



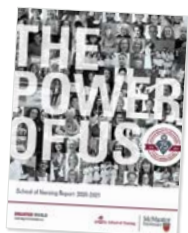
School of Nursing Report 2020-2021

Vision

Within a culture of optimism and respect, we will transform the future of nursing practice and lead with local and global communities through visionary, inclusive education and high-impact research.

COVER

Our cover pays tribute to our students, faculty, staff and alumni – past and present. They are the power of us.



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

McMaster University recognizes and acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the Dish With One Spoon wampum agreement.

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Our leadership team



Joanna Pierazzo

Assistant Dean,
Undergraduate Nursing Programs



Michael McGillion

Assistant Dean,
Research



Scott Stewart

Manager, Finance & Budgets



Nancy Carter

Assistant Dean,
Nursing Graduate Program



Yvonne Maidment

Director of Administration



Christine Gibson

Program Manager (BScN)



Ruth Chen

Assistant Dean,
Academic Resources, and
Department Education Coordinator



Caitlin Schmid

Staff Operations Manager

Leading from the ground up

"You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope." – Thomas Merton



We have all heard the adage "When things get tough, the tough get going." And this past year was certainly a tough one.

Our lives were turned upside down by Covid-19, and even if we were lucky enough not to contract the virus, it disrupted our world in countless ways, keeping us apart from family members, friends, co-workers, and students, and denying us the pleasure of celebrating major life events, including our own School of Nursing convocation.

But crisis can be a powerful instigator. It can bring people together and strengthen our collective values. It can also spark ground-level innovation that scales faster and more successfully than many monumental efforts.

In the School of Nursing, the constant need to shift gears and adapt to changing situations demanded an all-hands-on-deck approach that required every faculty member, every staff member and every student to draw deeply on the skills, character and commitment that have come to define McMaster nurses.

I am proud to say we rose to the occasion.

We completed a School-wide strategic planning process, underwent a full CASN accreditation review, implemented our renewed graduate curriculum, and signed off to graduate 454 BScN, 18 MSc and 4 PhD students plus 20 Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioners, all while planning a virtual 75th anniversary celebration. We pivoted from in-person classes to online learning, removing then returning our students to clinical practice and labs, and finding new and creative ways to keep connected and support our students and each other.

Research was impacted by public health restrictions, altered data collection and participant recruitment, but was offset by our ability to secure Covid-related funding opportunities that capitalized on

McMaster's well-regarded expertise in public health.

Our senior leadership team is to be commended: Joanna Pierazzo led the charge with her team to maintain the quality of our BScN programs and ensure our students succeeded; Ruth Chen managed the heightened demand for sessional instructors; Nancy Carter launched the first revised graduate curriculum in 16 years while simultaneously converting to online courses; and Michael McGillion mobilized our SON research office to continue to support faculty and graduate students applying for Covid-related research funding.

If we worried that we would not find the strength to do it, we were wrong. It turns out the pandemic highlighted the strengths we already had.

The result has been a level of innovation we never expected. Moving courses online has identified new opportunities and new ways of meeting the varied needs of our students. The result will be a richer and more diverse program of education options for all students, whatever their circumstances.

Perhaps it's fitting that all of this took place during the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's death, and our own 75th anniversary of the School of Nursing.

This was truly a year in which we celebrated our ties to the past and our faith in the future.

Sandra Carroll RN PhD
Vice-Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, &
Executive Director, School of Nursing

3rd
in Canada

15th
in the world
(QS World University
rankings)

Our Brilliant Year

Our faculty, students and staff rose to the challenge during a difficult year by drawing on the characteristics that have come to define McMaster nurses – leadership, innovation, strength, courage, resilience and compassion. Here are the key areas in which we shone.



In the midst of a pandemic, we continued to deliver all of our undergraduate and graduate nursing programs, ensuring students obtained their clinical practice hours. Excellent pass rates were achieved

by our BScN graduates. We accomplished all of this by thinking outside the box, prioritizing our students and our people over process, communicating regularly, and ensuring that our students were supported – especially our first-year learners. Our clinical placement success is a testament to our strong clinical, community and academic partnerships.



3,037
clinical
placements

96.5%
pass rate for BScN
graduates, NCLEX 2019
(latest year available)



We unveiled an ambitious 5-year Strategic Plan that prioritizes visionary, inclusive education, high-impact research, and a culture of optimism and respect.

Informed by meaningful engagement with our faculty, staff and students and consultation with stakeholders at every level, it commits to a path that builds on our strengths to transform the future of nursing practice.



We prepared to launch an innovative Northern Nurse Residency program to build and sustain nursing capacity in northern Ontario.

Partnering with Nunavut and St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, the tailored curriculum weaves practice with theory knowledge to equip graduates for the unique challenges of nursing in the north.

