



Community Research Platform

Annual Report

2020 – 2021

BRIGHTER WORLD

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Community
Research Platform





CRP Background and Overview



In 2019 the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) received support through the Provost's Strategic Alignment Fund to develop a Community Research Platform (CRP). In March 2021, the CRP was recognized as a Core Research Platform at McMaster.

In alignment with McMaster's strategic research plan and the FSS' strategic goals and priorities, the CRP develops, leverages, and mobilizes infrastructure and expertise

from across McMaster and local community organizations to build capacity and foster mutually beneficial research collaborations.

Through the CRP, interdisciplinary researchers, students, staff, and community partners work collaboratively to advance research with a social purpose (i.e., improving societal wellbeing and resilience, shedding light on social issues, supporting innovation, contributing to the public good, and/or providing guidance for policy).

CRP Partners

Following consultation with faculty members, a wide range of key community organizations, and the Office of Community Engagement, we identified several Hamilton area community organizations interested in co-developing the CRP. Current platform partners include:

Canadian Mental Health Association of Hamilton (CMHA) — a non-profit that provides mental health services, **Hamilton Public Library (HPL)**, **Young Women’s Christian Association of Hamilton (YWCA)** — a non-profit that advocates for and provides essential services to women, girls, non-binary, gender-fluid and trans folks of all genders, and **Centre [3] for Artistic and Social Practice (C3)** — an artist-run non-profit that uses the arts and art education to promote social practice and social change.

Platform partners share an interest in building research capacity within their organization in partnership with McMaster and are committed to the delivery of evidenced based programs and services. All CRP partners are well networked locally, regionally, and nationally thus increasing the scalability and impact of collaborative projects and knowledge mobilization activities.

In addition to the four partners, the CRP has also collaborated with the **Canadian Urban Library Council (CULC)**, **Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario**, **St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton**, **City of Hamilton Housing Services**, **541 Eatery**, **Food for Life**, and **Hamilton Community Foundation**. The CRP continues to explore opportunities to involve additional partners and collaborators based on the interests and needs of faculty members and of local community organizations.



Canadian Mental Health Association
Mental health for all



Hamilton Public Library



YWCA
HAMILTON

centre [3]
for artistic + social practice



CRP Model

The CRP is a unique ‘platform’ model of community-university research partnership as it aims to develop and foster long term, sustainable, ‘programs of research’ that extend far beyond one-off research projects. Stakeholders share research infrastructure in the form of space, software, data, equipment, and expertise. Four key thematic research areas have emerged that align with the expertise and interests of McMaster researchers and the mandates of community partner organizations. They include **Mental Health (CMHA)**; **Social Engagement and Community Resilience (HPL)**; **Gender and Intersectionality (YWCA)**, and **Arts-informed Research (C3)**. For each thematic area, the CRP has formed research groups comprised of interdisciplinary scholars, students, staff, and community experts. Each group works to advance research that informs organizational practice and contributes to social impact.

The CRP offers support and unique opportunities for faculty, students and community organizations interested in working on partnered research including:

- Support with the development of project MOUs, workplans and service contracts.
- Facilitated access to diverse communities and datasets.
- Facilitated access to research infrastructure and expertise.
- Research project coordination and support from project conception, through project development, to funding application, to project execution and to knowledge mobilization.
- Participation in a community of practice involving researchers, students and community practitioners committed to advancing scholarly knowledge that benefits the community.



CRP Strategic Goals

The CRP's main goals include:

- Increase the research capacity of all stakeholders by developing, sharing, and mobilizing infrastructure, resources, and expertise.
- Expand upon faculty research strengths and advance interdisciplinary and intersectoral research groups.
- Facilitate mutually beneficial research collaborations between researchers and community organizations.
- Advance research that responds to needs and aspirations of local communities.
- Provide unique community-engaged research, training, and professional networking opportunities for students.
- Leverage programs such as Mitacs and increase access to academic, community and government grants.

CRP Governance and Research Groups

The CRP is co-led by James Gillett, Associate Dean of Research and Grad Studies, FSS and Leora Sas van der Linden, CRP Program Manager and is governed by a Steering Committee comprised of McMaster and community partner representatives. The Steering Committee is responsible for advancing the strategic vision of the CRP, decision making and conflict resolution, identifying new opportunities and sharing best practices, supporting research projects between the university and community partners, guiding and promoting knowledge mobilization activities, and seeking opportunities to expand and sustain the CRP.

