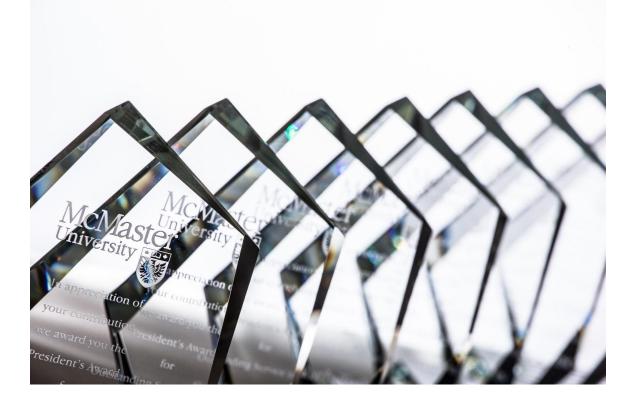# President's Awards for Outstanding Service in 2023

NOMINEES AND RECIPIENTS

PRESIDENT'S AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN 2023

INDIVIDUAL NOMINEES

Jessica Anderson +
Recruitment Officer
Office of the Registrar

Jessica Anderson started in the Office of the Registrar in 2021 as a liaison assistant before progressing to the role of student services professional (international) and, for the last year and a half, domestic recruitment officer (communication and outreach). Jessica has played a key role in successful recruiting initiatives including the viral reel "We love Mac, of course...", the Spring Information Series, the 2024 Viewbook, Junior Recruitment and McMaster's first international student pre-departure brochure. She also delivered a successful presentation on domestic student recruitment and school visits at the Registrar's Office Forum.

Jessica's innovative approach to the design of McMaster's recruitment fair booth wraps departed from conventional designs to introduce visually striking and interactive elements that grabbed the attention of attendees. She also took a leading role in developing the University's first fully online Financial Transparency Week which gave students insights into how their fees are allocated across various departments and services. She also makes significant contributions to the success of the Spring Info Series, May@Mac Open House and the Fall Preview Open House.

Jessica spearheaded the Tour Guide Social Working Group, which helped reimagine the way campus tours are presented, and introduced interactive elements and multimedia components to the tour guide program. In July 2023, Jessica was selected as a guest speaker for Post-Secondary Education Web Conference (#PSEWeb) "Build from Within" in Victoria, British Columbia.

+ Denotes Individual Award Recipient

Colleen Ballagh
Operations Coordinator
Obstetrics and Gynecology

Previously an administrative assistant in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Colleen Ballagh is now the operations coordinator in the same department where her responsibilities include a wide range of administrative and operational tasks. Colleen has managed office moves, renovations and built out new signage for the department while also working to improve the department's efficiency and effectiveness on a number of fronts including the hiring process where her use of templates in communications has enhanced the candidate experience. She has been instrumental in the roll-out and usage of SharePoint within the department and has also made

significant contributions to the welcoming and onboarding process for new faculty and staff. She has a strong track record of playing important roles in the planning and delivery of education-focused events and activities including the Canadian Resident Matching Service, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations, town halls, academic half days, department rounds, education retreats, graduations and Resident Appreciation Night. Colleen also provides direct support to faculty members by submitting expenses, managing billing and organizing meetings.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, as the department adapted to virtual and hybrid work environments, Colleen went out of her way to ensure that members of the department team still felt connected. She established weekly Zoom check-in meetings with the team and created fun games for the group to enjoy during their online interactions.

Bipasha Bose*
Program Manager and Senior Principal Research Engineer
Mechanical Engineering

Bipasha Bose joined the McMaster University community in 2016 as a postdoctoral fellow in Mechanical Engineering, then became principal research engineer at the McMaster Manufacturing Research Institute (MMRI). She is now senior principal research engineer at MMRI and the program manager and founder of the Material Property Assessment Laboratory (MPAL). The state-of-the-art MPAL provides the testing infrastructure for evaluating materials and has been used to conduct research for hundreds of student and industry projects. Through MMRI and MPAL, Bipasha's work has helped establish collaborations with 23 different McMaster research groups, 10 other universities and colleges, six start-up companies and more than 40 industry partners including international and governmental organizations. She has also played a key role in industry projects that have generated outstanding results, such as a remarkable 160% business growth for one industry partner and the development of four new products in a single year for a start-up company.

Bipasha has demonstrated excellence in mentoring graduate students and applying her materials engineering expertise to enhancing McMaster's research capacity and research output. She has also played a vital part in connecting her work beyond the McMaster campus. For example, she collaborated with an elementary school robotics team as a mentor to young women interested in science and technology and she helped initiate the MMRI Industrial Training Program by offering her courses for its inauguration.

Denotes Individual Award Recipient

Joanne Chou
Business Systems Specialist
Financial Affairs

Joanne Chou began her McMaster career 15 years ago in the Faculty of Health Sciences, moving to Financial Affairs in 2016. There, she progressed to become a business systems specialist in the Financial Systems Support team. During her time in Financial Affairs, Joanne has redeveloped the manual reconciliation process in order to automate student tuition payment deposits, led the security by position project to streamline the user experience, simplified the onboarding process and reduced duplicate data entry. She reimagined Mosaic training for her department using SharePoint to ensure the training resources would be future-ready and she then launched the platform as the Finance Training Hub, complete with innovations including a quiz tool to provide immediate feedback to users. She also personally developed more than 30 engaging videos in a consistent format and presentation style to support learning.

