

OFFICE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

**Annual Update,
2021**



Public Engagement



Message from Lisa Browne, Vice President, (Advancement and External Relations)

Before I came to Memorial, I was the CEO of a local community organization. The connections with the university were broad and deep. From that vantage-point, I understood that public engagement was an important part of Memorial's value to this province.

Since beginning my new role, I've had the opportunity to understand that commitment from the other side. As Newfoundland and Labrador's only university we have a unique relationship and responsibility to this place.

Even as COVID-19 has changed our lives in so many ways, our students, faculty, staff, and alumni, working closely with Memorial's valued public partners, have found new and meaningful ways to collaborate, building strong partnerships (even from a distance.)

I'm excited for the opportunities ahead, as we continue to work together!

Message from Dr. Robert Greenwood, Associate Vice President (Public Engagement and External Relations)



“How are we doing?” It’s a question that we have been asking a lot recently. The first phase of Memorial’s Public Engagement Framework is now coming to an end, and as we look toward the future, the Office of Public Engagement is taking a close look at how public engagement at Memorial has developed over the past decade or so.

Over 600 people took the time to fill out our staff and faculty survey this winter (thank-you!) and we’re in the process of getting input from students and Memorial’s many, many public partners. It’s a big project, but it will help us make responsive and informed decisions as we plan for the next ten years.

While we know that there is always room for improvement, we are feeling optimistic about the future of public engagement at this institution.

Transforming our Horizons, Memorial’s new strategic plan, places “commitment to communities” as a core strategic theme of our institution, promising to build on our “legacy as one of Canada’s most engaged universities.”

On an individual level, the early results of our evaluation show that faculty and staff believe there is a high need for public engagement at Memorial, with a full 70% indicating that they would like to be doing more.

As we undertake this assessment, and build the next phase of Memorial’s public engagement story, the Office of Public Engagement remains committed to supporting Memorial students, faculty, staff, and their partners, as they create meaningful partnerships that address challenges and rise to opportunities.

About us

Memorial's Office of Public Engagement (OPE) is a pan-university unit that is the steward of Public Engagement at Memorial, and supports the engaged work of Memorial's students, faculty, staff, and public partners.

We offer funding opportunities that support collaboration between Memorial and the public, including community groups, not-for-profit organizations, industry and industry associations, governments and others.

OPE also provides regular public engagement education and training opportunities, including Engage Memorial virtual panels, and the Tandem newsletter.

Additionally, OPE supports Memorial's external relations work, including federal government relations and strategic initiatives like Cold Oceans and Arctic, Science, Technology and Society, otherwise known as COASTS.

A number of Memorial's public-focused units report through OPE, including:

The Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development



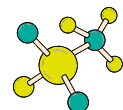
Alumni Engagement



Newfoundland Quarterly



Johnson Geo Centre



Memorial University Botanical Garden



Signal Hill Campus Operations, Conference and Event Services & Presidential Hosting





"Over the years I've worked on Memorial public engagement projects from every angle - as a student, a community partner, a committee member, and a panelist. It's been really heartening to see folks on all sides of these partnerships continually pushing them to be better, thinking critically about them, and using them to drive so much important work on the ground"

-Josh Smee. CEO. Food First NL.



"OPE funds changed my scholarly trajectory. I am in a much better place now working together with the members of the public."

- Dr. Sevtap Savas. Professor. Faculty of Medicine, Division of Biomedical Sciences

Public Engagement Funds and Awards, 2021/2022

The Office of Public Engagement administers five different funding and awards programs, each with a distinct purpose:

- Quick Start Fund for Public Engagement is a low barrier support to help develop new partnerships: up to \$2,500 each.
- The Public Engagement Accelerator Fund can help to take an existing partnership to the next level: up to \$10,000.
- The Catalyst Conference Fund is there to help organizers build meaningful public engagement opportunities into events and conferences: up to \$5,000.
- The Public Engagement Postdoctoral Fellowship is a chance for a new scholar to develop public engagement expertise through a focused project: up to \$25,000 (split with a faculty or department.)
- The President's Award for Public Engagement Partnerships is Memorial's highest honour for public engagement, and is awarded to an exceptional partnership between Memorial and a public collaborator: \$5,000.

All funding applications must include both a Memorial applicant and a public partner, and are adjudicated by committees consisting of students, faculty, staff, and members of the public.

In 2021/2022, the Office of Public Engagement distributed \$333,784.72 through our funding and awards programs. Over 96 Memorial students, faculty, and staff, and 80 public partners received support for their collaborations.

2021/2022 Project Highlights

We funded projects across all kinds of faculties, disciplines, and locations through our funding programs this year.

