



# McMaster Human Resources Department Operational Strategy 2023-2027

Advancing McMaster's People and Culture Priorities

**BRIGHTER WORLD**  
hr.mcmaster.ca

Human Resources





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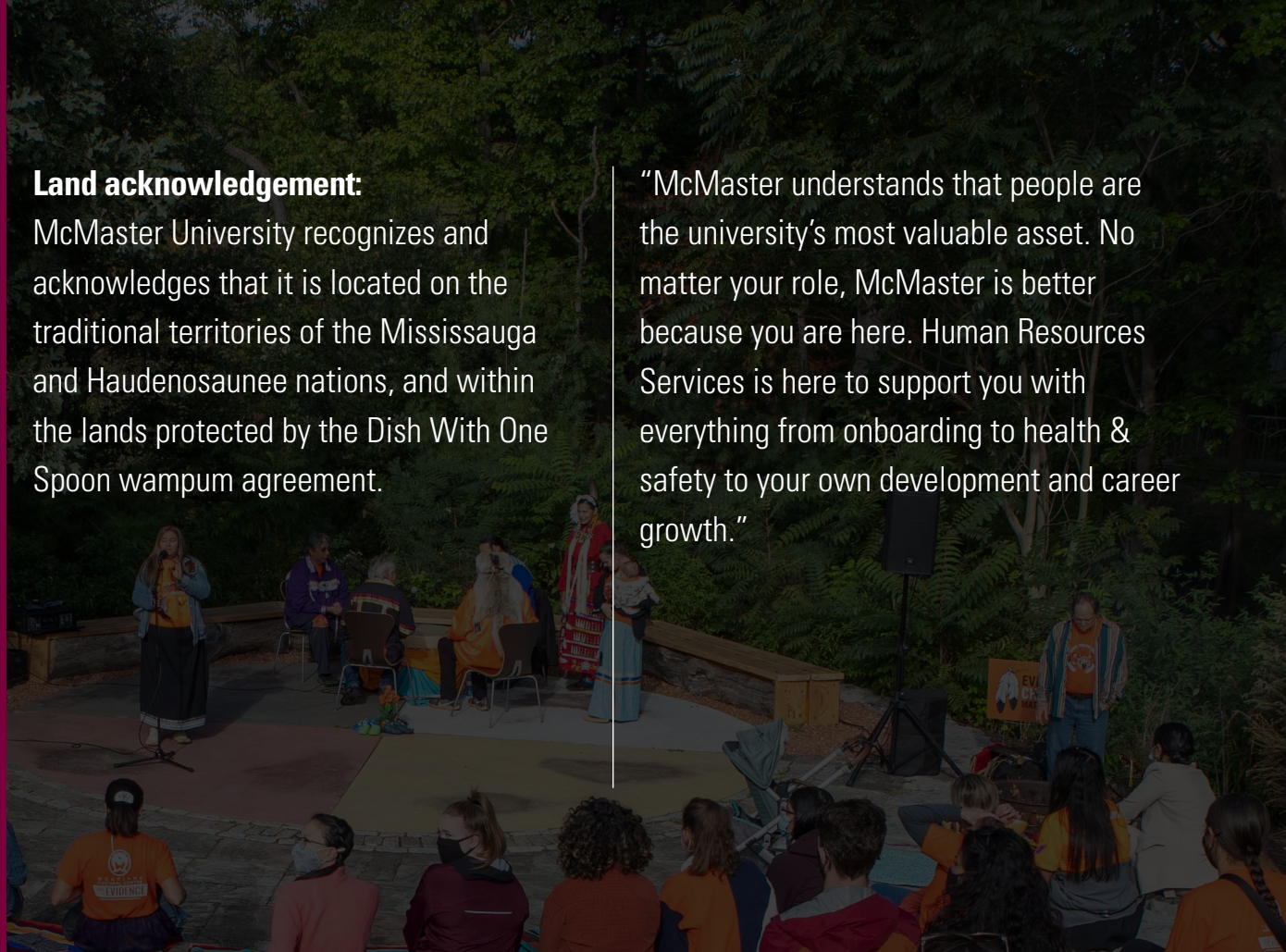
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## Land acknowledgement:

McMaster University recognizes and acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the Dish With One Spoon wampum agreement.

“McMaster understands that people are the university’s most valuable asset. No matter your role, McMaster is better because you are here. Human Resources Services is here to support you with everything from onboarding to health & safety to your own development and career growth.”





