



Opportunity Profile

VICE-PROVOST, INDIGENOUS

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About McMaster University

Founded in 1887, McMaster University is located on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg Nations, acknowledged in the Dish with One Spoon Wampum belt. Wampum uses the symbolism of a dish to represent the territory and one spoon to represent that the people are to share the resources of the land and only take what they need.

Home to 37,000 students and more than 65 research centres and institutes that cross boundaries and disciplines, McMaster prides itself as a hub for innovation, discovery, and world-class research. The university comprises six academic faculties—Business, Engineering, Health Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Science—offering over 3,000 courses. It provides a dynamic learning environment for more than 32,000 undergraduate and almost 5,500 graduate students from 125 countries.

Nestled within the faculty of Social Sciences, the Indigenous Studies Department is home to the Indigenous Studies undergraduate program, a graduate program, and research and community-focused activities. The Indigenous Studies undergraduate program is one of the longest-standing programs of its kind in Canada. The University acknowledges the leadership of Indigenous faculty and community leaders who shaped and propelled Indigenous Studies since the first Drum Beat conference in 1989. Since the Indigenous Studies Program's official establishment in 1992, the program has grown exponentially, not only in the number and background of students but also the growth in Indigenous faculty, staff, Elders and community spaces. As an institution of higher learning, McMaster has a unique responsibility to continue the important work of building an environment in which Indigenous faculty, staff, and students can thrive.

McMaster employs more than 17,000 people, including 992 full-time faculty members (excluding clinical educators), 124 endowed chairs, 86 Canada Research Chairs, 13 endowed professorships, two Canadian Institutes of Health Scientific Directors, and two Ontario Research Chairs. The university has been recognized as a Hamilton-Niagara Top Employer for the past ten years and has been ranked among Canada's Best Diversity Employers for the past seven years.

McMaster is dedicated to building relationships and enhancing its engagement with local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. The university actively supports Indigenous students, staff, and faculty; promotes Indigenous education and the study of Indigenous knowledge and culture; and ensures First Nations, Métis, and Inuit representation in institutional decision-making. As part of this commitment, McMaster is currently seeking its first **Vice-Provost, Indigenous (VP-I)**, to further advance Indigenous initiatives and engagement.

Learn more at mcmaster.ca

McMaster's Vision, Institutional Priorities, and Indigenous Strategic Directions

Vision

Impact, Ambition, and Transformation through Excellence, Inclusion, and Community: Advancing Human and Societal Health and Well-being.

Institutional Priorities

McMaster's [Institutional Priorities and Strategic Framework 2021-2024](#) sets out five key priorities:

- **Inclusive Excellence.** Aspire to embed an inclusive approach that intentionally engages and respects a diversity of peoples, perspectives, and ways of knowing, in everything we do.
- **Teaching and Learning.** Further advance and support innovation in teaching and learning, within and beyond the classroom and across disciplines and Faculties, to elevate teaching as a professional discipline and equip our students with the knowledge and skills needed to make a transformative impact on our world.
- **Research and Scholarship.** Be the go-to place for world-class researchers and collaborators who share our values and commitment to working together across disciplines, sectors, and borders to develop knowledge, tackle global issues, and advance human understanding.
- **Engaging Local, National, Indigenous, and Global Communities.** Further develop and expand our network of longstanding and respectful partnerships with communities, partners, research collaborators, and supporters for the benefit of all.
- **Operational Excellence.** Enable the administrative operations of the University to most effectively support the institutional vision and aspirations of our community of researchers, scholars, teachers, and learners. Included within this broader strategic priority of operational excellence is the objective to cultivate human potential through activities to support an engaged and inclusive campus community that attracts, retains, and supports the high-caliber, diverse talent needed to deliver the University's strategy.

Creating a Brighter World

McMaster is devoted to the cultivation of human potential, improving people's lives, contributing to global knowledge, and advancing health and well-being. One of the ways McMaster fulfills this commitment is by pioneering groundbreaking research across disciplines, from healthcare and business to arts, culture, and advanced manufacturing.

Read more about [McMaster's Brighter World](#).

Indigenous Strategic Directions

Vision: McMaster University upholds respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous peoples that honour their rights and self-determination in the academy and territory.

Mission: To uphold Indigenous leadership in education and research in ways that guarantee Indigenous rights, self-determination, and reconciliation.