Joanne has displayed exceptional commitment to service in managing security access for Mosaic financial users. When issues arise in this area, it can often be difficult for users to determine the best path to find support, but Joanne consistently makes it her personal mission to resolve each issue swiftly, accurately and with personal attention. Joanne has also been a member of the Employee Engagement Committee in Financial Affairs for the past seven years as she volunteers to foster a work environment that is fun, collaborative and engaging.

Betty Chung
Manager, Strategic Faculty Events and Engagement
Office of the Dean & Vice-President, Faculty of Health Sciences

Betty Chung, the manager of strategic faculty events and engagement, has been a member of the Office of the Dean & Vice-President in the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) for 25 years. She now plays a cornerstone role in the Faculty's relationships with its donors and community. Betty brings exceptional and personalized attention to every philanthropist – from making sure that donors of art know about the placement and care of each piece, to creating bespoke strategies for each meeting of the FHS Donor Gift Boards.

A long-time supporter of the Faculty community, Betty is often the first contact for new recruits to the dean's office. She has also played central roles in community-building events such as the FHS Roads to Reconciliation Event – for which she sourced local Indigenous suppliers – as well as the multi-faceted 50th anniversary of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine and the medical school's annual White Coat event which she successfully converted to the White Coat in-a-box event during the pandemic. Some of the innovations Betty implemented to support that virtual event now help streamline processes for current and future Faculty activities.

Betty was also the lead contact for the Faculty's Festschrift Symposium celebrating the career of Judah Denburg and has been a busy on-campus volunteer as part of the committees delivering the McMaster Children's Party and the McMaster Community Engagement program.

Rachel Couban*
Research Coordinator
Michael G. DeGroote National Pain Centre

Rachel Couban is the medical librarian in the Department of Anesthesia and the research coordinator for the Michael G. DeGroote National Pain Centre. In addition to her research-related duties, Rachel has also taken on responsibilities including teaching, supervision, grant coordination and conference submissions. Working with a large group of information specialists, she has delivered several systematic reviews that identified large bodies of evidence that have been missed by other research groups. That kind of insight has allowed Rachel to make invaluable contributions to 94 publications and counting. The results of those publications have influenced projects including reviews of drug treatments for COVID-19 and several crucial evidence syntheses on the management of acute COVID-19 that have supported new World Health Organization guidelines.

Known by peers for both the speed and the quality of her work, Rachel has a strong track record of supporting both prominent research groups and student research projects. She has become an impactful trainer and advocate for applications such as DistillerSR and Covidence and she is a leader in improving systems and processes. With the National Pain Centre, for example, Rachel has streamlined processes for evidence syntheses, coordinated regular meetings with faculty and trainees, taken the lead on collating and submitting presentations to conferences and stayed on top of the latest advancements in information science.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient

Samantha Couch*
Program Manager, Cooperative Education
Faculty of Science

Samantha Couch has been part of the Science Career and Cooperative Education team for more than a decade and a half, starting as a recruitment assistant and serving since 2021 as program manager for cooperative education. Her impact and length of service have earned her the affectionate nickname "The Mom of Co-op" and she lives up to that unofficial title by building personal relationships with scores of co-op students every year. For example, at the onset of the pandemic, Sam worked tirelessly to support the 136 students working their first co-op terms. She revised employment dates, identified new options and provided personal support to students as far away as Madagascar.

Sam leads the Co-op Student Advisory Group and played a key role in engaging co-op students in the development of the Faculty's strategic plan. In 2021, she developed and delivered the Co-op Symposium (since rebranded as Science Career Expo) to give students returning from their first co-op experiences the opportunity to present to fellow Science students. Sam developed a mentorship program that connects first-time co-op students with an upper-year student and a co-op graduate. She also led the development of the successful Co-op Ambassador Program.

Beyond the McMaster campus, Sam has consulted on an e-Campus Ontario initiative with the University of Toronto and has been a volunteer proposal reviewer for Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL).

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient

Connor Dougherty
Human Resources Partner
Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence and Impact

In 2022, Connor Dougherty started in his role as a human resources partner with the Faculty of Health Sciences, specifically with the Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence and Impact (HEI), a department with a vast research enterprise involving nearly 40 faculty members; hundreds of joint, associate or part-time faculty and approximately 400 staff. Since starting in HEI, Connor has revamped recruitment, onboarding and orientation processes to inspire more first-choice candidates to choose HEI. He championed the use of Vidcruiter, creating efficiencies in the screening process, and developed new HR processes to streamline service. Connor also spearheaded the use of faculty and staff engagement surveys, an initiative he has shared through the Faculty's HR office with other departments and schools.

