Research Plan 2015-2018

Making a Difference through Research

gender policy learning social health aging food women literature disabilities literacy politics childhood critical women's theory tourism children's reading security behavioural lifelong learning inclusive education religion management women's rights inclusion history statistics family art popular culture language environment administration girls communications cultural education

1

Preamble

Research is a core mission of any university. As stated in the Mission statement of the Mount's strategic plan, *Mount 2017: Making a Difference,* Mount Saint Vincent University is "dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge: scholarship, teaching and intellectual endeavour of the highest quality." Discovering and sharing knowledge to understand society and nature and to improve the human condition defines, in broad terms, the Mount's commitment to making a difference through research. Following, and further aligning with, our Academic Plan, this document, *Making a Difference through Research,* articulates a research direction and agenda for the Mount for the next three years. It is intended to sit alongside and interact with the Mount's other primary planning documents in the service of the Mount's mission, vision, and goals.

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[1] The Wordle™ was created from data gathered through an on-line survey, review of faculty profiles on the Mount website, and review of internal and external research grant awards. Keywords identified in a thematic analysis were entered into the Wordle program. The result is this "word cloud" that displays the entered text with prominence given to words based on the frequency of use. For example, the word most frequently used to describe faculty research is "gender" hence "gender" appears as the most prominent text.

The Mount's current Strategic Research Plan, approved by Senate first in 2003 and in revised form in 2010, was crafted to align with the Canada Research Chairs Program. *Making a Difference through Research* extends the current Strategic Research Plan. Upon approval, this document will form the basis for a revision to the Mount's Canada Research Chairs Strategic Research Plan.

The planning, preparation, and development of the Research Plan was carried out under the guidance of the Committee on Research and Publications (CRP), chaired by the Associate Vice-President, Academic and Research. Throughout the Winter and Spring of 2014, the Associate Vice-President, Academic and Research and at least one representative from the CRP met with departments and programs across the University to invite submissions, comments, and contributions to inform the Research Plan. Outreach also included undergraduate and graduate students. In addition, the Research Office contacted all full-time faculty members to gather detailed information on research interests and activities.

The discussions and submissions were wide-ranging and informative. They included numerous suggestions and ideas about how to enhance and support research culture, programs, and activities at the Mount. While all of the information contributed to the development of the Research Plan, following the model of other similar documents, such as the Academic Plan and Teaching and Learning Plan, the Research Plan itself only addresses the broader and more overarching issues related to research directions for the Mount. Upon approval, the Research Plan will be followed by the development of an action plan for the implementation and realization of the goals and commitments set out in *Making a Difference through Research*. The action plan will reflect many of the creative ideas and suggestions offered in the consultation process.

With an emphasis on the distinctive character of the Mount, *Making a Difference through Research* is intended to reflect, recognize, and support the Mount research community's commitment to exploration and discovery and also its engagement with and response to complex social, cultural, environmental, health, education, and economic needs of individuals, communities, and society. This Plan also was crafted with attention to the Mount's size and resource capacity so as to set a research direction that is reasonable and sustainable for us as an institution.

The Research Plan
The Research Plan focuses on seven main areas:
1. research and scholarship diversity
2. areas of emphasis
3. community outreach and engagement
4. local, regional, national, and international partnerships
5. relationship between research and teaching
6. student research opportunities
7. research environment, culture, and institutional support

Each section contains a brief description about how the area is important to the Mount's research enterprise. This is followed by a statement of commitment that identifies the Mount's intention to build capacity and support research as a core activity of the University. In addition to giving

priority to these seven areas of commitment, the following principles will inform and support decision-making when allocating resources to research and scholarship initiatives:

- Quality: The Mount upholds the highest standards of scholarly rigour in research regardless of discipline, orientation, or form.
- Integrity: The Mount is committed to creating an environment that promotes responsible research conduct by adhering to high ethical standards and practices.
- Interdisciplinarity, Collaboration, Partnership: Based on the belief that, in the pursuit of knowledge, much is to be gained from varying and differently informed perspectives, the Mount encourages interdisciplinary approaches to research and inter-institutional collaborations.
- Service to Community and Society: The Mount continues to honour its tradition of social responsibility by supporting research that addresses issues of social importance and engages community members and members of various publics, while recognizing that all research, regardless of immediate, practical social applications, contributes to our community and the world by deepening our understanding of the natural world and of diverse societies and times.