#1

— more students choose
Nursing than any other
McMaster program





We set the refresh button on our nursing graduate curriculum, completing a 5-year renewal process that will create new pathways for students and better equip them to lead in an evolving profession.

New and revamped courses designed with input from internal and external stakeholders now mirror how far the profession has come and where it is going. Among the innovative developments: Graduating students are now required to complete a leadership portfolio, write a mission statement for themselves, and prepare a five-year plan for their future.



Our researchers did not miss a beat. They were awarded an impressive \$1.6 million in Covid-related grants, and total funding for all nursing research topped pre-Covid levels by more than 6%. Our expertise in

public health, long-term care, homelessness, mental health and palliative care was spotlighted by the pandemic, along with our groundbreaking research to develop virtual patient monitoring systems that are literally saving lives.

132
research papers
published



We introduced new courses to our undergraduate programs to provide opportunities that respond to the varied interests and educational goals of our students. BScN students can now earn credits

toward a Certificate of Professional Learning in Nursing Leadership in Continence Care and Nursing Healthcare Leadership.



We continued to play a leadership role in addressing diversity, equity and inclusion and advancing the cause of Indigenous health. We created an Indigenous Health Curriculum Working Group, introduced a new

undergraduate Indigenous Health course, embedded equity in our hiring and recruitment processes, and created safe spaces for faculty and staff to address issues of equity. The appointment of Bernice Downey as the Faculty of Health Sciences' first associate dean of Indigenous Health will ensure that nurses at McMaster continue to exercise a meaningful role.



We led the way in producing a series of interprofessional training modules for all clinicians

who serve as preceptors to our Level 4 BScN students. The interactive

modules will be available to all health care preceptors, including physicians, child life specialists, social workers, OTs, PTs and chiropractors. Key faculty in health professional programs in the Faculty of Health Sciences worked closely with BScN to create this valuable work. The goal is ensuring on-the-ground skills and knowledge for every member of an inter-collaborative health team. This will contribute positively to the future of student learning in clinical education.

100%
increase in BScN
applications
(Fall 2020 to
Fall 2021)



We secured 3 endowed research chairs.

The **Gladys Sharpe Chair in Nursing**, held by Sharon Kaasalainen, honors the School's first director. The **Heather M. Arthur Population Health Research Institute/Hamilton Health**

Sciences Chair in Inter-Professional Health Research is named for the late McMaster nurse scientist who pioneered cardiac rehabilitation research in Canada. The inaugural holder is Diana Sherifali. The **Alba DiCenso Chair in Advanced Practice**, created in 2018 but newly endowed, honors a distinguished professor emerita and is held by Denise Bryant-Lukosius.



Sharon
Kaasalainen



Diana
Sherifali



Denise
Bryant-Lukosius



After an intensive review, our nursing school in collaboration with our Mohawk and Conestoga College partners emerged with a positive accreditation report from the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN)¹.

¹ Final decision expected in June 2021

What drove us then drives us now

McMaster's School of Nursing has been at the forefront of nursing education, innovation and impact since its founding in 1946.

In the pages that follow, we share milestones from our first 75 years and stories of how our students, graduates, faculty and staff are continuing to advance education, practice and policy to impact the lives of individuals and families everywhere.



1946



McMaster's School of Nursing opens its doors with **Gladys Sharpe** as director. Her shrewd hiring choices would create a powerful trifecta (Alma Reid, Florence Greenaway and Henrietta Alderson) whose efforts over the next 20+ years would establish McMaster's reputation as an early leader in nursing excellence.

1960s

We became the first faculty at McMaster to embrace a "problem-solving approach" to learning. Later adopted by McMaster's School of Medicine and the rest of the health sciences, it would evolve into the problem-based, self-directed, small group learning model since emulated worldwide.



1970

Our first funded research grant was awarded to **Dorothy Kergin**, who co-led a groundbreaking trial that proved nurse practitioners could be just as effective as



physicians in primary-care practice. Her work paved the way for future nurse leaders and signaled our growing reputation for evidence-based, impactful research.



1972

The Educational Program for Nurses in Primary Care was created as a nine-month work/study program to prepare nurses for an expanded role in primary care, specifically in physicians' offices. It was phased out in 1983, replaced by the BScN post-diploma stream.

1973

Our first graduate courses were part of an interdisciplinary, clinically-focused Master of Health Sciences degree. Unique in Canada, it allowed practicing nurses with no previous university education to attain a graduate degree.

1974

The School of Nursing became part of the newly-created Faculty of Health Sciences and moved into the McMaster University Medical Centre (now the McMaster Health Sciences Centre).



1982

First students admitted to the BScN post-diploma stream, created to satisfy the increasing demand for university-prepared nurses.