# Introduction

## Message from the AVP and CHRO

Human Resources Services is committed to delivering people and culture solutions that advance McMaster's vision, mission and strategic priorities. By providing impactful programs, expert HR counsel, and trusted partnerships, HR team members strive to optimize workforce strategy, inclusivity and operational efficiency, while advancing HR excellence.

As we reflect on our recent change journey, in addition to navigating through the global pandemic and supporting our community on a successful return to campus, we have embarked on a journey of transformation. This has culminated in new HR Governance, a new HR Operating model, and significant enhancements in HR self service offerings, enabling technologies and processes, reporting, inclusive and meaningful programming, and the expansion of HR expertise within our function and across our community.

These achievements have resulted from the ongoing collaboration and consultation with various university leaders, key partners and community members whose insights have been invaluable to informing the design, prioritization and successful implementation of several critical initiatives.

Looking forward through our modernized HR Strategy, we seek continued alignment with the identified priorities outlined within the university's strategic framework while also monitoring the pulse of emerging sector and global trends. As a recognized Top Diversity Employer in Canada and Top Employer in the Hamilton-Niagara Region, we know how important it will be to ensure continued focus on innovative programming and the overall employee experience to retain and attract our talented staff and faculty in a globally competitive marketplace, while creating an environment of inclusive excellence, safety and belonging where everyone can be their authentic selves and thrive.

Our refreshed HR Vision, Mission, Strategic Pillars and identified priorities, objectives and success measures are outlined in the next several pages. These have been designed based on the feedback gathered from various community engagement and validation sessions, pulse surveys, trend analyses and individual discussions which took place between fall 2022 and spring 2023.

We are excited to launch this new framework for 2023-2027, which we feel will strongly contribute to McMaster's rankings as a top global university. We

remain committed to championing a work environment which promotes inclusive excellence and operational efficiency in all we do and support across our community, while advancing the successful achievement of our student, teaching, learning and research priorities.

Ongoing review of our strategic deliverables will occur through HR Governance, and any related progress updates and enhancements will continue to be shared through various community engagement activities, our HR website and our HR Annual Report.

Thank you for your continued partnership in building a brighter future together.



*Wanda McKenna*

Wanda McKenna,  
AVP and CHRO

# Foundation for Strategy Execution

## Advancement through HR Governance and the new HR Operating Model

Human Resources institutionalized a governance structure to:

- Foster a partnership between university and human resources leadership in support of McMaster's vision, institutional priorities and strategic framework
- Monitor progress and key performance indicators
- Gain faculty and staff input into HR priorities, programs, and processes
- Capture diverse voices and innovative thinking
- HR will also engage Steering Committee to support development of the strategic plan, for approval by the HR Executive (PVP)

The recently introduced new McMaster HR Operating Model will continue to support advancement of deliverables across the University through respective areas of professional HR focus, and through the design and delivery of progressive strategic and operational HR policies, programs, processes, and initiatives.



## Guiding Principles for Leading HR Practice:

- **Inspire Culture:** enable an inclusive, physically and psychologically safe work environment where employees experience a true sense of belonging, can be their authentic selves, and have the opportunity to fully participate and contribute
- **Align Strategy:** ensure ongoing alignment with university strategy and develop leading class HR policies, programming, processes and initiatives to advance priorities
- **Cultivate Partnerships:** grow consultative partnerships internally and externally to advance innovation, shared accountability and service delivery across the university
- **Enhance Experiences:** promote an employee-centric focus to inform diverse, leader, employee, partner and candidate experiences through community engagement, partnership with Employee Resource Groups and ensuring alignment with Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility principles
- **Champion Change:** continue to champion and facilitate proactive innovation at the institutional and unit levels as we advance priorities
- **Make Evidence-Based Decisions:** collect ongoing feedback and analyze relevant data to gain insights into employee performance and needs and utilizing to make informed decisions on HR practices and initiatives

## Core Values and Capabilities

HR team members will continue to partner and collaborate across the McMaster community while modelling the [McMaster Values, Finance and Operations Division Values](#) as well as our [McMaster Leadership Capabilities](#)



## Our HR Vision

To advance a healthy, safe, and inclusive culture that inspires a diverse and talented McMaster community to contribute to a Brighter World

## Our HR Mission

We cultivate a community in which every employee's experience is that of acceptance, inclusion, belonging, and meaningful connection with the University's mission and institutional priorities. We do this through our following four Strategic Pillars.