During a transitional period in the department's administrative leadership, Connor helped ensure continuity of support to the team by acting as hiring manager for all central administration teams, contributing to probation reviews, leading employee engagement initiatives, supporting employee relations issues and taking a key role in preparing and disseminating communications to HEI stakeholders.

Another of Connor's signature contributions to the department is his advocacy of professional development for HEI staff. He consistently identifies creative ways to support staff with professional development opportunities that range from committee appointments to more formal learning venues such as workshops, conferences and classes.

Rebekah Flynn
Program Administrator
Faculty of Social Sciences

Rebekah Flynn joined the Faculty of Social Sciences team a decade ago and is now the program administrator in the Office of the Associate Dean Academic where she focuses on the undergraduate student portfolio by overseeing student, academic, external, admissions and administrative activities. A regular volunteer at events like the Ontario Universities Fair, May@Mac and Fall Preview, Rebekah has worked diligently to establish and maintain personal connections with the Faculty's students. She is also an irreplaceable part of the Faculty's external relationship building, in particular with Mohawk College whose instructors are involved in three specialized certificate programs offered by the Faculty. Rebekah helps these instructors acclimatize to the University and provides them with unwavering, high-quality support.

Rebekah has displayed a remarkable willingness and flexibility to adapt to new roles and tasks including reviewing admissions files submitted by applicants from other universities, from colleges and from international high schools. At the same time, she has overseen the process of sending outbound applications from Social Sciences students applying to other institutions. To strengthen this process and achieve better results for the Faculty's students, Rebekah redeveloped the relevant procedures, crafted new instructional materials for the staff involved and began offering informational webinars to interested students, all while also working with McMaster's central admissions team to enhance further the transfer credit database and vet credible institutions and courses.

Stephanie Haak*
Program Coordinator
Faculty of Engineering

Stephanie Haak joined the Faculty of Engineering in 2012 and moved to the 5-Year Programs team in 2018 to help launch the Innovation Minor and coordinate programs including Engineering & Society, Engineering & Management and MacChangers. In the process, Stephanie has earned a reputation for taking care of the "little" things that can easily accumulate into significant impact, like removing expired posters while on her way to a meeting or negotiating a contract to achieve significant savings for the Faculty. One of Stephanie's notable contributions has been supervising two dozen volunteers and more than 300 high school students for the Deltahacks overnight Hackathons. She played significant roles in launching MacBill in 2018, redesigning the Engineering website and working with the Engineering & Management Industrial Advisory Committee. Stephanie also has a strong track record of contributions to various conferences including the International Conference on Engineering Education and Research.

Always dedicated to students, Stephanie has completed the Professor Hippo-on-Campus Mental Health Education program and is progressing in the Teaching and Learning Certificate program. She has been an exceptional mentor with the student societies in Engineering & Management and Engineering & Society and, in 2023, she volunteered with the Tax Squad to provide free tax services to students and eligible community members. Stephanie is also pursuing her MBA in the DeGroote School of Business where she is a dedicated teaching assistant.

Denotes Individual Award Recipient

Renata Hall*
Manager, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Education
Equity and Inclusion Office

Renata Hall is the manager of inclusion and anti-racism education with the Equity and Inclusion Office and a PhD candidate and sessional instructor in the School of Social Work. Renata is a busy mentor in equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA) who has taken on dotted-line supervision with a number of colleagues who are engaged in EDIA in the McMaster community – a commitment that has helped her create an influential community of practice. A cornerstone of Renata's work is building supportive alliances with on-campus groups including the President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Committee – Race, Racialization and Racism Working Group. She collaborated with the MacPherson Institute to create the Inclusive Teaching and Learning Resources webpage and with the Black, Indigenous and Racialized Staff Employee Resource Group in their successful proposal for Strategic Excellence and Equity in Recruitment and Retention Program funding. She has also designed strategic EDIA plans for several McMaster departments.

A sought-after speaker on EDIA issues, Renata co-created the digital platform Learning in Colour to promote inclusive pedagogy, later presenting on that work at the President's Retreat and at several conferences. Renata also served as an IQAP reviewer for the School of Social Work and has taken it upon herself to create safe peer support spaces at McMaster for Black and for Muslim students in the wake of distressing world events.

*Denotes Individual Award Recipient

Hilary Jenkins
Research Scientist
Faculty of Science

Hilary Jenkins joined McMaster in 2008 as a research scientist in Research Core Facilities, initially splitting her time between the X-ray Diffraction and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) facilities before moving to NMR full-time in 2014 where, a year later, she was part of a President's Award-winning team. Well known for her exceptional support of graduate students, Hilary has made a number of other signature contributions to NMR. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she established procedures and protocols to ensure the continuing operation of the NMR facility as well as the safety of all users and staff. She is a champion for accessibility who has advocated for adaptations such as installing automated sample changers that diminish the physical barriers to using the facility. She takes the lead in training new NMR users, including developing a special training seminar for the research group. She was also a leader in the successful Celebration of Magnetic Resonance at McMaster event.

