

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Memorial University
Strategic Framework, 2018—2022

This Strategic Framework identifies priorities for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Faculty as a whole and the Dean's Office in particular are engaged with a wide range of objectives and tasks. All four areas of priority in this Strategic Framework, which include a) supports for academic programming, b) equity, c) space, and d) transparency, consistency, and communication represent issues that individuals and units across the Faculty repeatedly drew significant attention to, in both formal and informal settings, during the 2017-2018 academic year.

This framework has been developed under the leadership of the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, with ongoing input from the Faculty as a whole. It draws on the Dean's meetings with heads in the fall of 2017; meetings with departments in the winter of 2018; discussion at several heads' meetings in winter, spring, and summer 2018; and four working groups of heads which met in spring 2018. Informal and formal conversations with individuals in the Dean's Office have also informed this Strategic Framework. The following pages provide further detail regarding each of the four components of the Strategic Framework. The final section of this document addresses implementation.

SUPPORTS FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

Central Objectives

- Articulation of the central benefits of study in the humanities and social sciences in forms of communication that are concrete and that are accessible to a wide variety of audiences outside of university contexts;
- Assessment of possibilities for a) changes to existing programs or b) new programs that will ideally draw on HSS strengths and broadly contribute to the practices of living together well; and
- Identification of next steps related to assessment noted in above point.

Context and Rationale

It has become imperative to clearly articulate the value of a social sciences and humanities education (both through in-class and work-integrated learning) for a variety of audiences and stakeholders. Identifying the benefits of an HSS education will ideally lead to a) clarity regarding strengths and any possible gaps in HSS academic programs, and b) possibilities for new programming. It will also ideally increase the capacity of the Dean's Office and of HSS units to communicate the importance of ongoing support for our Faculty (budgetary and otherwise). Finally, attention to the areas noted above will additionally benefit our students, in terms of their academic experience at MUN and the ways in which they rely on their education following graduation.

Areas of Focus

- Articulate central messages for non-university audiences as related to the value of a humanities and social sciences education;
- Identify best ways to communicate these messages, and implement two or three initiatives directed to particular audiences (such as prospective students and their parents, government organizations, etc.);
- Assess the particular contributions of a humanities and social sciences education at MUN, including the university's stated "special obligation" to the province as noted in the university's

[Vision, Mission, and Values](#) statement (see “Vision” section, and “Values, Responsibility to Place” section); and

- Assess possibilities for a) the ongoing revitalization of programs, b) new programming in HSS, and c) working with non-HSS units at MUN on initiatives that might benefit HSS programming. Based on this assessment, determine next steps.
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EQUITY

Central Objectives

- To ensure that ASMs in HSS are contributing in equitable and appropriate ways to service, particularly in terms of gender and career stage; and
- To strengthen the ways in which HSS curriculum and programming attend to issues of equity, particularly in relation to the realities, experience, and knowledge of Indigenous and racialized communities.

Context and Rationale

Over the past five to ten years, both MUN and HSS have made explicit commitments to equity. These commitments include the appointment of a Special Advisor to the President on Aboriginal Affairs at the university level (and the linked Indigenization Strategy), as well as, for example, HSS’s appointment of and searches for Canada Research Chairs who identify with an Indigenous community and/or whose intellectual area of expertise involves Indigenous realities, experience, and knowledge. Equitable practices are most likely to endure and be far-reaching when such efforts are joined by Faculty-wide commitments to and engagement with equitable practices. In the area of service, it is crucial to consider the ways in which service-related tasks are shared equitably across genders and career stages, and to work to improve inequities.

Areas of Focus

- Identification of current practices in the Faculty as related to service, with a focus on gender and career-stage (i.e., Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor).
 - Based on the above, determination of the existence of inequities and articulation of a framework to correct these inequities.
 - Articulation of what constitutes equitable curriculum and programming in HSS.
 - Assessment of gaps between above articulation and existing realities in HSS.
 - Identification of two to three objectives that might lead to narrowing and/or eliminating the gaps noted above, and implementation of these objectives.
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SPACE

Central Objectives

- A five-year framework and initial set of commitments for space in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences that includes the following possible types of space: research, classroom, office, multi-purpose, meeting, and gathering spaces; and

- Resource commitments that encourage and support department and programmatic strengths and priorities and cross-departmental dialogue and collaboration.