For purposes of clarity, *Making a Difference through Research* is based on a definition of research articulated in the Mount's Policy and Procedures for Integrity in Research and Scholarship (2013):

> Research is defined as a systematic investigation for purposes of developing perspectives, creating knowledge, gaining insights, developing generalizations, informing policy or practice, or otherwise making a positive difference in the lives of individuals and/or communities. ... Research includes all forms of funded and unfunded scholarly and/or applied research and creative work, representing a diversity of methodological perspectives and approaches, conducted by and within the Mount community and by people who use Mount facilities for the creation, representation and publication of scholarly work.

This Plan is intended to be inclusive of all those who engage in research and scholarship under the auspices of Mount Saint Vincent University: full-time, part-time, and retired faculty members, librarians, staff, administrators, undergraduate and graduate students, visiting or adjunct scholars, and post-doctoral fellows–all integral to the Mount's research enterprise and intellectual life.

1. Research and Scholarship Diversity

Scholarship and research activities on the Mount campus reflect a rich diversity in field, focus, and form across a broad spectrum of methodological and theoretical traditions, and variously based in the laboratory, library, field, community, cyberspace, practice, and studio. Some research and scholarship requires considerable direct cost resources and is made possible only through large scale external funding; other research and scholarship is conducted primarily with indirect costs support (e.g., space, overhead costs, technology, library knowledge resources) from the University. Some research is conducted by individuals working alone; some by researchers working in groups within and across disciplines and sectors. Some research is more directly related to the improvement of the human condition; knowledge discovered in other research is

more fundamental and less immediately practical but equally important. Much of this research crosses disciplinary and methodological boundaries. Researchers from vastly different orientations and disciplines invest their talents and energies in addressing similar issues and problems for the betterment of society.

The Mount's research and scholarship can be categorized in the following ten clusters:

- Arts, Histories, Languages, Literatures, Philosophies, and Religions Of Diverse Cultures
- Creativity, Ideologies, and Cultures
- Human Development across the Life Span
- Inclusive Learning and Teaching
- Individual and Community Health and Wellness
- Literacies and Digital Media
- Natural Sciences
- Social and Cultural Diversity
- Study of Abstract Structures
- Work, Workplaces, and Careers

Throughout the University, scholars are engaged in research and scholarship that reflect the Mount's strengths in liberal arts, humanities, natural and social sciences, education, and disciplines aligned with professional education and development. From philosophy to mathematics, quantum physics to cognitive development and function, from plant systems to political systems, from ancient to contemporary societies, from languages and literature to digital media, from poetry, visual, and performing arts to communications and cultural studies, from the study of environmental sustainability to economic sustainability, from the study of learning and teaching to health and well-being, Mount scholars study the abstract, physical, natural, social, and constructed world.

The Mount is proud of the many and diverse areas of research strength and notes the outstanding achievements and honours earned by many Mount scholars and researchers. The University can only achieve its goal of research and scholarly excellence by acknowledging strength in diversity and supporting and promoting the work of scholars across our campus.

Commitment:
Research diversity is a strength. The Mount is committed to supporting the breadth of research and scholarship across disciplines conducted by members of our community at all career levels and at all phases of the research process.

2. Areas of Emphasis

Areas of research emphasis at the Mount are reflected in the foci of our Research, Awarded, and Endowed Chairs, our Centres and Institutes, as well as in our unique resources and collections. These areas are:

Research, Awarded, and Endowed Chairs:

Dr. Maya Eichler	Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Social Innovation and Community Engagement
Dr. Tamara Franz-Odendaal	Atlantic NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering
Dr. Marnina Gonick	Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Gender Identity and Social Practices
Dr. Janice Keefe	Lena Isabel Jodrey Chair in Gerontology
Dr. Jamie Metsala	Gail and Stephen Jarislowsky Chair in Learning Disabilities
Dr. Deborah Stienstra (2013-2015)[2]	Nancy's Chair in Women's Studies
Dr. Patty Williams	Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Food Security and Policy Change
TBA	Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Aging and Community

Centres and Institutes:
The following five Centres are sites of research funded by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) John Evans Leadership Fund as part of Canada Research Chair awards:
- ❖ Atlantic Centre for Research and Education of Girls and Women;
- ❖ Centre for Social Innovation and Community Engagement in Military Affairs;
- ❖ Food Action Research Centre (FoodARC);
- ❖ Global Aging and Community Project (opening 2016);
- ❖ Maritime Data Centre for Aging Research and Policy Analysis.