1983

Fast becoming recognized as a leader in nursing education, we began work with the Aga Khan University to prepare nurses in Pakistan for roles in community health, nursing education and health services. It was the start of a 22-year relationship that saw our influence extend across five continents, helping nursing schools adapt problem-based learning to meet local needs.



1986

We introduced our first graduate level program, the Advanced Neonatal Nursing Graduate Diploma, which ran until 2014.

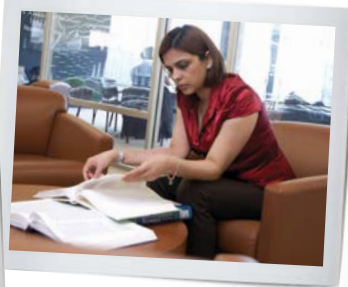


1992

The School was designated a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre in Primary Health Care and Teaching Methodologies, which continues to this day.

1994

The School of Nursing admitted its first PhD students.



1995

The Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Program (PHCNP) began as part of a BScN degree. It later moved to the graduate level, and is currently offered as part of a Master's course-based program or as a Diploma for students who already have a Master of Science degree.

1998

Professor Alba DiCenso was named founding editor of the *British Medical Journal's Journal of Evidence-based Nursing*, further cementing McMaster's status as a leader in the field.

2001

The McMaster, Mohawk, Conestoga collaborative BScN program was launched. Today it is one of the largest nursing education consortiums in Canada, delivering a fully integrated nursing curriculum to 3,000 students annually. Graduates receive a BScN degree conferred by McMaster University.

Special thanks to McMaster's Health Sciences archivist Melissa Caza, who knew where all the School of Nursing's historical photos were buried and unearthed them for us.

270
clinical
instructors

472
full- and
part-time
faculty

166
adjunct
professors



Frances Rogers,
right, engages with
a colleague



TRAILBLAZING

MAC NURSES STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD



Frances Rogers (nee Riddell) still remembers the day she showed up at the hospital wearing red shoes. “There I was in my white nurse’s uniform and cap but no one was looking at me. They were all staring at my red shoes. To wear anything but black shoes was unheard of in those days.”

“Those days” were the late 1940s, and it wasn’t the first time Frances had bucked a trend. In 1942, despite her parents’ insistence she become a teacher, she signed up for what was then the precursor to McMaster’s integrated nursing degree – a combined Bachelor of Arts degree from McMaster and Diploma in Nursing from Hamilton General Hospital (HGH).

“I was determined to be a nurse,” she recalls. “I had had some very good experiences with people who needed help, and I just knew it was the right career for me.”

She hadn’t thought of attending university until a friend of her father’s changed her mind. “I told him I was going to HGH for nursing, and he said, ‘No, you’re not, you need to go to university.’ Sometimes someone who speaks out changes your life.”

A Kellogg Fellowship also helped. After graduating from McMaster and working as an RN she was awarded the Fellowship to pursue a Master of Education in Nursing degree at Boston University. “They paid for everything, even gave me spending money. It was amazing considering the cost of a university education today.”

That was another unconventional choice. “Everyone else was heading to Columbia University. But I didn’t want to live in New York.” A music lover, she was attracted to Boston because she could walk to Symphony Hall on weekends to take in a concert, adding “the education was good, too.”

Indeed, it was. The nursing school, one of the country’s most innovative, had already adopted the principles of patient-centred learning and would later become the epicentre for the problem-based learning approach adopted by McMaster.

Excited to put her new ideas into practice, Frances returned to Hamilton in 1951 to join McMaster’s relatively new nursing faculty, where she worked alongside the School’s founding leaders – then-Director Alma Reid, Florence Greenaway and Henrietta Alderson, all of whom became close colleagues and friends.

Frances retired from full-time teaching upon her marriage in 1959, then worked part-time for a while and as a volunteer Red Cross teacher, subsequently raising three children. Although she is now 95, she continues to be very much involved with the School of Nursing, maintaining contact with former students and attending regular alumni events.

She feels lucky to have taught and practiced at such a pivotal time in nursing. “We were no longer expected to count the cutlery at the end of the day. We were finally taking our rightful place alongside everyone else with a science degree.”

Frances Rogers,
left, prepares with
colleagues



MAC NURSES DREAM BIG AND ACT BOLDLY

"Dr. Ray has a natural ability for understanding the meaning of transcultural caring and how this can be applied to decision making in today's nursing environment. She is a true leader."

— Sandra Carroll commenting on Marilyn Ray receiving an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from McMaster.



If you're wondering where you can go with a McMaster Nursing degree, **Marilyn Ray** can tell you.

"Anywhere your heart leads you," says the Hamilton native who propelled a Diploma in Nursing from St. Joseph's Hospital into a distinguished, if unconventional, 63-year career that shows no signs of abating.

