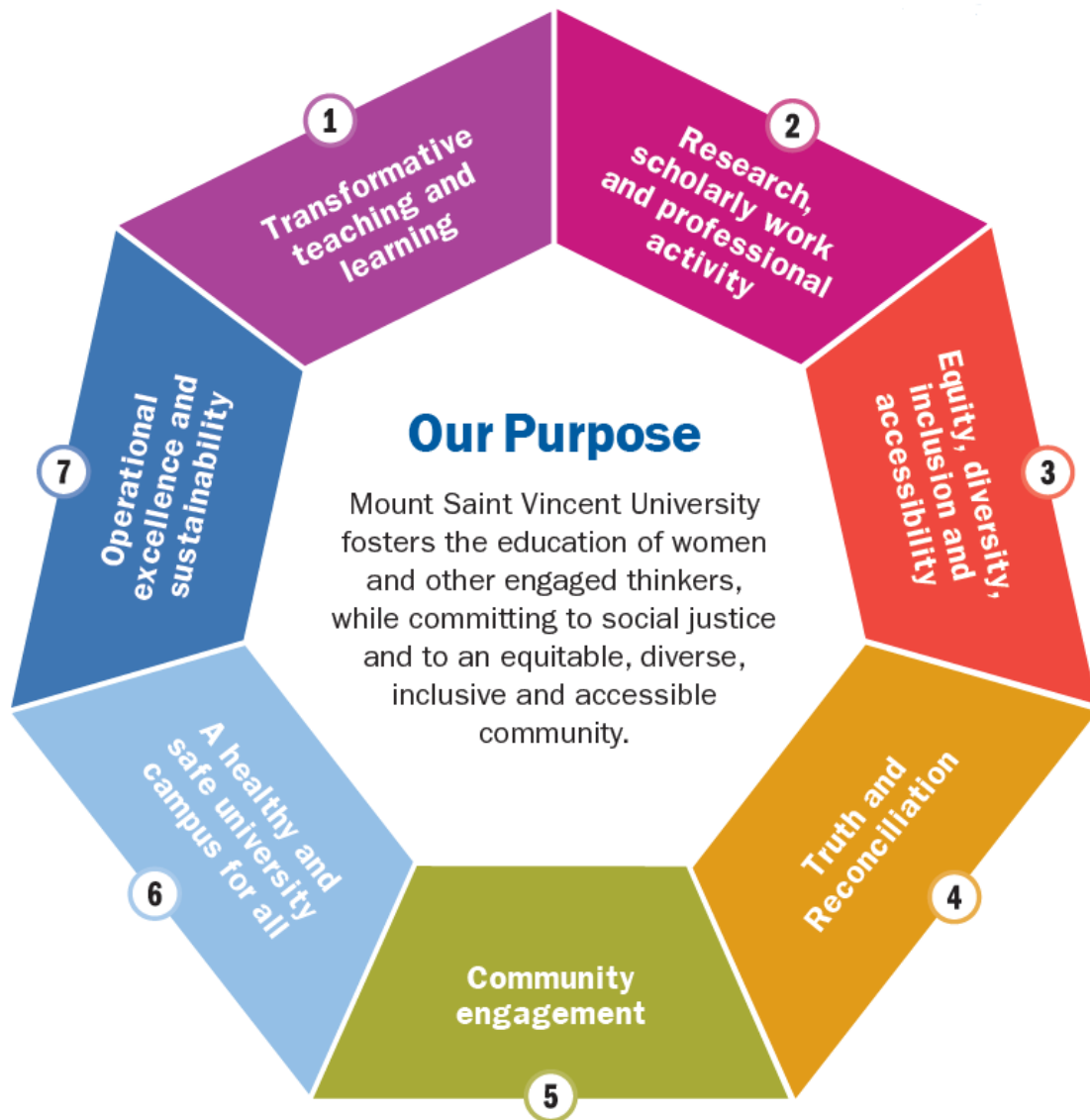




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SAINT VINCENT
UNIVERSITY

Strategic Plan
Progress Highlights
December 2025



Strength Through Community

The Strategic Plan progress updates in this summary reflect the dedication of many across the MSVU community – faculty, staff and administrators, students, alumni, donors, supporters, and partners. The reporting period includes progress between June and November 2025. This report reflects our collective commitment to MSVU and embodies the true power of *Strength Through Community*.

