

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: May 19, 2021

GENERAL

On May 4, 2021 Dr. Diane Hiebert-Murphy's appointment as the University of Manitoba's next Provost and Vice-President (Academic) [was announced](#). Dr. Hiebert-Murphy [BSW/82; MA/87; PhD/95] will assume her new portfolio on July 1, 2021 and will become the senior academic officer at the University of Manitoba, responsible for providing academic vision and leadership in all matters relating to students and academic staff, including academic programs, long-range academic planning, and enrolment management. She currently serves the University as Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs), a position she has held since 2016.

Spring Convocation 2021 will be hosted from June 15-17 on a new digital platform, offering an accessible and interactive experience for students and their classmates, faculties, friends and families from around the world. As the University community awaits the safe return of in-person celebrations, the new digital platform creates more opportunities for students to connect with one another, including faculty-specific virtual Convocation ceremonies, chat rooms, interactive exhibits, a digital photo booth and a downloadable digital yearbook.

On May 7, 2021, the UM Intranet was launched, offering a homepage accessible only to UM faculty and staff and containing a variety of resources needed for working at the University. Faculty and staff already can access human resources forms, workplace policies, supports for diversity and inclusion, copyright information, IST supports, and more.

The Province of Manitoba announced new COVID-19 restrictions on May 7, 2021 including the closure of gyms, libraries and restaurants. The University of Manitoba has restricted campus dining to take-out only and has closed its recreation facilities and libraries. Contactless pickup of library materials will continue through the pickup lockers and all electronic collections and virtual services remain available. For further information, please visit the [COVID-19 webpage](#).

ACADEMIC MATTERS

- The Rady Faculty of Health Sciences have invited members of the Rady Faculty community to join an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) community of practice – a group of interested faculty and staff who will meet for monthly, hour-long discussions. The group will explore EDI best practices and invite guest speakers, taking a social justice approach. The goals include providing training and experience to help members increase their skills and confidence in advocating for EDI; empowering members to be an EDI information source for their departments and communities; and having a voice in future EDI Initiatives.
- UM researchers have developed a credit card-sized device to test for chronic kidney disease. It is so compact and inexpensive that patients will be able to take the test at home. Test results would be available in just five minutes from a handheld device, called the Microfluidic Albumin Testing Lab on Chip (MATLOC). The device is much needed for people living in rural and remote locations.

- In its mandate to prepare students for interprofessional collaborative practice, the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences' Office of Interprofessional Collaboration (OIPC) is focused on the topic of racism in health care when working with first-year students. Due to moving the sessions to online learning the OIPC was able to welcome 40 nursing students from the College of Nursing's partner program at the University College of the North. Lori Davis, who represents the College of Nursing on the OIPC team, said "Engaging in this dialogue within their interprofessional teams, [students in] nursing and the other health-care disciplines have begun to break the silence around systemic racism in our health-care system."
- Opening on March 15th, the Virtual Advising Help Centre (VAHC) with Student Service Navigators provides peer-to-peer chat, email, and telephone support to students over extended hours seven days per week. Heather Nicolson, Coordinator, VACH, is leading this team of student staff who have been meeting virtually with students from around the globe answering questions and helping them navigate University services, policies, and processes. They also provide tips drawn from their own experiences on campus, and support students in using Aurora, UM Achieve, and other resources related to academic success. With an increasing number of students accessing this new service daily, the Navigators are serving an important role in supporting student success during this remote learning period.
- Lori Wilkinson, Sociology and Criminology was awarded the 2021 recipient of the National Metropolis Researcher Award, from the Association for Canadian Studies and the National Metropolis project. The Metropolis Awards of Excellence recognize and celebrate outstanding contributions to the field of immigration and settlement in Canada. This national award intends to establish a benchmark of achievement and excellence, bringing pride and peer acknowledgement to the deserving recipients.
- Professor Mel Braun, Desautels Faculty of Music, has started rehearsals for a new video project, the premiere of Andrew Balfour's new work, "Captive". "Captive" is the 3rd in a series of Camerata Nova projects in response to the truth and reconciliation hearings. Andrew is Cree and "Captive" is a lament on the fate of Chief Poundmaker, one of the many casualties of the Riel trial and execution. Instructor Tori Sparks and Metis composer and alumnus Eliot Britton are also engaged in this project.
- The Science-Asper Case team placed first at the Munich Re Cup. Asper students Yash Katyara, Hui Lin Cheong, Kevin Wong, and Faculty of Science student, Celia Dang competed against teams from University of Toronto, University of Waterloo, Georgia State University and Temple University. Originating in 2015, the Munich Re Cup began as a Canada-wide actuarial business case competition. As of 2019, the competition is now the premier actuarial case competition open to students in Canada and the United States. Participants will be provided the chance to develop and apply their analytical, presentation, and problem solving skills to a real-world business problem. The competition affords unique networking opportunities that will provide students with exposure to Munich Re leadership and industry professionals.
- The Bill Buxton Dissertation Award is given out annually to one outstanding doctoral dissertation in the Human-Computer Interaction research area of Computing Science. It is presented by the Canadian Human-Computer Communications Society. This is the first year that the award has been granted to a member of the University of Manitoba. Daniel Rea received the Award for the 2020 doctoral dissertation, "*Now You're Teleoperating with Power: learning from video games to improve teleoperation interfaces,*" completed under the supervision of Dr. Jim Young in the UM Human-Computer Interaction Lab (HCI).