### STRATEGIC PILLAR 1



Championing  
University  
People and  
Culture

### STRATEGIC PILLAR 2



Collaborating  
with our  
University and  
Community  
Partners

### STRATEGIC PILLAR 3



Advancing  
Service  
Delivery and  
Operational  
Excellence

### STRATEGIC PILLAR 4



Promoting  
Learning,  
Development  
and a Growth  
Mindset

The following pages outline further details regarding the specific objectives, priority activities and key success measures for each of our HR Strategic pillars.

# Strategic Priority #1



## Championing University People and Culture

We champion sustainable people and culture strategies, in support of an inclusive, psychologically healthy & safe work culture and employee experience



KEY OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY ACTIVITIES	KEY SUCCESS MEASURES
<p><b>Align HR (People and Culture) initiatives with university strategy, arising internal priorities and critical external trends</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the McMaster brand and global reputation through progressive HR planning, people initiatives and new programming that drives organizational goals (focus on recruitment/retention, compensation/ benefits)</li> <li>Ensuring McMaster has an effective and aligned HR Operating Model and resource agility to address arising needs and ensure harmonized decentralization</li> <li>Facilitating and participating in opportunities to inspire creativity, innovation and excellence across our community regarding employee experience and workplace priorities</li> <li>Handling complex employment issues with a view to early and effective dispute resolution and a fundamental commitment to protecting human rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the design and development of a new university People strategy</li> <li>Implement Talent framework</li> <li>Develop Employment Brand and create new Employee Value Proposition resources</li> <li>Improved UniForum /Service Satisfaction Survey results</li> <li>HR/Talent dashboards</li> <li>HR Feedback Survey results</li> <li>Ability to pivot on priorities</li> <li>Infrastructure for cross-organizational planning in place (i.e. Future Visioning Committee, HR Innovators Councils, HR Network, Communities of Practice)</li> <li>Renew the University's Collective Bargaining strategy</li> <li>Develop new Compensation, Benefits, Retirement Plans strategies</li> <li>Strategic grievance handling and metrics</li> <li>Early and effective alternative dispute resolution metrics</li> </ul>
<p><b>Champion an inclusive, psychologically healthy and safe work culture of belonging in alignment with leading global practice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building new strategies and leadership capability to enable a positive workplace culture which promotes community and belonging</li> <li>Partnering in the development and delivery of Employment Equity and institutional Diversity, Equity, Inclusion &amp; Accessibility (DEIA) priorities, Indigenous strategies and initiatives to promote inclusive excellence</li> <li>Ensuring ongoing feedback mechanisms are in place to assess and enhance the employee experience at McMaster</li> <li>Modelling McMaster Values, our new Finance and Operation Division Values and McMaster Leadership Capabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a Psychological Health &amp; Safety strategy</li> <li>Advancement of Employment Equity and institutional Diversity, Equity, Inclusion &amp; Accessibility (DEIA) and Indigenous strategic priorities</li> <li>Improved Employment Equity Census results; action planning outcomes</li> <li>Introduce new organizational level survey and pulse checks; action plans implemented</li> <li>Improved HR collaboration and experiences</li> <li>Revitalize the University's Health &amp; Safety Training program</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure people and culture sustainability through fiscal responsibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering value-added, competitive and progressive HR programs and services</li> <li>Building new compensation and benefits strategies</li> <li>Generating bargaining outcomes within established mandates</li> <li>Identifying new opportunities for revenue generation and cost savings</li> <li>Expansion of internal and external partnerships to enhance and complement services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual delivery within budget allocation achieved</li> <li>Savings realized through new strategies/ automation/initiatives</li> <li>Bargaining mandates achieved</li> <li>Confirm potential fee for service offerings</li> <li>Expansion of external partnership rosters</li> <li>Contribute to reduction in legal fees</li> </ul>

# Strategic Priority #2



## Collaborating with Our University and Community Partners

We ensure ongoing communication and consultation through inclusive and collaborative partnerships, forums, and community engagements to help inform HR initiatives and enhancements