Like many newly minted nurses of the late 1950s, Ray struggled to figure out what to do next. Pressed to continue her education, she chose a more adventurous route, setting off for sunny California and a job at UCLA Medical Centre.

The decision to hold off proved fortuitous. When she finally got the bug, nurses were much in demand and American schools were offering scholarships to anyone who would enrol. To qualify, you had to be a U.S. citizen, so she became one. She moved to Denver, completing her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Colorado while working hospital shifts to pay the rent.

Her next goal was a Master of Science, but there was one hitch. Eager to join the U.S. Air Force and continue her nursing work in the air, she was told by University administrators she couldn't work while receiving a federal grant to study. Ray countered: 'Is serving the country considered work?' They decided it was not.

Ray chose both, launching a parallel 32-year career in the military that began as a flight nurse tending to wounded Vietnam War soldiers and continued with assignments in education, administration and research. She recently partnered in the development of a new nursing education program for veterans transitioning to civilian life.

Called back to Hamilton in 1973 for family reasons, Ray was quickly tapped to join Mac's School of Nursing as an assistant professor in its new Nurse Practitioner Program.

"I learned so much," she recalls. "Everyone talks today about how they're committed to interprofessional collaboration in nursing education. We had it back then. We had a social worker, midwife, physicians and anthropologists on our team. Mac was already doing it."

While there, she squeezed in a Master of Arts degree in Anthropology and began exploring the emerging body of research in transcultural nursing, a theory of culturally competent care that was a harbinger of its time. She went on to complete a PhD in the subject and to further develop the concept through her teachings and a highly acclaimed book, *Transcultural Caring Dynamics in Nursing and Health Care*, which also examines the meaning of caring within complex health organizations. The entire U.S. military now draws on her body of work to impact the care of 10 million Americans.



Ray's fondness for McMaster extends to nurturing the next generation of nurses. In 2009, she established the Dr. Marilyn A. Ray Endowment for Excellence in Nursing Practitioner Education and Practice, an annual award recognizing student excellence in the NP program.

Reflects Ray: "To think I graduated from a Diploma program, and now I'm influencing these enormous systems. It just shows what a fabulous career nursing is. You can be engaged in so many rewarding ways."

Flight nurse, Air Force captain, educator and author, Ray has proven nothing is beyond reach for a Mac nurse.

EMPOWERING

MAC NURSES ENGAGE AND INSPIRE



A professor and student compare notes in the lab.



"Equity, diversity and inclusion are not an add-on here. They're embedded in the School's structure and culture. It's a top-down, bottom-up effort that's transforming policies and programs to overcome bias and inspire everyone, from students to faculty to staff, to see the possibilities of where they can be."

— **Arig al Shaibah**, Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion, McMaster University

If you were on the subway and heard someone make a racist comment, what would you do? How do we create spaces where every student feels safe? How do we embed health equity and social justice into our practice?

Reflection has always been a critical part of nursing practice. But the events of the past year – the death of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter protests, an Indigenous woman mistreated by nurses whose job it was to protect her – forced us all to reflect on what was going on in our own backyards and examine our roles in it.

The School of Nursing, amidst a graduate curriculum overhaul and a strategic planning exercise to guide the next five years of growth, saw an opportunity to engage faculty, staff and students in deeper reflection with results that have been truly transformative.

From a book club examining the lived experiences of Indigenous and Black Canadians to a curriculum embedded with health equity and Indigenous content to methods of teaching that promote cultural safety in the classroom to hiring practices that prioritize diversity to research that elevates the voices of the marginalized, the School has

demonstrated that commitment is an evolving process that must be constantly renewed and revitalized to stay alive.

Bernice Downey, associate dean, Indigenous Health, for McMaster's Faculty of Health Sciences, one of only two such positions in the country, calls the School's new undergraduate curriculum "innovative and inspiring, created by faculty who have done some reflection and learned from each other."

The School's new 5-year Strategic Plan goes further, aiming to change the face of nursing education, practice and research by embedding diversity, indigeneity and inclusion into every measure of the School's operation.

Professor **Susan Jack**, who started the book club, is using principles from her research in trauma-and-violence informed care to recast teaching through a health equity lens.

It starts, she says, by creating an environment that's welcoming and conducive to learning. "One of the first things we did was to eliminate participation points for students who perform well in class. Just because a student is introverted doesn't mean they're not prepared."

Even a simple Zoom class can be fraught with issues, she warns. "Instructors like to be able to see everyone, but it can be uncomfortable for some students, who feel they will be judged by their surroundings."

Jack teaches her students to apply the same level of sensitivity to their research, especially when collecting personal data from their subjects, and she is developing a set of guidelines for graduate student supervision that will include debriefing protocols and supports for students dealing with sensitive topics.