Hilary has prioritized equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives by volunteering for multiple EDI committees and presenting on the EDI strategies developed and deployed by the NMR laboratory. She has also participated in several international NMR workshops hosted by the IVAN (Inspiring a Versatile and Agile NMR) Community and presented at a workshop focusing on remote experiment submission, a presentation in which she highlighted the many innovations McMaster has contributed to the field.

John McAndrews
Managing Director, Digital Society Lab
Faculty of Social Sciences

John McAndrews joined McMaster in 2022 as managing director of the newly-launched Digital Society Lab in the Faculty of Social Sciences where he also holds an adjunct assistant professor appointment in the Department of Political Science. John played a central role in ensuring the lab achieved accreditation as a University research centre and made major contributions to the crafting of the lab's mission and vision. He led recruiting efforts for both staff and students, developed thriving research programs, secured external funding, established an exchange program with ICESI University in Colombia and championed the lab's innovative community-based research initiatives.

An exceptional mentor to the lab's students at all levels, John ensures they have opportunities to contribute to knowledge mobilization and peer-reviewed publications. He is diligent and deliberate in the details of his work including financial reporting, revising manuscripts and coordinating an international team of researchers. Perhaps most significantly, John has spearheaded the move by the Digital Society Lab to reach past research in emergent digital technologies towards greater engagement with society in the digital age. This evolution has inspired innovations including engaging with engineers to help build applications that can address some of the most salient implications of the lab's research and forming a team of computational linguists to help better identify and expose coordinated misinformation campaigns.

Ben O'Connor*
Acting Assistant Dean
Faculty of Science

Ben O'Connor joined the Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies in the Faculty of Science in 2016 as an academic support associate before becoming a recruitment & academic advisor, then manager of undergraduate recruitment & education. In these roles, Ben had a significant impact on the Faculty's recruiting efforts, particularly related to international students. He developed and refined digital learning tools including the New Student Guide and the mapsci.ca platform which allows students to map out individualized pathways from admission requirements to their undergraduate learning options. Ben also created the Fall Connection Hub, an opportunity for upper-year students to connect with Level 1 students as they consider their program selections for Level 2.

Now serving as acting assistant dean, Ben plays a lead role in recruitment and education activities for the Faculty of Science. He has done exceptional work in the core activities of his portfolio – including student recruitment and academic regulations – while also establishing strong collaborations across campus. This has included, for example, revisiting the letters of permission process and testing the new MacHub CRM platform. He has also guided a renovation of Level 2 admission practices and worked with the McMaster English Language Development Office to create an accelerated undergraduate degree program option, in addition to working within the Faculty to enhance blended, virtual, online and distance learning course modalities.

Denotes Individual Award Recipient

Jackie Osterman -
Assistant Dean
Faculty of Humanities

Jackie Osterman was appointed assistant dean of the Faculty of Humanities in 2015 as the latest step in a McMaster career that began in 1989 and moved into the Faculty in 2005. She has spearheaded the addition of Humanities personnel dedicated to recruitment, internships, careers and experiential education while also integrating these functions in the Student Experience Office. She has introduced new technological systems for student advising, has incorporated online services and has implemented new systems and training to enhance service related to mental health, accommodations and EDI initiatives. Jackie also pioneered information sessions and materials for new instructors related to the Undergraduate Course Management Policy.

A trained Employment Equity Facilitator, Jackie has instituted equitable hiring practices and is well known for her engagement with students, both through student societies and one-on-one. In fact, she is the only assistant dean who regularly advises students. She has been vital to the development of interdisciplinary programs including Integrated Business and Humanities, iArts, the Integrated Rehabilitation and Humanities program and Wilson College. She has also supported the development of the McMaster English Language Development program and the Diploma in Indigenous Language Revitalization.

Jackie co-founded MACADA – the cross-campus academic advising support group – and serves on a variety of committees and working groups including the Repeat Rules Working Group, the Mental Health Round Table and the Okanagan Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force.

- Denotes Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient

Milica Pavlica
Academic Department Manager
Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour

Milica Pavlica has been the academic department manager in Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour since 2000 after serving nearly a decade in the Office of the Vice-President, Administration and previously holding positions with Hospitality Services and the McMaster Students Union. In Milica's four decades with the University, she has established a particularly strong volunteer legacy. She originated and served as a long-time volunteer with the McMaster Children's Party and made significant volunteer contributions to the McMaster Fair, United Way campaigns and the McMaster Spirit Society. She has also been a member of the Systems Renewal Advisory Committee, Finance; the Science Joint Health and Safety Committee and the Sustainability Ambassador Team.

In her current role, Milica has done exceptional work building a strong relationship with Mohawk College – a partner in two collaborative programs – and made a significant contribution to the extension of that collaboration. Milica has overseen several major renovations to the Psychology Building that have helped elevate its status as a centre for research and teaching. Two notable examples are the addition, in 2011, of LiveLab, a unique research facility that has attracted international acclaim, as well as significant investments in expanded and enhanced student spaces. Milica has also established exceptional processes for recruiting and hiring and for supporting the department's budgeting and financial processes.