Theme 1: Transformative teaching and learning

Promote an inclusive, dynamic, current and personalized teaching and learning environment focusing on nurturing informed, critical, socially responsible and socially just global citizens.

Strategic Enrolment Management

Following extensive consultation with the MSVU campus community, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) approved MSVU's first Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan. Work has already begun on 11 of the 65 tactics, including a new admissions portal. The plan will be officially launched in January 2026 with a campus-wide event. A Manager, SEM Initiatives, was hired in November to guide the implementation of the plan and make connections between initiatives across MSVU.

Fall Enrolment Data

Below is a summary of MSVU's fall enrollment data. MSVU has experienced a slight decline in its overall enrolment (1.4%). Graduate enrolment has increased, while undergraduate enrolment has decreased. Declining enrolments are largely due to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) changes and the corresponding drop in international student enrolment.

Full-time domestic enrolment has increased by 3.04%, while full-time international enrolment has declined by 24.7%. MSVU's enrolment continues to reflect flexibility and access to all students. This is evident in the 1.3% increase in new transfer students and the 7.2% increase in part-time students from 2024.

Type of enrolment	Number	Change from previous year
Full-time enrolment	2,468	-5.5%
Part-time enrolment	1,313	+7.2%
Overall enrolment	3,781	-1.4%
Full-time domestic enrolment	1,864	+ 3.04%
Full-time international enrolment	604	-24.7%
Full-time first-year enrolment	326	-17.3%
New transfer students	382	+ 1.3%

Source: Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) Survey of Preliminary Enrolment
<https://atlanticuniversities.ca/stats/statistics-surveys-of-preliminary-enrolments/>

Teaching and Learning

Faculty development and training: This fall, the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) put on 21 events attended by more than 200 participants. These events covered course design, GenAI, Universal Design for Learning, and Experiential Learning. The TLC offered a fantastic, partnered workshop on Land Acknowledgments led by Patrick Small Legs-Nagge and successfully launched two new faculty community of practice spaces for faculty designing experiential learning opportunities and faculty responding to GenAI in their classrooms. The team also developed 23 new resources, and its bi-weekly newsletter was read by 1,400 people.

Quality assurance: The TLC is celebrating the successful launch of the 14-month BEd this past summer, the new majors and honours programs in Aging and Family Science, and Senate approval of the new Doctor of Psychology this fall (awaiting MPHEC approval and accepting applications). External review processes are now complete for programs in History, Business Administration, Tourism, Child and Youth Study, as well as BEd accreditation. MPHEC Quality Assurance external review takes place this December.

Doctor of Psychology Update

MSVU will launch a new Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) program in 2026 to help address the growing need for mental health clinicians, particularly those specializing in children and youth. Alongside this new program, the university will open a child and youth psychological services clinic at what is now the Advancement House site – this space will serve families and provide hands-on training for students. The PsyD program proposal was passed at the November Senate Meeting and has been submitted to MPHEC for review. With permission from MPHEC, we have opened applications for the September 2026 cohort, pending program approval. MSVU received funding from the Province to support the academic program and for building renovations. The university also received the first instalment of funding for the clinic operations, enabling the hiring of the new clinic's Director to proceed.

Continuing Education and Micro-credentials

In June 2025, MSVU completed the first delivery of the Ready to Lead (R2L) non-credit program for frontline continuing care professionals, funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Labour, Skills, and Immigration. Nineteen participants graduated and were recognized at an on-campus luncheon. A second delivery began in October 2025 and will conclude in June 2026, funded through a Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI) grant. R2L has been offered at no cost to participants, with all expenses covered by provincial funding.

MSVU is developing additional non-credit programming through partnerships with the Nova Scotia Disability Support Program, Discover Halifax, and the Centre for Women in Business. The TLC is also supporting a proposal for the Dimensions program, which could fund an EDIA-focused training initiative for post-secondary stakeholders.

The SHIFT micro-credential on job search and interview skills, developed with Career Services, was partially redeveloped with input from multiple student support offices to enhance inclusivity. Its second delivery began in November 2025, with 47 registrants as of

November 28 – already surpassing last year’s total of 41. SHIFT remains free for MSVU students and complements Career Services resources.