Her message is simple: "We need to promote health equity and social justice not just in what we teach but *how* we teach. If our students are to thrive, we need to provide choice, collaboration, flexibility, listening, validation, and clear guidance on what they can expect."

MAC NURSES LISTEN AND LEAD WITH RESPECT

Covid-19 exacted a devastating toll on the elderly, and long-term care residents were among the hardest hit. While news stories focused mostly on the disproportionate number of deaths, nursing home residents were struggling with something far more insidious – the loneliness and isolation from lockdowns that kept them apart from family and friends.

Even before coronavirus, worldwide research found 50% of adults over 60 to be at risk of social isolation. As many as one third to half of them are destined to experience some degree of loneliness in later life.



That comes as no surprise to **Sheila Boamah**, a critical care nurse who traded in her scrubs for a tenure-track position at McMaster's School of Nursing.

"In my practice, I saw a lot of emergency patients from long-term care homes," says the assistant professor. "Many had no family with them. Sometimes I felt helpless."

The effects of social disconnection can be serious, if not outright deadly. "Isolation and loneliness are like a couple. They go hand in hand and affect every part of one's well-being, including physical wellness. People withdraw, their muscles get weaker, their quality of life goes down, their level of engagement is not there anymore."

And it's not just the residents who suffer: 40-70% of family caregivers experience clinical symptoms of depression and feelings of isolation associated with the caregiving experience.

Boamah hopes her new research project, funded by a \$15,000 grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, will make a difference.

She is one of nine Nursing faculty members affiliated with the McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA). Working in cross-Faculty teams, MIRA doesn't just "do research" on older adults, it directly engages them, their families and their health care providers to produce practical solutions that work for all concerned.

For Boamah, her work with MIRA is a match made in heaven. "The causes of social isolation are not the problem. The problem is what are we going to do about it. And the best way to learn that is from those who live with it every day."

To find out what's really going on, she will interview both long-term care residents and their caregivers. "I want to understand their experience, to learn what they're feeling through their own narratives, and find sustainable, person-centred solutions. I want the findings to drive the policy."

Those findings, she hopes, will lead to improvements in service delivery and capacity building in long-term residential communities that have been understaffed and under strain far too long.

And it just might have immediate benefits for those who share their stories. "We all like to be heard and validated. If I spend time listening to them, they will feel they have something to contribute, that they make a difference. And that can only improve the quality of their lives."

Masking up with MacSOC

Nursing students and retired faculty members teamed up with MacSOC (the McMaster Student Outreach Collaborative) to hold a mask drive designed to protect our community's most vulnerable during Covid. They researched, designed and sewed protective masks, funding the cost with a "buy one, give one" promotion that resulted in more than 1,000 masks distributed to hospitals, long-term care homes, shelters and other locations where PPE was desperately needed.

*Pictured at right, nursing students **Lauren Collett** and **Christine Sui** mask up to save lives.*



IMPACTFUL

MAC NURSES MOVE SOCIETY TO MAKE CHANGE



Ruta Valaitis remembers her first research paper.

She had just graduated and was working as a public health nurse in Etobicoke, which had neighborhood teams, each with its own caseload and not all created equal. To highlight the inequities, she did her own statistical analysis and presented it to management.

"There I was using evidence to change practice. I guess it was always in my roots."

Valaitis spent 32 years changing practice as a nursing professor at McMaster, before retiring in 2020. During that time, she built a reputation as one of the world's leading community health scholars and practitioners, and a tireless advocate for ensuring primary health care nurses have a seat at the table.

Her distinctions are many: The inaugural holder of McMaster's Dorothy C. Hall Chair in Primary Health Care Nursing; Scientific Co-Director of McMaster's Aging Community and Health Research Unit; Deputy Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Primary Care and Health Human Resources; and Secretary to the Pan American Network of Nursing and Midwifery Collaborating Centers Network (PANMCC).

One of her earliest research projects was a Canadian study that looked at the primary care and public health sectors and how they could work together to improve outcomes. "I firmly believed we had to be interprofessional and interdisciplinary. That research was ahead of its time and we are still reaping the rewards."

Valaitis' impact has also been felt in health services and policy development, community health nursing, and e-health. She recently co-led a team of investigators in the development and implementation of a mobile app enabling real-time communication and decision-making to support adult stroke survivors recovering at home.

Students take instruction from Dr. Millar (center).



But one of her smallest projects is the one she's most proud of.

In 2017, she received funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to study one of the country's most vulnerable populations: the residents of Vanier Towers, a low-income Hamilton housing community burdened by crime, food insecurity and health issues that were going unmet.