Steering Committee membership includes:



James Gillett

Associate Dean of Research and Grad Studies



Lisa Weaver

Director of Collections and Program Development,
Hamilton Public Library (HPL)



Leora Sas van der Linden

Manager, Community Research Platform



Violetta Nikolskaya

Senior Analyst, Programs and Advocacy, YWCA of Hamilton



Sue Phipps

Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Mental
Health Association Hamilton (CMHA)



Colina Maxwell

Executive Director, Centre 3 for Artistic and Social Practice

In addition to the Steering Committee, research groups affiliated with the CRP's four thematic areas (Mental Health, Social Engagement and Community Resilience, Gender and Intersectionality, and Arts-Informed Research) have emerged. Research groups are made up of interdisciplinary researchers, students, staff, and community practitioners. Membership shifts based on the interests and needs of those involved in ongoing collaborative projects. Below is a summary of research group involvement in the reporting year.



Mental Health (with CMHA)

Marisa Young, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

Ameil Joseph, Associate Professor, School of Social Work

Diana Singh, Post-doctoral Fellow, Sociology

Shaila Kumbhare, PhD, School of Social Work

Samantha Perrotta, PhD, Health, Aging and Society

Jeff Black, PhD, School of Social Work

Rachel VanEvery, PhD, Health Aging and Society

Sue Phipps, CEO, CMHA Hamilton

James Gillett, Associate Professor, Health, Aging and Society

Leora Sas van der Linden, Manager Community Research Platform



Arts-informed Research (with Centre 3)

Tara La Rose, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work

Carmela Alfaro-Laganse, Associate Professor, School of Arts

Colina Maxwell, Executive Director, Centre 3 for Artistic and Social Practice

James Gillett, Associate Professor, Health, Aging and Society

Leora Sas van der Linden, Manager Community Research Platform



Social Engagement and Community Resilience (with HPL)

Nicole Dalmer, Assistant Professor, Health, Aging and Society

Meridith Griffin, Associate Professor, Health, Aging and Society

Brian Detlor, Professor, DeGroote School of Business

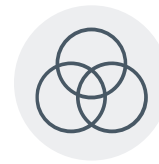
Kaitlin Wynia, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Health, Aging and Society

Felicity Niles, Undergrad, Health, Aging and Society

Lisa Weaver, Director, Collections and Program Development, Hamilton Public Library

James Gillett, Associate Professor, Health, Aging and Society

Leora Sas van der Linden, Manager Community Research Platform



Gender and Intersectionality (with YWCA)

