

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

APRIL 1, 2022 - MAY 31, 2023

A YEAR TO REMEMBER





In the spirit of *Truth and Reconciliation*, NOSM University respectfully acknowledges that our pan-Northern campus is on the homelands of First Nations Peoples.

The university buildings we occupy in Greater Sudbury and Thunder Bay are located on the territory of the Anishinabek Nation, specifically Atikameksheng and Wahnapiatae First Nations and Fort William First Nation.

Beyond a land acknowledgement, we understand that reconciliation is a practice.

We gratefully acknowledge the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who share their gifts and teachings with us so that we may better understand and honour their wisdom, and that of all of the traditional keepers of this land.

NOSM University will continue to practice reconciliation by listening, learning and fostering a culture of mutual respect and trust.

Introduction

This last year has carried us on an incredible journey of transformation and celebration. On April 1, 2022, NOSM University became Canada's only independent medical university. Then, the extraordinary news that the brilliant, nationally-lauded scholar-activist Dr. Cindy Blackstock would become the inaugural Chancellor. On May 26, 2023, Dr. Blackstock will be formally installed, and we will confer, for the first time as a University, degrees to the MD class of 2023.

The winds at Queen's Park have been blowing favourably in our direction, too, with NOSM University receiving the lion's share of the expansion positions announced by the provincial government. This means we can accept more MD students and residents into our programs. In fact, by 2028, through a gradual, incremental approach, we will offer a total of 108 seats, nearly doubling the capacity of our MD program; at the same time, we will almost double our postgraduate positions.

As you will read in our feature piece, "The Future Will See You Now," NOSM University has also attracted the support of some very astute and generous philanthropists in the last year. Their millions of dollars in gifts signal a new era for NOSM University, one defined by the next stage of our institutional maturation. Our evolution will continue to be marked by excellence, integrity, and ingenuity.

In the last year, our people have been promoted, awarded, and fêted; our students have learned, grown, and shown us by example what health equity in medicine can really mean. We have recruited our first Provost, Board of Directors, and Senate—exceptional people, one and all. And, though some of our partnerships have changed on paper, nothing has changed in our mutual resolve to work together toward a healthier North.

The entire NOSM University team, supported and guided by the executive leadership group, continues to amaze me. I cannot say enough how deeply grateful I am for everyone's efforts. This spring report is dedicated to the annual review of the University; I know you will read this and, like me, come away feeling impressed, inspired, and hopeful.

Miigwetch, thank you, marsi, merci,
Dr. Sarita Verma
President, Vice Chancellor, Dean and CEO
NOSM University

To view all
President's Reports,
please visit
report.nosm.ca.

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Editorial Team

Dr. Sarita Verma, **President, Vice Chancellor, Dean and CEO**
Joanne Musico, **Director, Communications and External Relations**
Danielle Barbeau-Rodrigue, **Director, Francophone Affairs**
Kimberley Larkin, **Manager, Communications**
Jason Lind, **Digital Media Specialist**
Tara Hawkes, **Graphic Designer**
Alexandra Poling, **Marketing Communications Officer**
Jessica Pope, **Public Affairs Strategist**
Caroline Cox, **External Relations Officer**



**ENABLERS: PEOPLE, RESOURCES,
INFRASTRUCTURE, RESILIENCE**

The Future Will See You Now

NOSM University has emerged as one of the most important and unique players in Canadian medical education—and donors are looking North.

In 2015, journalist and author Malcolm Gladwell tweeted, “If billionaires don’t step up, Harvard will soon be down to its last \$30 billion.”

The quip took aim at an historic \$400 million donation to Harvard University’s already-enormous endowment fund. Today, it is a fund worth a staggering \$50 billion.

Gladwell’s point is, in part, that giving to an educational institution with such a significant financial portfolio doesn’t exactly have the same impact as giving to one that is equally deserving but not as well established.

In the U.S. and Canada alike, endowments are almost entirely funded through philanthropic giving, and as an investment vehicle for universities, they are meant to yield a stable and growing source of income. They are absolutely critical to the success of universities for a number of reasons, not the least of which are student financial aid and academic research.

In the case of NOSM University, it has not had 100 years or more to build its well-deserved reputation, prestige, donor cachet, and an endowment fund worth billions. NOSM University only came into being a year ago.

That’s why it is both important and impressive that NOSM University has raised millions in the last year toward its own burgeoning Student Endowment Fund. As the youngest and perhaps most divergent player in the medical education space, visionary philanthropists are seeing value in our model and our results—and they are investing in our learners.

The Future Will See You Now is NOSM University’s awareness campaign to help raise the first \$50 million for our nascent Student Endowment Fund. The tagline plays on the old phrase, “the doctor will see you now,” but instead, alludes to Northern Ontario’s future doctors, and to the very future of medical education.

ENABLERS

Whether featured prominently in The Globe and Mail's Report on Business or in an ad at Billy Bishop Airport in Toronto, the message has clearly reached and resonated with donors, as has the hard work of NOSM University's Advancement team. One such donor, the FDC Foundation, entrusted NOSM University with a landmark gift of \$10 million in matching funds—and the foundation is based in southern Ontario.

"We are hoping this gift will ignite support from other donors to alleviate student debt and encourage more students to pursue careers as future health-care professionals in Northern Ontario," the FDC Foundation **noted**.