Working collaboratively with other leaders in public health, primary care and the housing sector, the group met monthly over the course of a year with tenants, the police, paramedics, social workers and other community members.

What they learned was shocking: The average lifespan of the residents was just 57 years; more than half said they had been diagnosed with a mental illness; a third reported problems with addiction; and 77% reported feeling unsafe in the complex.

The tenants were engaged every step of the way, including writing the needs assessment report that will drive improvements in their environment and their health. There are encouraging signs: A community kitchen was opened. They now have a home management worker, a community engagement worker, case workers for job and disabilities support, plus health workers who see residents on site.

The project is a model for community development and community engagement, says Valaitis, and a shining example of "how nurses can move society to make change."

This chart shows School of Nursing research funding by source.

Total Research Funding	2020-2021	2019-2020
Federal Granting Councils	\$ 2,806,890	\$ 829,592
Other Federal Sources	799,989	290,680
Provincial Government	667,853	199,845
Internal Funding	843,462	471,107
Not-for-Profit	365,935	102,700
Total	\$5,484,129	\$1,893,924

Leaning in for public health

Navigating the Covid-19 pandemic required Canada's public health leaders to make lightning-speed decisions, rewrite policies and protocols on the fly, and stay abreast of emerging science that was changing almost daily.

Who did they turn to for help in sorting the rapidly evolving evidence? Our country's best public health researchers, located right here at McMaster's School of Nursing.



Maureen Dobbins, professor of nursing and Scientific Director of the National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools, hosted at McMaster, created an online rapid review repository of the latest Covid-19 evidence that has since been accessed by more than 20,000 public health professionals. A complementary rapid response service delivers up-to-the-minute evidence within days of each request.

Dobbins' leadership and expertise has now been tapped by the

Ontario government, who recently appointed her to a special committee charged with coordinating and monitoring outbreak preparedness, planning and response activities in school and child care settings.



Meanwhile, nursing professor **Susan Jack** is making inroads on another front. An expert in trauma and violence-informed approaches to care and nursing responses to intimate partner violence, Jack has developed guidance to help Ontario's public health nurses prioritize the emotional and physical safety of their clients (pregnant individuals and families with young children) when completing "home visits" virtually.

"Nurses were challenged to work differently just as families were experiencing increased multiple stressors," says Jack. Tips and strategies, such as conducting visits in driveways or parks, came from nurses working directly in the field and are shared in an online resource hub, partially funded by the Ontario government.

Stepping up for students



Alexis van Baalen



Elaine Shuhaibar

Academic advisor **Alexis van Baalen** worked with a multidisciplinary team to devise a way for McMaster students to rehabilitate a course grade and mitigate the impact on their GPA. Clinical instructor **Elaine Shuhaibar** is committed to helping BScN students succeed. Both members of the School of Nursing were honored with a McMaster University President's Award for Outstanding Service. Shuhaibar also received a teaching award from the McMaster Students Union (MSU).

40+

student awards
presented in
2020



1987 nursing
students celebrate
their awards

TRANSFORMATIVE

MAC NURSES TURN PASSION INTO PURPOSE



"We discovered nursing is not just wearing scrubs and working in a hospital. Mac showed us that nursing can be whatever you want it to be."

— Jasmeet Chagger (shown right, with Maneet Chahal)

It took "a real entrepreneur" from their hometown of Brampton, Ontario, to convince **Jasmeet Chagger** and her childhood friend **Maneet Chahal** that they had what it takes to succeed. "He said, 'I'm tired of all your planning. You just have to act.'"

Act they did, and the rest is history: an extraordinary journey for the two registered nurses that earned them Graduate Student Leadership Awards and the devotion of an entire community whose mental health needs they now serve.

Chagger and Chahal went on to earn Master of Science degrees in Nursing from McMaster, but not before they started SOCH Mental Health, a community-based organization designed to change South Asians' attitudes towards an often-taboo subject and connect them with the services they may not even recognize they need.

SOCH is a word in Hindu, Urdu and Punjabi that means "to think", which is exactly what they're trying to do – change their community's thinking.

Both women are Punjabi, the largest South Asian group in Brampton, and they grew up with firsthand knowledge of the heartbreak that ignoring mental health issues can wreak on individuals and families. Chagger's father struggled with alcohol addiction; Chahal's suffered with anxiety and depression.

As nurses with Peel Region's Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT) supporting individuals with serious mental health concerns, they discovered other South Asian families facing the same challenges.

"They had no idea how to access services. Many didn't even know these issues needed to be taken seriously," Chagger recalls. "We decided to take a proactive, preventive approach, and bring the services to the community rather than the other way around."

From a single workshop in April 2015, Chagger and Chahal now offer a range of events and activities for the South Asian community, including a women's forum, a men's forum, a queer and transgendered forum, forums on children's mental health and maternal mental health, and chair fitness and yoga for seniors delivered in Punjabi.