Tina Moffat, Associate Professor, Anthropology

Karen Bird, Professor, Political Science

Jennie Vengris, Assistant professor, School of Social Work

Mary Vaccaro, PhD, Candidate, School of Social Work

Sara Adjekum, PhD, Health, Aging and Society

Grace Huang, Undergrad, Health Sciences

Isabel Dewey, MA, Candidate, Anthropology

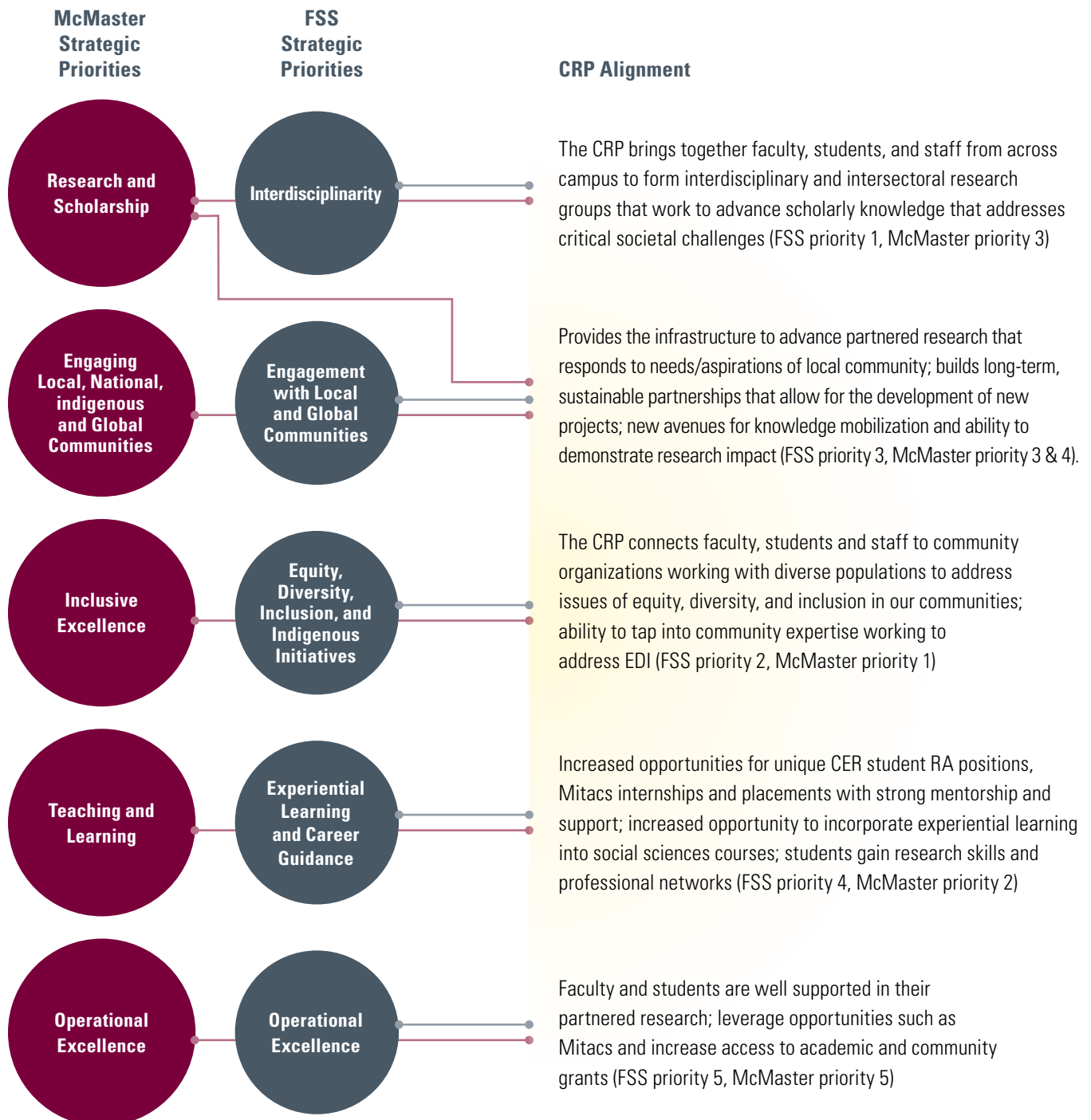
Violetta Nikolskaya, Senior Analyst, Programs and Advocacy, YWCA

Medora Uppal, Director of Operations, YWCA

James Gillett, Associate Professor, Health, Aging and Society

Leora Sas van der Linden, Manager Community Research Platform

CRP Alignment with FSS and McMaster Strategic Plans



CRP Highlights and Impacts

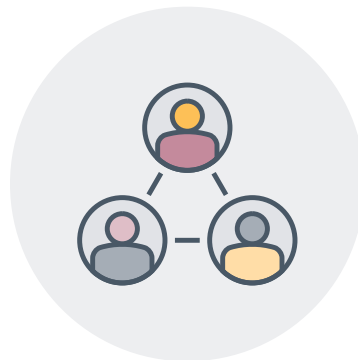
During the past year, the CRP has advanced work in the areas of Research, Training and Social Impact.



