

PRESIDENT'S REPORT  
JUNE 1, 2023 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

EQUALITY



EQUITY





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

In this report, we devote the conversation to the ways in which NOSM University is addressing health equity. As defined by the World Health Organisation, “health equity is achieved when everyone can attain their full potential for health and well-being.” To achieve health equity we must eradicate unfair, preventable and treatable health differences between people, groups and regions. NOSM University—through its social accountability mandate—is committed to achieving health equity for Northern Ontario.

At the core of NOSM University is a conviction that everyone, regardless of circumstance or geography, deserves the dignity of fair access to health-care practitioners who are culturally competent, understand the realities of living in the rural and remote North, and lead with compassion and integrity. We know that effective and fair health promotion comes down to access, equity, community engagement, and human rights.

With the establishment of its Centre for Social Accountability in 2021, NOSM University is reaching beyond its founding commitment to being socially accountable in education and research programs and is quickly earning a reputation as a leader in research, community engagement, social justice and health equity.

Most recently, NOSM University has attracted the support of forward-thinking philanthropists James and Louise Temerty, founders of the Temerty Foundation. Their generous \$10 million gift will transform the future of medical education. In recognition, our flagship Centre for Social Accountability will be renamed the Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity.

The Centre will be named in honour of Dr. Gilles Arcand, the late brother of Louise Temerty. Dr. Arcand was a physician with a deeply-held belief in the importance of health equity, rural medicine, and serving marginalized communities—values reflected by the Centre. Dr. Arcand practised medicine in northern Quebec prior to his death in 1975.



Health equity is the cornerstone of our work, and this report highlights some of our progress. In addition to our feature piece on the Temerty Foundation's investment, you will read about NOSM University's recognition of Indigenous learners, learner advocacy for Black patient health equity, outstanding efforts to recruit physicians to Northern communities, and how we are working to improve experiences for Francophone medical learners and patients.

I am grateful to the entire NOSM University team who works tirelessly to achieve our mission of improving health equity in Northern Ontario. I hope that this report inspires you and leaves you invigorated to continue in our mission.

Miigwetch, thank you, marsi, merci,

**Dr. Sarita Verma**

President, Vice Chancellor, Dean and CEO  
NOSM University

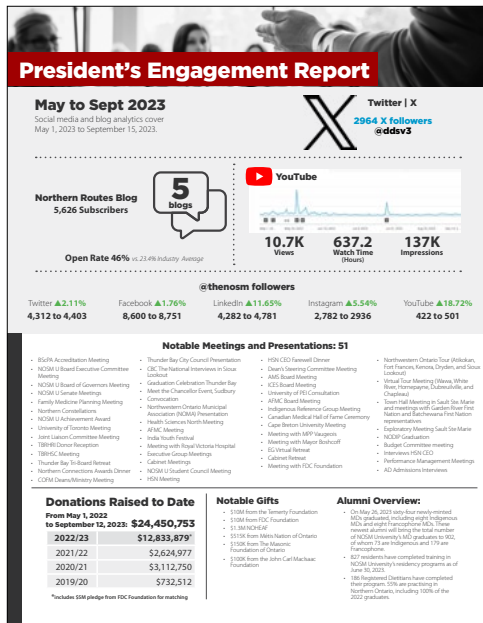
To view all President's Reports,  
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**[report.nosm.ca](https://report.nosm.ca)**



**To learn more about the outstanding research taking place at the Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity, read the 2022-2023 Annual Report.**

# President's Performance Goals

- Complete the fourth year of Strategic Plan: Metrics on all 5 Strategic Directions.
- Establish financial sustainability and resolve base budget deficit.
- Complete the \$50 million “The Future Will See You Now” fundraising strategy.
- Resolve issues regarding campuses at Laurentian and Lakehead Universities.
- Complete bargaining of OPSEU Collective Agreement with Unit 1.



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## Strategic Enablers: People, Resources, Infrastructure, Resilience

NOSM University has made strategic investments in our people, resources and infrastructure by living the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion; encouraging creativity; and supporting the well-being of the NOSM University community. Investment in people, resources and infrastructure are the enabling elements of the Strategic Plan and are critical to our success. Importantly, people are the foundation of our work.

NOSM University learners are major contributors to the social accountability mandate. With 27 per cent self-identified Francophone and 16 per cent self-identified Indigenous students entering our 2023 MD class, we exceed all measures of equity and diversity for medical schools.

### The statistics for the entering 2023 MD class are as follows:

Total admitted  
**79 (1 MMTP stream student)**

Average Age  
**24**

Average GPA  
**3.77**

- **21 or 27% - self-identified Francophone** admitted applicants (26% in 2022)
- Of the 21 Francophone admitted applicants, 16 applied through the **Francophone Admission Stream**.
- **13 or 16% - self-identified Indigenous** admitted applicants (16% in 2022)
- Of the 13 Indigenous admitted applicants, 11 applied through the **Indigenous Admission Stream**.

The rurality statistics do not include MMTP as the context was not taken into consideration. Therefore, these statistics reflect the 78 seats.

**37 or 48%**

Urban Northern Ontario  
(47% in 2022)

**33 or 42%**

Northern Ontario Rural  
(44% in 2022)

**5 or 6%**

Rural Southern Ontario or Rural Rest of Canada  
(8% in 2022)

**3 or 4%**

Urban Southern Ontario or Rest of Canada  
(Indigenous Applicants)  
(1% in 2022)



## Fostering a culture of philanthropy and advancement

As Canada's first-ever independent medical university, NOSM University is doing everything it can to help marshal doctors to where they're needed most.