They helped a Brampton funeral home develop a South Asian grief support group, produced 10 short films in English and Punjabi for South Asian international students in concert with Sheridan College and the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health, and trained Peel Children's Aid social workers to address the mental health needs of the Punjabi community.

One event held at a local Sikh temple caught the attention of the Sikh channel, which invited them to host their own TV show, Apni Soch (Our Thinking). The show became a hit, turning SOCH Mental Health into a global enterprise with combined outreach efforts touching more than 50,000 people in Canada and beyond.

Drawing on the problem-based learning model that is a tenet of McMaster's School of Nursing, the two women are more workshop facilitators than leaders, encouraging community members to connect with each other by sharing their personal struggles. "Storytelling is a powerful way to break through the stigma," says Chagger. "Lived experience speaks volumes."

And that entrepreneurial spirit they never knew they had? They credit McMaster's innovative approach to nursing for sparking it.

MAC NURSES FIND JOY IN SCIENCE



Kirsten Culver is not a nurse and doesn't have a nursing degree. So how did she become an assistant professor in McMaster's School of Nursing?

When she joined the faculty in 2004, it was for her expertise in the science of teaching and learning backed by a PhD in Medical Sciences. Her creative approach to teaching science subjects that are required learning in the undergraduate nursing program has earned her five awards for teaching excellence.

But her real achievement has been as architect of a new model of student learning that has elevated the importance of science in nursing and made it integral to McMaster's unique patient-centred approach.

Required courses such as anatomy, physiology, biochemistry and pharmacology used to be delivered on CD-ROM by instructors from the Faculty of Science, who didn't know how to make them relevant to nursing. "My challenge was to take science courses that until then had seemed peripheral and make them walk lock-step with nursing."

As Science Lead for the entire BScN program, Culver now ensures that undergraduate students don't just learn pharmacology, they learn the pharmacology of diabetes and other diseases they will encounter on the job.

"They now understand the scientific underpinnings behind their decision making," she says. "It allows them to draw from a deeper well of knowledge and react more nimbly in challenging situations, to understand not only what the best decision is but why."

With health issues becoming more acute and complex, Culver says the best nurses will be those who don't see all patients as the same, but are capable of identifying the exception to the rule. "If we don't understand the "why" of things, it's not easy to notice the atypical."

And that knowledge, she believes, is empowering. "The more empowered nurses are, the better quality of care their patients receive and the more capable and comfortable they are in advocating for them."

The proof is in the pudding, says Culver. "Our course evaluations have been very positive, our graduates have an excellent pass rate, and they're in demand in a variety of clinical settings."

"Plus, science is fun," she adds. "Understanding how our bodies work is a beautiful thing."



Nurses posing with research laboratory mice.

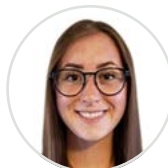
Next-generation nursing



Marissa Bird



Carly Ouellette



Kelsea Levesque

Virtual care and remote monitoring are the next wave of nursing technology, and our graduate students are leading the way. PhD student **Marissa Bird** received the **Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Doctoral Award** for her work in developing a virtual system for hospital-to-home care for children with medical complexities.

She and **Mitacs Fellowship** winners **Carly Ouellette** and **Kelsea Levesque** are also working under the supervision of assistant dean, nursing, Michael McGillion on a remote patient monitoring trial that has already operationalized hospital-to-home care for 900 patients across Canada.

They set up a temporary command centre and prepared 20 nurses redeployed from nearby hospitals to monitor patients' vital signs three times a day, among other measures. The research team is now working with digital health company Cloud DX to develop a vitality device that will be capable of tracking 17 different biometric indicators.