No matter where you're from, supporting NOSM University is an investment into the future of medical education in Canada—and beyond. Our distributed model is lean and delivers at the patient level. We know that by gathering local research data, we can establish clinical services directly linked to the immediate needs of the community, which is both right and more cost-effective. With vision and planning, this transformative model—supported by remarkable collaborations with the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), Indigenous and Francophone, remote, rural communities and allied health partners, along with scientists and clinicians in practice—is emerging as a cohesive ecosystem within which learners and communities will flourish.

With the highest admittance rate of Indigenous MD students in the country, NOSM University's work in and research with rural and remote and Indigenous communities will no doubt help to inform best practices across Canada and internationally. We are setting the health equity bar very high with our dedicated Centre for Social Accountability, and smart money knows that health injustice is an issue of which we all own a piece.

NOSM University dares to imagine a future with a strong health-care system without doctor shortage in Northern Ontario, and everyone has access to the culturally competent care they deserve, closer to home. We are exploring a future in which NOSM University will deliver new opportunities in research and education, and flexible learning experiences tailored to exactly what students want to achieve. We also imagine a future in which student debt-loads—roughly twice that of medical faculties across the country—are alleviated, so that new doctors don't have to decide between a bigger paycheck and a calling to serve the North. All of this starts with investing in NOSM University's students.

The future will see you now.

- The Future Will See You Now
- FDC Foundation makes historic \$10 million gift to support NOSM University students
- The Slight Family Foundation donates \$1 million to support BIPOC women in medicine
- Métis Nation of Ontario supports NOSM University students with \$515k bursary
- NOSM University receives \$500,000 gift from Marcel and Frances Labelle Foundation
- \$100,000 gift from John Carl MacIsaac Foundation for Nicolas Michael Farkouh Bursary



PLANNING: TRANSFORM HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES FORGING COMMUNITY

There are so many reasons to live and work in Northern Ontario. For physicians across the region, collegial atmospheres and close-knit communities help doctors feel appreciated and supported.

Five Northern Ontario docs discuss the support from colleagues and the community connections that shore them up.



Dr. Lily DeMiglio, Marathon

Dr. Lily DeMiglio, recipient of the 2022 NOSM University learner-nominated Teacher of the Year award, advises medical students to keep an open mind about rural practice. Dr. DeMiglio fell in love with the broad scope of work she could practise as a rural generalist: from inpatient care to the emergency room, to work in the clinic and with First Nations communities. She also enjoys being able to dedicate time to teaching and committee work and having a flexible schedule.

PLANNING

To adapt to the needs of her patients and the community, Dr. DeMiglio expands her skill set regularly—she is now a coroner, for example—and she recommends that others who practise as rural generalists embrace the opportunity to continue to learn.

“You’re not going to know everything. Over time, you do get that experience and when you don’t know, you can always phone a friend.”

That “phone a friend” mentality has shored Dr. DeMiglio up along the way, helping her to build personal resilience—and solve problems for patients.

“Medicine is so collegial. For me, a huge part of helping to sustain myself is reaching out to my medical school colleagues.”

NOSM University’s ongoing expansion will nearly double the number of MD students, growing the pool of trained physicians who may decide to call rural towns home. Students who want to practise as rural generalists will continue to be supported through the Rural Generalist complementary studies. Read more in the articles “**NOSM University Undergoes Historic Expansion**” and “**Innovating Curriculum**.”



Dr. Akila Whiley, Red Lake

When she was entering her fourth year of residency, **Dr. Akila Whiley’s** experience to that point had been in large urban settings, and the emphasis seemed to be on specializations—anything but rural generalism and family medicine.

“That really wasn’t what I wanted,” she says about weighing her options for the final year of her residency. “And so, I truthfully mapped out all of the places I could go... and I picked the furthest place on the map.”

That place was Red Lake. While the location took Dr. Whiley out of her comfort zone, she made a good impression. On her final day, a local doctor asked her to come back to Red Lake to practise.

“I hadn’t thought about it,” she recalls. “I got on the flight, and I left. And then I had just a really sinking feeling that I’d never come back. And so that was my sign. I wrote him back a week later and said, you know... I’m gonna be all in.”

Dr. Whiley says she finds fulfillment in caring for people in all stages of life. She loves working in a unique, close-knit community where people help and support one another. The community’s willingness to help was evident when, in her first three weeks of practice, Red Lake’s hospital had to be completely evacuated due to encroaching forest fires.

“It was just this remarkable group effort. There’s so many people I see and I’m reminded of our sense of connection because we went through that experience together.”



Dr. Adam Moir, Dryden

Dr. Adam Moir, rural generalist and NOSM University alumnus, says that when you work in a small town like Dryden, the whole community picks you up. Sometimes people will bring him blueberries, cookies, or homemade pickles. Other times, they will clean his driveway before he gets the chance.

“People show me that they appreciate me as a physician every single day,” he says. “It’s always nice to feel appreciated. Small communities do that by leaps and bounds. All that appreciation really nourishes my soul.”

Dr. Moir has learned to schedule time for self-care and family. He notes that health human resources challenges have been long-standing in Northern Ontario, and many communities have been in and out of crisis for a long time. Dr. Moir encourages learners to accept that reality and not be deterred, but also not make too many self-sacrifices because, he says, “staying healthy and well enables you to have a longer, more fulfilling career.”

Dr. Moir says he feels supported not only by the community, but also by rural physicians across the North.

“When we think about practising rural medicine, we tend to think that we’re isolated and that we don’t have a clinical network or clinical community. But the fact is, you’ve got a network that’s much broader. Those mentors and connections from across Northern Ontario really sustain you when you’re working in a rural setting.”