Chopped Food Competition

The ‘Chopped’ Food Competition at MSVU challenged teams of high school students to showcase their culinary skills while connecting with nutrition students and faculty. On Friday, May 30, teams received a box of pre-selected ingredients in advance and created a recipe using at least 60% of those ingredients, with up to 40% of their own choosing. Each team also presented a story about their final dish. A panel of expert judges evaluated the entries: Judy Fraser Arsenault, retired AHN faculty and lab instructor; Heather Richards, Director at Chartwells MSVU; Jill Conrod, Registered Dietitian and Director of Products & Healthcare at Sperry/Novagevity; and Adegoke Fadare, MLA for Clayton Park West. Judges scored teams on creativity, dish attributes (taste, appearance, etc.), and the storyline behind their recipe. [Watch a CTV story about MSVU Chopped here.](#)

French Bursary Funding Approved for 2026–2027

The Modern Languages Department has secured seven French as a Second Language bursaries totaling \$21,000 for incoming French students in the 2026–2027 academic year. The Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC) recently approved MSVU’s funding request for the Bursaries for Postsecondary Studies in French as a Second Language (FSL) Program.

Excellence in Early Childhood Education Bursary

The Bursary provides financial support for students (up to \$4,000 each) in full-time studies in an approved Early Childhood Education (ECE) diploma program in the 2025-2026 academic year. The number of bursaries granted depends on the number of applications received and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s funding availability. Should there be more applications than bursaries, priority for funding is be given to students who belong to an underrepresented group within the sector: Acadian/francophone, persons living with a disability, 2SLGBTQIA+, newcomer, Mi’kmaq/Indigenous, Black/African Nova Scotian, or another racially visible group. Bursaries will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

CEWIL Canada Support for Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

CEWIL’s mission is to build capacity to develop future-ready graduates through quality work-integrated learning. The CEWIL iHub is a centre of expertise that offers grant-based funding for curricular WIL (supported by the Government of Canada). CEWIL Canada funded two WIL projects in Applied Human Nutrition this year, totaling \$115,650.

- “Helping Future Dietitians in the Internship Education Program” received \$43,000, under the direction of Jillian Ruhl. Students collaborated with children to share knowledge on food, health, and the environment through hands-on learning at food banks and community gardens.
- “Just Gardens: Growing Sustainable Food and Health Knowledge with Communities” received \$72,650, under the direction of Dr. Irene Ogada. This project created opportunities for aspiring dietetics students who struggled to afford unpaid internships, enabling them to better serve local communities and improve public health.

Renewed chemistry accreditation

The Canadian Society for Chemistry (CSC) has renewed accreditation for MSVU's Bachelor of Science Major in Chemistry and Chemistry Joint Honours programs, affirming the department's exceptional faculty, research, and student experience. Despite being one of the smallest accredited programs in Canada, MSVU offers students unique opportunities for early research involvement, leading to co-authored publications, conference presentations, and entry into prestigious graduate programs—including producing MSVU's first Rhodes Scholar. The department's faculty are leaders in their fields, with recent award winners like Dr. Chérif Matta, whose groundbreaking work in physical chemistry and chemical physics earned him the Professional of Distinction Award and an Alumni Award of Distinction. This accreditation underscores MSVU's commitment to quality education and scientific excellence.

Theme 2: Research, scholarly work, and professional activity

Advance research, scholarly work and professional activity among faculty, staff and students, especially as it relates to the advancement of women, girls and other marginalized and underrepresented groups, social responsibility and social justice.

Research Training

Since September 2025, the Research Office has hosted four events: two talks as part of the MSVU Black and Indigenous Speaker Series (Zabrina Downton on Truth and Reconciliation; Dr. Eric Oliver on Climate Action) and two Lunch and Learn webinars (Ted McDonald on research data; Michael Sullivan on research security). Recordings and resources are available on the [MSVU website](#) and the new Research Resources SharePoint launched in November 2025.

Research Funding

The first [MSVU Research Annual Report](#) (August 2025) summarized 2024–2025 research activity and funding. MSVU faculty secured over \$4M in Tri-Agency funds plus support from CFI, Mitacs, Research Nova Scotia, and others. A CIHR Tier II Canada Research Chair nomination in Health Communication was submitted in October with an associated CFI infrastructure request. Researchers earned major grants across all Tri-Agencies (CIHR, SSHRC, NSERC) and launched EDIA-focused projects and OCAP training through a new internal pilot fund.

