Recognizing innovation in education, research success and clinical excellence: past, present and future
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Message From the Dean

Dear Faculty of Medicine alumni, donors and friends,

When I step through the main entrance of Roger Guindon Hall, I often think of the faculty members, staff and learners who have passed through before me. There’s a lot of history in our halls, and still so much more to accomplish—which is especially meaningful to me after being made permanent dean this fall.

If our recent successes are any indication of how bright the future is for this faculty, we are in excellent shape. In this issue of MedExtra, we recognize exceptional members of the uOttawa Faculty of Medicine family, including two surgeons, Dr. John Sinclair and the late Dr. Éric Poulin, who have made significant contributions to patient care. We also highlight the impressive research conducted by the School of Epidemiology and Public Health, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Dr. Lynne Leonard’s tireless efforts to help vulnerable populations affected by the opioid crisis, as well as Dr. Manisha Kulkarni’s eye-opening report on ticks and Lyme disease, are just two shining examples of how the many researchers at the Faculty of Medicine make a positive difference in our communities, and strive for a healthier tomorrow for Canadians.

In this issue we also feature the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Program, whose hard-working students and fellows play a starring role in so much of the exceptional research emerging from the Faculty. We continue to strengthen bonds between basic scientists and clinicians at all levels, with growing impacts on patients. From research in metabolomics, virology, systems biology and molecular imaging, to cancer, neurodegenerative diseases and other illnesses, the uOttawa Faculty of Medicine is the consummate home for curious minds looking to make their mark in biomedical sciences, clinical research and implementation science. We encourage you to share this issue with aspiring scientists in your world.

Not only is the Faculty making waves in research and education, but I am also extremely proud of our contributions in the realm of diversity and inclusion. Congratulations to Dr. Steffany Bennett on her two-year appointment as special advisor, diversity and inclusion for the University of Ottawa. Dr. Bennett will take on this important work while continuing in her role as University Research Chair in Neurolipidomics. This is timely as the Faculty plans to strengthen its efforts with engagement and related aspects of diversity, inclusion, wellness and recognition.

Enjoy this second edition of MedExtra, be inspired by our history of impressive successes, and relish the very special and key role you play in this faculty we’re building together.

Warmly,

Bernard Jasmin, PhD
Dean, Faculty of Medicine
University of Ottawa
Another memorable alumni week

This September, the Faculty of Medicine was delighted to welcome alumni from across the country and around the world to reconnect at Homecoming 2018. This year, the classes of 1963, 1993 and 2003 supported student scholarships through their established endowment funds. We also hosted the Alumni Awards of Distinction where five alumni were recognized for their leadership and achievement in medical research and education. For those who attended this year’s Homecoming Weekend, thank you for sharing such a memorable occasion with us.

At events like these, I am struck by a remarkable sense of pride for all facets of the Faculty’s community, including donors, alumni, researchers, clinicians, teachers, learners and staff. Your contributions of time, talent and enthusiasm are the foundation of this institution.

Near or far, we encourage all of you to stay connected with the Faculty of Medicine family. Perhaps you will be inspired by what you read in the following pages to support our research, mentor young students, or partake in some continuous learning. In any case, we look forward to keeping in touch with each of you as we continue to build on our proud history of excellence.

Sharon Rowan
Director of Development, Faculty of Medicine
University of Ottawa

If you are interested in learning about the many alumni benefits at the Faculty or have questions about any of our programs, please contact the Advancement team by telephone at 613-562-5800 ext. 8562 or by email at advancement.med@uOttawa.ca.

The Dean’s Awards of Distinction

Each year, the Faculty of Medicine recognizes outstanding alumni through the Dean’s Awards of Distinction, which are bestowed upon recipients during Homecoming Weekend in September. Here are the 2018 award winners who have shown excellence in advancing the delivery of health care, education and research.

Exceptional Leadership Award: Dr. Jack Kitts

The Exceptional Leadership Award is presented to an alumna or an alumnus who has demonstrated professional excellence, leadership and dedication to the community. The recipient is a true champion in the realm of medicine who demonstrates excellence as a community leader.

Dr. Jack Kitts (MD ’80) is currently the president and CEO of The Ottawa Hospital, managing a staff of over 12,000. In the summer of 2018, he was named to the Order of Canada for his distinguished career as an anaesthesiologist and health care leader.

Dr. Kitts received his medical degree from the University of Ottawa in 1980. After interning at the University of Toronto, he completed a three-year tour as a medical officer in the Canadian Forces before returning to
the University of Ottawa to complete specialty training in anaesthesia in 1987. He spent one year as a research fellow at the University of California in San Francisco. Dr. Kitts then joined the medical staff at the Ottawa Civic Hospital as an anaesthesiologist and research director for the Department of Anaesthesia. In 1998, Dr. Kitts was appointed vice-president of medical affairs and led the medical staff during a complex restructuring in which three hospitals and five large programs were merged into The Ottawa Hospital. He was named president and CEO of The Ottawa Hospital in February 2002 and continues in that position to this day.

“It has been an incredible journey for me with the University of Ottawa both as an MD and Executive MBA graduate. No individual can accomplish any of this alone. So, I want to thank my friends, colleagues and most of all the amazing talented people who are members of my leadership team. They brought to the table way more than I could possibly do! As all leaders know—you are nothing without your team.”

— Dr. Jack Kitts, president and CEO of The Ottawa Hospital

Lifetime Achievement Award: Dr. Mark J. Aubry and Dr. Andres Lozano

The Lifetime Achievement Award honours a lifetime of significant contributions to the community and achievement in healthcare and medicine. Recipients are leaders in their respective fields and have demonstrated professional excellence and selfless dedication over their years of work.

A former Gee-Gee, Dr. Mark J. Aubry (MD ’78) is the chief medical officer of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) and Hockey Canada. He is also a team physician for the NHL’s Ottawa Senators. Previously, he served as chief medical officer for the Canadian Olympic Team at the 1992 Olympic Winter Games and for the Canadian Universiade Team in 1991. He is a member of the IOC Medical Commission and co-director of the Ottawa Sport Medicine Centre.

Throughout his career, Dr. Aubry has contributed greatly to the research of spinal cord injuries and concussions. For several years, he helped organize the Symposium on Concussion in Sport, leading to the agreement statement on concussion in sport (2001 in Vienna and 2004 in Prague), and he helped organize the 3rd International Symposium on Concussion in Sport (2008 in Zurich). Dr. Aubry also helped develop the Hockey Canada Safety Program and is a member of the Hockey Canada Safety Program Committee.

