

# **Memorial University of Newfoundland**

**STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN SUMMARY**

**FOR THE**

**CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM**

April 2015

## INTRODUCTION

Memorial University is the only University in Newfoundland and Labrador, and it is shaped and sustained by the highest standards of contemporary research, and by the people, location and history of its community. The University is committed to excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and service to the general public. The institutional mandate involves undertaking research on the challenges facing the province and sharing its expertise within its community. To fulfill this mandate, Memorial will build upon its vibrant culture of creativity, research excellence and innovation to create, transform, interpret, share and apply knowledge with integrity, excitement, vigor and purpose.

## OBJECTIVES

The goals of Memorial University's Strategic Research Plan (SRP) are to attract, retain, support and celebrate people engaged in and supporting research; to support an environment of research excellence; to engage with community partners and collaborators locally, nationally and internationally to create, share and apply research; and to support fundamental and applied research excellence in areas of strategic opportunity.

## PRIORITY AREAS FOR RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING

The University plans to achieve its objectives through ten Strategic Research themes described in detail in Table 1. These themes identify Memorial's research priorities in areas where there are strengths to build on, and where there are opportunities for growth. Much of the research associated with the Strategic Research themes is not limited to any one theme, as the inter-connectedness among the themes is as important as the classification of the work under each.

Memorial's Strategic Research Plan, named the Research Strategy Framework (see: <http://www.mun.ca/research/explore/framework/>), is one of three Frameworks developed by the University to identify the goals and objectives necessary to achieve success in research, teaching and learning as well as public engagement. Guided by feedback received in more than 100 consultation sessions in the University and the Province, the Research Strategy Framework (RSF) was the first of the frameworks to be developed and endorsed by Memorial's Senate in 2011. The vision is to ensure that Memorial University is a leading knowledge community where research excellence is valued and promoted for its contributions to the advancement of knowledge, to the professional and personal development of students and researchers, and to the wellbeing of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada and the world. The 10 research themes capture Memorial's core research strengths. The consultation process recognized the value of the full spectrum of research and the diversity of the modes of dissemination of research results. The process was based on the principle of freedom for researchers to pursue research which is based on their individual and collective intelligence, curiosity, inventiveness and creativity. It considered all aspects of scholarship, including research and creative activities, as well as the translation of knowledge into products, practices and policies, and other forms of community engagement. The process was iterative and included extensive internal and external consultation, and analysis of data and trends. All units of the University with a research role were included in the consultations.

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## DISTRIBUTION OF CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS AND USE OF CHAIR FUNDS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY

The distribution of Canada Research Chairs within Memorial University's academic units largely reflects relative Tri-Agency funding levels. However, Memorial recognizes the potential for a Chair to serve as a catalyst to increase performance in Tri-Agency programs. To advance Memorial's research ambitions into 2020, extensive consultations with academic units, faculty members, and staff were undertaken in 2013. The resulting plan, Memorial's Strategic Research Intensity Plan (SRIP), released in 2014, stems directly from the RSF (see: <http://www.mun.ca/research/explore/srip/>). The plan reflects a synergistic and integrated approach for strengthening all aspects of research at Memorial University, including scholarship and creative activities, as well as the translation of knowledge into products, practices and policies, and other forms of community engagement. The SRIP mandates Memorial to work towards the establishment of research chairs, including Canada Research Chairs, in every school, faculty and campus at Memorial in areas identified as priority research themes within the RSF by 2020. This action will be supported through the Office of the Vice-President (Research), in particular through the newly created Office of CREAT, CRC and CFI Services, with oversight by Memorial's CRC Steering Committee which includes representation from the Offices of the Provost and the Vice-President (Research).

As stated in the SRIP, Memorial believes that Chair holders must have access to significant research funding in order to rapidly impact their environment. In many Canadian universities, Canada Research Chairs funding is allocated primarily to the Chair holder's salary, thus requiring the Chair holder to focus on obtaining additional research funding in the initial years of the chair. Such an approach is often problematic, having the consequence of attracting high quality faculty members, but denying them the means to initiate their research program in a timely manner. At Memorial University, for Canada Research Chairs to contribute more rapidly to the university's research intensity, Memorial will strive to provide Chair holders with research funding at a significant level. This approach is supported by a newly approved procedure, Financial Arrangements for Canada Research Chairs.

## EQUITY

Memorial is committed to maintaining a welcoming and favourable work environment for all individuals, removing workplace barriers that negatively affect individuals or groups, supporting the creation of a diverse workforce, and providing community leadership as a progressive and equitable employer. It is committed to employment equity and encourages applications from qualified women and men, visible minorities, aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities. Memorial's plan for ensuring that career and training benefits will be made available to designated groups is rooted in its Employment Equity Policy, related procedures and practices. Further, this policy is informed by the Federal Contractors Program, which was established in 1986 to further the goal of achieving workplace equity for designated groups.