KEY OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY ACTIVITIES	KEY SUCCESS MEASURES
<p><b>Maintain focus on understanding the diverse and arising HR needs across our community</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting ongoing review of strategic and operational plans of our various faculties and departments</li> <li>Facilitating regular discussions with university leaders and administrators to understand common and unique needs and to solicit feedback</li> <li>Leveraging insights from interactions, new embedded HR Strategic Partner roles/ HR teams to inform planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation at least 2 times per year with all university senior leaders; qualitative feedback</li> <li>HR presence at respective faculty/ department meetings</li> <li>HR partnership support available across the university</li> <li>Documented findings and trends</li> </ul>
<p><b>Promote alignment and awareness of HR policies, programs, processes, and initiatives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating HR Governance to ensure ongoing review of priorities, arising needs and required changes</li> <li>Delivering on a robust HR communications and community engagement strategy</li> <li>Enhancing community access and transparency to HR policies, processes, resources and information</li> <li>Identifying and actioning synergies with university partners to create efficiencies and enhance experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR Governance meeting outcomes</li> <li>HR website enhancements</li> <li>Attendance at HR Forums, HR Network sessions, info sessions</li> <li>HR website enhancements and stats; new Teams/Sharepoint sites</li> <li>Tracking and progress updates</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build HR presence and reputation through trusted community partnerships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to expand and enhance internal partnerships to support new HR, DEIA, Indigenous and Talent strategies (i.e. mental health, student to staff, early career, internal mobility, agile/gig workforce, retiree returns)</li> <li>Ensuring regular connection with key university partners, employee group representatives and committees</li> <li>Offer community Town Halls/Forums to share ongoing updates and gain insights</li> <li>Expanding opportunities for community collaboration on HR Operations matters</li> <li>Evolving external partnerships to expand available program and service offerings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of partnership engagements and new process/initiative results</li> <li>Regular engagement with key partner committees, i.e. TMG, BIRS, Indigenous Education Council, MURA, MUFA, SSC, EIO, etc.)</li> <li>Regular meetings with employee group and union representatives</li> <li>Expanded roster documented and available for use by our community facilitated through HR; cost synergies</li> <li>Labour Management Committee meeting frequency and outcomes</li> <li>Central and Joint Health and Safety Committees engagement</li> </ul>



# Strategic Priority #3



## Advancing Service Delivery and Operational Excellence

We are committed to continuously reviewing and progressing our policies, programs, processes, and professional HR services as we strive for operational excellence and seamless delivery.



KEY OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY ACTIVITIES	KEY SUCCESS MEASURES
<b>Explore and leverage technology to advance HR services and efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driving effective and efficient HR operations, systems, and processes that demonstrate stewardship of HR resources</li> <li>Leveraging technology, machine learning and innovation to streamline HR processes and improve the employee experience</li> <li>Scaling up services to meet growing employee and department/faculty needs</li> <li>Refining and measuring service delivery performance and effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantially reduce waiting time in resolving HR inquiries by utilizing conversational AI solutions</li> <li>Optimizing service delivery by implementing automated and digitalized processes</li> <li>Provide an effective, positive and uniform employee service experience</li> </ul>
<b>Use evidence-based data approaches to inform HR planning and design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building new data functionalities and move away from traditional reporting.</li> <li>Working with UTS to design innovative workforce data architecture, storage and access</li> <li>Advancing People Analytics strategy and maturity through robust data governance, and developing new tools to widen data access and support self-service data sourcing</li> <li>Achieving operational excellence through a clear, effective and sustainable people analytics strategy, define the guiding vision for HR data transformation journey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide more useful and meaningful data-based insights to leaders to make more informed decisions.</li> <li>Developing new tools to widen data access and support self-service data sourcing.</li> <li>Advancing data governance strategy in HR and ensuring HR data integrity, providing users with powerful, reliable and secure data.</li> </ul>
<b>Enable innovation and continuous improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and developing synergies with other functional streams</li> <li>Conducting ongoing external research and best practice reviews</li> <li>Ensuring proactive internal process reviews, audits, and compliance</li> <li>Providing mechanisms for community feedback and engagement in needs identification, solution development and implementation</li> <li>Facilitating agile project teams to work on identified gaps, solutions, and enhancements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synergies identified and implemented</li> <li>Participation in external reviews</li> <li>Industry/sector benchmarking</li> <li>Compliance and accuracy rates</li> <li>Audit findings/resolution</li> <li># community suggestions/ideas/requests</li> <li># Continuous Improvement/agile solutions implemented</li> </ul>
<b>Communicate the HR Operating model, define service levels and update as required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evolving specializations and role scope within the HR Operating model in alignment with arising priorities and available resourcing</li> <li>Continuing to build self-service capability, knowledge bank and resources for our community to support people related activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly defined and articulated service levels</li> <li>UniForum results</li> <li>HR satisfaction survey results</li> <li># self-service solutions/ utilization rates</li> </ul>



# Strategic Priority #4



## Promoting Learning, Development and a Growth Mindset

We promote a community of continuous learning and belonging where our employees contribute their strengths and expertise, can be their authentic selves, have the opportunity to grow personally and professionally, and be celebrated for their accomplishments.