In 2021, the Indigenous Education Council and McMaster Indigenous Research Institute, in consultation with the campus community, developed four Indigenous Strategic Directions to identify and prioritize strategic Indigenous initiatives:

1. Research
2. Education
3. Indigenous Student Experience
4. Leadership and Governance

Learn more about the [Indigenous Strategic Directions](#).

Joint Indigenous-Administrative Consultation Group (JIACG)

The Joint Indigenous-Administrative Consultative Group (JIACG) brings together senior university administrators with Indigenous community leaders at McMaster. Chaired by the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), it advances Indigenous institutional priorities and provides senior leadership guidance on Indigenous initiatives. This work is primarily informed by the 2021 Indigenous Strategic Directions, developed through extensive consultations with students, staff, faculty members, and Indigenous communities.

Indigenous Education Council (IEC)

McMaster's [Indigenous Education Council](#) is responsible for promoting the advancement of Indigenous education at McMaster, advocating for Indigenous students, staff, and faculty, and providing advice and support to the University on Indigenous matters. The IEC also works closely with the JIACG to operationalize and achieve strategic goals.

The IEC's extensive mandate ensures balanced representation from the neighbouring Six Nations of the Grand River, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and diverse urban Indigenous community members, providing a forum to advise the university on matters impacting their communities.

Learn more about the [IEC Terms of Reference](#).

McMaster Indigenous Research Institute (MIRI)

The [McMaster Indigenous Research Institute](#) leads and informs Indigenous research reform at McMaster University as well as across multiple universities and community environments. Its [Research Primer](#) guides those engaging with Indigenous Peoples and communities in research.

Indigenous Health Learning Lodge (IHLL)

The [Indigenous Health Learning Lodge](#) works with the Faculty of Health Sciences to create a learning environment that is culturally safe – working with humility to enable sustainable systems change and advance the work around truth, reconciliation, and anti-colonization with all aspects of Indigenous health and well-being. The faculty includes eight Indigenous faculty members and collaborates under the leadership of the Associate Dean, Indigenous Health.

Indigenous Student Services (ISS)

The [Indigenous Student Services](#) team, established in 2014 under Student Affairs, emerged from the Indigenous Studies Program to better support Indigenous learners across all faculty programs. Its mission is to make McMaster the top choice for Indigenous students by enhancing the student experience through culturally relevant programs and services, including recruitment and community outreach, admissions and transition support for incoming students, dedicated financial aid resources, wellness counselling, access to the Elders-in-residence program, and access to cultural and social programming.

ISS provides a safe and welcoming space for Indigenous learners, including a student lounge, study space, ceremonial room, teaching kitchen, medicine garden, outdoor classroom, and community gathering space.

Indigenous Studies Department (ISD)

The [Indigenous Studies Department](#), located within the Faculty of Social Sciences, is home to the Indigenous Studies undergraduate program, graduate program, and research and community-focused activities. The Department has 11 Indigenous faculty members, making it one of the largest in Canada.

The Indigenous Studies undergraduate program, one of the longest-standing programs of its kind in Canada, incorporates a very unique teaching structure of Indigenous knowledge which involves many Indigenous peoples and Elders. This unique perspective assists all students from various cultures and backgrounds in learning about the history and lives of Indigenous people from an Indigenous perspective. The faculty and staff in the Indigenous Studies Department are dedicated to educating on Indigenous perspectives and issues, as well as ensuring the success of students.

The Role

McMaster is seeking an inaugural **Vice-Provost, Indigenous (VP-I)**—a senior academic administrator with a proactive and wide-ranging mandate to guide and support the university’s commitment to reconciliation. This role will be central to fostering a university culture that embraces and promotes Indigenous self-determination within a Nation-to-Nation framework.

The VP-I supports the development and implementation of relevant policies and processes. This position provides expertise, insight, advice, and assistance across the institution on matters of Truth and Reconciliation, ensuring a sustained focus on these priorities. By fostering a visible and impactful presence, the VP-I works to infuse the values of reconciliation and self-determination into the university’s daily operations and culture.

Indigenous Leadership Model

The VP-I role is rooted in foundational Indigenous values and principles such as self-determination, reciprocity, and respect. This position will foster the collective voice and cohesion of existing Indigenous leadership on campus and community rights holders.

The Terms of Reference for the Vice-Provost, Indigenous, will be a living document, evolving alongside the needs and priorities of McMaster’s Indigenous community.