Dr. Robert Ohle, Sudbury

Dr. Robert Ohle had no intention of moving to Canada after medical school. Plans changed for the Dublin-born physician when he met his future wife, Dr. Sarah McIsaac. He followed his heart—and Dr. McIsaac’s residency placement—to Canada and ultimately to Sudbury, Ontario, where he chose to build a life, family, and medical career.

Dr. Ohle says living and working in Northern Ontario has offered the best of all worlds—a clean and green environment, affordable housing, and a vibrant career. “Practising in Northern Ontario, outside of major urban centres, has meant having leadership opportunities and a chance to make a real impact in the areas I am passionate about: research and education.”

Along with Dr. McIsaac, Dr. Ohle co-founded the Northern City of Heroes initiative, which aims to increase survival from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest through improved access to quality CPR training. The initiative has achieved significant, measurable results.

Dr. Ohle shared his secrets to managing the daily stresses of practising medicine: creating moments of joy and connection with others. He finds small moments of joy within each day, reflects on and appreciates them, and shares those moments with others. Sharing these moments and asking patients, “What has been the best part of your day?”, briefly takes patients out of a stressful environment. One example was asking an elderly couple in the ER how they met. “It brings such happiness for patients and families into a stressful encounter, and helps center my care on the person, not the illness.”



Dr. Jonathan DellaVedova, Sault Ste. Marie

For Dr. Jonathan DellaVedova, a pediatrician in Sault Ste. Marie and a member of NOSM University's inaugural class, the opportunity to practise in his hometown is both personally and professionally fulfilling. His passion shines through when he speaks about Northern Ontario.

"There's this feeling you get as you're driving North and the lanes on the highway start to fall away and there are fewer and fewer cars, and then the city turns into farms and then it turns into forest," says Dr. DellaVedova. "It just feels right—you're pointing North, and now you're home."

"There's a sense in the North there that this is where you belong, and always have belonged."

Dr. DellaVedova also appreciates the unique and diverse professional opportunities that keep his work fresh and engaging. For example, he was able to become an Assistant Professor and teach students in the first year of his practice—something he might not have been able to do in southern Ontario.

His top recommendation for medical students? Choose to practise somewhere with a positive work environment. He calls this a "big selling feature" for the Soo.

"It's a really positive climate, very collegial, very professional. I cannot say enough about the outsized impact that that climate makes on your professional satisfaction. If that's something you can find, you never let it go. And when you're shopping around for places to work, really put a lot of weight on the way that professionals interact with each other and the environment, because that will have a huge impact on your wellbeing."

- Visit nosm.ca for more information about the Rural Generalist Pathway.

COMMUNITY: ADVANCE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Two NOSM University Alumnae Bring Social Accountability to the Forefront

In 2022, NOSM University welcomed two familiar faces into Francophone and First Nations portfolios. **Dr. Jacinta Oyella** was named Site Director of the Family Medicine Remote First Nations Residency Stream in May, and in June **Dr. Mélanie Patrie** became the Francophone Education Lead for residency programs.



Dr. Jacinta Oyella

An alumna of the Family Medicine Remote First Nation Stream that she now leads, Dr. Oyella practises as a Community Physician

for Matawa Health Co-operative delivering comprehensive rural/remote First Nations primary health care. Dr. Oyella is a Clinical Lecturer and Preceptor at NOSM University and has acted as a competency coach for NOSM University residents. She completed medical school at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda.

The Remote First Nations Family Medicine Residency Stream reflects the university's social accountability mandate by teaching residents skills in comprehensive rural and remote family practice at distributed learning sites, and in urban centres including Dryden Regional Health Centre, Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre, and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. The stream came to be as a result of a 2017 Tripartite Partnership

Agreement (supported by the Ministry of Health) between the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Eabametoong First Nation, and Matawa First Nations Management, with the goal of preparing future family physicians to practise in First Nation communities in Northern Ontario. Dr. Oyella feels passionate about this mission. Above all, she embraces the importance of relationship-building based on trust.



Dr. Mélanie Patrie

Dr. Patrie is a proud Francophone who completed her MD and residency at NOSM

University. As a medical student, she was a member of the Francophone Reference Group as a student representative and is currently an Assistant Professor and physician facilitator for the French Language Clinical Skills sessions offered by Francophone Affairs Unit for MD students. She is a family physician with a busy clinical practice at the City of Lakes Family Health Team at the Chelmsford site. With a family practice that is mostly Francophone, she recognizes both the importance of offering French language medical services and the challenges that arise when this need is not met.

Dr. Patrie is motivated to work towards advancing the Francophone presence at NOSM University and within its residency programs.

Doing Good: NOSM University Students Immerse and Learn in Northern Ontario Communities

As a medical university founded with an explicit social accountability mandate, NOSM University challenges itself to make a difference and lead the transformation of health-care systems in Northern Ontario. Social accountability informs how students interact with communities across the wider pan-Northern campus. Students engage in advocacy efforts and community involvement that is grounded within communities under a true co-creation model. Through this, students are becoming leaders who can help to transform health-care systems and improve population health outcomes.

For **Logan Brennan**, fourth-year NOSM University medical student, social accountability meant contributing his skills and energy to community life beyond health care. During the summer of 2022, Brennan spent two weeks learning during a rural generalist elective in Marathon. Coincidentally, one of the high school volleyball coaches was hosting a volleyball camp in preparation for the coming season. Brennan—who has played at the varsity level and was a member of the Canadian national men’s volleyball team—offered to support the local team development in the evenings while he was on placement.