Alex Proulx
Lab Technician
Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour

Alex Proulx joined McMaster in 2022 as a part-time laboratory technician in Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour. His position became full-time just months later when he also joined the Department of Biology staff. Alex has helped deliver six unique undergraduate laboratory courses across the two departments, supporting between 600 and 700 students annually. He helped establish a creative new program to collect invasive crayfish from Spencer Creek in support of a neuroscience laboratory and he reorganized and rewrote the student laboratory manuals for physiology. Alex has also worked diligently with the Central Animal Facility and the Animal Research Ethics Board to implement updated protocols for the involvement of animals in research.

Alex reorganized the undergraduate labs for his departments, enhancing health and safety, training and accessibility. His inventive troubleshooting regularly saves time and money while enhancing the student experience, for example, by reviving non-functioning lab equipment that would have otherwise cost $10,000 to replace. He also created custom equipment for the Animal Physiology Lab and developed a unique pin cushion that reduced the number of student pinprick incidents to zero. Alex is also a pillar of his departments' outreach efforts as he sets up lab equipment for recruiting events like May@Mac, demonstrates neurophysiology experiments for the Hamilton Brain Bee for local high school students and even joined the Brain Bee organizing team as a volunteer.

Shannon Reitsma
Research Assistant
Medicine

Shannon Reitsma started with McMaster as a temporary interviewer for the Canadian Multicentre Osteoporosis Study (CaMos) in 2006 before becoming a research assistant in Medicine two years later. In the years since, she has been integral to the success of several epidemiological studies including CaMos nationally and the international Global Longitudinal Study of Osteoporosis in Women. She has consistently achieved high retention rates in studies like these because of her strong personal relationships with participants. Shannon has also refined procedures to minimize data inconsistencies and created the protocols that facilitated the transition from paper to digital record keeping.

Shannon's trademark is highly organized data based on her consistently exceptional skills as an interviewer. With one study, for which she did telephone interviews during the pandemic, her keen attention helped flag gaps in care. She then helped chart a new course for the study extension. She also made significant contributions to the creation of a new multi-site questionnaire that could better capture nuances in the study participants' reported experiences.

Always ready to contribute as needed, Shannon earned her Certified Clinical Research Associate designation to serve as a project coordinator on short notice. She also took the extraordinary step at the beginning of the pandemic of teaching herself to make masks for her colleagues, even mailing them to team members at other sites.

Christine Rich
Career Educator
Faculty of Engineering

Christine Rich started in McMaster's Department of Family Medicine in 2011 before moving to the W Booth School of Engineering Practice & Technology and the Engineering Co-op & Career Services team in 2018. In her years there, she has played a key role in the transformational growth of the graduate co-op program from 17 registered co-op work terms to more than 500.

As a career educator, Christine's primary responsibility is supporting students in career planning, job search, professional branding, networking and employment/work-term success, so she opens as many appointments as needed to meet demand and gets to know each student personally. Because about 80% of Engineering co-op graduate students are international students for whom English is not their first language, her commitment to knowing and supporting students individually is even more critical to creating a quality experience. At the same time, Christine has shown how important other relationships are to the success of the program. She has strengthened faculty awareness of the co-op program and initiated meetings with department administrators to develop processes and workflows for supporting enrollment in co-op. The result is a stronger co-op ecosystem within the Faculty.

Christine has built a range of initiatives to support the co-op program including a six-week synchronous course and workshops as well as drop-in sessions designed to increase students' knowledge, competence and confidence.

Carly Silenzi
Customer Service Representative
Financial Affairs

Carly Silenzi joined the Accounts Receivable team in 2019. As a customer service representative, she focuses on corporate deposits, cashiering, reconciliation and training while also collecting both student and non-student (MacBill) debt. She has identified and helped to rectify a number of process inefficiencies, saving time and improving service. Carly is one of the team's best investigators of reported discrepancies related to fees or charges. She responds promptly, investigates thoroughly, works to ensure fair resolutions and then communicates transparently with everyone involved. Carly has also taken to mentoring new members of the team, enhancing training documentation and creating detailed guides for common tasks, thus ensuring consistency and facilitating cross-training.

Carly played a key role in the e-transfer refunds project that streamlined the process of disbursing scholarship payments and managing student account credits. In fact, this kind of project is Carly's calling card. She is a champion for automated financial processes and has brought her skills in this area to making improvements in petty cash and journal entry procedures as well as cash flow reconfiguration. This approach was particularly impactful during the COVID-19 pandemic when Carly spearheaded the adoption of e-deposit technology. She was also an important contributor to the implementation of Peoplesoft's Payment Predictor, the facilitation of the Accounts Receivable office move and the success of the recent MacBill Town Hall.

Sherri Smith
Administrative Assistant
Medicine

Sherri Smith is an administrative assistant in the office of Dr. Alexandra Papaioannou in the Geras Centre for Aging Research. With nearly two decades of experience supporting executives and senior management, Sherri currently oversees scheduling, communications and the centre's financial resources which include multi-site operating, research, services and cost-recovery budgets. This work involves ensuring that all financial practices align with not only McMaster policies, but with Hamilton Health Sciences and McMaster University Medical Centre policies as well. To achieve the best results in this part of her portfolio, Sherri has identified and integrated digital tools and cost-effective technologies into the centre's financial management. She is also currently enrolled in the McMaster University Human Resources Management certificate program with the goal of bringing the skills she develops there back to the centre to enhance organizational management, talent acquisition, training and communications.

