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March 2019

McMaster Connectivity Newsletter

For the IT community, by the IT community.

NOTE: We have changed email platforms, our newsletter is now distributed via MailChimp.

McMaster IT Strategic Plan

Prioritizing strategic initiatives and seeking further campus engagement

Following the recent [launch](#) of the [McMaster IT Strategic Plan for 2019 – 2021](#), work has begun on prioritizing the IT Strategic Initiatives for 2019. In April, the [IT Governance standing committees](#) will be reviewing the list of proposed initiatives in the context of the McMaster IT Strategic Plan, providing their input and ensuring there is sufficient clarification to endorse the priorities. Once the standing committees have discussed fully, the list will move to the IT Executive for review and endorsement.

The list of initiatives will be shared with the campus for awareness through various channels. Each prioritized initiative will go through a full process of campus engagement, analysis, assessment, and planning in order to reach project proposal stage and then the proposal will be reviewed through IT Governance for individual project endorsement.

Campus engagement sessions coming this Spring

Engagement sessions for the endorsed prioritized initiatives are planned for this Spring. These sessions are an opportunity to bring together constituents from across McMaster to provide input on the initiatives. Targeted and broad communications will be shared in the coming month. We hope to see you or members from your respective areas in attendance!

IT Governance Updates:

Learning Management System Review: Endorsed

This phase of the Learning Management System Review is a discovery to complete a large-scale survey about satisfaction with Avenue. The MacPherson Institute has at times received feedback on Avenue from faculty, through information that came out of the IT Review, and more recently through the Teaching and Learning review that was conducted. Prior to negotiating the next contract with D2L Brightspace (due for renewal in October 2021), it is important to review past data collected, but more importantly to engage in a system-wide review of the campus needs for its LMS, determine the current needs of our LMS users, and develop recommendations for which options, tools, and platforms are best suited for the LMS users' needs.

The project will be set up on the Strategic Initiatives page under a Connected Community. Check [here](#) for project updates.

CISCO Smart Building Occupancy (proof of concept): Endorsed

The purpose of this project is to complete a Proof of Concept (POC) to provide visualization of occupancy in spaces to better understand the opportunities related to automated management of buildings such as HVAC controls for energy savings and improved lighting comfort. The pilot will be based on a select number of buildings (IAHS, Thode Library and Mary Keyes. The Pilot will run for one year so that a full year of seasonal (weather) and people occupancy data can be analyzed and used to develop the feasibility and usefulness of this technology. A project team of cross functional resources will be selected to administer the Pilot and develop the final submission of recommendations. The project will be set up on the Strategic Initiatives page under a Seamless

Foundation. Check [here](#) for project updates.

McMaster Experts Module Extension: Endorsed

The proposed upgrade will provide a number of valuable benefits to the entire institution:

- Enabling comprehensive views and assessment of scholarship at McMaster by centralizing and integrating various types of research and teaching information that are currently maintained by disparate units across campus. This approach would allow researchers to be explicitly linked with their collaborators, publications, grants, and teaching activities.
- Reducing faculty and administrator burden by providing a fully digital, streamlined solution for faculty members' annual activity reporting; individuals will be able to populate reports seamlessly with information that already exists in Experts research profiles.
- Standardizing and streamlining the content in researcher profiles by serving as the central, editable source for information on McMaster's researchers. Information will be managed and edited in a single system (McMaster Experts) and subsequently used to populate profiles on Faculty, Institute, and Centre web pages.

The project will be set up on the Strategic Initiatives page under a Seamless Foundation. Check [here](#) for project updates.

Research Administration Digitization

McMaster's research administration offices (MILO, ROADS, and HRS) currently rely on manual workflow processes when it comes to assisting researchers with their funding applications, notifying researchers of post-award status, and letting researchers know about upcoming funding opportunities. Phase one is a discovery phase which will build on preliminary work that has been done to date to create a clear specifications document, budget and a robust implementation plan. Phase two will be the development and implementation of the solution.

The project will be set up on the Strategic Initiatives page under a Transformative Information Technologies and Services. Check [here](#) for project updates.

Student Ancillary Fees Opt-out (Legislated Change):

Endorsed

The purpose of this project is to implement the changes mandated by the Provincial Government that students be allowed to opt out of non-essential ancillary (supplementary) fees. This change is required by June 1, 2019 when students register for courses for the 19/20 academic year.

The project will be set up on the Strategic Initiatives page under a Seamless Foundation. Check [here](#) for project updates.