“As my classmates and I celebrate 40 years since graduation, we remind ourselves of the great things that we have experienced and of all the great teachers that helped us get to where we are today. We showed up 40 years ago and did not know anyone. We were 84 students and became a family. A lot of my success is credited to the Faculty of Medicine for giving me a positive learning experience. I cannot thank the uOttawa Faculty of Medicine enough.” — Dr. Mark J. Aubry, chief medical officer of the International Ice Hockey Federation and Hockey Canada

Dr. Andres Lozano (MD ’83) is a professor and chairman of the Division of Neurosurgery at the University of Toronto. He obtained his MD degree from the University of Ottawa, and his PhD in neurobiology and neurosurgical training from McGill University. He received postdoctoral training in movement disorders at Queen Square, London, UK and in cell and molecular biology in Toronto.

He joined the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto in 1991, and in 1999 he became the youngest individual to be appointed full professor in the Department of Surgery. In 2014 he was appointed to the rank of University Professor, the highest and most prestigious academic rank at the University of Toronto. He also holds the Dan Family Chair in Neurosurgery at the University of Toronto and the Ron Tasker Chair in Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery at the University Health Network. He is a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Neuroscience, and has published over 450 manuscripts and 90 chapters and edited five books.
Rising Star Achievement Award: Dr. Nathalie Jetté and Dr. Virginia R. Roth

This Rising Star Achievement Award recognizes an outstanding alum who has made significant contributions to health care and medicine. This award honours young alumni with 10 to 20 years of professional experience in their medical specialty.

Dr. Nathalie Jetté (MD ’98) is a professor in neurology at the University of Calgary, and a member of the Hotchkiss Brain Institute and the Institute for Public Health. She is an epilepsy specialist and a health services researcher. She completed her training at Columbia University (epilepsy and EEG Fellowship), University of Ottawa (neurology residency and medical school) and McMaster University (MSc in Neurosciences and BSc in Biology).

Dr. Jetté holds a Canada Research Chair in Neurological Health Services Research and an Alberta Innovates Health Solutions (AIHS) Population Health Investigator Award. She has been the recipient of over 40 research, teaching and clinical awards, including Calgary’s Top 40 under 40 Award. She is associate editor of the leading epilepsy journal, Epilepsia, and is involved in the development of national surveillance programs for neurological conditions. As part of her research program, she is studying appropriateness of care, health resources use and access to care, and multi-morbidities and their associated outcomes in persons with neurological conditions.

Dr. Virginia Roth (MD ’93) is currently the chief of staff at The Ottawa Hospital. After obtaining her MD and completing her internal medicine and infectious diseases training at the University of Ottawa, Dr. Roth joined the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as an epidemic intelligence service officer with the Hospital Infections Program. She was then recruited to The Ottawa Hospital in 2000 as director of infection prevention and control where she played an essential role during the Ebola, SARS and H1N1 crises.

She has since completed an Executive MBA at the Telfer School of Management. Dr. Roth has experience in medical legal issues and risk management, complex health systems management, leadership training, board governance and public speaking. Her research interests include health care leadership, patient experience, and health care-acquired infections. She has published over 60 peer-reviewed articles.

“It has been a real privilege to see the University of Ottawa come to the forefront in terms of medical schools in Canada. I know that under Dr. Jasmin’s leadership along with Dr. Forgie, Dr. Whiting and all of the faculty that we are in very good hands and we will be proud as alumni.”

– Dr. Virginia Roth, chief of staff at The Ottawa Hospital.
Spotlight on our alumni:

**First-in-Canada approach to brain cancer surgery led by uOttawa alumnus Dr. John Sinclair**

In addition to being a valuable member of the uOttawa Faculty of Medicine’s Department of Surgery, alumnus Dr. John Sinclair (MD ’96) is an esteemed neurosurgeon at The Ottawa Hospital where he is pioneering the first-ever off-trial treatments of Canadian brain cancer patients using 5-Aminolevulinic acid (5-ALA) and fluorescence-guided surgery (FGS).

This new technique requires the patient to consume a fluid containing the drug 5-ALA before surgery. The drug concentrates within malignant glioma cells, causing them to become fluorescent under blue light.

The process makes malignant cells in a patient’s brain easier to see under an operating microscope, allowing surgeons to remove more of the tumour with fewer surgical complications and better patient outcomes.

Current brain surgery techniques use an operating microscope with standard white light. This allows surgeons to see the central part of the tumour, but where the tumour blends with normal brain tissue is less visible.

“Fluorescence-guided surgery is much more effective for brain cancers than surgeries performed with traditional white light,” says Dr. Sinclair, who leads this new project. “It is a dramatic difference that helps the surgeon remove more cancerous cells with improved accuracy, which benefits the patient in multiple ways.”

Having received special training in FGS techniques last year in Zurich, Dr. Sinclair adds that surgeons in Europe have been using 5-ALA and FGS for more than a decade, and this has now become the standard of care in those countries.

However, The Ottawa Hospital is the first centre in Canada to use this approach in a non-trial setting, made possible by a special grant from the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation. This grant was created from the generosity of donors throughout the Ottawa community, who have raised $15,000 for these first patients and more than $30,000 to support infrastructure for the approach. FGS and 5-ALA are an important addition to the existing therapies available to local brain cancer patients, including immunotherapy clinical trials and technologies like the CyberKnife.

“These tools and treatments can all work together to give patients the best possible chance when treating their disease,” says Dr. Sinclair. “We are pleased to be able to offer our patients advances such as CyberKnife and now FGS as we continue to develop and improve our existing treatments and protocols.”
Spotlight on our alumni:

Basic scientist Dr. Mary-Ellen Harper is “leading the way”

Performing research in basic science typically demands an intense focus at the bench. For one researcher, time spent away from the bench has also resulted in valuable learning opportunities for the students in her lab.

University of Ottawa Faculty of Medicine professor Dr. Mary-Ellen Harper happens to be an expert in mammalian bioenergetics, but also in inspiring young scientists to follow in her trailblazing footsteps.

Dr. Harper is the director of MATRIX (Metabolomics Advanced Training and International Exchange), an NSERC–CREATE program launched to train the next generation of leaders for customized career paths in the field of metabolomics, bioenergetics and bioinformatics. She is confident the project will put uOttawa on the map in the burgeoning field of metabolomics and revolutionize the field in the coming years.

