

TRENT UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN SUMMARY 2023-2028

INTRODUCTION

Trent University considers the conduct of high-caliber research a fundamental component of its mission as a Canadian institution of higher education. Trent's impressive research performance has earned top rankings in national performance metrics, including publication intensity, income growth, and research impact.

Since its inception in 1963, Trent has experienced significant expansions in research activity due to the growing participation of students and faculty and the development of infrastructure across two campuses, one in Peterborough and the other in Durham. Through recent initiatives such as Cleantech Commons, the Centre for Aging and Society, the Earth District, and research agreements with international institutions, Trent students and faculty have increasing opportunities for greater industry and community engagement in their research endeavors.

TRENT'S RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

The research ecosystem at Trent incorporates the university's signature focus on healthy and sustainable environments and communities, priority areas of research intensification, and a diverse range of research methods. The priorities identified in the Strategic Research Plan are grounded in a commitment to this interconnected research ecosystem.



KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE SRP

1. Enhance Research Excellence: Attract and retain top-tier researchers, scholars, and innovators across various disciplines who can inspire groundbreaking research, and provide

faculty with the support and mentorship required to submit high caliber funding applications that lead to research success.

2. **Promote Interdisciplinarity and Collaboration:** Foster a research environment that encourages collaborations within and beyond Trent, and cultivate research leadership that supports the integration of multiple disciplines to solve complex problems.
3. **Enhance Community Engagement and Knowledge Dissemination:** Promote partnerships with external stakeholders, such as the Earth District (consortium of 5 universities and colleges), and augment research involvement by leveraging Trent research institutes and centres in disseminating research findings through a wide range of communication channels.
4. **Foster Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Ensure a diverse and inclusive research environment that reflects Canada's demographics and a multitude of perspectives, including implementing best practices tied to the principles of the pan-Canadian Dimensions Charter.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING

Trent has identified six research priority areas. The active engagement and participation of Canada Research Chairs at Trent is integral to achieving success in these priority areas.

Priority 1: Student Engagement with Research

Student research opportunities are an essential part of undergraduate and graduate education at Trent. Research opportunities in coursework, in the field, in communities, in labs, in arts venues, and in co-curricular learning will prepare students for a life of consequence.

Priority 2: Enhanced Communication of Research

Mobilizing, translating, and disseminating Trent research drives policy, knowledge building, social innovation, and diversity of thought. Enhanced recognition, communication, and promotion of research capacity and significance will illustrate research excellence at Trent and beyond.

Priority 3: Faculty Support and Mentorship

Ongoing support, collegial mentorship, and research opportunities are central to ensuring researcher success. Supporting and mentoring researchers will expand and deepen research activity at Trent while helping to attract and retain talent.

Priority 4: Research Funding and Partnerships

Research funding from external sources engenders greater research opportunities, with high potential impact. Grant success rates, focused philanthropic support, as well as strong government, community, and industry partnerships will be essential to ensuring responsive and significant research outcomes.

Priority 5: Research Leadership

Trent's research excellence involves faculty leadership, locally and globally. Further development of Trent's Chairs Program, including named chairs, endowed chairs, Fulbright Scholars, and Canada Research Chairs will advance research activity and intensity.

Priority 6: Research Collaboration

Interdisciplinary and collaborative research focused on local and global challenges is a high priority for Trent. Providing researchers with opportunities to cluster by areas of mutual interest will facilitate valuable research developments.

ADDRESSING AND MONITORING GENDER REPRESENTATION IN CRC NOMINATIONS

Trent ensures equitable gender representation in its Canada Research Chairs nominations through two university policies, the “Standard Operating Procedure for the Allocation of Canada Research Chair” and the “Canada Research Chair Recruitment, Nominating and Hiring Process.” These policies govern the membership and involvement of committees at institutional (President/Vice-President Executive Committee, CRC Allocations Committee) and divisional (CRC Departmental Nominating and Hiring Committee, CRC Multi- Department Nominating and Hiring Committee) levels. These policies determine processes followed during the allocation and selection of new CRCs that are consistent with regulations set forth in the Trent University Faculty Association Collective Agreement and Trent’s CRC Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan. Specific measures to ensure gender representation in the allocation process include the requirement that all proposals for new chairs demonstrate how EDI was considered in proposal development and that a plan to recruit members of equity-seeking groups be included before the proposal is considered by the Allocations Committee. Once allocated, job postings for new chairs must meet requirements for inclusivity with clear language related to equity deserving candidates; hiring committee membership includes representation from members of the four designated groups whenever possible; applicants are required to complete self-identification surveys; and processes for equitable and inclusive interviews must be followed. Monitoring of gender representation is achieved through annual reports that are endorsed by Trent’s Research Policy Committee before presentation to the President/Vice-President Executive Committee. The Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will support the above processes.

DEPLOYMENT OF CRCs AND CFI SUPPORT

Trent’s CRCs represent research strengths over a broad area, but with particular emphasis on the environment, social issues, and policy.

