



**STRATEGIC PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT  
APRIL 2023**

## Message from The President & Vice-Chancellor



To the MSVU community,

I am pleased to report that we are making strides in the implementation of strategies spanning the [seven themes](#) in MSVU's current strategic plan: [Strength Through Community](#). I invite you to read this progress report for the latest updates by theme.

These updates reflect the hard work and deep commitment to the MSVU community of the many constituent groups across this exceptional university, including faculty, staff and administrators, students, alumni, donors, supporters, and community collaborators.

As always, sincere thanks to them for their unfailing commitment to our university community and all that MSVU stands for. Together they exemplify the true meaning of Strength Through Community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JD', written in a cursive style.

Joël Dickinson, PhD  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
Mount Saint Vincent University

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## **Theme 1: Transformative teaching and learning**

**Objective 1: Include material related to equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility (EDIA) and reconciliation in our course offerings.**

- A number of departments have **updated or expanded course offerings**, for example:
  - The Chemistry Department recently offered senior students Directed Studies courses with projects that have a goal of developing learning assets that focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), culturally responsive pedagogy, pedagogy that pays respect to Indigenous knowledge. The Department is also revising one of its large first-year courses to include UDL.
  - Women's Studies is developing courses in, for example, Global Gender Studies, Ecofeminism and Environmental Justice, African & African Diaspora feminisms Gender, Colonization, Decolonization, and more.
  - Biology and Chemistry labs are being redeveloped to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and practices.
  - In the last year, the Department of English has added a second-year course in Indigenous Literatures and a third-year course in Indigenous Feminisms and Sexualities.

**Objective 2: By keeping courses and programs current, meet the future needs of students so they can live, work and learn in a socially responsible and just way.**

- Progress continues on the development of a **new strategic enrolment management plan** for MSVU. The Strategic Enrolment Management Committee, with the advising firm Academica Group, has conducted an environmental scan and met with members of the various administrative units engaged in enrolment management, from recruitment through retention to graduation. A deep dive into the data gathered is underway and an initial plan is taking form.



## **Theme 2: Research, scholarly work and professional activity**

**Across all objectives:** In winter 2023, the Research Office launched a new five-year [Research Strategic Plan](#) following extensive consultation across the university. The plan focuses on key parts of research, such as the current research landscape, strategic research pillars, EDIA + Truth & Reconciliation, as well as research-related actions by sector.

**Objective 1: Enhance and expand research, scholarly and professional activity in support of the advancement of women and girls, other marginalized groups, social responsibility and social justice.**

- We continue to participate in the federal Tri-Agency Dimensions program to advance EDIA in research – the only Nova Scotian university participant and one of only 10 universities and colleges from across Canada. With the pilot phase recently complete, we are awaiting the outcome of our application for official designation as a Dimensions-endorsed institution (expected late April 2023).

**Objective 4: Encourage the research endeavours of women and other marginalized and underrepresented faculty, staff and students.**

- Supported by the NSERC Chair, Dr. Tamara Franz-Odendaal (Department of Biology), WISEAtlantic recently launched a program that gives Indigenous, Black, and international students paid research opportunities with MSVU Science faculty. In its first semester, the program received 18 student applications, and awarded eight research assistantships (fall 2022).

**Objective 6: Share research and knowledge with relevant communities, and influence action.**

- MSVU has recently become a member of [The Conversation Canada](#), a platform that connects scholars at member universities with its news editors to produce stories available for re-publishing by media around the world. This knowledge translation initiative is being led by the MSVU Research Office, Communications and Marketing, and the Library. Information sessions have been held for faculty and numerous faculty have published new works.