“Professors are key to the success of their lab’s benchwork, but they’re teachers and mentors, too,” explains Dr. Harper amidst her buzzing lab in the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology. “I try to lead by example and ignite a passion in my students to dig for creative solutions to scientific problems.”

An alumna of uOttawa, Dr. Harper credits her alma mater with nurturing her skills as a leader, which she now pays forward to her own students.

“I’m honoured to play a role in equipping our uOttawa learners with the skills and values they need for the next steps in their careers in the biosciences,” says Dr. Harper, who is also the University Research Chair in Mitochondrial Bioenergetics.

Dr. Harper emphasizes that the rich, collaborative environment at the Faculty of Medicine and partnered hospitals and institutes has contributed to her successes in science, with her current work leading the way in the field of cellular energy. With her studies spanning isolated mitochondria to cell cultures to transgenic mice to clinical investigations, Dr. Harper continues to add to uOttawa’s growing reputation in translational research.

Having made a name for herself internationally, Dr. Harper is frequently called upon to lecture around the world, and her work continues to bring distinction to the University of Ottawa.

Ultimately, Harper says, success in science is built on a strong foundation of mentorship, a principle she puts into practice every day with her students.

“I really believe it’s the key to recruiting and retaining tomorrow’s biomedical scientists,” she says.
Medical Hall of Fame Award recognizes a new generation of health leaders

MD/PhD student Marc-Olivier Deguise is a 2018 recipient of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame (CMHF) Award for medical students with an established track record of community leadership, superior communication skills and demonstrated interest in advancing knowledge.

With passion for both research and clinical work, Deguise hopes to offer first-hand treatment to patients while simultaneously contributing to the understanding of diseases through research.

“I hope to not only make an impact locally through my future clinical practice, but also globally through my research,” says Deguise, whose PhD work focuses on a fatal neurological disorder called spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) under the supervision of Dr. Rashmi Kothary, uOttawa professor of Medicine, Cellular and Molecular Medicine (CMM) and Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology (BMI), who is also the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute’s deputy scientific director and senior scientist.

SMA is a genetic disease affecting the part of the nervous system that controls voluntary muscle movement. Unexpectedly, Deguise’s research has successfully identified that this disease may be a multi-system disorder, instead of a disease that affects solely the motor neurons. The contribution of non-neuronal organs has been long debated in the SMA field. As such, his research challenges the historical neuron-centric dogma and more scientists are now supporting this new idea. The significance of his paradigm-shifting research has been recognized by the Award of Excellence in Graduate Studies at uOttawa, the Dr. Ronald G. Worton Researcher in Training Award of The Ottawa Hospital, and the Audrey J. Boyce MD/PhD Fellowship.

As a student, Deguise is already looking for ways to indirectly improve the well-being of children, whether it be through advocacy, fundraising or medical education. Recently, he led a fundraising team through Smiling Over Sickness at uOttawa that raised $33,760 for pediatric cancer research.

Furthermore, in an effort to bridge the gap between clinical and research training in medical school, he established an annual event in collaboration with the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario to introduce medical students to prospective research supervisors in a speed-networking model.

Deguise hopes to combine his passions for research, medicine and health care throughout his career.

Marc-Olivier Deguise
A legend in the operating room

ALS may have stopped him from practicing his passion, but Dr. Éric Poulin’s legacy is working to prevent it from happening to others.

As a pioneer of minimally invasive surgery, having a steady hand was one of Dr. Éric Poulin’s defining traits—which is why it was so obvious to his family in early 2011 that something was wrong.

“Stiffness in his legs, arms and hands, and sudden fatigue were the first signs of Éric’s discomfort,” says his wife, Margo Brousseau.

Dr. Poulin was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), a disease that affects motor neurons throughout the body. The disease robs patients of their ability to move, speak, swallow and eventually, breathe. What makes this disease particularly cruel is that while the body’s muscles waste away, the mind remains clear.

Dr. Poulin left his position as chief of surgery at The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) after his diagnosis in 2011, and passed away five years later on March 6, 2016. It was a devastating loss for both the surgery community and his family, which has fuelled Brousseau’s determination to help prevent future patients from suffering the way he did.

“The worst thing was to see his pain and to see him declining. It is something I will never forget,” she says.

“But I believe that there is a chance that one day families will no longer have to face this disease. By supporting the University of Ottawa Brain and Mind Research Institute, I am convinced that maybe in a not-so-distant future, a cure will be found.”

Brousseau’s support and Dr. Poulin’s legacy are helping to fund research into neuromuscular diseases like ALS. The Éric Poulin Centre of Neuromuscular Disease will fall under the umbrella of the uOttawa Brain and Mind Research Institute (uOBMRI).

“As a clinician, it’s so exciting because we will now be able to bring cutting-edge treatments to patients within the setting of clinical trials,” says Dr. Ari Breiner, a physician specializing in neurology at TOH. “We’ll interact with and offer treatments to patients while simultaneously collaborating with basic scientists with very promising track records in ALS research.”

To make these clinical trials a reality, physicians will be working with basic scientists like Dr. Derrick Gibbings, associate professor at the uOttawa Faculty of Medicine, who have dedicated their career to developing treatments for ALS while also pursuing ways of stopping the disease in its tracks.

“Doctors have observed proteins clumping in the spinal cord that kill the cells controlling the body’s ability to move,” says Dr. Gibbings. “We’re hoping that in finding a way to target the process that prevents the body from getting rid of these clumps, we can eventually halt the disease.

Not only did he make us a leader, he inspired a whole generation of young surgeons who are now practicing minimally invasive surgery across this country.

— Dr. Jack Kitts, president and CEO, The Ottawa Hospital
“Another project is focused on stopping the production of these clumps before they start,” he continues. “We’re trying to get that into clinical trials in the next two to three years.”

Clinical trials, of course, means that scientists are one step closer to finding a treatment for this currently incurable disease. For patients with ALS, and for people like Margo Brousseau who have seen family members succumb to the illness, this step is a sign of hope.

“After the diagnosis, Éric told me, ‘I did what I always wanted to do, to spend my life doing what I was passionate about—surgery,’” says Brousseau.

As for the decision to financially help research in ALS, Brousseau adds, “Éric was always adamant about the necessity of medical research, so I am, without a doubt, certain that he would have welcomed and supported these groundbreaking ALS trials.