Dr. Chérif Matta

Congratulations to Dr. Chérif Matta, professor of Chemistry at MSVU, for being honoured twice in the same day (November 20). Chérif received the 2025 [Distinguished Alumni Award for the Sciences from McMaster University](#) and the [Professional of Distinction Award at the Discovery Awards ceremony](#).

Dr. Janice Keefe

Dr. Janice Keefe received the [Dr. Janet Fast Research Excellence Award](#) at the 2025 Canadian Caregiving Summit Awards Gala. She also received the [Distinguished Alumni Award](#) from University of Prince Edward Island's Alumni Association this past October. Dr. Keefe serves as Chair of the Department of Aging and Family Science at MSVU and as Director of the *Nova Scotia Centre on Aging*.

Theme 3: Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility

MSVU will be a safe and welcoming place for all through our unwavering commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA).

Accessibility Plan

MSVU launched its updated [2025–2028 Accessibility Plan](#) in June, highlighting achievements from 2022–2025 and setting new goals. Key progress includes leadership in Universal Design for Learning, a campus Accessibility Audit guiding planning and investments, continued Dimensions participation, and ongoing support through the MountAbility program and Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Campus Engagement

On December 3, MSVU marked the International Day for Persons with Disabilities with a Campus Exchange event featuring an update on the Accessibility Plan and a panel discussion with community members who shared their first-person experiences and voices, helping to identify barriers and opportunities for accessibility on campus.

EDIA Governance Committee

MSVU is currently working to revitalize its Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Governance Committee and finalize its first comprehensive EDIA Action Plan. A session was held on December 1, 2025, to seek feedback on the membership and scope of the EDIA Governance Committee in preparation for its 2026 relaunch. MSVU's first consolidated EDIA action plan is ready for community consultation, which will also take place in early 2026. This plan aims to consolidate and affirm MSVU's commitment to be a leader in all aspects of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Theme 4: Truth and Reconciliation

MSVU is committed to Truth and Reconciliation and to promoting Indigenous world views in the work of the institution. A focus on women and girls is critically important to this work.

Millbrook—Kinu Partnership Launch

Millbrook First Nation and MSVU have launched a partnership through the Kinu Tourism Project to [advance culturally informed Indigenous tourism education](#), supported by funding from Indigenous Services Canada's Post-Secondary Partnership Program. Announced during the Kinu Indigenous Tourism and Education Conference at MSVU in early October, the initiative will create pathways for Indigenous students into tourism programs, strengthen cultural tourism in Mi'kma'ki, and foster entrepreneurship opportunities. This collaboration reflects a growing demand for Indigenous tourism and represents a significant step toward reconciliation by centering Indigenous voices and knowledge in education and economic development.

Marking Red Dress Day and Mi'kmaw History Month

On Monday, May 5 and Tuesday, May 6, 2025, MSVU hosted its inaugural installation honouring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Open to the public, the installation included opportunities for learning, reflection, and action and had over 100 attendees across two days.

The Special Advisor on Indigenous Affairs at MSVU and the Vice-President of People and Culture hosted a Treaty Day Rally and Walk in early October. Students, faculty and staff gathered for a moment of reflection in front of Seton Academic Centre, led by Dr. Krista Collier-Jarvis, a member of the Mi'kmaw First Nation and professor of English at MSVU, and then walked to the wikuom on campus where they were joined by children from the Child Study Centre for a rock painting activity.

On the eve of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the MSVU Research Office's Black and Indigenous Speaker Series featured a talk by Zabrina Downton titled "From Resistance to Governance: The Emergence and Relevance of Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch".

Indigenous Art Installation Unveiling

The Two-Eyed Seeing Program at MSVU created an [Indigenous mural](#) that is now a permanent installation in the MSVU library. Unveiled on October 22, this initiative was supported by the President's Fund – Special Projects Program. A story about the unveiling was featured in the [Halifax Examiner](#).