RESEARCH MATTERS

- Currently, research at the University of Manitoba (UM) is continuing within in the labs as well as remotely to the extent possible in compliance with the provincial Public Health Guidelines. Details on the current COVID-19 guiding principles, processes for requesting access and preventative measures are available in the updated Researcher FAQs section of the COVID-19 webpage.
- Civil Engineering Professors Jonathan Regehr and Babak Mehran have been awarded \$1.6 million in collaborative R&D funding from the National Research Council (NRC) of Canada’s Artificial Intelligence for Logistics Supercluster Support program to carry out the work. Their project titled: *“Applying artificial intelligence to improve the resilience, fluidity and safety of road freight transport in the Canadian Prairie and northern region,”* will catalogue truck routes and activity in the Canadian Prairies over the next five years. Data collected will capture the number, type, and weight of trucks using roadways, and how they collectively behave under various road-weather scenarios. The research will be conducted in partnership with NRC’s Digital Technologies Research Centre, including Dr. Chaouki Regoui, and will build on the first phase collaboration with experts from Manitoba Infrastructure, and International Road Dynamics, a Saskatchewan based ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) company.
- Forty-eight research projects led by thirty-nine investigators received a total of \$9.2 million in grant funding from a variety of sponsors. Those projects receiving more than \$25,000 are:

PI	Sponsor	Title	Awarded Amount
Akcora, Cuneyt (Computer Science)	Research Manitoba	Bonafide: Decentralized services for sharing and searching user generated data	\$150,000
Bohm, Clara (Internal Medicine)	CIHR Project Grant	Trial of intradialytic Cccling as kidney exercise rehabilitation for cardiac stunning in hemodialysis (TICKERS_HD)	\$439,874
Bolton, Shay-Lee (Psychiatry)	CIHR Project Grant	Adaptation and evaluation of virtual group-based cognitive behaviour therapy classes for mental wellness in public safety personnel	\$100,000
Cha, Young Jin (Civil Engineering)	Research Manitoba	Automated road surface damage detection and quantification using advanced deep learning	\$100,000
Chateau, Daniel (Community Health Sciences)	CIHR Project Grant	Investigating use of prescription opioids and multiple psychotropic medications during pregnancy: Impact on the mother and developing child	\$432,226
Collister, David (Internal Medicine)	CIHR Project Grant	Dialysis Symptom COnTrol-Pruritus Outcome Trial (DISCO-POT)	\$100,000