“The hope is that one day, no other doctor will have to step away from his or her life-saving work, nor any family lose a loved one, due to ALS.”

Community Generosity: Tavern on the Hill and Tavern on the Falls

There’s a long list of perks to dining at either Tavern on the Hill or Tavern on the Falls. Both of these fresh-air restaurants have spectacular views of the Ottawa River, an epic selection of gourmet hot dogs (which could send even the most experienced frankfurter aficionado into a spiral of decision-making despair), and a summertime ambience to rival patios in London, Paris or Madrid. We offer our sincere thanks to the Tavern restaurants for supporting the University of Ottawa Brain and Mind Research Institute (uOBMRI) and Bruyère Research Institute (BRI)’s new Memory Collaborative campaign. Their generosity will go toward research that is working to prevent and treat brain- and memory-related illness. A very special thank you to Andre and Chantal Schad, owners of these delightful pieces of heaven, that we are so fortunate to have in our city.
Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

At the University of Ottawa Faculty of Medicine, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows learn, discover and work in an exciting, creative, challenging and diverse environment.

Professors of the basic science departments together with all colleagues from hospital-based research institutes located in Ottawa, offer a vast and unique blend of research possibilities for students interested in a career in the life sciences. Postdoctoral fellows are also provided the opportunity to hone their skills while working with prominent researchers.

The Faculty is home to close to 600 graduate students and more than 120 postdoctoral fellows, with international students representing approximately 20% of our graduate student population.
Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Highlights

Diverse opportunities: The Faculty offers five main programs at the MSc and PhD levels (Cellular and Molecular Medicine; Neuroscience; Microbiology and Immunology; Biochemistry; Epidemiology), three collaborative programs at the MSc and PhD levels (Human and Molecular Genetics; Bioinformatics; Pathology and Experimental Medicine), a Graduate Diploma in Population Health Risk Assessment and Management, and an MD/PhD Program. The office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies also oversees the new and popular undergraduate program in Translational and Molecular Medicine.

Exceptional funding: Currently, over 76% of our graduate students hold an admission or excellence scholarship and over 20% hold an external scholarship (CIHR, NSERC, OGS or QEII). Since 2003, we have the second-highest growth rate in overall Tri-Council funding and the third-highest growth rate in Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) funding.

Advanced core facilities and world-renowned professors: Our faculty members are leading experts that teach and support our students and postdoctoral fellows in a stimulating environment supported by cutting-edge core facilities where discoveries contribute to medical research nationally and internationally.

Research-intensive setting: Affiliated research institutes at Bruyère, CHEO, Montfort, The Ottawa Hospital, The Royal Ottawa, and the University of Ottawa Heart Institute offer a vast and unique blend of research possibilities for students and postdoctoral fellows interested in a career in biomedical, clinical and population sciences.

Global relevance and competitive ranking: We are currently ranked among the top 100 universities in the world for clinical medicine (78th) and among the top 200 for life sciences (189th) by the National Taiwan University rankings. In Canada, we consistently rank #2–3 for medical and science grants according to Maclean’s magazine. Locally, the Faculty generates 60% of all research revenues received by the University of Ottawa.
Getting to know:

The Graduate Diploma in Population Health Risk Assessment and Management:
The Diploma in Population Health Risk Assessment and Management is offered on both a full-time and a part-time basis. It is specially designed for those individuals employed or interested in the field of population health and attracts an average of 20 students annually.

The MD/PhD Program:
The MD/PhD program offers exceptional students the opportunity to pursue two degrees over the course of seven years. Based on a single integrated curriculum, it combines our existing undergraduate medical education curriculum with approved doctoral programs (Biochemistry; Cellular and Molecular Medicine; Microbiology and Immunology; and Neuroscience). Students ultimately receive a Doctor of Medicine and a PhD degree. The program was created in 2010, with four students entering the program each year.

University of Ottawa thesis prize won by Faculty of Medicine PhD student

Each year, the University of Ottawa and the Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation announce the winners of the 2018 Master's and PhD theses prizes and medals. The Faculty of Medicine congratulates Dr. Stephen Elisha Clarke (PhD in Neuroscience) on receiving the 2018 Governor General's Gold Medal in Medicine, Health Sciences and Interdisciplinary, awarded for the best doctoral thesis in the field.

Pairing Program: Research opportunities for medical students

A key goal of the Faculty of Medicine is to promote translational research in an effort to facilitate the real-life application of research discoveries to clinical practice. Toward this goal, medical students are provided the opportunity to work with leading researchers at the Faculty of Medicine.

Based on their field of interest and the type of experience they seek (research electives, volunteer observer, etc.), students are matched with professors in the Faculty who are international leaders in their fields. The students proceed to work in a research laboratory during the Fall and Winter/Spring terms.

This is the first step in the Faculty’s graduate student/medical student Pairing Program. Step two is in the works, intended to provide graduate students at the Faculty with the opportunity to follow a physician in a clinical setting related to their research project, imparting a sense of the impact their research has on patients.

The Pairing Program is offered in addition to the Faculty’s Summer Research Work Program, featured in the Spring/Summer 2018 issue of MedExtra.

For more information, please contact the Faculty of Medicine Research Office at grad-medpairing@uOttawa.ca.
The School of Epidemiology and Public Health

In May 2016, the Faculty of Medicine officially launched the School of Epidemiology and Public Health, the latest evolution of the distinguished, 50-year-old Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine. This year is a particularly exciting year for the new School also because of the arrival of a new director, Dr. Melissa Brouwers.

The School is interdisciplinary and conducts research into the various factors that determine health and disease in humans, and also provides training for health researchers locally and internationally. Its faculty members offer advice and support to people and agencies who seek knowledge and expertise in epidemiology and public health.

Over the years, SEPH has developed strong links with clinical epidemiology and public health research programs via its collaborations with various research institutes and agencies affiliated with the University of Ottawa. Important research and training continues to be conducted in partnership with organizations such as OHRI, CHEO, Bruyère, The Royal Ottawa, Ottawa Public Health, Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health, Health Canada, the Champlain Local Health Integration Network, etc.