Other McMaster IT News:



Faculty of Engineering pivots to transform the undergraduate experience

The Faculty of Engineering is undergoing the largest transformation of their undergraduate experience in their 61 year history. Dean Ishwar Puri and a panel from his faculty discussed this new paradigm at a Café X talk, held in the L. R. Wilson Concert Hall on March 12. Several members of the McMaster IT community attended.

The new model for the undergraduate engineering program is called “The Pivot”. This is the intersection of Design Thinking, Innovation, Experiential

Education and Discovery. This model is based on three pillars, “Transforming the curriculum”, “Reimaging the classroom” and “Amplifying experiential learning”. A detailed timeline for the implementation, and cost estimates, where presented as well.

The need to redesign the pedagogical model is being realized because of the rapidly increasing pace of change in technology. Students entering into their first year of Engineering will be graduating into a world with new technologies and careers that didn’t exist when they started. McMaster needs to graduate “future ready” professionals.

The goal of this overhaul is ambitious. The Faculty is designing the program to give students experience in these areas:

- Integrated problem-based learning
- Research experience (at the undergrad level)
- Social consciousness
- Multidisciplinary team work
- Community engagement
- Industry-relevant challenge based projects
- Work-integrated learning (co-op)
- Professional Leadership

What does this mean for IT?

There will be an impact on the Teaching and Learning infrastructure required to support this new model. Classrooms are being reimaged and will be transformed into larger, flexible, multi-functional areas. They will resemble a cross between a maker space, and a start-up, incubator environment. The plan is for a 15,000 square foot interactive, linked space.

The old model of “chalk and talk” will still exist but new spaces aimed at self-directed, group learning will be required. This means that there won’t be a front or back to the space. Smart boards, rapid proto-typing stations, and other technologies will be spread out, throughout the space.

There are also some new technologies being used to support this new model. Micro credentials will be managed using block chain methodologies.

[For more information, please visit this site.](#)

Thank you to Roy Russell for contributing this piece

Introducing the VMware Academic Program

McMaster has purchased a subscription to the VMware Academic Program. The program provides all students, staff, and faculty with software downloads for personal use, whether as part of STEM classes, in research projects, or for gaining hands-on experience with VMware software.

McMaster University has access to a comprehensive suite of VMware products. The products provided are only for instructional and research use, and for gaining hands-on experience with creating virtual machines and core infrastructure products. The products cannot be used to replace products necessary for day-to-day work or to replace infrastructure.

Included products are:

- VMware Workstation
- VMware Fusion
- VMware eLearning and VMware Sales Professional training materials
- VMware vSphere Enterprise Plus
- VMware vCenter Server Standard

The licenses available are a 365-day license that require a one-time, annual download. Annual product downloads ensure that members receive the most up to date versions of products.

To access the tools, go to <https://mcmaster.onthehub.com> and sign in with your MacID@mcmaster.ca. Once signed in, select your license group, and navigate to the VMware tab.

If you are a lab manager and would like to install the software in your lab or have any questions about VMAP, please contact swlic@mcmaster.ca

IT Student Advisory Committee Update & Interview

The IT Student Advisory Committee has met six times since the launch in

September 2018. We have undergraduate and graduate representation from all faculties and student support units on campus, which provides a broad range of experience and knowledge of IT Services.

You can read what student representatives had to say about the Committee and IT at McMaster in this [interview](#). Major topics of discussion have included:

- McMaster IT Strategic Plan Preview
- Cyber Security
- Wireless Upgrade
- Microsoft Office 365
- Student IT Help Desk at Mills Library – Pilot
- Lyons New Media Centre
- Thode Makerspace
- Mobile Apps

ITSAC members have provided ideas and feedback on how we can better socialize and promote IT services offered to students.

The committee also welcomed a new co-chair, Christa Morrison from Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence. Christa joined the committee as of the second term. We'd like to thank Michelle Zheng for her help with the initiation of the committee.

To learn more about the student advisory committee, please visit our webpage on the CTO site: [Information Technology Student Advisory](#) and on [Confluence](#).

McMaster IT community challenged to #Innovateforchange and support girls in STEM

Following on from International Women's Day where [Canada's theme](#) emphasized getting more women and girls into STEM fields, Roy Russell, Senior Research Computing Specialist, Research and High Performance Computing Support (RHPCS) shared his involvement with a regional initiative aimed at doing just that. [Technovation](#), is a yearly competition set to empower girls to get involved in the tech industry. And coding is the entry point. Find out how McMaster IT professionals can get involved [here](#).