New Indigenous Student Support Advisor

In April, MSVU welcomed a new full-time Indigenous Student Support Advisor, Kayla Bernard. Kayla is the primary contact on campus for supporting and engaging Indigenous Students, and she brings a wealth of experience to the role. She grew up in Sipekne'katik and in Halifax. She is a recreational therapist with many years of experience in youth and Indigenous programming. She served as an Indigenous Student Advisor at Dalhousie University, was a national board member for Scouts Canada, and has received many awards recognizing her work on youth mental health, Reconciliation, and human rights.

Mi'kmaq Prayer Book Repatriation

MSVU is collaborating with Wagmatcook First Nation and the Nova Scotia Museum to repatriate a Mi'kmaq prayer book. The prayer book, currently housed in MSVU's MacDonald Collection, was originally donated by Katherine McLennan sometime between 1951-1959. Historical notes inside reference Wagmatcook and the Googoo family, whose members are actively researching its origins. MSVU will continue preserving the book until its return and supporting Wagmatcook's efforts to design a space for its protection. A community event is being planned for spring 2026.

Theme 5: Community engagement

MSVU will build stronger societies together by enhancing access to education, partnering with communities to identify and solve problems, and building a culture of collaboration where no voices are silenced and all can engage.

New Student Support Funds

Through donor generosity, several new funds have been established to support students:

- Business & Tourism and Hospitality Management Scholarship
- Liam P. Sneyd Tourism and Hospitality Management Scholarship
- MSVUSU Student Housing Support Fund
- Suniti Seth Scholarship
- Dr. Marilyn McDowell Awards (Applied Human Nutrition Award & Graduate Research Award)

Folia Montana

The annual magazine for alumni and friends was distributed to approximately 11,000 alumni and donors around the middle of July. Feedback on *Folia Montana* content has been great thus far. This activity has highlighted several hundred outdated contact addresses and is helping Advancement clean up alumni records. Discussions are underway to re-strategize distribution and print fewer copies in future years.

Riva Spatz Women's Wall of Honour – Leaf engraving and celebration luncheon

There were 8 new leaves engraved this year for the physical wall – some in memory and some in honour of important women in donors' lives. Advancement hosted a celebration luncheon for new recipients on November 13, 2025. Speeches by President Dickinson and Keely Wallace took place with the hour ending by the Wall of Honour for photos.

Ottawa Alumni Event

President Dr. Joël Dickinson, Associate Vice-President, University Relations, Karen White, and Manager, Philanthropy, Anne Thibodeau hosted an MSVU alumni gathering at The Hyde in Ottawa on October 30. MSVAA Board Member Janice Graham-Migel also joined, along with individuals representing class years from 1972 to 2007. The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, The Honourable Lena Metlege Diab, participated as well.

Child Study Centre Update

With demolition of the old Meadows building at MSVU now complete, construction of the new Child Study Centre (CSC) is set to ramp up soon. The new centre is estimated to be completed before the end of 2026. These are exciting developments for an initiative that will have profound impacts on early childhood education in the Atlantic region and beyond.

In 2024, MSVU announced that the current Child Study Centre would be replaced with an expanded centre on campus. The project is supported by the Nova Scotia and federal governments, as well as donors.

Thanks to an increase in funding of \$5.5 million from the Province and an increased fundraising goal of \$7.5 million, the CSC expansion is moving forward. The total investment from the federal government is \$3 million and the investment from EECD and Advanced Education is \$7.5 million.

The new Child Study Centre will expand access to high-quality care and serve as a provincial model of inclusion. The new centre will have triple the number of child care spaces it does now, including spaces for infants under 18 months (the current centre does not have infant spaces). These additional spaces will help address the acute shortage of quality, accessible child care spaces.

Fathom Studio is the design firm on the project, while Bird Construction has been hired as the construction manager.

Fundraising for the centre is also ramping up with a capital campaign in its early stages. The “quiet” phase will focus on securing 60% of the university’s fundraising goal with early champions/lead gifts. Throughout this phase, Advancement is exploring smaller “salon” style events with lead and major donors. Work with the CSC committee and special community advisors has been ongoing with a heavy focus on building the prospect list to hit MSVU’s goal of 100+ campaign prospects.

Reunion Weekend Events

The Advancement team celebrated a successful reunion weekend from September 18-21, 2025. A variety of events were organized including the Academy, Sisters of Charity and Golden Grads luncheons. A new event introduced this year was the Breaking Barriers panel discussion. The panel featured distinguished alumni panelists and was moderated by Dr. Joël Dickinson. The event was a success with over 80 attendees including alumni, staff, faculty, students, and community members.