These three Centres and Institutes are formally recognized and supported by the University:
- ❖ Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender, and Social Justice;
- ❖ Child Study Centre;
- ❖ Nova Scotia Centre on Aging.

The following are informal Centres and Networks that have developed from large programs of research or collective cross-disciplinary interest:
- ❖ Centre for Arts-informed Research and Teaching: A Scholartistry Connective;
- ❖ Food and Nutrition Training Centre;
- ❖ Measuring Cooperative Difference Research Network (Atlantic Cluster);
- ❖ World Heritage Tourism Research Network.

Unique resources that help to define and support key areas of Mount scholarship also include:
- ❖ MSVU Art Gallery;
- ❖ Library collections such as the Canadian Children's Book Collection, the Lesbian Pulp Fiction Collection, the MacDonald Room Collection of rare books, and the University Archives.

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[2] The Nancy's Chair is typically a one- or two-year external appointment.

<u>Areas Targeted for Enhancement</u>
Within the current economic and political climate, as the Mount engages in a process of defining and articulating its unique contributions and roles as an institution of higher education, it is vital for Research to be an integral part of that process. As it becomes increasingly important to make visible the ways in which we are distinguished from other neighbouring universities, we will build on our unique areas of emphasis in research and scholarship to communicate a strong and unified message about existing areas of research that are prominent at and unique to the Mount.

The following areas of research emphasis align with key areas identified through analysis of research and scholarship conducted by Mount researchers. They are included in the previously delineated research clusters but stand out as areas of interdisciplinary strength in which the University already has invested and which help to define our uniqueness. In order to strengthen our profile as a research community, it is imperative that we support, promote, and build on our key areas of emphasis.

<u>Commitment:</u>
While recognizing the diversity of research at the Mount, over the next three years we will seek to enhance our research capacity in the following five areas. These areas of emphasis are explicitly tied to the Mount's overall strategic goals and values.

I.   <u>Gender and the advancement of girls and women</u>. This key area of emphasis is inspired by the Mount's enduring commitment to the advancement of women. It is a recognition of the very significant emphasis on gender in research across many disciplines (e.g., Education, History, English, Business, Political Studies, Science, Sociology, Women's Studies, Family Studies). "Gender" as a primary area of importance to the University is clearly evidenced by the University's commitment to three Chairs in this area: Canada Research Chair in Gender, Nancy's Chair in Women's Studies, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Chair for Women in Science and Engineering (Atlantic Region). By identifying "gender" as a strategic research area of emphasis, we acknowledge the Mount's significant historic and continuing role in knowledge advancement through research and scholarship in this area.

II. <u>"The Social" and Public Policy.</u> Across programs and disciplines, Mount researchers, individually and in community, work to critically examine and address pressing social matters. Researching "the social" is an area for which the Mount is known and could be better known. The Mount was founded on a strong tradition of social responsibility. That tradition is well represented in our research in areas such as social economy, social inclusion, social movements, social innovation, citizen and community engagement, socially-important scientific issues, and other areas inspired by a commitment to social justice–Aging, Health, Food Security, Education. Participatory modes and methods of research and research communication reflect our commitment to democratic engagement. Placing emphasis on research that, through substance and form, addresses complex social issues will enhance the Mount's capacity to make a difference in the lives of individuals and communities and to be recognized for its contributions in these areas.

Across disciplines, a predominance of Mount research that is primarily grounded in the social sciences and focused on issues of social importance, also has an explicit goal of policy change and development. Acknowledging the Mount's role in leading, debating, and influencing public policy and making this an area of strategic priority will highlight opportunities for Mount researchers from across disciplines to lead and be recognized for leadership in this area.

The understanding of issues of social importance and the development of appropriate public policy are enhanced by the empirical and analytical perspectives of the natural sciences and maths. Support for research in these fields will complement and strengthen our social research and policy-making.