As a part of our strategy, we've identified the need to lighten the tuition load for our students, and even the playing field for Northern learners. NOSM University students graduate with twice the debt of students at other medical schools in Canada. It is not because we are more expensive: it's because we recruit from the North, for the North, and typically, people in the region do not have access to the same financial and social means as students in the south. In 2022, we committed to raising the first \$50 million for NOSM University's Student Endowment Fund.

Thanks to the vision of FDC Foundation who gave NOSM University \$10M to match every donation for student financial aid, we have successfully attracted new donors and re-engaged lapsed donors to achieve \$20,107,175 in endowments. In addition, NOSM University has received its endowments previously held at Laurentian University which brings the first \$50M initiative to over \$34M. We expect that the endowments from Lakehead University will flow soon, and this will take us very close to achieving our target.

Although our plan is to raise \$50M in endowments, the momentum garnered by FDC Foundation's matching program generated much more interest in giving to NOSM University. As a result, we are delighted to see a total of \$24,450,753 raised since

May 1, 2022, when we launched *The Future Will See You Now* initiative.

**Total Gifts raised since May 1, 2022: \$24,450,753**

**Learner Awards and Bursaries: \$21,342,495**

**Other Areas of Support: \$3,108,258**

- Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity
- President's Visionary Fund
- Research Fund
- Indigenous Pathway
- CampMed
- Library Fund
- Student Emergency Fund

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 are alleviated, so that new doctors do not 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. All of it helps to improve health equity.

# In the Spotlight



## Portraits honour the stories of Indigenous MD graduates

At NOSM University's inaugural convocation ceremony on May 26, 2023, and as a recipient of the CIBC Indigenous Learner Leadership Award, Dr. Ryan McConnell was presented with a striking portrait by Anishinaabe and Kanienkehaka artist, Elliott Doxtater-Wynn, a member of Bay of Quinte Mohawk who grew up in Six Nations of the Grand River. The portrait is large—four feet by three feet—and incorporates imagery from the graduate's personal stories.

Each year, two self-identified Indigenous learners are selected as recipients of the CIBC Indigenous Learner Leadership Award. Each is provided with \$20,000 and a professional development budget and supported them with networking resources during their fourth year of MD studies.

"It was an honour to receive the CIBC Indigenous Learner Leadership Award and the portrait," says

Dr. McConnell, who, like Doxtater-Wynn, is a member of Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. "Although there was such a great sense of community growing up and so much support at home, I think a lot of Indigenous kids don't see medicine as a pathway. Being selected for the Indigenous Learner Leadership Award was icing on the cake and is something for which I'm very proud of and grateful."

Artist Doxtater-Wynn also says that he felt "honoured" to be involved. He wanted the artworks to celebrate the graduates. "It's a major accomplishment for an individual to become a doctor," he says. "Thinking of the grandeur of what their accomplishment was, I wanted to create something that could be an heirloom, and something that would reflect their story when they go into their own practice. I felt that the best way to honour the students for their achievements was to do something on a large scale."



With a background in Indigenous storytelling, Indigenous knowledge, and education, Doxtater-Wynn conducted interviews with both physicians prior to painting their portraits. Doxtater-Wynn also researched and incorporated teachings specific to the graduates' heritages; for Dr. McConnell, these included the History of Six Nations, Dish with One Spoon Wampum, Kanienkahaka, Tree of Peace, The Great Law, and The Eclipse and the 50 Chiefs.

Dr. McConnell says he finds the inclusion of his story to be meaningful: "For me, the most special part is the integration of my family. Along the bottom of the painting Elliott was able to integrate photos of my dad and I, my mom and I, and of my siblings. That personal touch was appreciated. There are also

pieces of symbolism that represent my community. Elliott was able to integrate the hydro lines that are in our backyard and the shoreline of the Bay of Quinte."

Dr. McConnell will complete a Family Medicine Residency. "Being an Indigenous physician is something I don't take for granted. I hope I can be a role model for kids in my community and other Indigenous kids across Canada. I think more Indigenous representation in medicine is a good thing. I hope I can be part of a culture of change," Dr. McConnell says.



The **CIBC Indigenous Learner Leadership Award** was established in 2021 to recognize fourth-year MD students who have demonstrated leadership qualities within the Indigenous community at NOSM University. It is part of a \$150,000 donation from CIBC to promote and recognize Indigenous learner leadership and mentorship.

Dr. Tara Wilson from Constance Lake First Nation was also honoured with a portrait. **Wilson and Doxtater-Wynn spoke with CBC Radio about the award and the artwork.**



## Building a culture of wellness, respect, and equity

NOSM University fosters inclusiveness by supporting an environment that embraces differences in staff, faculty and learners and respectfully creates value from the differences to leverage talent and foster both individual and organizational excellence. We are creating a climate where learners, faculty, staff, and patients can expect the highest standards of respect, kindness and professional collegiality and civility. By embracing and learning from our differences—race, gender, abilities, backgrounds, beliefs, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and our infinite number of inherent and acquired traits—we truly become inclusive.

As part of this work, the Black Medical Students' Association of Canada (BMSAC) and the Black Physicians of Canada are organizations that NOSM

University supports and endorses to address racial discrimination and underrepresentation in health-care education. Our advocacy takes an intersectional approach to developing a diverse health-care community in which Black medical students, physicians and health-care providers can thrive and feel safe. NOSM University has scholarships such as the Slight Family Foundation's entrance scholarship for BIPOC women—including transgender and non-binary people; financial support for learners to attend annual general meetings; and representation at events. We are proud that Brienne Olibris will be the first NOSM University medical student to serve on the BMSAC Executive Council as Director of Student Affairs.

