analysis business Intelligence (BI) Team

The Office of Institutional Research and Analysis (IRA) Business Intelligence (BI) team has been developing modules to support reporting functions in areas including research, human resources and student data. For two years, work has progressed rapidly and that work is now revolutionizing data management at McMaster.

The team solved a critical gap in the reporting capabilities of Mosaic by creating a novel report they can now adapt to work in multiple situations. The team has also incorporated user requirements and created the ability to track data over multiple years. On the less technical side, the BI team has prioritized communications and training as they have provided both group presentations and one-on-one training in conjunction with a service orientation that sees them respond almost immediately to questions or concerns.

The BI system provides one source of data for analytics at McMaster and turns reporting and queries into processes that can be delivered with unprecedented speed, accuracy and consistency. The BI team’s work is already having a significant impact on, for example, the development of the proposal for a new undergraduate program in Sustainable Chemistry where the BI tool was critical to budget development and in providing the data-driven rationale for the program. As one staff member said, “Never before have we been able to pull so much data, so quickly. ... These tools are like a breath of fresh air!”

Team Members

Chris Ferguson
Amjad Ghafoor
Peter Haywood
Susanne Janisch

Vanessa Kientega
Nagender Nadimetla
David Xie
Jin Zhang
Planning Team for the 30th Commemoration of the École Polytechnique Massacre

December 6, 2019 was the 30th anniversary of the mass shooting at École Polytechnique de Montréal (now Polytechnique Montréal). To mark the anniversary of the tragedy, McMaster joined with numerous institutions across Canada to honour the victims of the shooting by shining giant beams of light into the night sky.

With little guidance from the Montréal-based coordinators and working through a challenging language barrier, the diverse, 15-person McMaster planning committee adeptly navigated the complex logistical challenges of delivering the memorial as envisioned. The Engineering alumni team led the planning of the event, working closely with Facility Services on details from sound to landscaping. The Engineering communications team created the brand for the event and worked with University Advancement to raise awareness and connect with off-campus media.

The McMaster committee took a lead role with other participating Ontario universities (Waterloo and Toronto) in sourcing the unique light equipment so that others could utilize the same solution and meet tight budgets. The McMaster team also secured clearance from Transportation Canada to shine the light beam into the sky.

The resulting event and memorial were moving and impactful. McMaster’s memorial gathered more than 200 people from the University and beyond, including local politicians and alumnae. The event also attracted significant media attention from outlets including CBC, CHCH and The Hamilton Spectator.

Team Members

Andrew Aran
Nancy Balfoort
Monique Beech
Arlene Dosen
Carlos Figueira
John Hemmer
Wade Hemsworth
JD Howell

Elliott Jeyaseelan
Sara Laux
Colleen Ledrew
Bob Shaw
Leesha Sinanan
Ben Spark
Carm Vespi
**Reactor Café Team**

Elizabeth Encarnacao and Sandra Dimarcantonio-amos are the day shift staff at the Reactor Café on the ground floor of Thode Library. Together, they keep the cafe in meticulous working order, but the real impact of the two-person team is in their positive attitudes and their ability to connect to every customer – whether faculty, staff, student or visitor – with genuine warmth. In the words of one student, “No matter how stressful school gets, I know that I can go to the Reactor Cafe and buy a coffee and immediately feel a million times better because of the friendly, cheerful, encouraging conversation.”

When the Reactor Café was remodelled, Sandra and Liz decorated the serving counter with hand-painted figures and a sign celebrating the diversity of the McMaster community. In addition, Liz and Sandra regularly decorate the cafe for seasonal occasions and frequently run fun competitions like challenging their customers to guess the number of hearts in a jar for Valentine’s Day.

Because this duo’s greatest impact comes from the personal connections they make, their greatest achievements are revealed in their customers’ comments. One said, “Liz and Sandra are incredibly caring and go out of their way to make students feel welcome.” Another added, “Liz and Sandra make the Reactor Cafe a welcoming and fun spot for students. ... They share their good moods with everyone.”

**Team Members**

Sandra Dimarcantonio-amos  
Elizabeth Encarnacao

**Denotes Team Award Recipient**
McMaster’s new Course Repeat regulation was developed by the Committee on Academic Structures for Student Success to help McMaster students overcome the punitive aspects of a poor grade. The simple goal was to allow students who retake courses to replace their old marks with the retake marks. This replacement influences each student’s Grade Point Average which is an important factor in academic standing and progression, program entry and graduation approval. While the goal was simple, the process of achieving it was not, so in April 2018, nearly two dozen Mac staff began working on the Course Repeat Policy Implementation Team.

The implementation of the Course Repeat regulation needed to be a completely innovative solution. There was no template to follow and the team could not identify another institution that had done something similar. McMaster’s solution was entirely conceptualized, designed and implemented from internal resources and delivered by team members adding the project work to their existing portfolios.

The team also displayed a strong commitment to its outreach efforts to keep stakeholders engaged and to update training materials for academic advisors. As a result of the team’s work, more than 650 McMaster students who have repeated a course under the new Course Repeat policy have been able to enhance their GPAs free from the drag effect of the previous mark.

Team Members

Hannah Abram
Deepak Ananthnarayan
Shelley Anderson
Teresa Basilio
Rita Campbell
Nevine Chawra
Angela Fortino
Lynn Giordano
Alex Harris
Sophia Holness
Cathy Mackenzie

Silvia Nuber
Jackie Osterman
Nancy Pandit
Jennifer Richardson
Joanne Smith
Wendy Spencer
Trish Sullivan
Dennis Tian
Janice Tsang
Alexis van Baalen
Maria White

**Denotes Team Award Recipient
SMPL Team

Hospitality Services operates two residential dining halls including the busiest, Centro, which serves 4,000 students daily. With the increasing number of students with food allergies and sensitivities, the SMPL team worked to create an environment where students can be comfortable dining regardless of their dietary concerns. The result is SMPL, a stand-alone food station in Centro where all offerings are prepared without the top ten food allergens in Canada. That focus extends to staff training, cleaning procedures, ordering and sourcing practices, all to maintain the integrity of the station. The SMPL team also ensures that everything from the food covers to the prep space support the SMPL goals. The 28-day SMPL menu rotation is made from scratch with a variety that appeals even to those without allergies.

Originally projected to generate 5% of Centro sales in its first year, SMPL is approaching double that and it’s achieving those results while winning awards. In 2019, the SMPL team won the Canadian College and University Food Service Association Shine Award and was the only Canadian school recognized by the American National Association of College and University Food Services when SMPL took home honours in the Residential Dining Concepts category at the Loyal E. Horton Dining Awards. The SMPL team also made important contributions to the content of Managing Food Allergies and Anaphylaxis: A Guide for Post-Secondary Institutions.

Team Members

Liana Bontempo
Nick Giammarco
Paul Hoag
Randal Patriquin
Cathy Tatsis

^*Denotes Special Achievement Award Recipient