III.   Aging. With two research chairs in aging, the CFI-funded Maritime Data Centre for Aging Research and Policy Analysis, and the forthcoming Global Aging and Community Project, as well as the University-supported Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, it goes without saying that research in aging is a key area of research strength at the Mount. Research on aging cuts across programs (Lifelong Learning, Family Studies and Gerontology, Sociology, Chemistry, Business and Tourism) and variously focuses on health and healthy living, positive aging, learning, care and caregiving, dementia and contexts for and contributors to healthy aging. The Mount will continue to build research capacity in this area with a goal of enhancing its regional, national, and international reputation as a leader in aging research.

IV.   Childhood and children's well-being and learning. The study of childhood and children's and youth's well-being and learning is a predominant theme on the Mount's research landscape. From the perspectives of Child and Youth Study, Education, Nutrition, History, Literature, Political Studies, Psychology, Biology, and Family Studies, Mount researchers study various aspects of childhood and children's health, learning experiences, trajectories, challenges, influences, and contexts. Regionally, the Mount is unique in its capacity to contribute to knowledge advancement, policy change, and practices that promote the health and well-being of future generations. The Mount will enhance its profile by acknowledging and supporting our interdisciplinary strength in this area.

V.   Healthy living, healthy environments, and food security. Consistent with the Mount's commitment to social responsibility and addressing complex social problems through research, the fifth opportunity for strategic development of research is in the areas of healthy living, healthy environments, and food security. The Mount supports an impressive amount of research focused on understanding and improving individual and community access to proper nutrition as a vital part of healthy living and growth. The Mount has become noted for its role in advancing understanding of and informing practice and policy related to food security. A significant part of this research also supports our commitment to community-engaged scholarship. Researchers also investigate the role of foods in chronic human diseases and the development of dietary and educational strategies towards reducing the burden of obesity and diabetes. Research at the Mount also focuses on

environmental issues such as the impacts of climate change, ecosystem productivity and conservation, as well as human developmental processes. Across departments and disciplines such as Applied Human Nutrition, Biology, Business and Tourism, Communication Studies, Child and Youth Study, Education, Family Studies and Gerontology, Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology, and Women's Studies, researchers contribute to understandings about aspects of healthy living and development in healthy environments. Fostering the continued development of research in these area will enable the Mount to build on our significant research strengths and contributions to these fields.

3) Community Outreach and Engagement

At the Mount we acknowledge the vital role of university-based research in community well-being and growth (social, cultural, political, economic). The University's tradition of social responsibility extends to the nature and broad intentions of much of our research. In substance and form, research supported by the Mount is strongly participatory in nature and focused on reaching out to and involving diverse communities and publics as partners, consumers, and knowledge creators. Our common practice is to conduct research 'with' and 'for,' rather than 'on,' those who stand to benefit. Embedded in much of Mount scholarship is a commitment to community outreach, access, and engagement. This research often involves and draws on diverse art forms and traditions–literary, visual, performance. We have significant expertise and leadership capacity to become known for our commitment to enhancing community linkages and public engagement in research and scholarship in the arts and humanities, natural and social sciences, education, and professional studies.

Related to public access, the Mount is fortunate to have capacity and expertise in the area of open access to research and scholarship produced by Mount researchers. Further, the "Journals at the Mount" (http://journals.msvu.ca) electronic journal hosting service by the Mount Library provides key infrastructure for well-established peer-reviewed journals that have either partnered with or are published by the Mount (*Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* and *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture, and Social Justice).*

Commitment:
The Mount will endeavour to increase the social impact of research by promoting and supporting research and scholarship that emphasizes public engagement and access. Given that one of the central goals of research is learning, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL)[3] principles of accessibility are instructive. These principles, when applied to research, advocate: multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression/interpretation, and multiple means of engagement.

Commitment:
The Research Office will work closely with the Library to encourage, educate, and support utilization of our available resources in the area of open access to research and scholarship.

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[3] The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework and set of principles, developed at the National Center on Universal Design for Learning, USA, intended to promote inclusive learning by removing barriers to accessibility. The framework emphasizes flexibility in the way information is presented, the way knowledge is demonstrated, and the way learners are engaged.