“Health care and education are the backbone of a community,” Brennan says. “Without stability, structure, and opportunity within these key pillars, it is difficult to foster and grow community. Marathon is blessed to have exceptional community members who have demonstrated and taught me what rural medicine and community are all about.”

For a **group of fourth-year NOSM University students**, the impetus for getting involved at a community level came from learning about the high rates of cannabis dependence in Northern Ontario. Northern Ontario has the highest rates of cannabis dependence in high school students across the province, according to **The Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey**, published by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in 2020.

The university students—now graduated from NOSM University—created a **video to educate youth about cannabis**. Targeted at youth aged 12-18, the video was created as a result of the university’s unique advocacy curriculum.

“We are hoping that our video answers questions that kids may have about cannabis, and facilitates open discussions,” says Dr. Kelsey Pitre. “Ultimately, if youth still opt to use cannabis, I hope this video will provide them with strategies to use it more safely.”

The group of students contacted public health units, regional harm reduction programs, and the Canadian Pediatrics Society in an effort to spread the word. The project was awarded the Pediatric Resident Advocacy Education Grant by Healthy Generations.

“Living and training in the North, you learn that meaningful change begins with intent and is driven by people who have a common goal,” says student Alannah MacLean. “We knew that reaching out to the greater Northern Ontario community would help get this video to youth who will benefit most from learning more about cannabis and harm reduction strategies.”

Dr. Pitre adds, “Our years at NOSM University have taught us to advocate for patients both at the bedside and beyond. We’ve learned to identify health disparities and find unique ways to try to address them in partnership with communities, and it has been an incredible learning experience.”

One annual NOSM University student project, a menstrual product drive, was born from a desire to combat health inequities by improving access to period products. **In its second year in 2022**, menstrual products were purchased for the fly-in community of Kingfisher Lake First Nation. The drive was led by Ashley Perreault and Lucie Ménard, medical students at NOSM University who serve in the elected position of Local Officers of Reproductive Health.

Currently, costs of menstrual products in this community are triple the cost of products purchased in urban centres or online.

“NOSM University has an important relationship with Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario, who provide students with invaluable learning opportunities throughout their time in medical school,” Perreault says. “As students who are dedicated to addressing the priority health concerns of the people and communities of Northern Ontario, we were focused on relieving the financial burden on those who menstruate.”

Currently, **fundraising is underway** for the 2023 menstrual period drive, which will benefit 120 people who menstruate in the fly-in community of Muskrat Dam First Nation. The project is being led by students Rebecca Bourdon and Brooklyn Ranta.

Dr. Sarah Newbery, Associate Dean of Physician Workforce Strategy at NOSM University, has been impressed over many years with the ways that medical students contribute to community life. “As medical students learn in communities, there are opportunities to which we, as community preceptors, can invite their participation—whether in sport, music, or local events,” she says. “The sharing of skills, and gifts of time and energy impact people and communities in such positive ways.”

NOSM University Recognized for Commitment to Northern Ontario’s Francophone Community

NOSM University was a **2022 recipient of the Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l’Ontario Award of Recognition** honouring community partners for their contributions and efforts to improve access to, and equity of, French-language services.

“This is an honour for which we are very grateful, and it’s one that tells me that NOSM University is on the right track,” says Dr. Sarita Verma, President, Vice-Chancellor, Dean, and CEO of NOSM University. “NOSM University has prioritized social accountability and health justice in everything we do. Simply, this means that the university must be thoughtful and responsive to communities and their health needs—particularly for the roughly 130,000 Francophones and French-speaking people in Northern Ontario.”

The university continues to expand its efforts to support Francophone medical students who will practise in French, as well as support Francophile and Anglophone medical students in recognising and providing linguistically and culturally sensitive care.

On behalf of the university, Dr. Verma thanked many Francophone contributors, supporters, communities, and partners. “To meet the needs of the Francophone community, we rely on solid partnerships with organizations like the Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l’Ontario. Merci, thank you for this recognition.”

Social Accountability Mandate Drives Work on Planetary Health

NOSM University understands that **planetary health is human health**, and that environmental justice and health equity are the ultimate goals. With this in mind, the Action Committee on Climate Change (ACCC) was established to provide advice to the President and Board of Governors about climate change and its impact on health in Northern Ontario. Chaired by Dr. Elaine Blacklock, the ACCC works with the Executive Group and the Board, in collaboration with other portfolios within the university, to identify, evaluate, and recommend opportunities and implementation strategies (where feasible), regarding the development of a comprehensive response to climate change.

To date, these activities have occurred:

- Our **Strategic Plan** identifies the commitment by NOSM University to “become a leader in internal practices that address climate change and environmental health” (Strategic Enabler 3, Investing in our Infrastructure);
- We declared 2021 to be our “Year of Climate Change and Social Justice.” In that year we also signed the **Okanagan Charter**, and we invested in research projects hosted by the Centre of Social Accountability that responded to climate change, social determinants of health, and building community and youth resilience;
- Major work on curricular renewal in both the MD program and in postgraduate programs is underway;

- We celebrated **Earth Day on April 21, 2023**. This event was also the focus of the **President’s Lecture Series in 2022** and featured an amazing panel devoted to the topic.
- NOSM University signed the AFMC **Academic Health Institutions’ Declaration on Planetary health**.