In partnership with other Indigenous leaders on campus, the VP-I will co-lead McMaster’s Reconciliation Strategy, ensuring it upholds Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe worldviews while integrating diverse Indigenous perspectives from McMaster’s Indigenous faculty, staff, and students. This role carries dual accountabilities—working in partnership with both the Indigenous communities and the university to align institutional goals with Indigenous priorities. As a bridge-builder, the VP-I will listen deeply, foster trust through open dialogue, and ensure shared understandings lead to meaningful action.

The successful candidate will be welcomed into McMaster’s Indigenous academic community and active team of Indigenous leaders and allies.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic and Collective Leadership

This Office will aim to uphold Indigenous leadership, values, methods, and ethics by:

- a. The VP-I will take leadership responsibility for implementing and maintaining the university's Indigenous education and research plan, ensuring it evolves as reconciliation-focused leading practices emerge within the Indigenous education and research landscape. The VP-I will also be responsible for directly overseeing the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and the budget allocated to it.
- b. Providing vision and leadership across the institution for decolonization while furthering reconciliation within the university. The VP-I will work collaboratively with the Indigenous community at McMaster University, creating new initiatives while strengthening Indigenous visibility and self-determination within the institution. The VP-I will also work with non-Indigenous leadership to support their ongoing education and development of allyship and decolonization.
- c. Working in close collaboration with the JIACG, IEC, ISS, MIRI, the HLL, the ISD, and senior administration, the VP-I will identify and develop strategies to address systemic issues, support Indigenous faculty, staff, and learners and foster non-Indigenous allyship through educational initiatives and policy reform.
- d. Carry messaging from the broader Indigenous leadership collective, the senior administration, and other stakeholders on emerging issues, opportunities, and challenges related to Indigenous matters and campus climate. Acting as the key point of contact, the VP-I will engage with both internal and external Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.
- e. Working in close collaboration with the IEC, Director of ISS, the Chair of ISD, Director of MIRI, Executive Director of the IHLL, Associate Dean, Indigenous Health, Associate Vice-President (Students and Learning), Dean of Students, Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Faculty Deans, the President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC), and the McMaster Accessibility Council (MAC), the VP-I will identify the barriers to post-secondary education for Indigenous communities and support the development of pathways, strategies, and policies to address such barriers.
- f. Provide support and assistance in the implementation of Indigenous-focused initiatives across the university, ensuring that input from Indigenous learners, faculty, and staff is incorporated into these efforts.
- g. Liaise with faculty leadership to facilitate the sharing of reconciliation-focused leading practices across the university.
- h. Partner and liaise with the Provost, Vice-President (Research), Deputy Provost, AVP (Students and Learning), Dean of Students, Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Dean, Indigenous Health, Faculty Deans, Assistant Vice-President and Chief Human Resources Officer, and other senior administrators to embrace and implement the relevant recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report.

- i. Work closely with the Director of MIRI, Vice-President (Research), and Faculty Deans to ensure that selection processes for prestigious positions (e.g. CRCs and CERCs) and nominations for prestigious awards (e.g. FRSC) incorporate processes that address issues of Indigeneity, in alignment with the new '[Indigenous Ancestry Verification Guidelines.](#)'
- j. Support the work of the AVP and Chief Human Resources Officer in developing and implementing Indigenous-specific strategies and policies to advance and support employment equity across the university, as well as collaborate with the Deputy Provost to support the development of Indigenous faculty members.
- k. Represent McMaster externally and build networks with peers at other institutions across Canada and internationally, fostering relationships and engaging in a community of best practices regarding reconciliation within academia.

Collaboration with the Vice-Provost, Equity and Inclusion (VPEI)

- a. Advise and inform the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) in support of McMaster's commitment to ensuring an inclusive, positive, respectful culture and climate across the university campus.

Dispute Resolution

- a. Support colleagues in the EIO, Human Resources Services, Faculty of Health Sciences Professionalism Office of Respectful Conduct in Clinical and Academic Environments (ORCCA), Student Support and Case Management Office, the University Secretariat, and other offices or senior administrators, as appropriate, to ensure a consistent approach grounded in Indigenous values in handling complaints and effectively implementing policies and practices related to human rights and equity-related issues across the institution when consulted for advice.