4) Local, Regional, National, and International Partnerships

By virtue of our size, location, and resource capacities it is imperative that we engage in research partnerships of various kinds. And we do. Mount researchers have vibrant and established research relationships with colleagues, organizations, institutions, governments, and industries close to home and around the world. Forging and fostering these relationships is an integral part of contributing to the global intellectual community.

From a funding perspective, research granting agencies are increasingly encouraging and rewarding multi-site and collaborative research including involvement of industry partners. As a small university, it is vital that we forge research partnerships and alliances in order to compete within this funding context.

Our student body is becoming increasingly diverse as are our institutional connections around the world. Currently, Mount faculty are engaged in collaborative research of various kinds with international partners in countries such as Australia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Finland, Ghana, India, Kenya, Mexico, Moldova, Portugal, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Vietnam. The opportunities to expand international research connections are considerable and desirable.

Over the past four years the Mount has invested considerable effort in strengthening our affiliation and partnership with Springboard[4] through the Office of Innovation and Community Engagement (formerly the Industry Liaison Office) that we share with Saint Mary's University and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. As a result, we have made substantial gains in facilitating research-industry partnerships. Some of our researchers have developed productive and fruitful research partnerships with local businesses and associations. One of our main challenges in this regard is the fit between much of the research conducted at the Mount and industry needs. In order to strengthen the Mount's industry and community partnerships, we need a two-pronged approach. Internally, we must continue to promote and support opportunities for researchers to work in concert with industry and community partners; externally, we must continue to advocate for a broadened perspective on the nature and scope of such partnerships to include an emphasis on innovation and research that has both practical and immediate social impact and benefit or that contributes to a more general and theoretical understanding of nature and the human condition.

Commitment: The Mount is committed to strengthening our research capacity by encouraging and supporting opportunities for collaborations and partnerships, within and external to the Mount, that will serve to enhance our overall research agenda. We particularly encourage partnerships and collaborations tied to the five areas of emphasis identified earlier in the Plan .

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[4] Springboard is a network of Atlantic Canada colleges and universities. Funded by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and its member institutions, Springboard works to help its members develop partnerships and collaborations with industry experts.

5) Relationship between Research and Teaching

The Mount's Research Policy (1975) states:
> It is generally agreed that the major functions of a university are the development of knowledge through teaching, the extension of knowledge through research and scholarly activity and the preservation of knowledge through its role as repository and trustee of our cultural heritage. …

> There cannot be good teaching unless the faculty are engaged in research and scholarly activity. Research not only complements teaching; it is an integral part of good teaching at the university level for it is research that distinguishes the university from other post-secondary institutions. For these reasons, the University encourages its faculty to engage in research and supports them in their research efforts insofar as its resources permit.

It is also the case that that often these two pillars create rivalries and competing demands and priorities. There is little room at our University for such bifurcation. We value research and teaching equally. In order to value and honour our commitment to "the pursuit of knowledge: scholarship, teaching and intellectual endeavour of the highest quality" we must work towards a stronger integration of research and teaching.

Research and teaching interact in a range of ways. Such interaction can take many forms, for example engaging in the scholarship of teaching, providing opportunities for students to engage in research, integrating research into course offerings, modelling research and scholarship practices.

The context is set in our Academic Plan, Teaching and Learning Plan, and the reorganization of the Teaching and Learning Centre to support research as an integral part of the mutually ongoing improvement of teaching and learning.

<u>Commitment:</u> The Mount is committed to supporting a complementary relationship between teaching and research as part of the ongoing improvement of teaching, learning, and research.

6) Student Research Opportunities

During the campus-wide consultation to inform the Research Plan, there was overwhelming acknowledgement of the need to better involve students and provide exposure and opportunities for them to engage in and learn about research. This is important both for the intellectual life of students and for faculty who benefit from working with interested students and whose research programs are advanced through student involvement–both undergraduate and graduate.

The research enterprise of a University depends on student involvement in research activities. At the undergraduate level, involving students in research provides a foundation and framework for potential interest in career development, including graduate work. Efforts to educate students about the role and importance of research in their academic programs enables students to learn

from and participate in the development of new knowledge and approaches to investigation and exploration.