Sherri is well-recognized by her colleagues for contributing to and even leading the centre's culture. Her collaborative approach and effective communication skills have a positive influence on her colleagues and their work. As the chair of the Geras Centre's Social Committee, Sherri consistently makes the effort to elevate and maintain a positive working environment. Her colleagues can always depend on her to lead the celebration of personal and organizational milestones including promotions, birthdays, weddings and births.

Dennis Tian*
Lead, Systems
Office of the Registrar

Dennis Tian has been at McMaster since 2002 and in the Office of the Registrar since 2006. Starting as a computer systems manager, he is now the lead for systems. A member of committees including the McMaster IT Forum Committee, the HEUG Mentor Committee, the RO Faculty Working Group and the IT Management Community Working Group, Dennis has seen his work recognized with the Registrar's Office You Make a Difference Award, the Faculty of Engineering's Co-op Supervisor of the Year Award and the Ontario University Registrars' Association's Award of Excellence. Dennis has demonstrated his leadership in managing, developing and enhancing mission-critical information systems including PeopleSoft Campus Solutions, Student Virtual Schedule Builder, the Enterprise Event/Room Booking System and the Student Card System. He developed the "Tips and Tricks for IT Help" channel for Microsoft Teams and consistently works to ensure his colleagues have the knowledge to navigate technical challenges.

Dennis is a regular volunteer for events including Convocation and Welcome Day, as well as an active participant in the Black, Indigenous and Racialized Staff (BIRS) Employee Resource Group and the Technology Round Table. He was even a member of the Repeat Rules Project Team that received the President's Award in 2020. A relentless innovator, Dennis developed a block enrolment tool, introduced a chatbot to answer common student questions and founded and leads a community of practice for business systems analysts.

Denotes Individual Award Recipient

Emily Vance
Recruitment and Admissions Officer
DeGroote School of Business

Emily Vance started as a recruitment and admissions officer for the MBA programs in the DeGroote School of Business in 2022. Shortly after she arrived, she began implementing process improvements to admissions rubrics and policies, enhancing the applicant experience, reducing response times for offer decisions and reviewing admissions policies to eliminate potential barriers to inclusivity. Emily also worked collaboratively beyond the School to identify procedures that could increase admission-offer response rates across the McMaster campus.

In her work directly with applicants, Emily provides personalized attention and solutions to enhance the speed, accuracy, efficiency and sensitivity of the admissions process. She has, for example, adapted the admissions process several times on a case-by-case basis when an applicant has had limited access to technology or has required other accommodations.

Emily's efforts have made admissions more efficient through cross-departmental collaborations with, for example, the School of Graduate Studies and DeGroote's Career and Professional Development Team. Through this work, Emily has increased the response rate for DeGroote applicants and has provided a competitive advantage for McMaster in the hyper-competitive MBA market. Her success in both relationship building and bottom-line results has positioned the MBA Recruitment and Admissions Team as a leader in graduate-level and even University-wide decisions affecting admissions and the associated processes.

Michele Vaz
Business Manager
W Booth School of Engineering Practice & Technology

In 2019, Michele Vaz became the business manager for the W Booth School of Engineering Practice & Technology where, working alongside the School's director, she provides administrative direction in operational infrastructure, human resources, financial resources and strategic planning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Michele successfully onboarded several new employees while working remotely and took it upon herself to deliver essential workplace devices so the team could be fully operational while working from home and providing the continuity and support the School's students required during the transition to remote learning.

The strategic plan Michele developed has become a pillar of the School's programs and progress. She identified several areas within the W Booth School that were primed for growth, but required additional support to achieve smart transformation. As a result, Michele devised, advocated for and implemented several new staff positions, most crucially developing a new position to lead academic programs, a position that would prove vital to the orchestration of the School's large slate of diverse B.Tech., degree-completion and graduate programs. After seeing the success of the role Michele established, other departments in the Faculty of Engineering have implemented their own versions of this position.

Beyond the W Booth School, Michele has volunteered with the Inspiring From Within Committee for several years.

Lisa Villeneuve*
Administrative Coordinator
Pediatrics

Lisa Villeneuve is the administrative coordinator for the Rheumatology-Allergy-Immunology Division in Pediatrics. Working at McMaster for more than 15 years, she has become an integral part of the division's activities. Lisa is responsible for administrative and clinical tasks ranging from patient bookings, to liaising with allied health staff, to procuring compassionate care medications. She also maintains key roles in the division's education and research activities and played a lead role in the division's participation in the pilot program for the new Hamilton Health Sciences hospital information system. Her input has been vital to the development of new clinical services including the autoinflammatory clinic for children and adults.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lisa worked in the office to facilitate her colleagues' ability to work remotely and to promote continuity of care for patients during an extremely trying time. In fact, Lisa has become a go-to resource for patients and their families, supporting them with prompt and thorough responses to all inquiries, facilitating interpreters when required and building significant relationships with patient families to the point of keeping in touch even after the child is no longer a patient.

