

## Innovation Strategy, 2023-2026

At Memorial, we are committed to innovation. We recognize the innovation-driven foundational work that has been happening across our campuses and the culture of innovation that our Strategic Plan, *Transforming our Horizons*, encourages us to embrace. Several reports, including the [Research Strategy Framework](#), [Technology Transfer and Commercialization Strategy](#), *Innovation Initiative Report*, MUN Innovation Charter and [Memorial's Strategic Plan](#), guide us on what we need to do. We have held multiple consultations with our [internal and external stakeholders](#) to ensure their voices were captured. We know that a culture of innovation is an essential catalyst for social and economic development and global competitiveness. Our Innovation Strategy is the next step to inspiring the advancement of innovation for positive impacts locally, nationally and internationally.

### Our definition of innovation

Innovation is knowledge that is created, adapted and applied to generate new value, including new products, services, processes, or practices and policies.

We deliberately chose a broad definition of innovation that reflects the full scope of the work and recognizes that we – students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and supporters – are called to expand an enterprising culture of innovation.

### A culture of innovation

Memorial's culture of innovation must foster bold thinking and spark creativity. To do that, we need to encourage innovative mindsets that challenge us to think differently while bringing us together to achieve our vision.

Previous studies and consultations have pointed to the need for innovation and have proposed ways to get us there that are encouraging and demanding. We are well-positioned to move forward and we need to do just that. Memorial's Strategic Plan, *Transforming our Horizons*, urges us to “build an ever more vibrant culture of innovation.” One that encourages and rewards innovation. One that pushes us forward.

The current Innovation Strategy focuses on the next four years and charts ways to continue growing our innovation culture. We are committed to three strategic priorities grounded in what we have learned and have intentionally chosen to align with the university's Strategic Plan. This bold, daring and challenging path requires commitment from all of us. Together, Memorial will move forward and be a change-maker for a better tomorrow.

## Our vision

Our vision is to create a progressive environment for innovation where people are inspired to seek opportunities, experiment with new ideas and be daring.

## Guiding principles

This strategy is guided by core principles that influence our actions and ensure that we implement them well. We will be:

**Realistic:** What we propose must be feasible and resource-friendly, leverage existing resources and align with Memorial's Strategic Plan.

**Accountable:** We will be accountable to our university community. We will have measurable targets and timelines and will communicate our impact.

**Community-based:** Our community is large and diverse. We are students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, supporters and the many external communities with which we interact. We will also be mindful of our university's commitment to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Inclusive and equitable:** Equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation will be embedded in all that we do. We want to ensure equity deserving groups are able to contribute to the culture of innovation at Memorial, are excited by the opportunities it will provide, and are eager to get involved.

**Committed to sustainable impact:** We are committed to the United Nations' *Sustainable Development Goals* and will be mindful of how our work can influence that call to action.

**Leadership-based:** We anticipate a collaborative approach but we also need leaders to step forward to facilitate specific actions. The work is intentionally ambitious and will need commitment and a dedicated role tasked with overseeing the implementation of the strategy.

## Strategic priorities

The focus for the next four years is based on the foundation we have and the commitment we need to achieve all that is possible. We will do that by:

Priority 1: Building on our vital foundation;  
Priority 2: Nurturing our vibrant community; and  
Priority 3: Celebrating our visible impact.

## **Priority 1:**

### **Building on our vital foundation**

Much is happening on our campuses that shows the innovative spirit of our community. There is high interest in creating an environment that gives freedom to innovate by continuing to challenge how and why we do things and finding ways to do them even better. We have enthusiastic internal innovation leaders who have formed purposeful teams focused on clear objectives. We want to create further structures that enable and support leaders, specifically from equity deserving groups. Memorial's Strategic Plan shows that our leadership is committed to innovation; we embrace that commitment to help ensure we make progress and spread the message on innovation.

#### **Goal 1: Well-defined and aligned innovation ecosystem**

We want to ensure that our innovation ecosystem is fully defined and understood. By defining what is happening, we will better communicate, connect and support current initiatives, and identify new opportunities.

**Action 1:** Identify existing roles, services and programming on our campuses and opportunities for improvement.

**Action 2:** Develop, with representation from equity deserving groups at Memorial, a plan to address new opportunities for improvement.

**Action 3:** Create an innovation-support ecosystem map that shows the roles, services and programming, how they interact and entry points for internal and external stakeholders.

#### **Goal 2: Spaces to support innovation**

We want an environment at Memorial that encourages and supports innovation, one that provides the space to learn, grow, fail, try again and innovate. This will require access to both physical and virtual spaces.

There is a strong interest in having additional interdisciplinary physical spaces on our campuses that encourage creativity and innovation and promote collaborative problem-solving (co-innovation spaces). Such spaces are inspiring and inclusive, and well equipped with the tools and resources needed for idea generation, prototyping and testing.