## Theme 3: Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility

**Objective 2: Promote a diverse, global and inclusive community of faculty, staff and students in an environment of mutual respect.**

- On March 22, 2023, we celebrated the **opening of a new EDIA Hub** on campus. Located adjacent to the McCain Atrium, the Hub is a dedicated space for students, faculty, staff and alumni to access information on EDIA resources. It also creates opportunity for collaboration and community-building among EDIA leaders at MSVU.
- The **Management Forum team has been expanded to include the EDIA Advisor**, Special Advisor to MSVU on Indigenous Affairs, and Harassment and Discrimination Advisor. These inclusions ensure greater diversity within the team and respond to the University's commitment to EDIA.
- In January 2022, Communications & Marketing published a new Editorial Style and **Inclusive Language Guide** designed to help promote consistency of language and terminology across non-academic university materials, and ensure use of language that is inclusive of all. In particular, the guide features information on language with regards to Indigenous Peoples, race, age, disability, and gender, as well as trauma-informed language.





## **Theme 4: Truth and Reconciliation**

**Objective 1: Ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are aligned with the principles of Truth and Reconciliation.**

- The MSVU Senate has added to its membership a designated seat for an L'nu representative. L'nu Advisory Circle member and MSVU alum John R. Sylliboy is the first to hold this seat, as of January 27, 2023.

**Objective 2: Recruit and retain Indigenous faculty, staff and students and provide a welcoming, supportive and safe campus environment for Indigenous peoples.**

- A new **Indigenous Cluster Hire** to fill four new faculty positions has been initiated (2023).
- A 'Shared Vision EDIA team' chaired by the MSVU President (through the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents) is **developing a plan for retention of Black and Indigenous faculty** across all Nova Scotia universities.

**Objective 3: Be a national leader in providing education and awareness about Truth and Reconciliation, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG), 2SLGBTQIA+, and about the issues and root causes of the violence they experience.**

- This winter (2023), we established a new Truth & Reconciliation Action Committee at MSVU through the Office of the President. The commitment level is strong with an approximate membership of 42 faculty, staff and students.



## **Theme 5: Community engagement**

**Objective 1: Enhance and expand educational access for girls, women, marginalized and underrepresented groups from our communities.**

- We continue to work with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre to offer the **Aboriginal Access and Post-Secondary program (AAAPS)** which recently saw its highest enrolment to date. For the first time (fall 2022), AAAPS students took part in a week-long boot camp before the term started. It included a full day on the MSVU campus and was supported by numerous staff.
- In the interest of ensuring that Indigenous students have access to a curriculum that foregrounds Indigenous knowledge, **AAAPS students took a credit course in Mi'kmaw language for the first time in the fall of 2022.** Held at Dalhousie University, but with half the seats reserved for MSVU students, this class is an example of inter-University collaboration on initiatives to support Indigenous students
- In the summer of 2022, **MSVU partnered with Phoenix Youth to provide a unique on-campus experience for 13 youth who attend programs at Mulgrave Park Community Centre.** The students spent two days and one night on campus where they attended mini lectures, visited with Mount Mentors, and enjoyed gym time. The visit is intended to lay the groundwork for further pathway programming.
- A new **Graduate Scholarship for Women in Gender Studies** was recently established to honour the legacy of the late Dr. Alexa McDonough, while supporting women graduate students doing feminist research. Fundraising continues, but, with help from the MSV Alumni Association, the first award was made in 2022.



## **Theme 5: Community engagement (continued)**

**Objective 4: Develop proactive, user-centric, integrated and coordinated university marketing and communications that promote our mission, vision and values.**