Lisa is also a leader in establishing the division's work culture and always sets the right tone in welcoming new resident trainees to the division during their onboarding process.

Denotes Individual Award Recipient

PRESIDENT'S AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN 2023

TEAM NOMINEES

ACCESS Tech Working Group
Megan Bieska, Carlos Figueira, Greg Iarusso, Craig MacDonald, Alex Schaap, Kate Whalen

McMaster's Academic Sustainability Programs Office, University Technology Services and Facility Services launched the ACCESS Tech Working Group with a mission to reduce IT waste on campus, donate useful items to communities in need and improve the data security of end-of-life electronics. Since 2019, the working group has collaborated with student, campus and community partners to divert more than 8.3 tonnes of IT waste, provide more than 300 pieces of reused technology to McMaster students and donate more than 150 computers into the Hamilton community through organizations including Empowerment Squared, the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, the Immigrant Working Centre and Refuge: Hamilton Centre for Newcomer Health.

The ACCESS Tech Working Group achieved these kinds of measurable outcomes through an exceptional commitment to planning, open communication and transparency by employing regular meetings, social media and public collection events. The team has hired McMaster students to help grow and sustain the program and has engaged 49 different experiential learning students as part of 12 different project teams, one of which received the Climate Change and Health – Innovation Award in 2020. The overall program has garnered significant positive media attention with multiple Daily News stories and one story in the *Hamilton Spectator*. The group's work has established McMaster as a leader in effective e-waste management among Canada's U15 universities as no other post-secondary institution actively reuses IT.

 # Denotes Special Achievement Award Recipient

CSU Operations Group
Gabriela Marszalek, Sonya Runco, Carla Schmitt, Karina Ziolkowski

The Computer Services Unit (CSU) Operations Group provides helpdesk support to all Faculty of Health Sciences faculty and staff. This includes everything from minor computer issues to connecting peripherals and assisting departments with mass inventory needs. In all of these functions, the group goes well beyond the basic requirements of their roles. They consistently invest extra time on calls to recommend multiple options, work to optimize the results of the call, provide personal attention to every client and even drop off equipment to clients' homes to support remote work.

The helpdesk team has implemented new and improved systems and applications for diagnosing laptop issues and new processes to streamline the decision between troubleshooting and equipment replacement. For example, a tool called geekbench instantly measures the speed and memory performance of a computer to help identify if it makes more sense to repair or to replace the unit.

This level of commitment from the members of the CSU Operations Group consistently inspires exceptional reviews from the people they support as they regularly earn five-star ratings from helpdesk users. Staff and faculty know they can count on the service, experience and customer care the group provides. They have a well-earned reputation for responsiveness and speed while at the same time demonstrating unfailing patience as they work to understand the details of each call.

Illume 2023

Bobby Abali, Santina Arvandi, Steven Barei, Karen Bigeye, Natasha Condon, Matthew Demers, Elsa Dupont, Carlos Figueira, David Fisher, David Fogarty, Raquel Gavey, Holly Gibson, Brad Haalboom, Laurie Ham, Laura Hickenbottom, Brett Hill, Paul Hoag, Noelle Holloway, Melanie Hunter, Jammy Ing, Megan Johnson, TJ Kelly, Steven Kuran, Ivan L'Ortye, Robert Morrallee, Dean Mougenot, Erin Otterspoor, Marta Prancho, Ann Richards, Daniel Vartanian, Catherine Young, Joseph Zubek

In August 2023, McMaster hosted the Illume National Arts & Sports Festival involving more than 2,600 youth and adult members of the Ismaili Muslim community in a qualifying event for the International Global Encounters Festival in Dubai. The McMaster Illume team engaged 32 employees from Housing & Conference Services, Athletics & Recreation, Facility Services, Hospitality Services, Parking Services, Campus Safety Services and organizations including the McMaster University Student Centre and Emergency First Response Team. The festival extended the relationship between McMaster and the Ismaili Muslim community that dates to the 1987 agreement between the University's School of Nursing and Pakistan's Aga Khan University.

The McMaster-based team worked with Illume officials to host eight of the festival's 18 sport events on campus while partnering with Tourism Hamilton for offsite venues. The team transformed the Peter George Centre for Living and Learning into the athlete and artist village, bringing accommodation, meals and programming under one roof. The opening ceremony attracted more than 3,000 participants and spectators to Ron Joyce Stadium where they saw a first for McMaster: a synchronized drone show that met every standard for legal, safety and logistics compliance. The team also delivered a VIP kick-off reception at Alumni Memorial Hall with guests including Mayor Andrea Horwarth, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Arif Virani and Member of Provincial Parliament Adil Shamji.