Dakshinamurti, Shyamala (Pediatrics and Child Health)	CIHR Project Grant	Effect of hypoxia and nitric oxide therapy on adenylyl cyclase activity in persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn	\$784,125
Dart, Allison (Pediatrics and Child Health)	CIHR Project Grant	iCARE 2.0 –biopsychosocial risk factors for kidney disease in youth onset type 2 diabetes: Longitudinal evaluation and pilot study of a novel skills-based mental health intervention	\$1,300,500
Elias, Brenda (Community Health Sciences)	Kids Brain Health Network	Implementation of a genomic assessment tool from early identification of infants and children at-risk for FASD	\$78,500
Figley, Chase (Radiology)	Research Manitoba	Application of a novel 3D centre line extraction algorithm for automated coronary artery mapping and quantification	\$100,000
Fridell, Mara (Sociology)	Mitacs Inc. Accelerate	Integrative and capacitating workforce EDI	\$45,000
Hardy, Krista (Surgery)	Research Manitoba	A decolonizing approach to the incorporation of traditional Indigenous ways of healing into Manitoba's bariatric program	\$34,691
Hatala, Andrew (Community Health Sciences)	CIHR Project Grant	Anishinaabe Mikinak Kinamakamik: An Indigenous-led strengths-based inquiry of Turtle Lodge as an innovative center for Indigenous education, wellness, and flourishing	\$1,748,025
Irani, Pourang (Computer Science)	NSERC Strategic Project Grant	Seamless interaction	\$71,710
Khoshdarregi, Matt (Mechanical Engineering)	Research Manitoba	Autonomous robotic platforms for aerospace and vehicle composite manufacturing	\$150,000
Kindrachuk, Jason (Medical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases)	CIHR Project Grant	Identification of the molecular determinants underlying asymptomatic Ebola virus testicular infections and long-term effects on reproductive health	\$726,750
Lakowski, Theodore (Pharmacy)	CIHR Project Grant	Oligonucleotide-bioconjugate mediated repression of the HOXA9 gene to treat mixed-lineage leukemia	\$699,975

Leblanc, Alexandre (Statistics)	Canadian Statistical Sciences Institute (CANSSI)	Sports analytics	\$200,000
Mackenzie, Corey (Psychology)	Research Manitoba	Opportunities to promote treatment engagement among older adults referred to specialty mental health services	\$34,539
Maghoul, Pooneh (Civil Engineering)	Research Manitoba	Systems and methods for ultrasonic characterization of permafrost, frozen soil, and saturated soil samples: Proof- of-concept	\$100,000
McKinnon, Lyle (Medical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases)	CIHR Project Grant	Regulatory T cells and the control of female genital inflammation: Relevance for HIV prevention	\$100,000
Mehran, Babak (Civil Engineering)	Mitacs Inc. Accelerate	Optimal recharging scheduling for urban electric buses	\$45,000
Mishra, Suresh (Internal Medicine)	CIHR Project Grant	Establishing essential research tools to advance the knowledge of interrelated sex differences in adipose and immune functions in health and disease (The SDAI Core Models) and exploring the mechanisms involved in the sex-dimorphic role of prohibition above and beyond sex hormones	\$100,000
Mufti, Aftab (Civil Engineering)	Research Manitoba	Enhancing bridge evaluation using data from real-time monitoring of bridges	\$100,000
Mufti, Aftab (Civil Engineering)	Research Manitoba	Sustainable infrastructure new sustainable corrosion protection techniques to extend the life of reinforced concrete structures	\$80,000
Muthukumarana, Saman (Statistics)	Research Manitoba	Assessing and identifying indoor environmental quality gaps in commercial buildings using wireless sensors and big data analysis tools	\$150,000
Ramjiawan, Bram (Pharmacology and Therapeutics)	Research Manitoba	Evaluation of OmniSan 200* anolyte liquid as a novel hard surface disinfectant against human Coronavirus	\$75,000

Rigatto, Claudio (Internal Medicine)	Seven Oaks Chronic Disease Innovation Centre	Can virtual lifestyle programming limit collateral health damage from the COVID-19 pandemic: A pilot study	\$25,000
Rodriguez Leyva, Delfin (Physiology & Pathophysiology)	Mitacs Accelerate Industrial Postdoctoral Fellowship	Discovery and characterization of a new platform of drugs to address multi-drug resistance in pathogenic bacteria	\$330,000
Romanescu, Razvan (Community Health Sciences)	Research Manitoba COVID-19 Research Fund	Mobility and COVID-19 Trends	\$100,000
Sorensen, John (Chemistry)	Research Manitoba	Commercialization of bioactive natural products derived from plant beneficial bacteria	\$150,000
Spiwak, Rae (Surgery)	CIHR Project Grant	The power of linked data: Investigating social determinants of child health and their implications in reducing pediatric traumatic injury	\$60,000
Szturm, Tony (Physical Therapy)	Research Manitoba	Rehab @ home: Bringing interactive rehabilitation devices to homes	\$99,575
Thiessen, Kellie (Nursing)	Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba Inc.	Pathways to care: Partnerships to address gaps in maternity care	\$32,950
Wall-Wieler, Elizabeth (Community Health Sciences)	CIHR Project Grant	The relationship between health and child protection services involvement among parents in Manitoba, Canada	\$393,976
Wang, Jun-Feng (Pharmacology and Therapeutics)	CIHR Project Grant	The role of neuronal and glial thioredoxin-interacting protein in chronic stress-induced neuronal dysfunction: indications for depression and cognitive impairment	\$623,475
Wicklow, Brandy (Pediatrics and Child Health)	CIHR Project Grant	The next generation longitudinal birth cohort: Early childhood beta cell and renal function in offspring exposed to maternal T2D	\$100,000
Wittmeier, Kristy (Pediatrics and Child Health)	CIHR Project Grant	Using social network analysis to understand knowledge translation in child development and rehabilitation	\$100,000
Woodgate, Roberta (Nursing)	CIHR Project Grant	Young immigrants and refugees co-designing mental health and well-being solutions	\$761,176