# In the Spotlight



## 'From my heart'

### Meet Chantae Robinson, medical student and champion of Black-owned business in the North

Chantae Robinson has one word for you: “love.”

“Everything that I do is an expression of love for others,” says Chantae, before heading back into the operating room.

The third-year NOSM University medical student—born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica—moved to Sudbury at the age of 16. She is the current president of the Afro-Heritage Association of Sudbury (AHA). Among many other things, AHA manages a program funded by FedNor called the Northern Ontario Black Economic Empowerment Program (NOBEEP), which serves to encourage and support Black entrepreneurs and Black-owned businesses in the North.

“One of the things I’ve noticed coming from Jamaica is that a good lifestyle was much more challenging to achieve in Jamaica,” says Chantae. “There is a lot of poverty there. When I came to Sudbury and I saw the abundance of resources in Canada, I immediately started to appreciate the opportunities, but also to see the contrast.”

“Poverty leads to poor health,” says the doctor-in-training. “What we aim to do with NOBEEP is empower people to get themselves into a position

where they can sustain their lives. When a person is optimizing their gifts and time, their overall wellbeing is improved.”

This holistic approach to health care parallels Chantae’s personal philosophy on life.

“For me, the work I do is from my heart,” she says. “How I view humanity and our duties to each other is that we’re here in this world as a community, all of us. The more that we can help each other, the more we uplift each other, the more we work according to love, the better everyone will be.”

As for her future career path, Chantae aspires to be a general surgeon working in a Northern community, where, she says, “I can engage not only in health care, but also in other areas of community development that I am passionate about. Northern Ontario is the ideal environment to fulfill these purposes.”

NOSM University learners and alumni are internationally recognised for their outstanding commitment to advocacy, health equity, and social accountability. The work of these exceptional leaders—like Chantae—is rooted in, and co-created with, community.



## Transform Health Human Resources Planning

One of NOSM University's primary efforts to address the health inequities in Northern Ontario is our transformative approach to the planning and delivery of workforce supply to reduce the gaps in Northern Ontario Health human resources. A total of 902 MD students have graduated since NOSM University's first convocation ceremony in 2009 (73 Indigenous and 179 Francophone) as well as 827 residents from nine residency programs. Considering NOSM University graduates have only been practising for 12 years or less, the impact in Northern Ontario has been impressive with 50 per cent of graduates choosing family medicine (compared to 23 per cent in Canada) and a majority staying in Northern Ontario to practise after certification.

Despite our efforts, we continue to struggle with physician shortages in Northern Ontario—a major issue as communities face Emergency Room shortages and closures, government cutbacks,

burnout, and a high percentage of impending retirements. There is no question, health care in Northern Ontario is in danger. You can read more about it in the call for action by the OMA and Ontario College of Family Physicians: **Immediate Action is Needed to Support Northern Ontario Family Doctors Working to Keep Emergency Rooms on the Brink of Closure Open.**

At NOSM University, we continue to do our part with laser focus. We train people in the North, for the North, and we have a successful model of recruitment of physicians from other parts of Canada.

# In the Spotlight



## Two Northern Ontario communities share successes with recruitment

**Sault Ste. Marie and Sioux Lookout are great places to work—and the word is getting out**

Dr. Mara Boyle didn't originally think that her career would lead her to family medicine—or to Sioux Lookout. Plans changed when her third year of NOSM University's MD program brought her to the small town, four hours north of her hometown of Thunder Bay.

"I didn't really want to be a family physician when I arrived in Sioux Lookout in my third year. I thought that I was going to become a specialist," Dr. Boyle explains. "One of the aspects of working in Sioux Lookout is that you practise a broad scope of family medicine. I found it difficult to think about putting myself into a specialty after my Comprehensive Community Clerkship. That's been a big driver for my career; why I chose family medicine, and why I returned to Sioux Lookout, first for residency and then to practise."

Dr. Boyle is not alone. Of the 11 physicians contracted at Sioux Lookout's Hugh Allen Clinic, seven are former residents. Six physicians—more than half of the doctors at the clinic—completed a NOSM University residency in the community.

Hugh Allen Clinic Manager, Linda McNaughton, cites residents as the single greatest success story for local physician recruitment, and she points out the positive experiences that residents often have.

"I think our success can be attributed to the variety of roles and the opportunity to be flexible with scheduling and preferred medical practice. The work in the clinic is very well supported by experienced long-term support staff and seasoned mentors with over 30 years of experience. Being able to walk down the hall to get advice and share experiences is very rewarding," McNaughton says.

"One of the special things about Sioux Lookout—and it is immediately apparent—is that the physicians really are a community," she says. "Everyone holds each other up. The very strong collegial environment was a huge draw, and it made a big difference in my transition from residency to practice. If I needed help in the middle of the night, I always knew there was someone who would pick up the phone."



This strong sense of community extends beyond work. Dr. Boyle notes that her personal and professional lives have merged: the physicians get together regularly, and their children have become friends. “It’s a very vibrant physician community,” she says.

Like Dr. Boyle, Dr. Allison Webb in Sault Ste. Marie is a family physician whose practice includes obstetrics. Dr. Webb, too, is a NOSM University alumna who completed both her Comprehensive Community Clerkship and her residency in the community where she now lives.