Research is critical to society. Mount researchers engage in a range of research and scholarship intended to make a difference in the lives of individuals, communities, and society. Undergraduate student learning can be significantly enriched by exposure to, understanding of, and involvement in many facets of the research enterprise. There are many researchers on campus who provide intensive research learning opportunities for undergraduate students. The Mount is in a position to be able to substantially increase these opportunities.

Commitment:
The Mount will undertake to broaden and enhance undergraduate student research opportunities on campus and in the community with the long-term goal of providing an opportunity for every undergraduate student to learn about and/or be involved in some aspect of research at the Mount.

The strongest expression of need and interest among Mount faculty was for graduate student support. Graduate students are a vitally important part of the intellectual life of a university. Opportunities for graduate students to be involved in research is critical for the education and career development of graduate students, for the continuing scholarly success of faculty, and for the research culture of the University. Faculty members in departments without graduate programs sometimes hold adjunct status at other universities in order to have access to and work with graduate students.

Commitment:
The Mount will place emphasis on the role of research in the learning experience of our graduate students and on the role of these students in helping to shape the University's research culture. To explore and facilitate this the Research Office will work with Graduate Studies to develop a mechanism for collaboration between the two units.

7) Research Environment, Culture, and Institutional Support

In recent years the Mount has made considerable investments of resources of various kinds to foster an environment conducive to and supportive of the individual and collective interests of Mount researchers and the University's research enterprise as a whole. The pursuit of knowledge through research and scholarship is a reflection of the environment within which such activity is conducted. The quality of a research environment also has a strong impact on faculty recruitment and retention as well as on student recruitment.

Commitment:
The Mount will continue to strive toward creating and sustaining a research environment that attracts and retains excellent scholars who are committed to the Mount's mission, vision, and goals and that provides opportunities for students to learn and grow through research. This commitment will involve attention to: assistance and support along a career continuum for members of the Mount's research community; enhanced promotion and visibility of research; research infrastructure; and continued development of a research culture.

8) Research Culture

Creating a more visible or stronger research culture was identified as a goal of several academic departments. This is a goal that is achievable through collective efforts both at a department and University level. Part of fostering a research culture involves community building within the University and between the University and its diverse constituent communities. While, generally speaking, there exists a culture of collegiality, and considerable collaboration already takes place among support services, there is room for a more explicit goal of strengthening collaborative links across academic, academic support (e.g., Library and Research Office), and non-academic departments (Financial Services, IT&S, Public Affairs, and Facilities,) in support of fostering a culture of learning that is enhanced and enriched by a commitment to research and scholarship.

Commitment:
The Mount will undertake to acknowledge and support the integral role research plays in the intellectual life and knowledge production of the university. We take pride in the excellent and important research and scholarship that defines our research community. We will endeavour to make visible, recognize, and promote this work for the good of the University and society. This will include: enhancing ways in which we recognize and celebrate the Mount's research achievements, creating opportunities for interdisciplinary initiatives, developing a communication strategy to promote Mount research, enhancing opportunities to welcome Visiting Scholars, Postdoctoral Fellows, and visiting graduate students to campus, and focusing attention on the role of research in students' learning .

9) Institutional Support

Research is foundational to the intellectual life of the university. While the costs of supporting research can present a challenge to universities that have multiple priorities to fulfill, the intellectual integrity of the university depends on the pursuit of knowledge through exploration, experimentation, and scholarship. Externally, the economic climate has had and will continue to have an impact on the strategic directions of funding agencies towards commercialization, industry partnerships, and large, multi-sited collaborative projects–all with reductions in funding envelopes. While we have very strong and competitive scholars at the Mount, institutionally it is increasingly difficult to compete with other institutions for diminishing pots of federal research money. Trends across small and mid-sized universities suggest that, despite academic quality, we cannot rely on success with federal research grants. In the likely absence of a dramatic increase in federal funding, the University and its researchers must work together to find alternative ways of financially supporting its research enterprise.

The economic climate will continue to have an impact on our capacity to support all types of research activities. It is a myth that social sciences and humanities researchers do not need funds to carry out their research. Our university invests considerably in supporting the cost of "unfunded" social science and humanities research and scholarship. Faculty salaries for time devoted to research, basic operating costs, infrastructure costs, costs for library, technology, and

other research-related services all are part of the Mount's contribution to support "unfunded" research.