Zahradka, Peter (Physiology & Pathophysiology)	Mitacs Accelerate Industrial Postdoctoral Fellowship	Broadening the vascular diagnostic service continuum of Koven Technology Canada through the development and validation of a novel in vitro diagnostic technology to diagnose peripheral arterial disease	\$55,000
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ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- The University of Manitoba (UM) has hired Sustainable Solutions Group (SSG) to develop a Climate Action Plan, including carbon emission targets aimed at achieving emissions neutrality by 2050. To date, UM has provided SSG with all necessary data to create a business-as-planned analysis for UM, followed by suggested options to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Campus-wide engagement will begin in the next month.
- Sustainable Solutions Group was also hired to develop Sustainable Design Guidelines that will guide sustainability considerations across all buildings’ projects. A working group has been established to help determine guidelines for the UM that outline best practices, technologies, and methods that will contribute to enabling the UM to achieve its emissions reduction goal set out in the Climate Action Plan. The project will be completed by August 2021.
- The ReBin is a newly branded waste bin that captures batteries, pens and markers, and plastic bags all to be recycled. Two bins have been placed at the Fort Garry Campus and another two at the Bannatyne Campus. Previously, these waste streams were being collected separately at the Dafoe Library only.
- This year, the theme for Earth Day was Restore Our Earth. Earth Day was turned into Earth Week from April 19 to April 23. The Office of Sustainability developed a week filled with learning opportunities and initiatives to provide the UM community with the tools to feel empowered to expand the environmental movement by offering events and activities from home. More information can be found at <https://news.umanitoba.ca/celebrate-earth-day-all-week-long/>
- *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and *The Personal Health Information Act* were submitted for second reading in the Legislative Assembly in March 2021. The text of the proposed changes was not released in Fall 2020 during their first reading. There are substantial proposed changes to both Acts. Proposed changes range from an increase of time for public bodies to respond to requests, up to 45 days from 30, to an increase in proactive release of information by a public body. The Access and Privacy Office has undertaken a review of all of the proposed changes, and will be following the bills through committee to track further revisions to prepare for consultations with other stakeholders throughout the UM that will be impacted by the changes. Additionally, *The Limitations Act* was also reviewed in the current session of the Legislature, and has passed through committee with no additional updates. Some of the changes will impact existing records retention rules, and an assessment of that impact is also underway. Finally, the Legislative Assembly has reintroduced *The Human Rights Code Amendment Act*, which seeks to amend *The Human Rights Code* on a number of fronts including, but not limited to, broader powers to dismiss complaints before an investigation, and capping damages to \$25,000.