With more than 200 affiliated faculty members and over 165 trainees, the School produces a large number of research outcomes that contribute to a highly active learning environment. The interdisciplinary nature of the School and its ability to develop community partnerships have enabled it to achieve a high level of research intensity in many areas including descriptive and analytical epidemiology, as well as applied and clinical epidemiology.
It takes a community to fight a health care crisis

New technology helps to prevent opioid overdoses

More than 1,200 Ontarians died of opioid overdoses in 2017, a disturbing 45% increase from the year before. The national figures are just as bleak. According to data released by the Public Health Agency of Canada this fall, the number of Canadians dying from apparent overdoses continues to increase, with 3,987 apparent opioid-related deaths in 2017, up 34% from 2016.

Most of these individuals did not intend to die. In fact, coroners or medical examiners deemed 88% of the deaths in 2016 and 92% of those in 2017 as accidental.

For many individuals, their deaths have been linked to overdoses from street drugs contaminated with opioids. Until recently, people who use drugs have had no reliable way to identify the contents of what they are taking prior to use. But a new technology available at the supervised injection site located at the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre in downtown Ottawa is changing that, and has the potential to become a critical new instrument for improving the health and safety of communities everywhere.

The new technology comes in the form of a portable mass spectrometer developed by research partners at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. It is roughly the size of a small printer, and in just 20 seconds can test a drug sample for up to 16 contaminants. It is the only machine of its kind in Canada that can detect the highly toxic opioid fentanyl.

“This unique collaboration of analytical and social sciences is yielding unprecedented insight into the opioid crisis Canada is currently facing,” explains Dr. Jeffrey Smith, director of the Carleton Mass Spectrometry Centre and associate professor in the Department of Chemistry and Institute of Biochemistry at Carleton University. “Even for people working on the front lines, this machine has proven to be a real eye-opener as to how serious this problem is in our community.”

Once people who use drugs know what is in them, they can choose to inject or ingest at the injection site, where help is just steps away. Alternatively, they may choose to take a smaller dose, or not take it at all.

Test results from the portable mass spectrometer are circulated with community partners every month, and posted publicly on Facebook. When the machine detects especially dangerous particulates, like carfentanil, a memo is shared immediately with paramedics, police and harm reduction workers.

“By sharing these findings with front line workers, this machine isn’t just benefitting the individuals who are using it—it’s helping the wider community,” says Dr. Leonard.

Currently the machine is only available for use by clients of the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre’s harm reduction program, Oasis. But Leonard and her team are working to make it available to the wider community, including parents who may come across drugs in their kids’ belongings. This will require approval from the federal government.

Dr. Leonard is also eager to bring this technology to areas that have been hit hardest by the opioid crisis, like on the west coast of Canada. She says there is a similar machine in Vancouver, but it doesn’t test for fentanyl. Instead, drug users there must rely on fentanyl testing strips, which are less reliable.

“Ethically, I feel a huge responsibility that we’ve got something that’s really working, that’s really helping people make good, healthy decisions and I want everybody to know about it,” says Dr. Leonard.

The research team responsible for this novel new technology comprises harm reduction service providers, chemistry and program evaluation experts, social epidemiologists, and people with lived experience. This project is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).
They are now in the second year of a three-year study measuring the distribution and density of blacklegged ticks in the city, as well as the infection rates of ticks with *B. burgdorferi* and other tick-borne pathogens. The team is monitoring 23 sites across Ottawa, including nine municipal parks, seven conservation areas and forests, six recreational trails and one provincial park.

Results from data that the team collected in 2017 were published in the *Canada Communicable Disease Report* in October. Some key findings:

- Blacklegged ticks were found in 16 of the 23 sites (70%).
- Of the 194 adult and 26 nymphal blacklegged ticks tested, almost 30% were infected with *B. burgdorferi*, known to cause Lyme disease.
- Recreational trails, conservation areas/forests and the provincial park within the city of Ottawa had significantly higher tick densities than municipal parks.
- No ticks were found in urban parks.

“Our study shows that tick populations are more widespread around Ottawa than previously thought,” says Dr. Kulkarni. “Furthermore, ticks are starting to pop up in some areas of the city sooner than we were expecting.”

Up until 2017, the only data that provided a picture of where ticks were present across Ottawa came from passive reporting of ticks submitted by the public to Ottawa Public Health for testing. Dr. Kulkarni and her team used this information to choose 23 diverse surveillance sites around the city where ticks were expected to reside, like Carp Hills, and areas where they weren’t.

### Tiny predators in the park

1 out of 3 ticks tested in new Ottawa study carry Lyme disease

New data from uOttawa shows that tick populations are more widespread around Ottawa than previously thought.

Dressed in hazmat suits, University of Ottawa Faculty of Medicine researchers Dr. Manisha Kulkarni and Dr. Roman Kryuchkov drag white flannel sheets across a patch of grass. They’re on the hunt for *Ixodes scapularis*—more commonly known as the blacklegged tick.

The hazmat suits are protection against these parasites, which measure about 3 mm at full maturity. Despite being small, they have the potential to pack a mean punch if they find a human host. Blacklegged ticks are carriers for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacteria known to cause Lyme disease—a condition that manifests itself with symptoms of joint pain, fatigue, and in some cases, facial paralysis and heart conditions.

Between 2016 and 2017, the reported number of Lyme disease cases in humans in Ottawa jumped from 74 to 186, but until recently there has been little active tick surveillance in the region. Dr. Kulkarni, an assistant professor with the School of Epidemiology and Public Health and affiliate investigator at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, and her team are working to remedy that.
“Our model confirmed that areas in west Ottawa, such as Carp Hills, were indeed highly suitable for ticks,” she said. “But it also indicated there were areas along the Ottawa river that we should investigate. That was an important finding.”

She adds that blacklegged ticks were concentrated in wooded suburban and rural zones including in the Greenbelt, and that some of these areas border residential neighbourhoods. With ongoing changes in climate and northward expansion of tick populations, Dr. Kulkarni says that Ottawa is likely to see a ‘filling in’ of suitable habitat around the city in coming years, meaning more areas may become risk areas for Lyme disease.

Although ticks are most known for carrying the bacteria that causes Lyme disease, they can also carry other pathogens. For example, ticks can carry *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, which causes anaplasmosis. In addition, they can carry *Borrelia miyamotoi*, causing an infection sometimes called tick-borne relapsing fever. Both are rare, but the first confirmed human case of anaplasmosis was recently reported in the area.

Dr. Kulkarni is hopeful that conducting active tick surveillance at the local level may help to inform risk assessment and public health actions.