The Mount's entire research enterprise, including our internal grants program, depends on external funding from provincial and federal governments and granting agencies. Our annual allocation from the federal government's Indirect Costs of Research Program is calculated based on Tri-council funding. Our allocation of Canada Research Chairs also is determined based on Tri-council funding. Currently we have an allocation of one Canada Research Chair more than the minimum. We cannot afford to lose this allocation.

Commitment:
The Mount recognizes the importance of continuing to support researchers in a range of research activities through a program of internal, small-scale funding. It is a priority to continue this support. Our capacity to provide internal funding is enhanced by an increase in external funding. We will continue to encourage all researchers to apply for external funds, even small amounts, and place emphasis on assisting and supporting the development of funding applications. We also will explore strategies for increasing our financial capacity to support large-scale collaborative grant applications. In addition, we will continue to invest in our partnership with Saint Mary's University to support an Office of Innovation and Community Engagement to broaden funding opportunities with industry partners.

Infrastructure Support
The Mount has invested considerably in infrastructure funding in partnership with the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and the Nova Scotia Research Innovation Trust (NSRIT). Research infrastructure for our Canada Research Chairs, science labs such as the Atlantic Root Symbiosis Lab, the Bone Development Laboratory, and the Physiological Plant Ecology Laboratory, as well as other research infrastructure were made possible through this partnership funding. The new Margaret Norrie McCain Teaching, Learning, and Research Centre is another example of the Mount's infrastructure investment in research.

The current economic and political climate of dwindling research funding and growing emphasis on technology, economic impact, and commercialization presents challenges to Mount researchers and our ability to sustain a commitment to excellence in research in an increasingly competitive funding environment. Nevertheless, it is vital that we sustain strong infrastructure support for faculty researchers.

Commitment:
The Mount will continue its commitment to funding research infrastructure guided by priority areas emphasized in this Research Plan and as is financially viable. Working in partnership with researchers and relevant non-academic departments, we will develop a set of research infrastructure guidelines to ensure a more systematic and priority-driven approach to research infrastructure support. These guidelines will include attention to issues such as data management, data storage, research-related information technology and services, as well as availability and distribution of equipment.

Space
Infrastructure support in the form of research space continues to be a challenge especially for researchers with large grants or resource-demanding research needs. Like all universities, the Mount continues to struggle with capacity in this area. Also of importance is access to research space for non-laboratory researchers and for those, including graduate students and early career faculty, who do not have external funding. In a context of dwindling external funding, it is increasingly important for researchers to maintain their research profiles and for the Mount to find ways to support their scholarly activity. It is also important for academic departments to be mindful of space limitations and to contribute to finding creative solutions for research space.

Commitment:
The University recognizes the importance of both physical and virtual space for researchers. A space policy, to be created as recommended in the Strategic Plan, will take into account the role of research space in upholding the Mount's commitment to research and scholarly excellence with due consideration to the inherent space-related challenges and tensions.

Concluding Comments and Summary of Commitments

Making a Difference through Research describes, gives shape to, and sets direction for research and scholarship at the Mount. It is intended as a document that is consistent with and complementary to the University's other major strategic planning documents. Created with the Mount's resource capacity and size in mind, it is a Plan that is reasonable and sustainable for us as an institution. At the same time, it is a Plan that identifies key commitments under several rubrics that will serve the Mount's vision of creative research for social responsibility and pursuit of knowledge: scholarship, teaching and intellectual endeavour of the highest quality.

The following categories represent the organizing framework for the Research Plan. From these emerges a set of commitments that will form the basis for an action plan that also can be used to assess the achievements of *Making a Difference through Research*.

Categories:
• research and scholarship diversity
• areas of emphasis
• community outreach and engagement
• local, regional, national, and international partnerships
• relationship between research and teaching
• student research opportunities
• research environment, culture, and institutional support

Commitments

1. Research diversity is a strength. The Mount is committed to supporting the breadth of research and scholarship across disciplines conducted by members of our community at all career levels and at all phases of the research process.