- The consultation for Canada’s copyright term extension from 50 to 70 years after the death of the creator closed on March 31, 2021. Responses to this consultation, which have been publicly shared, were primarily from the Library, Archive and Museum and copyright scholar communities. Responses frequently criticized the short period provided for response, and suggested that the Federal Government re-assess its ability to include a registration requirement for the additional 20 years of copyright protection under international legal conventions to which Canada is signatory. A registration requirement would mitigate against some of the problematic aspects of providing an additional 20 years of copyright protection to orphaned or abandoned copyright protected works used in research and education.
- The Legal Office has worked with the COVID-19 Recovery Steering Committee in providing advice regarding risk mitigation strategies as the UM begins re-opening its campuses and resuming activities. This has included drafting revised language for the academic calendar, drafting and revising of acknowledgment forms and waivers and revisions to contract provisions. Support has also been provided to the Steering Committee and Risk Management related to issues and concerns that have arisen as a result of the changes in insurance coverage related to COVID-19.
- The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) worked closely with the Legal Office in the drafting of a policy, procedure and by-law related to the operation and governance of the NCTR. The draft documents were finalized and sent to Human Resources, and it is anticipated that they will be going before the Board of Governors soon.
- The Legal Office supported the Vice-President (Research and International) in relation to the transition of TRIUMF Joint Venture to TRIUMF Inc. TRIUMF is Canada’s Particle Accelerator, which is a research facility located on the University of British Columbia campus. TRIUMF was created in 1981 and the University became a member in May 2008. The change in legal structure was recommended by a governance review and is effective as of April 1, 2021.
- The Legal Office supported and participated in a three-day arbitration hearing on Teaching Guidelines, and is awaiting a decision from Arbitrator Arne Peltz. In addition, a tenure appeal hearing concluded that awaits a decision from the three-person panel chaired by Martin Freedman.
- In April, a new series of “Ask an Expert” panels focusing on key areas of importance to our human resources practices were offered by Learning and Organizational Development. Designed to deepen the knowledge of employees taking the new UM Human Resources Essentials Program, the expert panelists provided insights and answered questions on the topics of Addressing Hiring and Implicit Bias; Job Evaluation and Classification; and Ensuring Successful Onboarding.
- This spring, Learning and Organizational Development will be offering several sessions exclusively for intact groups and teams that promote both skill development and create opportunities for team building and collaboration in an engaging and interactive format. Some of these offerings include Building High Performance Teams; Building Your Team Charter; Workload Balance and Stress; and Social Intelligence - Building Impactful Relationships.
- Office 365 roll out and mail migrations were completed as of mid-February 2021. Endpoint software roll out and account reconciliations are in progress.

- The new National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation website successfully went live on March 31.
- Migration of the remaining VPN services off the legacy Palo Alto Internet firewalls was completed, that is, all internet facing services are now running on fully supported Cisco internet firewalls.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

- Alumni and Donor Relations is engaged in robust planning for 2021/22 with a goal to increase total funds raised by a minimum of 8% year over year.
- The 2020/21 Faculty, Staff and Retirees campaign raised \$380,000 representing an increase of 35% over the previous year. Contributors were particularly responsive to supporting pandemic relief funds and the UM Food Bank.
- President Benarroch continues his outreach to government partners and community.

Meetings with Provincial partners included:

- Tracy Maconachie – Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Training/Acting Deputy Minister Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration
- Honorable Audrey Gordon – Minister of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery

Updates to the community included:

- Earth Day – Message shared in UM Today
- Vaccine Encouragement- Email communication from President’s office to all students, faculty and staff
- 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) Event held April 21 - Video Message
- Rh Awards Event held May 13 - Video Message
- The Isbister Legacy Society, which recognizes donors who have arranged future planned gifts, held a virtual book club program on April 8. Over 50 members participated, with 24 logging in for a discussion about *Medicine Walk*, the UM Alumni Book Club’s current read. The conversation was facilitated by Warren Cariou, Director of UM’s Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture.
- UM hosted its annual Three Minute Thesis (3MT) virtual event on April 21 with 325 attendees viewing the 12 graduate student presentations. The entire panel of judges was comprised of UM alumni.
- Working with an external web development partner, Marketing and Communications was the principal contributor to the design, navigation and copy for the new National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation website and archive database which launched March 29. The news story created by the team for the launch resulted in 1.4 times greater than typical page views and was picked up by multiple news sites including the Winnipeg Sun and Toronto Star. In addition, videos of Residential School Survivors that were developed performed well averaging 102,000 post engagements, significantly above the 6,000 – 7,000 average.

- ER has procured a virtual event platform to allow units acting on behalf of ER and the President's office to produce interactive online events and allow UM to connect with its community in engaging and meaningful ways.
- During March 2021, there were 3,563 news stories in media mentioning UM: 1,369 of these related to COVID-19.
- Major media coverage occurred related to UM. These included reporting on UM alumna Sherri Sosa's appointment as president of Venue Nation (subsidiary of entertainment giant Live Nation). MSN carried a story featuring Centre on Aging Director Michelle Porter's comments on lesser pandemic impacts for seniors this spring. A widely circulated Leger Poll conducted for UM researchers noted that pandemic exhaustion was an influence on people gathering at Easter against public health recommendations.