Policy Advice, Training and Reporting

- a. Monitor legislative and policy developments regarding Indigenous relationships with various levels of government, providing advice and support on the development and effective implementation of policies and strategies to ensure institutional compliance with legislative and reporting requirements.
- b. In collaboration with the VPEI, colleagues in Human Resources Services, the Faculty of Health Sciences ORCCA, the University Secretariat, and other offices or senior administrators, the VP-I will develop a training program to raise awareness of human rights and equity-related policies. This will include practices UNDRIP – Indigenous rights, the *university's Discrimination and Harassment Policy (DHP)*, *Sexual Violence Policy (SVP)*, *Accessibility* policies, and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. *The VP-I will support the effective implementation of these policies and ensure that members of the senior administration and individuals in authority have a thorough understanding of relevant processes and responsibilities under relevant policies and legislation.*

Accountability

The VP-I will have dual accountability:

1. Collective Indigenous Accountability

This leadership role is accountable to an Indigenous Leadership Circle that includes, Elders, traditional practitioners, faculty, and Indigenous administrators, including the Co-Chairs of the Indigenous Education Council (IEC), the Director of Indigenous Student Services (ISS), the Chair of the Indigenous Studies Department (ISD), the Director of the McMaster Indigenous Research Institute (MIRI), and the Associate Director of the Indigenous Health Learning Lodge (IHLL).

The VP-I will work closely with all Indigenous Leadership roles on campus and will be guided by the [Indigenous Strategic Directions](#). The VP-I will also participate in the Joint Indigenous Administrative Consultative Group (JIACG) to support the operationalization of Indigenous Strategic Directions. The Indigenous Leadership Circle will provide advice and feedback to the Provost on performance evaluations to measure the effectiveness of the VP-I role.

2. University-based Accountability

The VP-I will report directly to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic). Additionally, the VP-I will liaise with the Vice-President (Research), Deputy Provost, Vice-Provost Equity and Inclusion, Associate Vice-President (Students and Learning) and Dean of Students, Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Dean, Indigenous Health, Executive Vice Dean and Associate Vice-President, Academic in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty Deans, and the Assistant Vice-President and Chief Human Resources Officer, as well as other senior administration members with regard to matters of Indigeneity.

The VP-I will participate in the work of both the PACBIC, as well as the MAC, and collaborate with the VP of University Advancement in the development of an Indigenous philanthropic strategy.

The Candidate

Experience and Qualifications

- Candidates should hold a doctorate or terminal degree (a master's degree will be considered) in any discipline but with focus on Indigenous research.
- Executive or senior administrative work experience, with a demonstrated ability to plan and manage both the strategic and operational levels and successfully lead and manage in a complex environment.
- Knowledge of key partner organizations and networks in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.
- A record of successful academic or other leadership experience in progressively more senior leadership roles.
- Experience in developing strong relationships and partnerships with community, industry, government, and other institutions.
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and Indigenous self-determination.
- Exceptional oral, written, and presentation communication skills, with the ability to articulate complex ideas and influence individuals and groups with diverse needs and interests.
- Knowledge of budget planning, development, and management.
- Visionary and results-oriented Indigenous leader, grounded in diverse Indigenous values and approaches, capable of foreseeing and analyzing varied and changing contexts and navigating forward paths.

Competencies and Personal Attributes

Leadership

- Be a transparent, ethical, and principled administrative leader with strong analytical capabilities, insightfulness, and judgement.
- Lead by example and promote an environment of collaboration, consultation, and respect, guided by the principles of the Two Row Wampum.
- Have a talent for diplomacy, tact, and strong relationship-building skills.
- Fulfill commitments and demonstrate a sincere interest in the development and success of others, with comfort in putting the needs of others ahead of their own.
- Provide helpful guidance and advice, offering objective and truthful feedback where needed, and consistently working to grow and develop others.
- Display a personal passion and self-motivation to perform at a high level, placing significant value on creating and maintaining high levels of passion and enthusiasm in others.
- Demonstrate a deep commitment to and support of advancing Truth and Reconciliation, while being able to inspire, engage, and mobilize others toward meaningful action.

Administration

- Be an experienced administrator with strong analytical capabilities, insight, and judgment.
- Identify and solve a range of problems, including those relating to academic, personnel, and budgetary issues.
- Demonstrate sound financial judgment and the ability to lead the development of the VPI Office budget and financial planning.
- Make decisions after appropriate consultation and manage the effective execution of decisions.
- Demonstrate understanding of the development of partnerships aimed at furthering and enhancing the academic mission.

Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Indigenous Self-Determination

- Have a strong commitment to increasing accessibility, equity, and diversity, with the ability to maintain an inclusive climate wherein everyone feels validated and accepted.
- Understand and demonstrate commitment to the principles of intersectionality.
- Believe that diversity and inclusion are integral components of a quality university experience. Bring a global perspective, interacting effectively and respectfully with people of different backgrounds.
- Understand that the strength of an institution lies in the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff complement.