Highlights include:

A citizen science project that is empowering high school students to do scientific sampling across the province. This will help track the impacts of climate change in Newfoundland and Labrador (Faculty of Science and the NL English School District.)

A partnership that will pilot a recreational therapy program at Her Majesty's Penitentiary to support inmate rehabilitation and wellbeing. (Faculty of Human Kinetics and Recreation and Eastern Health.)

A collaboration that is working together to understand existing research on the Innu, identify research priorities for the future, and support respectful research relationships. (School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies and Innu Nation.)

A university-industry partnership that matches challenges with expertise to help take the next steps in this province's environmentally and economically sustainable future. (Technology Transfer and Commercialization Office and econext.)

Learning and Sharing

The Tandem

In 2021, the Office of Public Engagement launched the Tandem, our quarterly e-newsletter, featuring public engagement news and ideas.

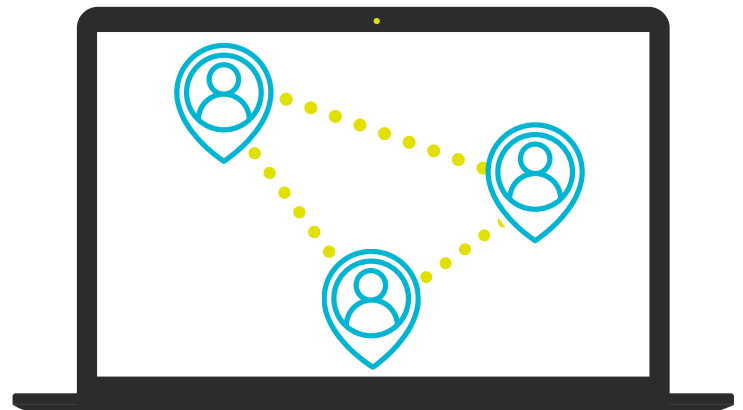
Each issue includes interviews, videos, discussions, and articles that share tips, lessons, and insights from Memorial's many successful public engagement collaborations.

To read current and past issues, please visit www.mun.ca/publicengagement/tandem



Engage Memorial

Over the pandemic, Engage Memorial has evolved from in-person programming, into regular virtual discussions featuring Memorial students, faculty, staff and public partners. It's a chance for engaged researchers and public partners to share their successes and challenges related to engaged work.



This year, we hosted discussions about:

Rural
Engagement

Becoming a
Public Scholar

Engaging
Remotely

Building
Partnerships

We are so grateful to the hosts and panelists who have shared their time and experience: thanks again!

Evaluating the Public Engagement Framework

The first phase of Memorial's Public Engagement Framework came to an end in 2020. Since then, OPE has been undertaking a comprehensive review of the Framework's impacts since it was adopted in 2012.

The evaluation has included surveys, focus groups, and data collection. We have engaged Memorial students, faculty, and staff, public partners from across NL, and public engagement professionals, nation-wide.

The final results of the evaluation will help us as we develop a new public engagement strategy, in alignment with Memorial's strategic plan, Transforming our Horizons.

We expect that our report will be available later this Spring. In the meantime, here are some early results...



70%

of faculty and staff respondents would like to do more public engagement.



83%

of public partners respondents say Memorial is helping make a positive difference in NL.



91%

of respondents from other Canadian universities rated Memorial's level of public engagement as higher than other Canadian institutions'.



Looking ahead



What's next for public engagement at Memorial?

- Committed to Place: Leading Engaged Universities to Support Thriving Regions and Communities: This July 13-15th, OPE will host a training opportunity that will help university leaders embed public engagement within strategy.
- Evaluation of the Public Engagement Framework: We're currently wrapping up our summative evaluation of the success of the Public Engagement Framework. We'll be sharing the results near and far during the Summer and Fall of 2022.
- New Public Engagement Strategy: This Fall, we'll begin working on a new public engagement strategy in alignment with Memorial's strategic plan. We'll be working closely with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and public partners.
- Engage Memorial: We'll continue to work with our Education and Training Committee to provide Engage Memorial panels that reflect the interests of Memorial and our partners. Themes planned for 2022/2023 include recognizing and rewarding public engagement and arts-based public engagement.
- Faculty Training: We're also working on a new education and training program for Memorial faculty. We're still in the early stages of development, but are planning to provide opportunities for faculty to meet, share, and learn from each other.

In the meantime, if you've got questions, ideas, or stories that you'd like to share, or if you'd like to be part of one of committees, please reach out to the Office of Public Engagement at engagement@mun.ca. With that, we'd like to wish you a safe and healthy spring season!

Sincerely
The Office of Public Engagement Team