Reunion weekend attracted a total of 350 attendees across seven events: the Academy Luncheon, Breaking barriers panel, MSVU & MSVC 50 & 50+ Luncheon, Wine and Cheese Social with milestone pinning and alumni awards, Axe Throwing and Pizza with the President, Tailgate Mystics Soccer Party, and Lunch with the Sisters of Charity. At the Academy luncheon, we celebrated a very special milestone – 70 years since graduation for Hazel R. McLeod.

Student Recruitment Marketing Campaign

MSVU’s 2025-26 prospective student marketing campaign is now in market. Building on the success of last year’s award-winning campaign (Educational Digital Marketing Awards Merit Winner), this year’s campaign uses similar cues and improved tactics. It emphasizes how MSVU offers students a uniquely supportive education and space where they can be themselves, find their people, and make an impact. The campaign has two streams: one that targets potential students and one that targets parents and teachers as their influencers. The campaign has already had a positive influence on recruitment efforts. Compared to last year, there has been growth in the number of completed applications from Nova Scotia (+14%), New Brunswick (+79%), and Newfoundland and Labrador (+56%).

Theme 6: A healthy and safe university campus for all

People are the foundation of our university and we will work to further develop a campus environment where the health and well-being of faculty, staff and students is paramount.

Safety Update

The VP Administration, together with the IT&S, Security, Facilities, and Communications teams collaborated to review and update MSVU's Emergency Response Plan (ERP) and complete an audit and update of the university's Crisis Communications Plan (CCP). Part of this work included an update to the notification templates housed in the MSVU mass notification platform (Everbridge). In addition, multiple team members received additional Everbridge training, expanding the number of staff with knowledge of the platform.

Further to the May 29 security incident on campus, the university hosted a Campus Exchange event this fall focused on campus security. The event panel included a member of the Halifax Regional Police and was very well attended by MSVU staff, faculty, and students. The university's refreshed [Emergency Response Plan has been published online](#), accompanied by additional updated web content. New emergency instructions signage is in the final stages of development as well, as is a brochure for campus visitors.

An MSVU Occupational Health and Safety Orientation Booklet is currently in development for distribution to new employees as part of the on-boarding process.

Theme 7: Operational excellence and sustainability

Build a well-resourced university that will remain financially, operationally and environmentally sustainable in a constantly evolving geo-political and environmental climate.

Major Gym Refurbishment

In November, the Mount Mystics hosted home openers in a newly refurbished A. Garnet Brown Gymnasium. The transformation included refinished floors, new (and relocated bleachers), a new scoreboard, and more. The feedback since re-opening has been tremendously positive. [Watch a time-lapse of the project here.](#)

Fundraising update

- Goal: \$3,000,000
- YTD Actual: \$1,638,336.42 or 55% to goal
- Prior YTD: \$993,097.38
- YoY Variance: \$645,239.04
- Percentage Change: +64.97%

Information Technology & Services Updates

- The implementation of a new Admissions Portal is underway. The new admissions portal will provide a streamlined, user-friendly experience that simplifies the application process and enhances engagement for prospective students.
- A Managed Detection and Response (MDR) service is now in place at MSVU, further strengthening MSVU's cybersecurity stance. MDR delivers continuous monitoring and expert response to protect from evolving cyber threats.

People & Culture

As part of the development of the Office of People & Culture, the Department of Human Resources has restructured its staffing to create two new positions. These adjustments are substantively cost neutral due to the elimination of the previous Human Resources Manager and Manager, Academic Relations positions. The new position of *HR Advisor, Accessibility and Wellness* leads important wellness and accessibility work with internal and external partners, and develops strategies to promote employee health and wellness. The *Manager, Faculty & Staff Relations* acts as the primary liaison between MSVU and its employee groups, and plays a critical role in fostering positive labour and employee relations.

Employee benefits review

In December 2025, the University's Benefits Users Committee approved the launch of a comprehensive review of the university's employee benefits program. HUB Inc has been engaged to support this project. This review will ensure that the university's Group Benefit Plan is competitive, and supports employee recruitment and retention. The review will focus on providing a plan that brings value to members and is financially sustainable.