McMaster Access to Gartner for Technical Professionals

(from the March Tech Round Table Meeting)

By Shay Norkin

Client Director, Gartner

Did you know that McMaster IT professionals have access to the Gartner for Technical Professionals Platform? This access is part of our organizational subscription and a great resource for information and peer knowledge for a number of technical areas facing Higher Ed IT.

Please find attached the Gartner deck recently presented to the Tech Round Table, as well as a 2 page product flyer of Gartner for Technical Professionals (GTP) and an Online Research Quick Reference Guide for the GTP service. Do note that the Quick Reference Guide is for the old portal experience (the new experience was rolled out in February) but it is still relevant. Also attached for you is the 2019 Global Events Snapshot.

Before attempting to access any Gartner, first always login through the SSO setup on the [McMaster UTS site](#). Below are links to key feature/functionality within the portal:

- Technical Insights [overview](#)
- [Talk with an analyst](#) (recall this also includes reviews of documents of all kinds up to 20 pages in length)
- Track your key initiatives through [Gartner Track](#)
- Engage with IT professionals on [Peer Connect](#)
- [Cloud Decisions Tool](#) (Cloud Decisions & Cloud Match Tool) and instructional video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fmo24BuBZOI>
- Listen to [Webinars](#)
- Explore informal Gartner reads at [Smarter with Gartner](#)

Should you have any questions at all or needs based on our walkthrough or generally, please do get in touch with your manager or Kevin de Kock, Director, UTS.

[McMaster student creates app to predict snow days](#)

Posted: 12 Mar 2019 03:12 PM PDT

McMaster student [Joe Crozier \(@joe_crozier\)](#) has written [an app](#) to predict snow days.

Full story available at: eng.mcmaster.ca/news/student-creates-app-predicts-snow-days

[Student Startup competition on March 20th](#)

Wednesday March 20th from 5:00pm – 7:30pm

McMaster University Student Centre, 1280 Main Street West (3rd Floor CIBC Hall), Hamilton, Ontario

Register: [eventbrite.ca/e/the-forge-student-startup-competition-2019-tickets-55925687236](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/the-forge-student-startup-competition-2019-tickets-55925687236)

Organizer: [The Forge \(@forgemcmaster\)](#)

[First HamOnt JavaScript meetup Thursday March 21st](#)

Posted: 12 Mar 2019 04:16 PM PDT

When: Thursday March 21st from 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Where: [CoMotion on King](#) at 115 King Street East (3rd floor), Hamilton, Ontario

Register: [meetup.com/HamOnt-JavaScript/events/258938512](https://www.meetup.com/HamOnt-JavaScript/events/258938512)

Organizer: [HamOnt JavaScript](#)

[Ed Tech looks at how partnerships between IT and Physical Security](#) improve campus safety.

U of Toronto's TechKnowFile (TKF) conference, Ryerson U's Cybersecurity Day (RUCD) and the Ontario Higher Education Information Technology (OHEIT) conference launch their [new UnITe website](#) ahead of their May conference

CIO looks at the [11 biggest issues](#) IT faces today

The Guardian explores whether [university campuses are turning into mini smart cities](#)

Canadians are rightly worried about invasion of privacy in smart cities
McMaster's Sara Bannerman wrote a piece for [The Conversation Canada](#) on privacy issues related to smart cities. It was also picked up by the National

A Collaborative Approach to Cybersecurity is Higher Ed's Best Shield

[Read the article here.](#)

McMaster IT Community! Share your stories, project successes and ideas!

The McMaster IT Newsletter has a strong audience of over 500 readers across campus and excellent readership rates. We need your content and stories to truly capture the great work and ideas from the McMaster IT community and make the newsletter even better. Please submit any McMaster-related IT ideas and stories to c-it-newsletter@mcmaster.ca. McMaster IT Newsletter is distributed on a monthly basis.



Thanks for reading!

How to contribute to this newsletter:

We welcome content submissions from all IT employees across campus.

Do you have an update, event or story from your unit that you would like to share in the next newsletter?

Are you looking to raise awareness about an upcoming launch, service or discovery?

Do you have a great article to share?

- Email your content to c-it-newsletter@mcmaster.ca

or

- Create a blog post on Confluence and send a link + synopsis to c-it-newsletter@mcmaster.ca

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