“Prevention of tick bites and rapid removal of attached ticks is important because it can greatly reduce people’s risk of infection and prevent disease,” she says.

Data collected from summer and fall 2018 will be analyzed during the winter months and published in summer 2019.

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**Centre for Practice-Changing Research**

An example of the types of collaborative opportunities available to our SEPH and other faculty members include those under the Centre for Practice Changing Research, such as with the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute’s Clinical Epidemiology Program (CEP), affiliated with the University of Ottawa.

CEP puts knowledge to work—performing high-quality clinical research that can inform health decisions and ensure that results are optimally applied to improve health. CEP is known globally for its expertise in clinical trials, systematic reviews, knowledge translation, clinical decision rules and patient decision aids. To this end, the CEP is organized into six main themes, namely: knowledge synthesis; health research methods; maternal and fetal health; emergency medicine and critical care; circulatory and respiratory health; and knowledge translation, quality and safety. CEP is also affiliated with The Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre (TOHRC).

OMC, created in 2006, is an initiative of the OHRI centred within the Clinical Epidemiology Program and housed in the Centre for Practice-Changing Research. The OMC’s vision is to promote and facilitate methodological excellence in clinical research at The Ottawa Hospital, and beyond. Its role is to provide an umbrella of services to support clinical researchers at all stages of a research project from inception to dissemination.
Summary of research news

A sample of our outstanding research accomplishments

More deaths caused by the air we breathe than previously believed

A study in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS)* has revealed a two-fold increase in estimates of pollution-related mortality. Two members of the uOttawa Faculty of Medicine were among the 50-plus authors representing a large-scale, innovative analysis of numerous studies from around the world to draw conclusions about the impact of air pollution on worldwide mortality. Authors included members of the School of Epidemiology and Public Health: first author Dr. Richard Burnett, who assembled the contributors and amalgamated the studies, and Dr. Daniel Krewski, contributing his own 20-year study on the relationship between outdoor air pollution and death in Americans. The authors concluded that nearly nine million deaths are attributable to air pollution each year, notably higher than the four million deaths estimated by the World Health Organization in their Global Burden of Disease program.

High-dose folic acid does not prevent pre-eclampsia in high-risk women

Taking high doses of folic acid throughout pregnancy does not prevent pre-eclampsia in high-risk women, according to a large international clinical trial published in *The BMJ*. The flagship trial, led by researchers at the University of Ottawa and The Ottawa Hospital (TOH), refutes the findings of previous observational studies and is expected to change practice worldwide. Pre-eclampsia is high blood pressure during pregnancy and the leading cause of pregnancy-related complications and death worldwide. Throughout pregnancy, all women are advised to take a low dose of folic acid to prevent birth defects. Despite the recommendation of a high dose only for women at high risk of neural tube birth defects, studies show that many women are taking high doses of folic acid during their entire pregnancy. Dr. Mark Walker, chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Faculty of Medicine, head of the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Newborn Care at TOH and senior author of the paper, says people believe folic acid to be a harmless vitamin. To avoid over-medication, doctors should clearly tell patients when a high dose of folic acid is needed and when it should be stopped. The paper includes numerous authors from the Faculty, including first author Dr. Shi Wu Wen, professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and cross-appointed to the School of Epidemiology and Public Health.
uOttawa researchers in Dr. Derrick Gibbings’ lab connect the dots that cause ALS

Over 15 genes are linked to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), a disease that gradually leads to paralysis when the brain can no longer communicate with the body’s muscles. Mutations in these genes cause the disease, but exactly how is unclear. In *Nature Communications*, Dr. Derrick Gibbings, associate professor in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine, and PhD student and first author Maneka Chitiprolu, provide fundamental insights into what causes the disease. Namely, the study shows that no matter which gene is mutated, a large proportion of ALS patients have clumps of specific proteins, called stress granules, in the brain and spinal cord that are believed to be toxic, killing the neurons that act as message carriers from the brain to different parts of the body, such as muscles, causing weakening and eventual paralysis. In identifying such pathways in ALS, researchers can work to try to activate the process to get rid of stress granules as a way to treat the disease.

Stem cells can become neurons within the stroke-injured brain—making them potential big players in recovery

Dr. Diane Lagace, Dr. Jean-Claude Béïque and their team from the Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine and the uOttawa Brain and Mind Research Institute, including first author and postdoctoral fellow Dr. Timal Kannangara, are bringing new hope for stroke recovery. The team’s work published in *Stem Cell Reports* shows that stem cells in the adult brain can migrate to the site of stroke damage and become neurons. Although limited in number, these new cells can fire action potentials and are functionally connected with surrounding networks, all defining features of fully functioning neurons. These findings therefore ignite excitement about the capacity of stem cells to improve stroke recovery and outline new and compelling directions for stroke research—namely, how to increase the number of these immature neurons and maximize their incorporation into brain networks. Achieving these goals could make these cells big players in stroke recovery.
Exploring the patient-microbiome interaction identifies new players in pediatric IBD

The recent work of a group of researchers at the Faculty of Medicine and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario has brought science closer to understanding the pathogenesis of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) in pediatric patients. In *Nature Communications*, the team reported functional changes of the microbial community (microbiome) that inhabit the gut of children with IBD. The group of researchers was co-led by Dr. Daniel Figeys, professor and chair of the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology (BMI), Dr. Alain Stintzi, professor in BMI, and Dr. David Mack, professor of pediatrics; Xu Zhang and Shelley Deeke are co-first authors of this work. The researchers studied new-onset pediatric IBD patients to detect alterations in the proteins of the gut microorganisms as well as the patient's own proteins. The researchers are hopeful that the findings in this study may shed light on the future development of new diagnostic biomarkers and microbiome-targeted therapeutic approaches for both young and adult IBD patients.

Often-overlooked Natural Killer cells may be key to cancer immunotherapy

Immune checkpoint inhibitors are revolutionizing the treatment of cancer, but new research in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* is challenging the central dogma of how these drugs work. Checkpoint inhibitors work by waking up the body's own immune system and unleashing an immune attack on cancer cells, explains senior author Dr. Michele Ardolino, assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology and scientist at The Ottawa Hospital. Checkpoint inhibitors were assumed for years to target immune cells called T cells, but the paper reveals for the first time that they also target often-overlooked Natural Killer (NK) cells, with these cells playing a key role in the how the treatment works. Checkpoint therapy combined with other NK-directed immunotherapies may enable the targeting of many types of tumors currently unresponsive to available therapies, and the researchers are now investigating approaches to further enhance the cancer-killing ability of NK cells.
Can a calculator predict your risk of heart attack and stroke?