- **Adjunct position created** for one community practitioner, more to come.
- **Facilitated connections** to regional library systems to scale up projects.
- CMHA to partner on the development of a **Masters in Community Mental Health**

Research Advancements

- Recognition as a **Core Research Platform**.
- **University-level relationship with organizations** builds capacity, ensures sustainability, and makes it easier and more meaningful for faculty and students to engage in partnered research.
- Identified faculty working in the areas of mental health, arts-informed research, community engagement and gender equity and **brought them together to form interdisciplinary research groups** in collaboration with CRP partners.
- Involved **more than 25 researchers** over four Faculties in CRP projects.
- Initiated, developed, and/or advanced **18 collaborative research projects**.
- SSHRC Grants: 2 PEGs, 1 IG; Community and Government Grants: 1 Hamilton Community Foundation, 1 Public Health Agency of Canada (anticipated), 1 Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (anticipated); 4 Mitacs Internships.
- **Received \$45,000** through service contracts with community organizations.



Training

- Long term relationships built on mutual trust and benefit means organizations are more **willing to take on our students and create meaningful opportunities for them**.
- 4 Mitacs Internships for a total of **\$150,000 in research funding**.
- **Provided research and training opportunities** for 4 post-docs, 10 graduate students, 6 undergrad students, and 2 placement students.
- 2 students (1 grad, 1 undergrad) completed courses through involvement in CRP initiatives.

- **Created a Post-Doctoral Fellowship/Researcher** in Residence program with HPL (Mitacs funded)
- **Students received mentorship and training** from faculty, staff, and community practitioners.
- **Peer to peer learning and mentorship** among graduate students.



Social Impact

- Surveyed faculty members on their CER activity in 2019. Survey found that **more than 25% of respondents engaged in CER** in that year.
- **Developed the Mapping Community Engaged Research Partnerships** (<https://arcg.is/1PySD1>) interactive tool to highlight and share the FSS' CER work and to foster new interdisciplinary and intersectoral research partnerships.
- **Engaged and developed trusting relationships** with leadership and front-line representatives from key partner organizations in the Hamilton region.
- **Co-hosted a 'Call to Action' Forum on Reproductive Health, Pregnancy and Homelessness** in partnership with the YWCA.
- **Program Assessment and report provided to CMHA Hamilton** for the Intensive Supports Pilot project on housing and health supports for Hamilton folks with high acuity.



CRP Projects

The following funded projects were either initiated, supported, or advanced through the Community Research Platform:

SSHRC funded:

PEG: Toward the Development of a framework for research collaboration between public libraries and universities.

James Gillett, PI (\$24,055).

PEG: Emotions Matter: Skill Building, Emotional Resilience and Social Support for Care Workers.

Diana Singh, PI. (\$22,228)

Mitacs Internships:

Grief, Memorials, and Loss through COVID-19: Resources for caring while physical distancing.

Ameil Joseph (Supervisor) and Shaila Kumbhare (Intern) in collaboration with CMHA Hamilton (\$45,000).

Managing Mental Health: A Survey-Based Research Evaluation of a COVID-19 Emergency Mental Health Counselling Program.

Marisa Young (Supervisor) and Diana Singh (Intern) in collaboration with CMHA Hamilton (\$30,000).

Direct [Message]: Understanding Mediated Engagement in the Arts for Marginalized Older Adults in Hamilton, Guelph, and London, Ontario.

Tara La Rose (Supervisor) and Christina Vizio-Vanin (Intern) in collaboration with Centre 3 for Artistic and Social Practice (\$30,000).

Toward the development of a framework for research collaboration between public libraries and universities.

James Gillett (Supervisor) and Kaitlin Wynia (Intern) in collaboration with Hamilton Public Library (\$45,000).

Other funding:

Staying Home: Program Assessment of the Multi-sectoral Intensive Supports Pilot Approach to Finding and Securing Housing for Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness in Hamilton.

James Gillett, Samantha Perrotta, Jeff Black and Rachel VanEvery (\$3,500)

Loneliness & Mental Health Through COVID-19 and Beyond.

Ameil Joseph and Shaila Kumbhare. (\$12,000).

Call to Action on Reproductive Health, Pregnancy and Homelessness with YWCA Hamilton.

James Gillett, Grace Huang (\$5,000).

Nurturing Good Beginnings: Evaluating and Assessing the YWCA's community care program for new mothers/birthing parents.

Tina Moffat, James Gillett, Isabel Dewey and Sarah McDonald. (\$33,900).

Assessing the impact of the YWCA's Women's Enterprise Centre programs and services.

(\$10,000).



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SOCIAL SCIENCES