This year, we have established **NOSM University’s pledge for sustainable travel** and have joined the **Global Consortium on Climate Change and Health Education**. The Joint and Stipendiary Faculty Promotions Committee is suggesting mitigating climate change by allowing hybrid and virtual presentations to be counted towards promotions. In June 2023, NOSM University will be hosting the Summer Institute on Sustainable Health Systems with the **CASCADES**.

The ACCC’s vision is that NOSM University graduates are fully prepared to care for patients, to teach, to advocate for a sustainable low-carbon university and health-care systems, and to help create and lead the social mandate that will drive the enormous changes we urgently need here in Canada and globally.

Partnership and Advocacy are Impetus for New Global Health Initiative

Global health, an emerging initiative at NOSM University, aims to link expertise with inequities in Northern Ontario to similar global contexts across health professional education and research.

Dr. Tara Baron, Program Director of Pediatrics, and Dr. Emily Groot, Program Director of Public Health and Preventative Medicine, had the opportunity to travel with two PGME learners to the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) in Butaro, Rwanda, from September to October 2022. Drs. Baron and Groot call the experience “invaluable.”

Dr. Baron and a pediatric resident spent two weeks working with medical learners in Rwanda during their pediatric clinical rotation. “We were able to focus on teaching an approach to investigating and managing patients on the pediatric ward while working alongside local physicians. This allowed visiting faculty and residents to reciprocally learn about the Rwandan context while providing teaching support to the local faculty,” said Dr. Baron. “The UGHE students were a bright and engaged group who were keen to take advantage of all learning opportunities. They were truly a pleasure to work with! We all learned together as we encountered children with challenging medical issues.”

“The NOSM University social accountability mandate is similar to UGHE,” she continued, “and it was interesting to teach in an environment with similar values that also train physicians who will serve more rural and remote areas. The social accountability mandate is a very important part of NOSM University’s pediatric program and this experience really broadened our social pediatric curriculum.”

The trip resulted from an emerging part of NOSM University’s global health efforts—establishing partnerships with institutions around the world. Partnerships have the potential to open up opportunities for learners and faculty from both institutions, to grow research opportunities and collaborations, and to share local Northern Ontario expertise with others who live and work in contextually similar environments.

Currently, NOSM University is developing a framework for establishing new partnerships, and a few partnerships are already established, including UGHE, as well as the Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research at York University, The Network: Towards Unity for Health, and The Training for Health Equity Network. NOSM University also supports learners and researchers who wish to pursue opportunities in global health by offering support with pre-departure training and through a comprehensive international elective approval process.

NOSM University’s global health activities aim to link, in an equitable and reciprocal way, expertise with inequities in Northern Ontario to other similar global contexts across health professional education and research. Dr. Groot found these links to be critical. “A global pandemic is a reminder that public health and preventive medicine specialists need to understand and address the social and structural determinants of health around the world, and we’re thankful to UGHE for providing us an opportunity to teach in and learn about the Rwandan context,” she says.

“We look forward to continuing to work together in solidarity and reciprocity, and look not just to learn from urban academic centers, but to learn from other rural parts of the world.”



EDUCATION

NOSM University Undergoes Historic Expansion

This last year has carried NOSM University through an incredible season of change. On April 1, 2022, **we were proclaimed Canada's only independent medical university.** But that wasn't all. With the winds of Queen's Park blowing in our favour, NOSM University will undergo unprecedented growth. **In March 2022, a historic expansion to the number of medical seats was announced;** then, in April 2023, additional seats were announced. This means we can accept more MD students and residents into our programs. Through a gradual, incremental approach, we will offer a total of 108 seats, nearly doubling the capacity of our MD program; at the same time, we will go from 60 postgraduate positions to 123 by 2028.

According to NOSM University's estimates, more than 350 physicians are needed in the North. That number does not factor retirements that may take place over the next five years.

NOSM University's latest strategic plan, **The NOSM University Challenge 2025,** prioritizes health human resources planning as its first Strategic Direction. We will move forward with addressing the urgent physician workforce shortage, innovating health professions education, and strengthening research capacity while embedding social accountability throughout.

"This is another important step in transforming the health-care system in Northern Ontario to eliminate the gaps in health human resources and create equitable access to care," says Dr. Sarita Verma. "We cannot underestimate the impact that Northern Ontarians make when they pull together and advocate for change. I want to particularly acknowledge the Ontario Medical Association, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association and their members.

Municipalities, big, small and all, have had loud voices heard at Queen's Park."

As part of this growth, new residency programs have launched in **Addiction Medicine and Sport and Exercise Medicine** and a partnership supports **Obstetrics and Gynecology residents** who choose to live and work in Northern Ontario.

A collaboration between NOSM University and the University of Toronto's (U of T) Temerty Faculty of Medicine, the new U of T Obstetrics and Gynecology NOSM University Residency Stream will help meet the growing need for OB/GYN specialists across Northern Ontario. This program, based in Thunder Bay, will enable Obstetrics and Gynecology residency training to return to Northern Ontario through a combination of clinical rotations with U of T's accredited OB/GYN subspecialty training and academics.

Meanwhile, NOSM University is launching enhanced skills medical residency programs in Addiction Medicine and Sport and Exercise Medicine. Resident doctors who have completed a two-year family medicine program can now apply to a third year of family medicine training in the Addiction Medicine or Sport and Exercise Medicine program. Available to resident doctors from across Canada, the programs will help improve equitable access to health care for Northerners.