- Communications and Marketing successfully implemented its fall/winter 2022/2023 **student recruitment marketing campaign**, with a focus on online advertising as that's where the campaign's target audiences spend the majority of their time. Tactics included some poster and digital displays in key locations (out of home), and social media, gaming, programmatic and SEM efforts (online).
- **Two new booklets developed by Communications & Marketing in the fall of 2022 help tell the unique story of MSVU and are available in both print and electronic formats:**
  - **[Access & impact, A snapshot of MSVU](#)** is our positioning statement and outlines at a high level who we are, what we stand for, and our value proposition as we move forward.
  - **[So much to crow about at MSVU](#)** is a longer form document that elaborates on MSVU's unique attributes.
- Storytelling efforts continue, with more than 100 original stories shared across MSVU channels in the past year featuring the achievements of MSVU students, faculty, staff, partners and programs. As well, media relations efforts continue to garner significant coverage for the university and its experts. For example, from July 1 to September 20 (2022), MSVU was mentioned an approximate 3,570 times in news, social and broadcast media with a potential reach of 1.5 billion and an estimated ad value equivalency of \$13.7 million.





## Theme 6: A healthy and safe university campus for all

**Objective 1: Make MSVU a health and wellness enhancing place to work and study by building meaningful interpersonal connections; providing a physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally safe environment; and providing and aligning necessary programs, supports and spaces for optimum work, study and leisure/recreation.**

- A first ever ‘**Academic and Student Support Showcase: Facilitating Faculty and Staff Connections**’ event was held in September 2022 (the start of a new academic year). The event was designed to help students, faculty and staff learn more about how the academic and student support units can make a positive contribution to teaching and learning at MSVU.
- The Department of Biology has initiated **Biology Buddies**, a peer mentorship program that matches first-year students with upper-year peers to help build meaningful interpersonal connections.



## **Theme 7: Operational excellence and sustainability**

**Objective 1: Achieve operational excellence in administrative and academic support functions by making decisions that are informed by accurate, timely data.**

- Progress continues on the development of a **new strategic enrolment management plan** for MSVU.
  - The Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Committee, with the advising firm Academica Group, has conducted an environmental scan and met with members of the various administrative units engaged in enrolment management, from recruitment through retention to graduation. A deep dive into the data gathered is underway and an initial plan is taking form.
  - An SEM Data Committee was formed to guide the work around data definitions, required reports and evaluation of analytics tools – all key to the development of a successful SEM plan.
- IT & S has initiated the development of new Cybersecurity governance toward enhancing existing cybersecurity approaches.
- An inventory of digitization projects has identified 49 projects to be prioritized based on alignment with the strategic plan, benefit to students, and required resources.

**Objective 2: Develop an infrastructure that is financially and environmentally sustainable and that meets the needs of the university and its surrounding community so they can flourish.**

- On December 2, 2022, the MSVU Accessibility Advisory Committee, introduced the university's first multi-year Accessibility Plan (2022-2025). The plan reflects MSVU's commitment to fulfilling the requirements of the Accessibility Act that was passed in Nova Scotia in 2017 toward making Nova Scotia inclusive and barrier-free by 2030.



### Objective 3: Attract, retain and increase investment in the university.

• We've launched a year of celebration and reflection to mark MSVU's 150th anniversary and share our vision for the future. Activities to date include (not an exhaustive list):

- A successful [150th celebration launch event](#) held on campus on January 24, 2023.
- A new 150th anniversary website section also launched on January 24, providing a hub for information on MSVU's 150th, including a robust historical timeline, an animated ['History of MSVU in 150 Seconds' video](#), details of special events, stories and more.
- The sale of [150 MSVU merchandise](#) in collaboration with the MSVU bookstore.
- Extensive 150th storytelling, including a new [150 People Profiles series](#) and [Way Back Wednesday social media series](#).
- From November 2022 to February 2023, the MSVU Art Gallery transferred select artworks in the university's permanent collection from storage to the Gallery in order to photograph each piece and update collection records, and for display. The focus was on works by Alice Egan Hagen (1872-1972), a renowned Nova Scotian ceramicist and MSVU alumna. The university's permanent collection holds over 100 paintings and ceramics by Alice Egan Hagen, which were donated to the school by the artist in 1966.
- Plans are well underway for a roster of additional significant events to come throughout the year.





[MSVU.CA/STRATEGICPLAN](https://msvu.ca/strategicplan)