Researchers have built and validated an online calculator that empowers individuals to predict their risk of cardiovascular disease, which includes heart attack and stroke. Their process was published in the journal *CMAJ*, and the calculator is available at projectbiglife.com. While risk calculators already exist, they usually focus on factors that require medical tests, like blood pressure and cholesterol levels. As well, this calculator is better calibrated to the Canadian population, says Dr. Doug Manuel, lead author on the paper, professor in the Department of Family Medicine and cross-appointed member of the School of Epidemiology and Public Health, senior scientist at The Ottawa Hospital, and senior core scientist at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES). The calculator lets individuals accurately predict their risk of hospitalization or death due to cardiovascular disease within the next five years, and can also be used by policy-makers to better understand population health risks and help plan for the future.

Digital regulations are vital for protecting children targeted by unhealthy food and beverage ads

With over half of Canadian children owning a cell phone by grade 7, Dr. Monique Potvin Kent and team from the School of Epidemiology and Public Health set out to explore their hypothesis that children are highly exposed to ads for unhealthy foods and beverages on social media and gaming apps. While children saw few ads on gaming applications, the team found that over 70% of Ottawa children saw food marketing on social media, most frequently for fast food, sugar-sweetened beverages, candy/chocolates, snacks and alcohol. The estimated annual exposure of 5772 ads per child, says the team, may greatly influence children’s perceptions of a normal diet and their food preferences. To protect children’s health, the researchers stressed the importance of including restrictions on digital marketing when developing regulations that limit unhealthy food and beverage marketing to children. The Heart and Stroke Foundation commissioned and reported on the research.
Great things come in small packages: New research shows how compaction of DNA improves genome stability

Cells compact their DNA in the form of x-shaped chromosomes before dividing into two individual cells. Disruptions to this process can alter the DNA, potentially resulting in cancer, immunodeficiency, aging and other effects and disorders. Dr. Damien D’Amours, professor in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine, and his teams are enhancing science’s understanding of how a cell organizes itself to divide, something that is essential in reducing the incidence of such diseases. Their work in *Molecular Cell* reveals that condensin gets trapped in its own products as it compacts the DNA, and identifies the cellular components that release the trapped condensin to continue performing its role. Another D’Amours-led study in *PLOS Biology* shows how condensin harnesses cellular energy and transforms it into mechanical force that acts on DNA, providing critical insight into the process’s effects on the stability and structure of chromosomal DNA. Both studies play a role in explaining how the process of cell division can impact an individual’s health.

Could leaky blood vessels be a target for treating migraines?

Migraine headaches are often accompanied by electrical waves that slowly move across the brain, causing flashes of light and other visual disturbances. This phenomenon also affects the brain’s blood vessels, allowing large molecules from the blood to leak into the brain and cause inflammation and damage. New research published in *Annals of Neurology* reveals for the first time exactly how the blood-brain barrier opens during a migraine attack, and how to stop it. Among the findings was that a compound called fasudil, which is already used in humans to treat pulmonary hypertension and cerebral vasospasms, could block this phenomenon and prevent the blood-brain barrier from opening. This kind of blood vessel leakiness is also thought to occur in stroke and other brain conditions, thus establishing a whole new avenue of research and potential treatments, says co-author Dr. Baptiste Lacoste, assistant professor in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine and scientist at The Ottawa Hospital.
Faculty of Medicine major research events

Gairdner Lecture Series

On Tuesday, October 23, the Faculty of Medicine hosted two recipients of the Canada Gairdner Awards. The Gairdner Awards are considered among the most prestigious awards in biomedical science, recognizing outstanding world leaders who are advancing humanity and the world through their biomedical research. This year the event featured two internationally acclaimed researchers: Dr. Alan D. Lopez, Melbourne Laureate Professor and Rowden-White Chair of Global Health and Burden of Disease Measurement, University of Melbourne in Melbourne, Australia; and Dr. Lewis E. Kay, professor, Departments of Molecular Genetics, Biochemistry and Chemistry, University of Toronto, and senior scientist, Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Dr. Alan D. Lopez received the 2018 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award for his ground-breaking work in conceptualizing and quantifying the Global Burden of Disease (GBD). Dr. Lopez is co-founder of the GBD study, which quantifies health loss from all major diseases, injuries and risk factors by age, sex and location over time, and is credited with policy changes and improvements in health systems in numerous countries. The GBD study is published annually in *The Lancet*.

Dr. Lewis E. Kay received the 2017 Canada Gairdner International Award for the development of modern nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy for studies of biomolecular structure dynamics and function, including applications to molecular machines and rare protein conformations. His contributions to the field of biomolecular NMR spectroscopy include new insights into protein structure and its effects on biological functions and diseased states, as well as into new opportunities for drug targeting. Labs around the world use Dr. Kay’s tools and methods for disease research and other applications.
Friesen International Prize

On Tuesday, November 6, the University of Ottawa and the Friends of Canadian Institutes of Health Research (FCIHR) were pleased to host the 2018 Henry G. Friesen International Prize in Health Research Award winner, **Dr. David Naylor**. Dr. Naylor, professor of medicine and president emeritus of the University of Toronto, spoke on the topic of Emergence of Health Research as a Data Science. A physician-scientist, Dr. Naylor is an academic leader, health services researcher and adviser to governments on health policy, influencing health service delivery, public health and health research funding. He initiated and led the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES), now Canada’s largest independent network of health care investigators, research trainees, and students. The Friesen Prize, established in 2005 by the Friends of Canadian Institutes of Health Research, recognizes exceptional innovation by a visionary health leader of international stature.

Canadian Medical Hall of Fame (CMHF) Discovery Day

On May 31, 2019, the Faculty of Medicine will host the University of Ottawa CMHF Discovery Day. This unique one-day event provides secondary school students the opportunity to explore a variety of career options in medicine and the health sciences. Discovery Day includes a dynamic keynote lecture, interactive workshops and a career panel discussion. By interacting with researchers, clinicians and educators in their real-life work setting, students gain a clear picture of what it would be like to be a health professional. This collaboration with the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame is targeted primarily at Grade 11 students. Teachers and guidance counsellors are also welcome to attend.
Francophone Affairs

Funding supports francophone recruitment activities, research into medical education

In recent months, the Centre d’appui pédagogique en santé pour la francophonie of the Faculty of Medicine’s Francophone Affairs office (CAPSAF) has been awarded a total of $64,250 from different groups involved in medical education which will allow the Centre to broaden its research horizons. The funds will make it possible for work to continue eight research projects on medical pedagogy and ensure the results of this research can be shared at various well-known conferences.