“During my Comprehensive Community Clerkship, my first impression was that—professionally—Sault Ste. Marie was very supportive to work in,” Dr. Webb says. “Students were treated like real people, our time was respected, and everyone appreciated that we were there to learn. The staff were happy, and everyone I talked to liked working here. It seemed like a good place to practise, with lots of collegial support. I had a very positive experience.”

Although Dr. Webb met her husband in Sault Ste. Marie, it wasn’t a given that they would stay there. She says that she chose Sault Ste. Marie for her residency and career because she felt supported to work, learn, and grow in her practice, and because the city had a lot to offer.

Personal and professional lives are both major factors in where physicians decide to live and work, according to Carrie Stewart, Manager of Physician Recruitment and Retention at Sault Area Hospital. Local recruitment efforts are led by a recruitment and retention committee and are based on a tri-party agreement funded by the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Sault Area Hospital, and the Group Health Centre.

“Actions that the city takes—such as developing downtown, events, music, and restaurants, mountain bike trail expansion—all help bring doctors to Sault Ste. Marie. Our coordinated city-wide effort allows us to showcase our whole community, different practice options, and how our community is supportive and welcoming,” Stewart says.

Stewart’s job involves keeping connections to those completing medical education from Sault Ste. Marie as well as attracting physicians from across Ontario, nationally and even internationally. Prospective physicians’ community visits are individually tailored based on professional as well as community needs. Visits often include options for spousal employment, schools, daycare, recreational activities, and personal interests of the entire family.

“If I had to say there’s a secret sauce to recruitment, it’s open and honest communication with physicians,” she says. “It’s a long process of building connections to make sure the entire family is supported. It doesn’t happen overnight.”

Some of the community’s greatest success comes from a placement very early in medical school, years before learners start their residency or practice: the NOSM University Summer Studentship Program. This program is often students’ first clinical experience and is open to first- and second-year medical students, as well as learners studying in a wide variety of medical fields, including nursing, rehabilitation studies, medical radiation, lab technicians, dieticians, midwifery, and respiratory therapists. For medical students in Sault Ste. Marie, it aims to offer diverse learning, including clinical exposure in both hospital and community placements such as emergency room and ambulance ride-alongs.

And it's working. Stewart says learners placed in the city often come back to Sault Ste. Marie again and again for medical rotations. Over the last 20 years, 202 physicians have been recruited to the community. Impressively, 23 per cent have completed NOSM University's Summer Studentship Program.

A host of other options, including clerkships, electives, residency spots, and core rotations, also bring medical learners to the community. These options are central to recruitment, Stewart says. Over half of the 202 physicians recruited completed training in Sault Ste. Marie as part of a medical rotation.

Despite these successes, physician recruitment and retention remain a challenge in Northern Ontario.

"The challenges for recruitment are now so great that it is all hands-on deck," say McNaughton. She points out that, while the Sioux Lookout Regional Physicians Services Inc. is the regional lead on recruitment, the Hugh Allen Clinic does much of its own recruiting.

Dr. Boyle agrees that recruitment is a challenge and says that it was largely local physicians who recruited her to Sioux Lookout. "Doctors end up taking on a recruiting role and chatting with residents and friends," she says. "Everyone has such a varied practice, and there was lots of assistance in helping me envision what I wanted my practice to be."

"To do this alone would be very difficult. I'd suggest going with a community-wide effort and building that relationship with NOSM University and bringing as many learners as you can. Create that warm welcome within the medical community and that will be your best marketing. They will be back, and they'll spread the word," says Stewart.

### Sioux Lookout by the numbers

**42 contracted physicians** (including 3 surgeons, 1 infectious disease, the rest family medicine)

**30 of those physicians** underwent training after the creation of NOSM University in 2005.

Of those 30 physicians, **77 per cent completed at least some portion of their training through NOSM University** (including medical school, residency, PGY3 year, visiting electives).

Of the 23 physicians who reside in Sioux Lookout, **82 per cent completed at least some portion of training through NOSM University.**

**More than 860,000km<sup>2</sup>** and over 80 per cent of Ontario's landmass, Northern Ontario has some of the worst health indicators in Canada

The health-care needs of the Northern population are complex, having the most vulnerable, unhealthy populations of any geography in Ontario.

People in Northern Ontario have a shorter life expectancy, the highest rates in the province for opioid addictions, mental health, cardiac disease, cancer, and diabetes. We also have an aging population and have significantly less access to health care than most of Canada. In addition, a high number of far north and remote First Nations communities continue to face longstanding food insecurity, boil water advisories, and high rates of chronic diseases.

NOSM University, through its research and advocacy has been addressing this problem with government, the public and through fundraising.



## Temerty Foundation makes amazing investment in health equity

The Temerty Foundation, established by James and Louise Temerty, has made a \$10 million gift to support NOSM University medical students and to advance and grow social accountability and health equity initiatives. In recognition of this transformational gift, NOSM University's Centre for Social Accountability will be renamed the Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity.

Established in 2021 as the Centre for Social Accountability, it was born of an immutable conviction: that everyone, regardless of circumstance or geography, deserves the dignity of equal access to health-care practitioners who are culturally competent, understand the realities of living in the rural and remote North, and lead with compassion and integrity.

Dr. Gilles Arcand was Mrs. Louise Temerty's brother, a physician who, among other things, practised rural medicine in Northern Quebec. He was dedicated to serving marginalized communities before his death in 1975.