2. While recognizing the diversity of research at the Mount, over the next three years we will seek to enhance our research capacity in the following five areas. These areas of emphasis are explicitly tied to the Mount's overall strategic goals and values:
   - gender and the advancement of girls and women;
   - "the social" and public policy;
   - aging;
   - childhood and children's well-being and learning;
   - healthy living, healthy environments, and food security.

3. The Mount will endeavour to increase the social impact of research by promoting and supporting research that emphasizes public engagement and access. Given that one of the central goals of research is learning, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles of accessibility are instructive. These principles, when applied to research, advocate: multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression/interpretation, and multiple means of engagement.

4. The Research Office will work closely with the Library to encourage, educate, and support utilization of our available resources in the area of open access to research and scholarship.

5. The Mount is committed to strengthening our research capacity by encouraging and supporting opportunities for collaborations and partnerships, within and external to the Mount, that will serve to enhance our overall research agenda. We particularly encourage partnerships and collaborations tied to the five areas of emphasis identified earlier in the Plan.

6. The Mount is committed to supporting a complementary relationship between teaching and research as part of the ongoing improvement of teaching, learning, and research.

7. The Mount will undertake to broaden and enhance undergraduate student research opportunities on campus and in the community with the long term goal of providing an opportunity for every undergraduate student to learn about and/or be involved in some aspect of research at the Mount.

8. The Mount will place emphasis on the role of research in the learning experience of our graduate students and on the role of these students in helping to shape the University's research culture. To explore and facilitate this the Research Office will work with Graduate Studies to develop a mechanism for collaboration between the two units.

9. The Mount will continue to strive toward creating and sustaining a research environment that attracts and retains excellent scholars who are committed to the Mount's mission, vision, and goals and that provides opportunities for students to learn and grow through research. This commitment will involve attention to: assistance and support along a career continuum for members of the Mount's research community; enhanced promotion and visibility of research; research infrastructure; and continued development of a research culture.

10. The Mount will undertake to acknowledge and support the integral role research plays in the intellectual life and knowledge production of the university. We take pride in the excellent and important research and scholarship that defines our research community. We will endeavour to make visible, recognize, and promote this work for the good of the University and society. This will include: enhancing ways in which we recognize and celebrate the Mount's research achievements, creating opportunities for interdisciplinary initiatives, developing a communication strategy to promote Mount research, enhancing opportunities to welcome Visiting Scholars, Postdoctoral Fellows, and visiting graduate students to campus, and focusing attention on the role of research in students' learning.

11. The Mount recognizes the importance of continuing to support researchers in a range of research activities through a program of internal, small-scale funding. It is a priority to continue this support. Our capacity to provide internal funding is enhanced by an increase in external funding. We will continue to encourage all researchers to apply for external funds, even small amounts, and place emphasis on assisting and supporting the development of funding applications. We also will explore strategies for increasing our financial capacity to support large-scale collaborative grant applications. In addition, we will continue to invest in our partnership with Saint Mary's University to support an Office of Innovation and Community Engagement to broaden funding opportunities with industry partners.

12. The Mount will continue its commitment to funding research infrastructure guided by priority areas emphasized in this Research Plan and as is financially viable. Working in partnership with researchers and relevant non-academic departments, we will develop a set of research infrastructure guidelines to ensure a more systematic and priority-driven approach to research infrastructure support. These guidelines will include attention to issues such as data storage, research-related information technology and services, as well as availability and distribution of equipment.

13. The University recognizes the importance of space for researchers. A space policy, to be created as recommended in the Strategic Plan, will take into account the role of research space in upholding the Mount's commitment to research and scholarly excellence with due consideration to the inherent space-related challenges and tensions.

Committee on Research and Publications 2013-2014

Dr. Ardra Cole, Chair	Associate Vice-President (Academic & Research)	
Committee Member	**Department**	**Faculty representation**
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Dr. Candace Blayney (Term ended Dec. 2013)	Business & Tourism	Professional Studies
Dr. Kathy Darvesh (Term start Jan. 2014)	Chemistry	Arts & Science
Dr. Michelle Eskritt	Psychology	Arts & Science
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Dr. Ashwani Kumar	Education	Education
Dr. Ron MacKay (Term start Jan. 2014)	Biology	Arts & Science
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Committee on Research and Publications 2014-2015

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Dr. Theresa Glanville	Applied Human Nutrition	Professional Studies
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