Employment equity is a key responsibility of a wide range of leaders at the University. The President is responsible for employment equity across the institution, and members of the senior executive are entrusted with the proper application of employment equity policies and procedures in their respective units. All individuals involved participate in employment systems reviews to ensure there is no systemic discrimination in employment policies and practices. Finally, individual academic

departments and divisions compile and develop employment equity plans, implement approved employment equity plans, as well as evaluate and renew employment equity plans every five years.

For faculty recruitment, including the recruitment of Canada Research Chairs, the terms of Memorial's Collective Agreement provide clear processes related to employment equity. The Agreement provides for the establishment of a Joint Association/University Employment Equity Committee (Joint Equity Committee) which assists Memorial's Employment Equity Officer in developing and monitoring the employment equity program for the University's academic community. The committee includes representation from the designated groups, and assists Academic Units in the development of hiring goals and other measures to reduce unwarranted imbalances among target groups. The Joint Equity Committee is authorized to review procedures, actions, and outcomes related to recruitment and appointment of academic staff members to ensure that due emphasis is given to increasing, as appropriate, the proportion of target groups. Under-representation of a target group is deemed to exist when the proportion of academic staff members in an Academic Unit from a given target group is less than the proportion of persons from that group in the total pool of persons who: (a) have graduated in Canada within the previous three (3) years from the degree program normally required for an appointment at this University in their discipline; or (b) are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

## PARTNERSHIPS

External engagement (i.e., sharing research findings and partnering on research activity with communities, governments, organizations and the private sector) and inter-disciplinary collaboration are vitally important to realizing the significant opportunities presented through the themes. As such, opportunities for partnering with regional and national agencies will be pursued vigorously, as will partnerships with the private sector and community-based organizations. Current partnerships with departments of the provincial government and regional agencies will be enhanced.

Where strategically desirable, sharing of resources and interdisciplinary approaches to major research questions will be encouraged. Memorial recognizes that core disciplinary competencies must be developed and sustained, and that the unique ability and approaches of a single investigator can have as much impact on a field of study as team approaches to certain problems. The recognition of these core values and provision of a supportive environment for both individual and team research will be fundamental to the successful development of internationally-recognized research strengths at Memorial.

**Table 1. Memorial's Strategic Research Themes**

1. Aboriginal Peoples	Research under this theme relates to the pre-history and history of Aboriginal peoples, as well as to contemporary issues and opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador, nationally and internationally
2. Arctic and Northern Regions	Research under this theme relates to people and communities, environment and resources, approaches and technologies for sustainable resource development, and land, ocean and coastal zones in arctic and northern regions.
3. Community, Regional and Enterprise Development	Research under this theme relates to building capacity of people, organizations, communities, industries, and enterprises to foster social and economic prosperity and development in rural and urban communities, neighbourhoods and regions.
4. Creative Arts, Culture and Heritage	Research related to creative production and expression; curation and interpretation; and archaeological, historical, ethnographic and archival research in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada and Internationally.
5. Environment, Energy and Natural Resources	Research related to the environment, development of natural resources (oil and gas, mining, forestry), and the interaction of people, industry, and communities with the natural world, locally, nationally and globally.
6. Governance and Public Policy	Research related to organizational and corporate governance, public policy and the relationships amongst governments and non-government organizations. Corporate governance consists of the collection of rules, processes and practices that determine the relationship between members of an organization and those who have a stake in the organization's performance, including shareholders, creditors, employees, customers, and society at large. Governance, more broadly, includes how government bodies develop and implement public policy, and how governments relate to non-governmental organizations in the shared allocation of decision-making and resources for achieving public policy purposes.
7. Information and Communication Technology	Research related to the theoretical foundations of information and communication technology (ICT), the design and deployment of ICT in a variety of settings, and the evaluation of the use of ICT and its impact on individuals, organizations and society. It involves research into the study and design of systems that capture, store, transmit, process and use information in a manner that is efficient, accurate, reliable, secure, profitable, and responsible.
8. Oceans, Fisheries and Aquaculture	Research related to the maritime environment, the interaction of coastal people and communities with the ocean and maritime environment, and the scientific, technological and organizational requirements of industrial development in this environment, particularly relating to conditions in the North Atlantic. Fishery and aquaculture, more specifically, include fresh water and marine fish biology and environments and scientific, technological and organizations aspects of fishery and aquaculture industry development, and their related social, community, environmental and public policy characteristics.
9. Social Justice	Research related to systems and structures that contribute to more humane, equitable and just societies. Its focus is on building the capacity and enabling the civic engagement of vulnerable populations, locally, nationally and internationally, whose voices are seldom heard in addressing the barriers to their wellbeing and full participations in society.
10. Wellbeing, Health and Biomedical Discovery	Research related to improvement of health and well-being through building research and knowledge provincial, nationally and internationally especially for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in areas of unique provincial need and opportunity.