There is also a need to build awareness and increase usage of existing digital infrastructure to host resources, support the dissemination of innovation-driven initiatives and research, and facilitate engagement among stakeholders.

**Action 1:** Identify physical spaces suitable for use in the short term, including pop-up venues to foster collisions.

**Action 2:** Create an online Innovation Toolkit that houses resources and tools to facilitate internal and external stakeholder interaction with innovation-related activities.

**Action 3:** Identify a tool to showcase expertise and collaboration opportunities.

**Action 4:** Develop a plan for the design and operation of co-innovation spaces.

### **Goal 3: Communication of what is available**

We are committed to defining our innovation ecosystem and building on the programs, services and opportunities for innovation. We must also commit to getting the word out so that students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and supporters know what exists and how to access it.

**Action 1:** Enhance the *Innovation Memorial* website to be the go-to connector of our innovation ecosystem.

**Action 2:** Work with internal and external stakeholders to build and share awareness of the university's *Innovation Memorial* brand.

### **Goal 4: Leaders to ensure that progress occurs**

Memorial's leadership also committed to innovation by appointing the first director of innovation and entrepreneurship in 2019. This role facilitates and supports the university's strategic and long-term approach to advancing innovation and entrepreneurship activities across its campuses. This role is poised to lead the implementation of this strategy with the support of other innovation leaders at Memorial.

**Action 1:** Ensure that leadership continues to commit to the success of the Innovation Strategy.

**Action 2:** Identify and encourage innovation leaders, specifically members of equity deserving groups, to support the strategy implementation.

## **Priority 2:**

### **Nurturing our vibrant community**

Our community is students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, supporters and the many external stakeholders with which we interact. We want to continue to connect and create further meaningful opportunities for our community and be mindful of our commitment to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### **Goal 1: Opportunities and supports for students, faculty and staff**

We aim to create more opportunities and supports to nourish the innovative spirits of Memorial's students, faculty, and staff. Students infuse our campuses and places with vibrant ideas. Students benefit from exposure and access to innovation-related opportunities where new skills and competencies nurture and develop new ideas into innovations for the benefit of the economy and society. Our faculty demonstrate a commitment to our students, our university and our communities. Faculty members are key influencers of the culture of innovation at Memorial. Faculty commitment to innovation is critical. Staff members are dedicated, responsive, and have so much to contribute. Staff know how to make things happen and what works. Staff can be encouraged to innovate in a way that inspires some risk-taking, challenging the status quo without the fear of making mistakes along the way. We need more opportunities to collaborate between students, faculty, staff and external stakeholders.

**Action 1:** Foster and support innovation-driven programming that is accessible to all students.

**Action 2:** Identify ways innovation and entrepreneurial activities can be recognized in promotion and tenure.

**Action 3:** Identify supports to foster interdisciplinary research-driven innovation.

**Action 4:** Form a staff-led cross-unit collaborative committee to discuss opportunities to enhance administrative processes submitted by students, faculty and staff.

#### **Goal 2: Meaningful collaborations with community**

We have strong ties to the community and our Strategic Plan, *Transforming our Horizons*, recognizes that our greatest strengths are people and place. It also recognizes our commitment to communities. Our Innovation Strategy supports that commitment and will continue to engage with communities to ensure we are focused on real-world challenges.

**Action 1:** Collaborate with stakeholders and relevant internal committees to identify Memorial's role in addressing specific community and industry opportunities and challenges.

**Action 2:** Simplify community and industry engagement processes so it is easier for external stakeholders to engage with us.

**Action 3:** Identify and communicate supports for academia-industry collaborations across all units on our campuses.

### **Priority 3: Celebrating our visible impact**

We intend to hold ourselves accountable for delivering on our ambitious 4-year plan. We will share our impact and celebrate our successes. We want people to know about our activities to create more opportunities for collaboration, synergies and recognition. We will continue to support and recognize the innovation-related awards and events already happening on our campuses, and we are committed to even more ways to celebrate and show how proud we are of the work we are doing and the impact it is having.

#### **Goal 1: Recognition of successes**

We want to celebrate our successes to recognize the value of innovation, share with our stakeholders our impact and promote further opportunities.

**Action 1:** Determine additional awards or alternatives needed to recognize the innovation successes of our students, faculty and staff, specifically members of equity deserving groups.

**Action 2:** Host an annual event to showcase successes in innovation to peers, industry and the broader community.

#### **Goal 2: Updates on plans and progress**

We need to share what we are doing and track our progress. We need to ensure that we make an impact and stay committed to the plan.

**Action 1:** Use social media platforms for regular updates on the Innovation Strategy progress.

**Action 2:** Develop a virtual dashboard on the Innovation Memorial website to communicate the progress.

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