Faculty of Health Sciences MacSites Project Team
Jamie Bozarth, Circe Luna Cordeiro, Latasha Deleo, Tyler McIntyre, Taylor Miatello, Simon Oakley, Melanie Phillips, Ryan Poole, Shayla Vize

The Faculty of Health Sciences MacSites Project Team tackled the daunting task of unifying the Faculty's fragmented web presence by connecting and aligning a diverse group of websites including those of departments, schools, research institutes and programs. The project team included members of the Faculty's Communications team and Computer Services Unit along with the University's Media Production Services. Their collaboration ultimately built FHS MacSites to support the Faculty's website ecosystem while ensuring high quality, brand consistency and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act compliance across 120 new FHS sites.

The team used a variety of approaches to achieve this result including creating custom wireframes for units with outdated websites, providing rigorous editorial reviews of all written and visual content and developing a Web Editor Hub that connects users to the tools and supports they need to build and maintain dynamic, on-brand websites. In collaboration with the Faculty's associate dean of equity and inclusion and the Indigenous Health Learning Lodge, the team also enhanced content related to equity, diversity and Indigenous health. Another key innovation was the use of open-source software to maximize efficiency, effectiveness and economies of scale.

Since launching in August 2023, the Faculty's main website – which was streamlined from more than 300 pages to fewer than 100 – has seen a 78% increase in overall page views and an increase in average session time of 18%.

<u>Holmium Production Team</u>
Megan Blacker, James Kennedy, Natalie Mercanti, Dhrupal Patel

The McMaster Holmium Production Team manufactures medical isotopes for cancer treatment. Over the last five years, the team – which is based in Nuclear Operations & Facilities – progressed from test irradiations of holmium microspheres to a full production line. QuiremSpheres, the trademarked name for holmium microspheres, provide life-changing cancer therapy and are also MRI active which allows them to contribute to the imaging data that clinicians use to develop increasingly precise diagnoses.

In 2023, the Holmium Production Team manufactured its first patient dose, with every dose being custom made for an individual patient and tumor. The product is then shipped to a hospital in Europe where it becomes part of the patient's cancer treatment. More recently, the team also validated a second product called QuiremScout which contributes to the treatment of liver cancer through a process called Selective Internal Radiation Therapy.

To produce these life-saving microspheres, the team works under demanding timelines because of the short half-life of holmium-166. The time from production to patient administration is typically less than 72 hours. The team has five hours after irradiation in the McMaster Nuclear Reactor to transport the products to the cleanroom or hotlab across campus where they are processed, undergo stringent quality testing, are dispensed according to the prescribed patient dose and packaged for a flight to Europe – a process involving multiple facilities the team has to validate against dozens of standards.

McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA) Team ^
Gesine Alders, Allison Dubé, Casey Irvin, Amy Ladouceur, Alison Outtrim, Audrey Patocs, Ine Wauben

The McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA) team has been building an expanding legacy of impact both on and off the McMaster campus. The team members' work in supporting MIRA's research enterprise has produced exceptional results. Prior to MIRA's founding in 2016, approximately 15% of scholarly publications by McMaster faculty and trainees were related to aging. In 2023, that figure surpassed 20%. MIRA members have generated more than $35 million in internal and external research support which continues to expand McMaster's capacity in aging research.

In 2023, the MIRA team collaborated with the Gilbrea Centre for Studies in Aging on a successful application to the McMaster Okanagan Special Project Funding to host an Older Adult Open Campus day as part of a broader strategy to expand MIRA's community engagement. The event involved 70 students and 50 community members. In support of the same goals, the MIRA team also worked with faculty to develop an intergenerational space in the Lincoln Alexander Hall student residence. This space will allow MIRA to conduct intergenerational programming and bring older adults and students together to improve well-being.

Also in 2023, the MIRA team deepened the institute's research engagement in Toronto through a partnership with the multi-service agency Dixon Hall. The MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre unites McMaster's research strengths with Dixon Hall's expertise as a social service provider.

^ Denotes Team Award Recipient

Research Data Management Services Team ^
Danica Evering, Isaac Pratt

In recent years, the two-person Research Data Management (RDM) Services Team has revitalized the University's programming on the research data lifecycle including planning, storing and publishing data. This ongoing reinvention of the portfolio includes the development of McMaster's Institutional RDM Strategy, the delivery of a SSHRC-funded two-day workshop on community research data toolkits and social justice, the development and launch of the Data Management Plan Database, the presentation of the Summer Learning Cohort on Indigenous Data Sovereignty, partnership on the Data Champions project and the creation of an RDM community of practice for the McMaster and Hamilton research communities.

The RDM Services Team developed the vital Research Data Storage Finder, an interactive tool that lists the data storage and backup providers available to McMaster researchers. The team also collaborated with the Research Software Development Team to create a first-of-its-kind Research Assets Management Plan to help researchers manage data and software development. The template will be available nationally on the Digital Research Alliance of Canada's Data Management Plan Assistant.

The team's contributions to research data management also extend beyond McMaster as both team members are involved in the provincial, national and international RDM communities, including organizations such as Compute Ontario, the Canadian Dataverse Administrators, the national Data Management Planning Expert Group and the Research Data Management in the Canadian Context open educational resources.

^ Denotes Individual Award Recipient