KEY OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY ACTIVITIES	KEY SUCCESS MEASURES
<b>Provide innovative and inclusive employee development opportunities for each phase of their career journey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing enhancements to existing programming to ensure inclusive, hybrid offerings</li> <li>Enhancing orientation and onboarding processes, resources, and training to create positive and inclusive experiences for new employees to the university</li> <li>Continuing to automate and integrate Health &amp; Safety and other mandatory training</li> <li>Designing new and promoting available development opportunities</li> <li>Modernizing learning and development related policies and programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancements to New Employee Orientation, Essentials programs, online learning, etc.</li> <li>New onboarding module; links to learning and development</li> <li>New Health &amp; Safety training in place; automation and links to onboarding</li> <li>Utilization rates</li> <li>Satisfaction and learning retention rates</li> <li>Potential cost/time savings</li> </ul>
<b>Advance leadership capability and capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refreshing McMaster leadership capabilities for use by all academic and administrative leaders</li> <li>Managing external vendor solutions and partnerships to enable development programming (i.e., multi-rater, assessments, mentoring, coaching)</li> <li>Implement new opportunities for shared learning and to showcase successes</li> <li>Building infrastructure to support leader mobility and career paths</li> <li>Updating tools, resources and training to support leaders in managing employee development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancements to New Manager Orientation, Personal/ Knowledge/ Strategic Leader programs; website updates and promotions; # participants/ ratings</li> <li>Introduce new programs: Inclusive Excellence, Organizational Leader, Working Mind</li> <li>New leadership development framework and pathways</li> <li>Leader retention/movement rates</li> <li>Multi-rater average rates</li> <li>Website/resource enhancements</li> </ul>
<b>Promote a culture of belonging and recognition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating and participating in Communities of Practice, affinity groups, focus groups to build networks and promote belonging</li> <li>Continuing to enhance recognition related programming in alignment with new organizational values and leadership capabilities</li> <li>Creating opportunities for connection and discussion on key topics for our community</li> <li>Enhancing annual review and merit processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus group feedback</li> <li>Engagement/pulse survey results</li> <li>Employment Equity survey results and outcomes</li> <li>Stay and exit survey results</li> </ul>
<b>Continue to grow HR team expertise and engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to advance "One HR" team culture and alignment of activities across teams</li> <li>Formalizing a talent strategy and ongoing reviews</li> <li>Enabling targeted team and individual development opportunities</li> <li>Continuing to review team engagement activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team retention/movement</li> <li>Robust succession plans in place</li> <li>Development opportunities/ learning transfer outcomes</li> <li>HR engagement and action planning results</li> </ul>

# Moving Forward Together as we advance a Brighter World

As we introduce and enhance our plans through 2023 and beyond, we will be continuing to share regular progress updates and share related information through various connection points across our community and details will be posted on our [HR website](#). These will include:

- Ongoing progress reviews and prioritization through our HR Governance committees
- Contributions towards Institutional Strategic Priorities and Goals update publications
- Participation in various university committees to align efforts and identify opportunities for synergy
- Revised HR webpages outlining key projects, initiatives and highlights for each HR strategic pillar

- Continued publication of our HR Annual Report and Top 100 Employer annual submissions
- Ongoing HR Forums, HR Network Sessions and various community engagement/lunch and learn/training sessions on specific topics and new initiatives
- New online forums for community questions and feedback
- UniForum data, Employee Engagement surveys, Employment Equity Census information and various feedback surveys on HR programming and initiatives
- HR dashboards and analytics

Our HR team will be pleased to assist with your inquiries or engage in feedback discussions anytime.

- [hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca)
- 222-HR
- New HR blogs on our HR website
- Ongoing continuous improvement survey feedback

Thank you for your continued partnership, collaboration and innovation in generating a positive employee experience for all.



“When we work together with other great minds, we do better and achieve more”.