"By adding these fields of study to our residency programs, we are providing more learning opportunities for new family physicians to expand their expertise," says Dr. Rob Anderson, Associate Dean, Postgraduate Medical Education. "For Northern Ontarians, there are often barriers to accessing health care from specialists. Enabling family physicians to expand their scope of practice will benefit Northerners who are often required to travel to urban centres to gain access to Sport and Exercise Medicine or Addiction Medicine services."

NOSM University currently enrolls 74 MD students and 60 first-year residents per year.

Innovating Curriculum

From MD specializations and pilots to **medical physicists** and **rehabilitation professionals**, NOSM University programs train practitioners committed to improving health outcomes in Northern Ontario.

Indigenous Peoples' Health and Wellness Complementary Studies

The first of its kind in Canada, the Indigenous Peoples' Health and Wellness Complementary Studies program is designed to address the health-care needs of Indigenous peoples using community-engaged Indigenous teachings to enhance students' competency to provide safe, compassionate care. Part of an enhancement of the UME curriculum, eight first-year students have been admitted to the CS each fall. This is the second year of the Indigenous Peoples' Health and Wellness Complementary Studies.

In addition to their UME program requirements, students participate in experiential and participatory learning activities in Northern, rural, and remote contexts. Curriculum includes foundational teachings in Indigenous Knowledge and healing, mentorship with Indigenous physicians and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, trauma-informed care, interprofessional collaboration for Indigenous health, and advocacy and leadership.

Knowledge keepers, faculty, and students are creating a community of people who are connected through their passion for Indigenous health and wellness. It is hoped that the ripple effects of this specialization will go beyond those who are directly involved in receiving this training and their future patients, by helping to improve systems where graduates become leaders and advocates.

Francophone Curricular Initiative

Launched in September 2022, the Voie vers la médecine en français (Francophone Curricular Initiative) integrates dedicated learning experiences throughout the MD program that will contribute to preserving and solidifying Francophone students' cultural and linguistic identity, while they build their confidence in becoming competent Francophone physicians.

Students participating in the initiative will practise with patients and taking their histories French, learning medical terminology, and engaging in group learning sessions in French. Other experiences may include mentoring opportunities with practising Francophone physicians and priority access to clinical placements in Francophone settings.

The Voie vers la médecine en français also identifies Francophone faculty members who can provide guidance and ongoing mentorship to NOSM University medical students across the region. In parallel, both physician faculty and students can build a strong advocacy and leadership network in support of a sustainable approach to patient-centred and culturally safe care for all Francophones. The program targets the development of leadership skills needed to understand and influence health systems, and focuses on advocacy for Francophone patients and communities to identify unique challenges related to the delivery of French-language health services.

Rural Generalist Complementary Studies

Recently launched as an opportunity for students interested in rural generalism in the UME program, the Rural Generalist Complementary Studies provides enriched learning experiences for MD students who have a desire to become a rural generalist family physician. It forms the UME component of the **Rural Generalist Pathway**, which aims to align medical training with community needs and create a career for physicians that is appealing in the short- and long-term.

Through mentorship, targeted skills development, priority placements in rural communities, and opportunities to explore the complex and changing nature of and influences on rural practice, future physicians will learn and be prepared for what it takes to be a rural generalist family physician—physicians who provide comprehensive primary care as well as work in rural hospitals, ERs, and provide other enhanced services.

Students who take part in the Rural Generalist Complementary Studies will have an understanding of their role in communities and the ability to be agile and adapt to changing community needs.

A broad scope of practice, excellent clinical skills, the humility to work with and to understand community needs and to seek to collaborate are the keys to becoming a rural generalist. The program puts an emphasis on developing relationships and learning in community and clinical settings where graduates might someday choose to practise.

Rehabilitation professionals

When a patient is living with a chronic condition or has had an injury, rehabilitation professionals help return them to what is most important: participating in work, social, and recreational activities.

Rehabilitation disciplines include audiologists (AUD), dietitians, kinesiologists, nurses, occupational therapists (OT), physiatrists, physiotherapists (PT), psychologists, social workers, and speech-language pathologists (SLP).

Through funding from the Ministry of Health, the **Rehabilitation Sciences (RS) Program** at NOSM University works to increase the number of RS professionals working in Northern Ontario. The program currently coordinates more than 150 clinical placements each year across the North for learners enrolled in OT, PT, SLP, and AUD programs at McMaster University, Queen's University, the University of Toronto, Western University, and the University of Ottawa. Since the program was created, more than 700 learners have completed placements and more than 120 of these students are currently working in Northern Ontario.

Clinical placements are the biggest source of recruitment for new rehabilitation professionals in Northern Ontario. Despite efforts, recruiting rehabilitation professionals to the North continues to present a challenge. Collectively, there are currently more than **148 vacancies for RS professionals across Northern Ontario**, as tracked by NOSM University's Rehabilitation Sciences Program. To try and manage with the growing health human resource challenges and leverage the advantage of training local students, NOSM University has started initial discussions with the McMaster University School of Rehabilitation Science around the potential for satellite campuses of their OT and PT programs in Thunder Bay and Sudbury, and of their SLP program in Thunder Bay.

Medical Physics Residency Education Program

The Medical Physics Residency Education Program (MPREP) teaches the clinical application of medical physics with a focus on radiation oncology. Learners apply physics to the processes of radiation treatment, develop individualized patient radiation treatment plans, contribute to the computation of radiation doses, and verify the accuracy of radiation treatments. They also participate in quality assurance, radiation safety, equipment operation, and regulatory compliance.