The newly named Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity is the only one of its kind in Canada. It is a visionary, multidisciplinary venture, dedicated to the improvement of health and wellness in Northern Ontario. Through policy leadership and advocacy, research and innovation, and education that better aligns medical training with community needs, the Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity is becoming an international leader. Its impact derives from regional focus yet is unbounded in its scope. The national and international relevance of its work will become recognized as its results are dispersed among practitioners, policy makers, and advocates in similarly challenged regions.

To date, the Centre has developed partnerships, connected researchers, and answered emerging research questions. In the last year alone, its staff has contributed to 15 peer-reviewed publications and have helped advance key projects in the areas of **artificial intelligence**, climate change, and health system transformation. The Centre was the recent



recipient of two Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grants to further social accountability efforts.

“The Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity is about accountability to underserved communities— Francophone communities, Indigenous communities, and rural communities. NOSM University is taking up this challenge with key research partners from across Northern Ontario,” says Dr. Verma. “We are incredibly grateful to the Temerty Foundation for their vision, for their generosity and for helping us to do this important work.”

Dr. Erin Cameron is the Academic Director of the Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity. “The Centre leads and supports research, champions health policy, and ignites community conversations around what it means to deliver equitable health care to people who need it most,” she says. “We are so fortunate to have forward-thinking philanthropists like James and Louise Temerty who see the potential impact and societal value this kind of work can have.”

While \$3 million of the \$10 million gift will go to support the important work of the Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity, \$7 million will be used to bolster NOSM University’s burgeoning Student Endowment Fund to help medical students studying at NOSM University in perpetuity.

“We’re thrilled that the \$7 million earmarked for the Student Endowment Fund will be matched one-to-one by the FDC Foundation,” says Dr. Verma. “That \$14 million will open many doors to future NOSM University students—and they’re the future of health care in Northern Ontario.”

## NOSM University featured on flagship CBC program, The National

NOSM University is No Ordinary School of Medicine. We believe in a future with a strong health-care system in Northern Ontario without doctor shortages and where everyone has equitable access to the culturally competent care they deserve, closer to home. Hear how learners at NOSM University are living and training in communities across Northern Ontario in The National’s story.



Tackling the doctor shortage in rural Ontario



Tackling the doctor shortage in rural Ontario

## Preventing burnout

In 2021, 72.9 per cent of physicians surveyed by the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) reported burnout, up from 66 per cent in 2020<sup>1</sup>. At NOSM University, building and sustaining our resilience is a crucial part of enabling our success. Making our campuses, working and learning environments safe and investing in our people is at the heart of what we do.

<sup>1</sup> "Ontario's doctors report increased burnout, propose five solutions." Ontario Medical Association, <https://www.oma.org/newsroom/news/2021/aug/ontarios-doctors-report-increased-burnout-propose-five-solutions/>. Accessed August 31, 2023.



## NOSM University aligns education programs with societal and community needs

French language health services are a critical component of health equity in Northern Ontario. Since its inception, NOSM University has identified Francophones as a key population, and a group that is critical to achieving the University's mandate of improving care across the region.

More than 21.6 per cent of Northern Ontarians identify French as the first official language

compared to 3.9 per cent in Ontario. Language barrier continues to be significant cause of health inequity amongst this group. NOSM University is making it easier for Francophones with "Active Offer" training mandatory for entry into the MD program and now improving curricular offerings in French has become a reality.



## New NOSM University Francophone Curricular Initiative addresses health inequities in the North

NOSM University's new Francophone Curricular Initiative offers medical students the option to study in French. Launched in September 2022 as a pilot initiative, the first cohort saw 90 per cent of first-year Francophone medical students participate.

"The high uptake is a reflection of the need for this curricular initiative," says Dr. Nicole Ranger, Francophone Curricular Lead and alumna of NOSM University. "Learners come out of high school and university fluent in French, but they don't have the medical terminology regarding patient care. Knowing that they would benefit extraordinarily from learning in French, these students were excited to be the first participants and are becoming strong ambassadors for our initiative."

Previously, medical students who wanted clinical placements in French had to complete extra work on top of their MD curriculum. The Francophone Curricular Initiative is more equitable and allows students to complete some of their mandatory MD curriculum in French.

The pilot will roll out over four years, with additional years of the MD curriculum added as the first cohort progresses through their studies. While not all educational activities are offered in French,

Francophone students currently participate in small group learning in French throughout their first two years of medical school. While on campus, they also interact with Francophone Standardized Patients in some of the clinical skills sessions. They can also undertake clinical placements in French, and every effort is made to pair them with Francophone preceptors.

Training new doctors in French will increase equitable access to health care across Northern Ontario. "Language is one of the social determinants of health," Dr. Ranger explains. "If patients undertake the care in a language they're most familiar with—their mother tongue—that's a key aspect to improving the communication between providers and patients and improving patient safety. Patients can better understand medical instructions and what they are consenting to."

Students in the first cohort recognize the value of completing their medical studies in French.

"Considering the high population of Francophones in Northern Ontario, it is important for me to be able to offer equitable health care in French and English. As a physician, allowing a patient to speak in their mother tongue can make any medical encounter a better one," says medical student Félix Lavigne.

## COMMUNITY

Simon Paquette, a second-year medical student, and is participating in the pilot cohort. “I wanted to gain a better appreciation for linguistic and cultural diversity in health care,” he says. “My biggest takeaway is the importance of actively offering to speak French in health-care encounters. Offering French-language services to patients and never assuming English is the default language is now my standard practice. By participating in this initiative, I will enhance my ability to serve Francophone communities and contribute to the promotion of equitable health-care access for Franco-Ontarians.”