Whatever path you choose, you have the opportunity to make a difference to others every day. Never forget the power that a kind word, gentle encouragement and faith in others can have! Thank you for being a difference. Congratulations – remember you can achieve any goal you set for your self. Mac teaches you life skills. Proud to be a MAC graduate. All your hard work has finally paid off. Those sleepless nights studying for exams, practicing on friends for OSCEs, and early mornings getting ready for clinical have all prepared you for this moment. Breathe it in. Be proud of how far you have come. Do not downplay your success. You worked for this. You did it – and in some of the hardest times. Go become a nurse. Be a compassionate, kind, assertive, and trustworthy nurse. Hold your true love for this career close to you and don't let it slip away. Remember what you worked for and why you are here. It sounds corny, but you have the world at your fingertips, find what drives you and follow it. Congratulations on graduating to the next step in your nursing career. Being a nurse is awesome! Nursing career paths are filled with variety and challenges setting you up for life-long learning. Best wishes! Congratulations on choosing this most excellent of professions. Trust always in your way of knowing and never doubt that your heart is therapy that soothes an aching soul. You will do great things in whatever way YOU define greatness. May you welcome learning opportunities, share your knowledge, and do your best to take care of those who couldn't do it without you. Never for a moment, especially in those vulnerable ones, forget who you are, where you came from, and why you decided to choose this path. Stay humble and stay true to yourself. You are stronger than you think you are, and you are capable of greatness. The skills you have learned even through a pandemic will be so important as you move into the work world; in fact, I think you may bring layers of understanding and skills that those in previous years may not have. Never doubt that you are important to the health care system. You are vital, and valued. Be proud of yourself, confident in your training and go ahead and make your impact! Take honour and pride in all the hard work you have done to get you where you are today because you are going to be a wonderful nurse. All you have learned in the nursing program will enable you to be a force for positive change as you enter the healthcare workforce. Every Mac Nursing grad has made an impact on their communities in their private and working life. You will continue to do the same, I am sure. Congrats on this amazing achievement! Spread your wings and fly like a beautiful butterfly into the world of nursing. I am so proud of and excited for you :) My advice is to give yourself the gift of time. Your learning is not over, but you are well grounded and ready to go forth! "They may forget your name but they will never forget how you made them feel" congratulations on entering the knowing that is nursing stay humble and learn from your patients every day. Always be forward thinking & creative in the practice of your profession. Listen to your patients & their families (not only what is said but what is perceived, it is of utmost importance. The golden rule is paramount in your interactions with others. I.e. always treat others as you yourself would want to be treated. "Congratulations on finishing the easiest test of your nursing career, your BScN! Now, onto the real test: working as an RN! Buckle down, the ride isn't going to be smooth-sailing, but it is all worth riding for. Always remember, every great nurse who went on to be a Clinical Manager, a Nurse Educator, an Associate Prof, etc., they were once a Novice nurse like yourself. As you graduate always remember that Nursing is a profession of commitment, compassion and caring. It is a profession for professionals who work from the heart. Congratulations on achieving your BScN! This degree brings endless opportunities both personally and professionally that will only grow over time as long as you keep your mind and options open. Best of luck in your path forward. All the best as you transition from school to a RN position! This is a tremendous milestone and your work in the nursing profession is needed more than ever. You will forever realize how blessed you have been in receiving your BScN at McMaster. Always treat the housekeeper with the same respect as your professors, and one day you'll be glad you did. As you go forward, be reminded that you are joining nurses everywhere in accepting the immense responsibility we hold with each interaction, procedure, teaching and every therapeutic touch -whether it is physical or intangible. Allow yourself to listen to the wisdom of nurses who have gone before. Stay balanced by integrating the academic rigor of nursing science & evidential knowledge with the art forms of communication, creativity, caring and the therapeutic use of yourself as Knowledge Worker. I hope your career will bring you as much joy and pride as mine has brought me. May this experience guide you as you become a nursing leader in the future. Congratulations on all your hard work, you deserve to be proud of yourself. In these uncertain times, trust your gut and know that we senior nurses have your back! Congratulations on beginning your new journey! The nursing program will challenge you in a variety of ways, sometimes unexpectedly. But if you keep your head up and hang in there; experiencing those challenges will be the reason for your growth. Here's to you! Congrats class of 2020, you've graduated at a memorable time and should celebrate your success from one of the most renowned Universities for Nursing education. More importantly, you are now alumni of a faculty consisting of some of the most down to earth yet prominent scholars of Nursing. Keep your chin up, but don't be afraid to conquer your fears...remember you are a pro at problem-based solving and self-directed learning which will help you overcome challenges presented in your practice and outside of it. Most importantly, never ever forget about the holistic paradigm of nursing and advocating for yourself/patients at all cost. Congratulations and don your pin with pride! It's a symbol of your tremendous accomplishment and a reminder of the important calling you will soon embark on. Now, more than ever, people need us. You are beginning your nursing journey during an unprecedented time. Nurture your ability to express compassion, kindness and value. Take time for you along the way. Remain curious and challenge yourself to be a lifelong learner. Enjoy the journey of a long and rewarding career! You made it, welcome to the world of nursing. Times may be uncertain right now but hold your head high, and remember the passion for nursing that brought you into this field. Take advantage of the opportunities that lay in front of you right now but don't give up on that dream that you are especially passionate about! Congratulations on completing your nursing course. You should feel very proud to be joining this great profession. You will face many challenges in different workplace settings but always be confident that you have the knowledge, you can problem solve and can learn the required skills. Be a learner and a leader. Good luck!

WORDS OF WISDOM McMaster's School of Nursing has a long tradition of older, wiser alumni sharing inspiring messages each year for every new graduating student. This page contains a selection from the past year.