A two-year joint program in partnership with Health Sciences North (HSN) and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC), MPREP prepares learners for a career in clinic, industry, or academia. Learners complete their clinical rotations at HSN and TBRHSC but can also visit other cancer centres to learn about specialized techniques in radiotherapy.

Research



In NOSM's first year as a university, we are proud of the collaboration across disciplines that fostered partnerships across Northern Ontario, nationally, and internationally. Notably, we celebrated the launch of the Centre for Social Accountability—a truly interdisciplinary research centre, and the only centre of its kind. With the help of partners, we built our research capacity within clinical settings and grew our ability to offer graduate-level training. Our research is enhanced by partnerships, such as the new research agreements signed with Lakehead University and Laurentian University. Our efforts support the priorities of our strategic plan and will work to innovate health professions education, advance social accountability, and transform health human resources planning.

Dr. David C Marsh

Vice Dean, Research,
Innovation and International Relations
NOSM University



The innovative research of NOSM University faculty shone at national and international conferences in 2022. Locally, the University hosted several events to foster collaboration and research networks for researchers from Northern Ontario that included Divisional Research Seminar Series, the Northern Health Research Conference, and Health Research Town Halls in collaboration with Laurentian University, Lakehead University, Health Sciences North, and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. These research events provide an opportunity for NOSM University researchers to work together and develop collaborative research that is important for Northern Ontario.

Dr. TC Tai

Assistant Dean, Research
NOSM University



2022 Research Annual Report: Reflections



Becoming a University



Setting the Foundation for Excellence: Dr. Cindy Blackstock Named NOSM University's First Chancellor

Inaugural Board of Governors, Provost and Vice President Academic also Announced

Dr. Cindy Blackstock, renowned Indigenous child and family rights activist and member of the Gitksan, was named NOSM University's inaugural Chancellor on November 24, 2022.

"It is an honour to have Dr. Cindy Blackstock serve as NOSM University's first Chancellor," says Dr. Sarita Verma, President, Vice-Chancellor, Dean, and CEO of NOSM University. "Dr. Blackstock embodies the values of social justice, respect, and integrity. As Chancellor of NOSM University, her tenacious, inspirational leadership and steadfast moral courage will set the tone for us as Canada's first independent medical university, and the only such institution in the country established with an explicit social accountability mandate."

Among her innumerable accomplishments, Dr. Blackstock is the co-founder and Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, and a Professor at McGill University. She begins a four-year term as Chancellor and will be installed at NOSM University's first convocation ceremony held on May 26, 2023.

"I understand the need for compassionate holistic health care, especially in rural and remote communities. Universal health care means that every person should have access to the health care they need," says Dr. Blackstock. "NOSM University is a major part of the solution and I'm honoured to accept this landmark appointment as Chancellor."

NOSM University has also announced its inaugural Board of Governors. Each governor brings important experience, skills, and a commitment to the critical work NOSM University does to improve the health and wellbeing of Northern Ontarians.

The new governors who began their terms on January 1, 2023 are:

- Craig Abotossaway
- Imran Bagha
- John Beaucage
- Cindy Blackstock
- Angela Carter
- Kristy Côté
- Mark Hartman
- Mark Hurst
- Nancy Jacko
- Virginia May Katt
- Ashley Larose
- Sue LeBeau
- Dawn Morissette
- Shemer Ratner
- Susan Soldan
- John P. Stenger
- Sarita Verma
- Joy Warkentin

Note: John Beaucage is the first of five Lieutenant Governor in Council appointees.

"I am personally delighted to welcome such a strong group of new governors, and I look forward to serving with each of them in the coming year," says incoming Chair Joy Warkentin.

Adding to this exceptional leadership, on February 1, 2023, **Dr. Céline Larivière** joined NOSM University for a five-year term as its inaugural Provost and Vice President Academic.

In this role, Dr. Larivière is responsible for institutional planning and academic administration of all education programs involving students, members of Senate, governance and academic committees, and academic programs. She will lead the conceptualization, development, implementation, and continuous improvement of academic programs and services.

Dr. Larivière is a Laurentian University alumna and has a long-standing interest in the area of exercise science and human physiology. She pursued doctoral studies in Physiology at the University of Ottawa between 1994 and 1999 then completed post-doctoral training for a period of two years at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute. She has extensive administrative and educational leadership and previously served as the Interim Provost and Vice President, Academic, Dean of the Faculty of Education and Health, and Dean of the Faculty of Health at Laurentian University.

"I am honoured to join NOSM University at this pivotal time in its history," says Dr. Larivière. "The opportunities for innovation, discovery, and academic and clinical excellence are truly inspiring, and I look forward to championing these initiatives as we work to improve health equity in Canada."

To help establish effective governance in shaping what it means to be an independent medical university in Canada, a new Senate was installed in April 2023.

"We will continue to listen, learn, and work hard to cement NOSM University locally, nationally, and internationally as a major part of the solution" says Dr. Verma. "This is a momentous time in our short history and I am excited about the future. We are setting the foundation for an incredible future in health professions education."

Awards and Promotions

Awards

(January 1 - April 25, 2023)

There are many outstanding faculty, learners, and staff at NOSM University who make a difference in their community. Miigwetch, merci, and thank you for your ongoing work and commitment.