“Our university’s special mission is to be responsive to the unique health-care needs of the people of Northern Ontario, including Francophone communities, by providing innovative medical and health education programs. This is tied to our social accountability mandate,” says Dr. Céline Larivière, Provost and Vice President Academic. “The Francophone Curricular Initiative aligns very well with the university’s mission and mandate and is supported by our admission strategies.”

By aligning education programs with societal and community needs, NOSM University graduates physicians who are leaders that transform health-care systems and improve population health outcomes.

NOSM University is now recruiting Francophone **Standardized Patients** to support the Francophone Curricular Initiative. Looking for casual work? Help train Northern Ontario’s future doctors by portraying a patient.

The intersection of health equity and social accountability happens in the NOSM U research and discovery direction. Through multiple efforts including an annual Northern Health Research Conference (NHRC) the NOSM Research Toward Health Hub (NORTH) focussed on primary care research and the newly named Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity (which houses the Medical Education Research Lab in the North (MERLIN)), research at NOSM U is growing by leaps and bounds.

Themes	Research Priorities
Clinical and Translational Health	Cardiovascular Cancer Surgery Primary Care
Biomedical and Basic Sciences	Environmental Health Physiology, Biological Systems and Functions Disease Process, Diagnostics and Therapeutics
Population and Public Health	Chronic Disease Rural Medicine Health Services Social Determinants of Health
Humanities and Social Sciences	Indigenous Peoples’ Health Francophone Health Health Professions Education



## The Okanagan Charter

### Prioritizing health, wellbeing, and equity a leading priority

NOSM University's focus on wellbeing is guided by the **Okanagan Charter**, which calls upon the post-secondary sector to “transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities and contribute to the wellbeing of people, places, and the planet.”









The guiding principles of the Okanagan Charter are embedded in **The NOSM University Challenge 2025**. Since becoming a signatory, NOSM University has made great strides in its commitment to:

- Living the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Developing a global health strategy founded in principles of social accountability.
- Making strategic investments in our people, resources, and infrastructure.
- Encouraging creativity and innovation.
- Supporting the wellbeing of the NOSM University community.

## COMMUNITY

“Research shows us that individuals who are well are more creative, engaged, productive, and have a stronger sense of community,” says Dr. Verma. “It’s important for the entire NOSM University community

to focus on wellness as we look to the future—a future where access to equitable, quality health care for all Northerners is a reality.”

 <p>Dr. Joseph LeBlanc named the <b>inaugural Associate Dean, Equity and Inclusion</b>. Dr. LeBlanc promotes equity, increasing diversity and strengthening the culture of inclusion among staff, faculty, and learners, in collaboration with community and academic partners.</p>	 <p>A University-wide <b>Respect the Difference™ movement</b> launched, which we hope ignites a positive culture change that reaches beyond NOSM University and into our communities. The <b>Code of Respect</b> focuses on kindness as a manifestation of the University’s values, while striving towards compassion.</p>	 <p>NOSM University is one of only seven sites across the country to be selected as an “anchor,” of the national <b>Nourish Health Care Collaborative</b>. The Nourish Collaborative seeks “to tackle interconnected challenges such as health inequity, food insecurity, diet-related chronic disease, and the impacts of climate change.”</p>
<h3>2SLGBTQ+</h3> <p>NOSM University’s Health Sciences Library has made available a student-led <b>2SLGBTQ+ subject guide</b>. With links to online resources, topics range from transgender and intersex health to Two-Spirit resources and resources on gender neutral pronouns and misgendering.</p>	 <p>Understanding gender identities aids in delivering inclusive, patient-centered care. Often, pronouns have a gender implied that is not always accurate or needed. <b>Medical students</b> developed a <b>wearable pronoun pin</b> to help spark important conversations about <b>how to correctly use and share one’s pronouns</b>.</p>	 <p>NOSM University recently launched a <b>Virtual Health and Wellness Hub</b> where learners will find resources and helpful tips to support health and wellness. There are many facets of health and wellness, and most are not completely within individual control.</p>
 <p>The <b>NOSM University Action Committee on Climate Change</b> is addressing climate change. As a socially accountable institution that leads through a lens of health equity, NOSM University is planning for curricular changes, expanded research, and increased environmental advocacy to address planetary health.</p>	 <p><b>NOSM University’s pledge for sustainable travel</b> was established to encourage conscientious travel arrangements within the University and to promote a work culture of sustainable practices that align with reducing our carbon footprint. We have also joined the <b>Global Consortium on Climate Change and Health Education</b>.</p>	 <p>A new complementary online training module added to <a href="http://activeoffertraining.ca">activeoffertraining.ca</a> was created by the <b>Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l’Ontario</b> in collaboration with NOSM University and is designed for health professionals to enhance their ability to provide tailored services to Francophone patients.</p>



## Innovate Health Professions Education

NOSM University is recognized for developing innovative models of education in Northern, Indigenous, Francophone, rural and remote medicine that leads to well-trained health-care practitioners who stay in the communities of the North. As part of our commitment to excellence in health professions education, NOSM University maintains the highest standards of accreditation across all our programs and is driven by innovation in educating the next

generation of physicians, registered dietitians, physician assistants, medical physicists, and other health professionals and scientists.

NOSM University is advancing the national conversation about what health equity in the rural and remote North really looks like—and our leaders are truly making a difference.