In addition, Francophone Affairs received a $27,000 grant from the University, which will make it possible to hold the introduction to medicine mini-courses again this year. These courses are held during recruitment activities for francophone students from minority communities in the Ottawa area and elsewhere in Ontario.
2018 Funding – Francophone Affairs

Évaluer et améliorer la qualité de la rétroaction écrite des précepteurs en médecine familiale (phase 1)
[Evaluating and improving the quality of written feedback from family medicine preceptors (phase 1)]

The research team of Dr. Lyne Pitre, Dr. Éric Dionne, Dr. Manon Denis-Leblanc, Dr. Salomon Fotsing and Dr. Dominique Auger received $5,000 from the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) in January 2018.

Étude pilote : L’effet de l’introduction précoce de l’outil échographique auprès des étudiants du pré-externat de la Faculté de médecine de l’Université d’Ottawa
[Pilot study: The effect of the early introduction of the ultrasound tool to pre-clerkship students in the University of Ottawa Faculty of Medicine]

In March 2018, the research team of Dr. Nermine Youssef, Dr. Alireza Jalali and Michel Khoury (graduating class of 2021) received $5,000 from the Consortium national de Formation en santé (CNFS) (University of Ottawa).

Intérêt du nouveau format de séance d’information pour les patients simulés (PS) dans les cliniques simulées du pré-externat en médecine
[Interest in the new format of the simulated patient briefing (SP) in simulated pre-clerkship medical clinics]

The research team of Dr. Isabelle Burnier, Dr. Marie-Noëlle Nicole, Dr. Salomon Fotsing, Diane Bouchard Lamothe (MSc) and André Bléoo (simulated patient) received $5,000 from the Association médicale universitaire de l’Hôpital Montfort, Montfort Hospital Family Medicine Alternate Funding Plan in March 2018.

Effet d’un module d’autoapprentissage (versus enseignement magistral) sur la motivation à suivre le cours et acquérir des connaissances sur les « tests inutiles »
[Effect of a self-learning module (versus lecturing) on motivation to take a course and knowledge acquisition about “unnecessary tests”]

Dr. Lyne Pitre and Dr. Chantal D’Aoust-Bernard received $4,800 from the Association médicale universitaire de l’Hôpital Montfort, Montfort Hospital Family Medicine Alternate Funding Plan in May 2018 for salary support.

Module d’autoapprentissage d’appui à l’enseignement pour l’utilisation juste des tests médicaux — Choisir avec soins
[E-learning module for preceptors: Teaching how to choose diagnostic tests wisely]

The research team of Dr. Lyne Pitre, Dr. Chantal D’Aoust-Bernard and Diane Bouchard-Lamothe (MSc) received $9,600 in July 2018 from the group responsible for developing French-language teaching materials at the Office of the Associate Vice-President, Programs.

Module d’autoapprentissage d’appui aux étudiants durant les stages cliniques et sessions cliniques simulées: S’ouvrir à la rétroaction et viser l’amélioration des compétences plutôt que la performance
[E-learning module for students in clinical settings: Being open to feedback, aimed at improving competence instead of assessment performance]

The team of Dr. Louise Laramée and Diane Bouchard-Lamothe (MSc) received $10,050 from the Office of the Associate Vice-President, Programs in July 2018 to develop French-language teaching materials.

Projet de maillage (project for regional and provincial introduction to medicine mini-courses)

Francophone Affairs received $27,000 from the Office of the Associate Vice-President, Programs, in July 2018 to deliver regional and provincial recruitment activities (three mini-courses).
Task Force on Internationalization and Global Health

Task force helps shape the future of Faculty internationalization and global health initiatives

This past summer, the Task Force on Internationalization and Global Health, chaired by Dr. Mark Walker, completed an inventory and assessment of all international and global health activities at the Faculty of Medicine.

Using this information, the task force has put forward a draft report to the Faculty’s leadership team, recommending the best approaches for the future of our internationalization and global health portfolio, aligning it with the strategic directions of the Faculty of Medicine in terms of education, research and social accountability.

This fall, leadership shared the draft report with all Faculty of Medicine stakeholders, welcomed feedback via email, and organized town halls to engage with faculty members, learners and staff for additional planning. This consultation process is key to solidifying the report and formulating next steps.

Additionally, leadership hopes that the outcomes of these discussions will help inform the University of Ottawa’s overall international policy, which has been given renewed prominence with the recent appointment of Dr. Adel El Zaïm as chief internationalization officer.

“It’s an exciting time to be positioning the Faculty strategically in terms of internationalization and global health,” said Dr. Walker, who led this task force and is also a professor and chair of the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Newborn Care and senior scientist at The Ottawa Hospital. “We cannot be a world class university without having a strong international presence. Medicine, health and medical research have a universal impact that transcends borders and cultures with benefits for all of humanity.”

Recommendations by the task force for further consultation with stakeholders at the Faculty of Medicine:

Internationalization
- Consistent and systematic collection of international data to monitor critical trends.
- Strike a balance between short-term and long-term needs, consequences, benefits and challenges.
- Partnership evaluation and metrics.
- Leverage the Faculty’s position in the nation’s capital.
- Resource sharing across the University.
- Reallocate the resources and redefine the structure of the Office of Internationalization.
- Avoid the tendency to provide excessive support for individual projects.
- Support international initiatives.

Global Health
- Formalize policy for international/global health PGME placements.
- Establish a Partnership Strategy in Global Health.
- Appoint a director of Global Health across Faculty of Medicine departments.
- Implement a Global Health Service Model.
- Communicate, consult and share the global health vision broadly across the Faculty.
- Establish a research network for Global Health.
- Institutionalize the Global Health Curriculum.
- Global health awareness and promotion.
- Develop more academic offerings in Global Health.
The dean would like to hear from you.
Please share ideas, feedback and future content suggestions via infomed@uOttawa.ca

To further your continuing medical education and faculty development training, consult our joint calendar for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses and events.