- **Dr. Emmanuel Abara**, Associate Professor, received the 2023 Rural Heart Award from the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (SRPC).
- **Dr. Birubi Biman**, Associate Professor, is awarded NOSM University's Academic Leader Award.
- **Dr. Cindy Blackstock**, NOSM University's Chancellor, has been named a finalist for the 2023 World's Children's Prize (WCP).
- **Dr. Julie Boucher**, Assistant Professor, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Community Champion Award.
- **Dr. Catherine Cervin**, Professor, will be bestowed the title of Professor Emeritus at NOSM University's inaugural convocation on Friday, May 26, 2023.
- **Dr. Roderick Cheung**, Assistant Professor, received the 2023 Rural Service Award from the SRPC.
- **Dr. Bruce Cook**, Associate Professor, received the 2023 Rural Service Award from the SRPC.
- **Kathryn Culliton** is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Learner Scholarly Activity Award.
- **Dr. Hazem Elmansy**, Associate Professor, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Clinical Scholar Award.
- **Dr. Yvon Gagnon**, Assistant Professor, received the 2023 Lifetime Member Award from the SRPC.
- **Dr. James Goertzen**, Professor, received the 2023 Physician Clinical Teachers' Association (PCTA) Award and the 2023 Lifetime Member Award from the SRPC.
- **Dr. Tahereh Haji**, Paediatrics resident, is the recipient of the 2023 Professional Association of Residents of Ontario (PARO) Resident Teaching Award.
- **Dr. William Hettenhausen**, Associate Professor, received the Canadian Dental Association's Distinguished Service Award.

- **Sarah Hunt**, medical student, is the recipient of the 2023 PARO Citizenship Award.
- **Dr. Kirsten Jewell**, Assistant Professor, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Medical Educator Award.
- **Dr. Mike Kirlaw**, Assistant Professor, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Honorary Alumni Award.
- **Sue LeBeau**, Member, NOSM University Board of Governors, attained Fellowship status with the Canadian College of Health Leaders.
- **Joe Lipinski**, NOSM University's first Director of Finance, was posthumously awarded the inaugural Administration Award by the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC).
- **Dr. Michelle Lutsch**, resident, came in second place in the Resident Grand Rounds competition at the Lower and Upper Canada Anesthesia Symposium 2023.
- **Dr. Lorrilee McGregor**, Assistant Professor, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Scholar Award.
- **Dr. David McLinden**, Associate Professor, received the 2023 Rural Long Service Award from the SRPC.
- **Dr. Chris Meilleur**, Assistant Professor, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Community Champion Award.
- **Dr. Florence Morriello**, Internal Medicine resident, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Learner-Nominated Teacher Award and the 2023 PARO Excellence in Clinical Teaching Award.
- **Dr. Christopher Mushquash**, Professor, was awarded the 2023 Canada Gairdner Momentum Award.
- **Dr. Laura Noack**, Assistant Professor, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award.
- **Dr. Robert Nugent**, Assistant Professor, received the 2023 Lifetime Member Award and the Rural Service Award from the SRPC.
- **Dr. Eliseo Orrantia**, Professor, received the SRPC's 2023 Rural Community Impact Award.
- **Dr. Martin Papineau**, Assistant Professor, received the 2023 Rural Service Award from the SRPC.
- **Dr. August Pierik**, resident, came in first place in the Resident Grand Rounds competition at the Lower and Upper Canada Anesthesia Symposium 2023.
- **Dr. Lacey Pitre**, Assistant Professor, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Clinical Teacher Award.
- **Jamie Thompson**, medical student, received the CAME 2023 Rising Star – Certificate of Excellence Award.
- **Dr. John Tuinema**, Assistant Professor, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Rising Star Alumni Award.
- **Idorenyin (Idy) Udoeyop** received the CAME 2023 Rising Star – Certificate of Excellence Award.
- **Dr. Darryl Vance**, Assistant Professor, is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Faculty Mentorship Award.
- **Dr. Kathleen Walsh**, resident, received the CAME 2023 Rising Star – Certificate of Excellence Award.
- **Taylor Wilkins** is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Learner Peer Teaching Award.
- **Dr. Kaitlyn Zugic** is awarded NOSM University's 2023 Learner Advocate/Leader Award.

Faculty Promotions

NOSM University is proud of our exceptional faculty. Distributed throughout the North, our faculty prepares learners for the unique challenges of delivering quality health care in Northern, rural, and remote settings. This year, many of the faculty who were promoted to Associate Professor are NOSM University alumni. Congratulations on your accomplishments and promotions!

Dr. Catherine Cervin will be bestowed the title of Professor Emerita at NOSM University's inaugural convocation on Friday, May 26, 2023.

Professor

- **Dr. Rony Atoui**, Full Professor
- **Dr. Lee Toner**, Full Professor
- **Dr. Barbara Zelek**, Full Professor

Associate Professor

- **Dr. Dominique Ansell**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Mike Franklyn**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Diana Noseworthy**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Lakyntiew Aulakh**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Meghan Garnett**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Robert Ohle**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Linda Bakovic**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Mohammad Reza Golrokhian Sani**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Elrasheed Osma**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Ghazala Basir**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Emily Groot**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Atoosheh Rohani**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Pankaj Bhatia**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Mohammed Fawsi Khalil Ibrahim**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Hadi Shojaei**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Rya Boscariol**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Justin Jagger**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Mohammed Shurrab**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Teresa Bruni**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Ahmed Kotb**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Sean Sullivan**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Scott Cassie**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Sarah McIsaac**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Jason Sutherland**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Cheryl Clayton**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Sean Moore**, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Petros Zazos**, Associate Professor