### Did you know?

- Health Equity involves caring for all parts of a person and relies on interprofessional collaborations.
- NOSM University's Rehabilitation Sciences programs are a pan-northern initiative that spans interprofessional and inter disciplinary teaching and practice.
- Team based health care is proven to improve collaborative practice and have a positive impact on health care.
- As we grow NOSM University will develop new ways to establish and deliver health care in teams involving new professions and training will include enhancing our current programs.
- NOSM University's successful and fully accredited Dietetics Internship program is a key component to achieving health equity in the North.
- In total, 190 Registered Dietitians have completed this program – 54 per cent are practising in Northern Ontario, including 90 per cent of the 2022 graduates.
- Existing programs such as physiotherapy rely heavily on the finest faculty such as Brock Chisholm.

# In the Spotlight



## Physiotherapist Brock Chisholm honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award

If you are a rehabilitation professional in Northern Ontario, chances are good that Brock Chisholm was among the first people to give you a warm welcome to the region. A new award—the Health Sciences Lifetime Achievement—was given at NOSM University’s Northern Connections preceptor dinner and recognized Chisholm’s longstanding contribution to rehabilitation sciences.

Currently the Physiotherapy Clinical Learning Liaison for Rehabilitation Sciences at NOSM University, Chisholm is an exceptional ambassador for living and working in Northern Ontario—and he has been for more than 30 years. The award recognizes his longstanding contribution to clinical education, academics and scholarly work, recruitment and retention, promoting the importance of collaboration in clinical education, and for being a leading example of the values of the University.

“I was surprised, honoured, and humbled to receive the award. I had no idea I was receiving it. The award didn’t exist—it had never been given or been discussed, so it was quite a surprise,” says Chisholm. “The event organizers had given a pretext for my wife to attend the dinner, and it was very special that she could be there.”

In his 30-plus years in clinical education, Chisholm’s title and employer have changed—his involvement pre-dates the creation of NOSM by more than a decade—but his passion for working with learners and preceptors has remained constant.

Chisholm recounts when he first became a clinical educator in 1991: “When Sue Berry started recruiting for the Rehabilitation Sciences clinical education program that was associated with the Northwestern Ontario Medical Program (NOMP), I was asked to



go to Quetico for a training session. I was up for anything as a new graduate! It was the inaugural clinical educators' session. Shortly afterwards, I had my first learners. I loved it and was hooked on clinical education and teaching after that."

In 2000, he took on the role of placement coordinator for physiotherapy, and he has never looked back.

"This role allowed me to interact with both the clinical preceptors throughout the region, and the new learners who could potentially become health-care providers in the North. This engagement at all levels and in all Northern communities completely resonated with me because I love engaging with people. It gave me a forum to work with everybody across Northern Ontario."

Chisholm enjoys supporting preceptors and knows that they make an enormous difference to health care. "Without preceptors, there is no clinical education," he points out. "Making that connection to the students and sharing your passion is what teaching comes down to. We are there for the preceptors because they are there for the students."

A firm believer in the importance of NOSM University's mission of recruiting health-care professionals, Chisholm points out that a considerable number of Northern Ontario's current

rehabilitation professionals had placements in the North as students. Although he has worked with hundreds of learners, Chisholm says his work always feels fresh.

"There are always new preceptors and new learners to meet, and each placement is unique and another opportunity to meet and welcome a potential new health-care provider to the region. It never gets stale and is always the first experience for each new learner. It is always an opportunity to bring someone new up to Northern Ontario."

He adds, "The difference is all around us—so many of the rehabilitation providers throughout Northern Ontario were once learners through our programs."

NOSM University is known for educating physicians and health-care professionals to work in underserved communities; this means bringing people together across different disciplines and professions. Chisholm and his colleagues are highly regarded for their work to realize NOSM University's mission by being active partners and enriching learner experiences in Kenora.

Colleagues and former learners congratulate Chisholm on his Lifetime Achievement Award in this [video](#).





## MD program receives full eight-year accreditation

This spring, NOSM University's flagship Medical Doctorate (MD) degree program received great news from the Committee on Accreditation for Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS). "On the eve of our first convocation as a fully independent university, NOSM University received the decision of CACMS that our MD program has been approved for a full eight-year accreditation," says Dr. Verma.

CACMS says the accreditation process "provides assurance to medical students, graduates, the medical profession, health-care institutions, health authorities, regulatory authorities, and the public that:

1. educational programs culminating in the award of the MD degree meet reasonable, generally accepted, and appropriate national standards for educational quality, and

2. graduates of such programs have a complete and valid educational experience sufficient to prepare them for the next stage of their training."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Verma calls this a fantastic result. "We are deeply grateful to CACMS for its diligence with continuous quality assurance and attentiveness to detail. The final report will provide us with excellent advice on how to improve the education and training of physicians at NOSM University."

"Although we have work to do, we look to the future with unparalleled enthusiasm. We owe a great deal of thanks to Dr. Lee Toner, our Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education, as well as to Senior Director John Friesen and their entire team," says Dr. Verma.

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<sup>1</sup> Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools, <https://cacms-cafmc.ca/>. Accessed August 31, 2023.



## Strengthen Research Capacity in Northern Ontario

# Empowering Northern Ontario communities through research

### Social accountability leads to locally-driven solutions

Social accountability defines NOSM University. NOSM University researchers work to support the goals of communities and partners so that local priority health concerns lead health-system transformation.