Relationship Building, Collaboration and Communication

- Possess a highly collegial and collaborative style, excellent communication skills, and the ability to inspire the post-secondary community.
- Value relationships within, across, and outside the organization and actively build and maintain relationships that support business goals.
- Allocate time and effort to understanding and meeting the needs of internal and external stakeholders.
- Listen to others, readily share useful information and knowledge, and articulate thoughts and ideas clearly.

- Collaborate effectively, commit to supporting the larger group effort, and build and maintain cooperative and collegial relationships across the organization.

Vision and Innovation

- Ensure alignment with the vision of the IEC and other Indigenous entities with McMaster's vision and strategic plan.
- Envision possibilities and mobilize people to realize them.
- Support diverse ideas, thoughts, perspectives, and innovative thinking across the institution, while also championing the strategic initiatives of others.
- View tactical problems or initiatives from a broad perspective and emphasize solutions that support strategic objectives.
- Seek opportunities to improve systems, actively promote change initiatives, and assume personal responsibility to see that necessary change is effectively adopted and implemented.
- Articulate a clear vision, identify long-term future goals, and consistently challenge the institution to improve and grow.
- Question traditional approaches, seek innovative ways to address issues or problems and develop new solutions.

The Application Process

To fulfill McMaster’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and pursuant to Section 24 of the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code), this position will give preference to candidates who identify as a member of an Indigenous community (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit). Candidates from this designated group are invited to self-identify in their cover letter, including details relevant to their community and lived experience, as part of the application process. Candidates who progress to the later stages of the recruitment process will also be required to submit documentation to support their Indigenous ancestry in alignment with [McMaster University’s Indigenous Ancestry Verification Guidelines](#).

To Apply

To apply, please submit the following directly to Pathways Executive Search in PDF format at Applications@PathwaysExecutiveSearch.com. The application package must contain:

- A cover letter, in which candidates are invited to self-identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) and include a brief statement describing ties to their community.
- An updated Curriculum Vitae.
- A brief statement describing any contributions made or planned in relation to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion, Indigenous reconciliation, or inclusive excellence in research, teaching, or service within higher education, community-based or other professional settings (1-page maximum).

Please note that letters of recommendation are not required at the time of application. These will be solicited at later stages of the search process.

For more details or questions, please contact:

Joy Beshie, Principal

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Pathways Executive Search is a national recruitment firm offering Indigenous-focused professional services. With a mission to make recruitment and career journeys less challenging and more equitable, Pathways is guided by Indigenous values and principles of Indigenous inclusion, which underscore the capacity to build an inclusive process for all racialized and equity-deserving professionals.

About Hamilton

The [City of Hamilton](#) is a vibrant port city and industrial hub on the western edge of Lake Ontario –about 64km west of Toronto and within proximity of the Niagara Region, with its famous falls and burgeoning reputation. Known for its strong arts scene, equally strong sports scene, and beautiful hillside and waterfront landscapes, Hamilton is located both on top of and beneath the Niagara Escarpment, which is a World Biosphere Reserve that locals call “the Mountain”. Hamilton is a city of choice for people who want to experience the world-class offerings of the Greater Toronto Area with the comfort of a smaller, more connected community.

The ninth largest metropolitan area in Canada, Hamilton has a population of about 750,000 people and is conveniently connected to neighbouring municipalities with modern, comfortable, and speedy public transportation options. With an airport in the City of Hamilton and Toronto’s Pearson International Airport nearby, Hamilton is an attractive home base for frequent travellers.

Colloquially known as the Steel City, sixty percent of Canada’s steel is made in Hamilton. Home to Mohawk College, McMaster University, and other post-secondary institutions, Hamilton is also a destination for education. As a result, the city boasts exceptional cultural attractions (including several museums—the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, historic sites, botanical gardens, a safari park, and the Canadian Football Hall of Fame, among others), an outstanding healthcare network, and the youthful, diverse, and energetic spirit only found in university cities.

The City of Hamilton is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. This land is covered by the 1792 Between the Lakes Purchase, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

The City of Hamilton is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. Local Indigenous communities include [Six Nations of the Grand River](#) and [Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation](#). Located along the banks of the Grand River, Six Nations is the only reserve in North America where all six Haudenosaunee Nations live together, and it is the most populous First Nation in Canada. The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation is part of the Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) Nation, one of the largest Indigenous Nations in North America.