Name	Agency	Tier	Field of Research
Dr. Marguerite Xenopoulos	NSERC	Tier 1	Global Change of Freshwater Ecosystems
Dr. Whitney Lackenbauer	Special SSHRC	Tier 1	The Study of the Canadian North
Dr. Dennis Murray	NSERC	Tier 1	Integrative Wildlife Conservation
Dr. May Chazan	SSHRC	Tier 2	Feminist and Gender Studies
Dr. Naomi Nichols	SSHRC	Tier 2	Community-Partnered Social Justice
Dr. Anne Pasek	Special SSHRC	Tier 2	Media, Culture and the Environment
Dr. Ian Power	NSERC	Tier 2	Environmental Geosciences
Dr. Paul Szpak	SSHRC	Tier 2	Environmental Archeology
Dr. Bharati Sethi	Special SSHRC	Tier 2	Care Work, Ethnicity, Race and Aging
Dr. Andrew Tanentzap	NSERC	Tier 2	Climate Change and Northern Ecosystems

All CRCs are eligible to apply for CFI funding. Eight of Trent's current ten CRCs hold or have held CFI funding during their tenure as CRCs.

Trent has developed research focusing on the environment, social issues, and policy through the considered deployment of CRC allocations, CFI funding, regular faculty recruitment efforts, and the establishment of research labs, centres, and groups. Labs and centres with which CRCs are affiliated (including the Trent Centre for Aging and Society, the Water Quality Centre, and the Research for Social Change Lab) provide CRCs with opportunities to mentor and receive mentoring, to take part in collaborative research, and to access venues for knowledge mobilization. These research units also provide students and other HQP with opportunities to work with active and successful researchers who provide access to research opportunities, mentorship, and training to maintain and increase the talent pipeline.

Trent's future research focuses include sustainable, small-scale agriculture, green technology, and an expansion of work involving aging, health and society. Each of these research areas, and training within them, will be supported through ongoing and future investments in infrastructure and agreements including the establishment of a research farm, the construction of Cleantech Common (a research and innovation park focusing on university-industry partnerships to investigate and develop clean technology), and a seniors village to be constructed on campus with the goal of creating a vibrant intergenerational community that will bring seniors to university life and bring university life to seniors.

In addressing the particular needs of rural and northern institutions, Trent has an MoU with Lakehead, Laurentian, and Nipissing Universities to collaborate and share resources on research and innovation to boost Ontario's economy. The MoU focuses on research and commercialization support, knowledge sharing, access to professional experience and advanced facilities, and ecosystem links. The four universities, with IPON (Intellectual Property Ontario) funding, also formed the Northern and Rural Innovation Cluster, which focuses on vital minerals, cleantech, and battery electric technology. This initiative is an excellent opportunity for faculty researchers and CRCs to actively engage in the commercialization process.

The Earth District (a collaboration between Trent, University of Toronto Scarborough, Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, and Durham College of Applied Arts and Technology) is a consortium dedicated to collaborating on research, commercialization, and education focused on developing clean, green, and sustainable technology sectors. This consortium will create a wide spectrum of collaborative research opportunities funded through the cooperating institutions.

Trent's ongoing collaboration with Fleming College allows the two institutions to investigate research areas of mutual interest, share expertise, and engage students through placements, internships, and other hands-on learning experiences.

Trent also has a research partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada that allows Trent faculty researchers and administration to explore research areas of mutual interest and share data, connect promising Trent students with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for placements, internships, and experiential learning opportunities, and support networked opportunities for small-scale, sustainable agriculture in Ontario and nationally.

ASSESSING SUCCESS IN MEETING SRP OBJECTIVES

To implement Trent's newly approved SRP objectives, the Office of Research and Innovation, under the leadership of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, is establishing six distinct working groups. These groups have taken the lead in collaborating with various stakeholders, including deans, departmental chairs, and administrative staff from both Trent campuses, to effectively implement and assess strategies that address the priority areas outlined in the SRP.

Trent's success in meeting its objectives will be evaluated and published annually through the "Report on Research Excellence," using, where applicable, recognized metrics such as Research InfSOURCE rankings; increases in external research funding, peer-reviewed publications, research partnerships, commercialization activities, scholarly prizes, and graduate student enrollment. Simultaneously, unmet objectives will be acknowledged, prompting stakeholders to emphasize the achievement of these through strategies facilitated by the Office of Research and Innovation.

PLANNING AND APPROVAL PROCESS OF SRP 2023-2028

Following the Senate's approval of the "consultation process" in November 2022, the Office of Research and Innovation Planning Team undertook a series of 20 listening sessions with faculty, deans, students, research chairs, and administrators from November 2022 to January 2023 to determine research priorities for the next five years. Simultaneously, an online survey was conducted, and the collected data was used to supplement information gathered during listening sessions in developing a draft document outlining the Strategic Research Priorities. In February 2023, the draft was shared with Trent's Board of Governors for review and feedback. In March 2023, it passed further scrutiny and assessment by the Senate Executive, Faculty Board, and Senate. Once the necessary revisions were integrated, the Senate approved the final revised plan in May 2023. Trent's Office of Research and Innovation distributed the SRP to the Trent community and external stakeholders in June 2023.