Context and Rationale

Space commitments and resources bear on arguably all aspects of faculty, staff, and student life. HSS has significant needs in relation to research, classroom, office, and meeting space. In addition to 180 ASMs and approximately 60 staff members, the Faculty has several large research grants (including at least five in excess of \$1 million). These projects represent specific space needs that go beyond office and lab space required by individual faculty members. As at many universities, space at MUN continues to be in demand across academic and non-academic units. For all of these reasons, long-term space commitments that build on the strengths of the Faculty will ideally ensure continued success in both teaching and research.

Areas of Focus

- Identify and secure space commitments for a minimum of three to five years for large research projects and archival materials.
- Identify needs in regard to seminar rooms, small classrooms (i.e., with seating at 30 or fewer), and physical accessibility, and articulate possible next steps.
- Maintain proximate spaces for faculty and staff members in each unit in HSS.
- Identify possibilities for increased social and formal meeting spaces for faculty, staff, and students that could be shared by a few or several units in HSS.

TRANSPARENCY, CONSISTENCY, AND COMMUNICATION

Central Objectives

- A shared commitment to and the realization of consistent practices across HSS units in areas that affect the day-to-day workings of departments and faculty members and staff, including but not limited to: budget and resource decisions (teaching frameworks, graduate assistantships, lectures and other events, staffing commitments, research support); HSS-specific research applications and procedures; and space-related requests.
- Transparent and accessible information provided by both the Dean's Office and units in the areas noted above.

Context and Rationale

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is one of the larger Faculties at MUN, with approximately 180 ASMs, 60 staff, 15 academic units, 10 non-academic units, and 2,500 majors, 700 diploma and certificate students, and 500 graduate students. Ensuring consistent practices and clear communication related to the central activities of teaching, research, and service in the Faculty at one level contributes to a working environment in which faculty members, heads, and staff have a general sense of resource allocation, service-related practices, and other issues central to the Faculty. Consistent practices across the Faculty also make it possible for the Dean's Office to present requests based on information and evidence in ways that are more likely to be persuasive and convincing. Finally, consistent practices, particularly in undergraduate and graduate programming and service areas, will ideally support thoughtful decisions about programming and curriculum.

Areas of Focus

- Identification of common practices as related to resources, research, and space that are relevant to most or all units.
 - Articulation of practices that are aligned with the Collective Agreement, that are supported by those within the Faculty (including those in the Dean's Office, faculty members, and staff), and that have a fit with the broader university context.
 - Implementation of a framework that ensures the realization of the practices identified above.
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IMPLEMENTATION

As noted in the second paragraph of this document, there has been considerable input into this framework. In the fall of 2018, the Strategic Framework was on the agenda at Faculty Council, and the Dean requested feedback from the Research and Planning and Curriculum and Program Committees. It will be crucial for there to be substantive engagement from individuals in the Dean's Office and from faculty members in HSS for this framework to be successful. It is the responsibility of the Dean and those in the Dean's Office to provide leadership to and coordination of the components of this Strategic Framework, as well as to ensure broad consultation and participation related to framework implementation. It is the responsibility of faculty members in HSS to contribute their input and expertise to the process, and to substantively participate in the subcommittees noted below.

The anticipated working model for the Strategic Framework implementation process is as follows.

Leadership and facilitation. The Dean is ultimately responsible for overseeing the consultation and implementation necessary for this Strategic Framework. To this end, the Dean will delegate coordinate a subcommittee for each of the four strategic areas identified in this document.

Subcommittees. A Strategic Framework Subcommittee will be constituted for each of the four areas addressed in this document. Subcommittees will be constituted by five to seven ASMs (with not more than two of the members of any subcommittee coming from one unit). Staff members may be invited to serve on the subcommittees per the advisement of the Associate Dean facilitating that subcommittee.