“Our entire research program is built upon partnerships,” explains Dr. Brianne Wood, Associate Scientist, Social Accountability and Learning Health Systems at the Dr. Gilles Arcand Centre for Health Equity. “Partnerships and engagement are the foundation of social accountability. Social accountability requires that you direct your activities towards the needs and priorities of communities and organizations such as health system partners. Social accountability leads to meaningful collaboration, and it holds you to account so your research is useful.”

Dr. Wood’s work integrates social accountability and learning health systems, which means that her research projects aim to answer questions from communities and health system partners, and then the knowledge generated is integrated into health services and medical education. This integration closes the loop between community needs, health services delivery, and medical education.

“Embedded, socially-accountable research takes away the ivory tower and makes the research more real. Because we are working with the people who lead changes on the ground, you see the impact of the research because we are already working together. Patients, populations, and communities can contribute their perspectives about their priorities and questions. They can be involved in research in ways that empowers people.”

## RESEARCH

Recent projects include a **teams-based approach to the Northwestern Ontario Health Teams (OHT) Impact Fellowship**, and working with All Nations Health Partners in Kenora to answer research questions about high cancer rates in their region.

Jessica Logozzo is Vice President, Strategy and Regional Transformation at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. Working on behalf of the 12 hospitals in Northwestern Ontario, she partners with Dr. Wood on the OHT project.

“Working with Dr. Wood and the NOSM University team on the OHT Impact Fellowship has been a true example of social accountability in action,” Logozzo says. “By working directly with two Ontario Health Teams on the issues that they self-identified, NOSM University’s team was able to co-produce research,

evidence, and analytics that were most relevant to the OHT and partners. This partnership enabled meaningful research for our region that will enhance our collective efforts towards improvements in population health and system transformation.”

Ultimately, socially-accountable research sees results, says Dr. Wood.

“Partnership research is how you make sustainable change in the health system. It helps the findings be more reliable and trustworthy, which in turn can improve outcomes for patients and populations. It can help make health care more efficient and a better experience, both from the perspective of the patient and from the people delivering the care,” she says.





## Becoming a University

Representation matters. Usually, a university is heralded by the appointment a Board of Governors, a Chancellor and an inaugural convocation. NOSM University's first convocation occurred in May 2023, with the installation of our Chancellor Dr. Cindy Blackstock, and the **conferring of 64 medical degrees**. By custom, a university or government procession is headed by a mace, which is an ornamental staff of metal or wood, ahead of ceremony representing the values of the institution. This is the story of the new NOSM University ceremonial object that is equity oriented and will be used in place of a mace.

### MISSION

To improve the health of Northern Ontarians by being socially accountable in our education and research programs and advocating for health equity.

### OUR VALUES

- Innovation.
- Social Accountability.
- Collaboration.
- Inclusiveness.
- Respect.



## Meet “Nsidwaamjigan,” ceremonial object created to open NOSM University convocations

On May 26, 2023, hundreds of people stood respectfully in silence, listening to the powerful sounds of Indigenous singing and drumming, waiting for the graduates to appear. Then, as the formal convocation procession began, a carved eagle’s head club emerged, leading the way.

The carefully hewn head is the end of Nsidwaamjigan, the beautiful new ceremonial object that will now open all NOSM University’s convocation ceremonies. Created by Algonquin artist Bradley (Dreamwalker) MacDonald, a Waskabe (Helper) based in North Bay, Nsidwaamjigan means “it recognizes achievements” in Anishnawbemowin, and the baton-like object was named by a group of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

### Learn how to pronounce Nsidwaamjigan

While Nsidwaamjigan holds some similarities to a ceremonial mace or staff, it is also distinct. For that reason, the Elders and Knowledge Keepers resolved that it should be referred to by its name alone: Nsidwaamjigan.

For the artist, taking on the creation this piece was an important way to honour healers.

“Everybody that comes to NOSM University is a healer,” says MacDonald. “The most selfless path is to be a healer. It’s a hard commitment to go on the journey. For many healers, they forsake all the different things they have in their lives, and they focus on other people’s lives. The healers are extremely important.”

“Healers will see thousands upon thousands of faces,” he continues. “It takes a great deal of commitment. You give honour to the people being served as well as their future generations by the thousands.”

As MacDonald speaks about Nsidwaamjigan, it is clear that the object is rooted in a philosophy of interconnectedness.

“Instead of saying that certain things have a soul and others don’t, we recognize that everything has a soul,” he says. “We have everything within us that



connects us to everything. It is a matter of how much we can find that and love that. Everything in life is sacred. The root of everything in life is the sacredness of how we treat things.”

Nsidwaamjigan is in the form of a tree, representing the tree of life. It features petroglyphs, which symbolize the sacredness of family connection. Petroglyphs “have been here since the beginning,” and harken back to “the oldest petroglyph, the Milky Way,” says Bradly. It includes four branches—black, red, yellow, and white—which represent the guardians of different directions of the Universe and of the Earth, and a balance rooted in all things. The eagle on the top of Nsidwaamjigan represents the sun, an awakening, the enlightenment of a person’s self, and the realization of what it means to be a healer.

The history of ceremonial maces is rooted in colonialism. The first maces date back to the Stone Age, and early maces were clubs used to physically protect the king’s person. In contemporary use, maces are present at many legislative assemblies—in fact, some governments cannot legally convene without the presence of the mace—and they represent authority. Canada is one of many commonwealth countries where a mace is used in the House of Commons to represent the authority of King Charles III.

Maces also have a longstanding use in convocation ceremonies. In Britain, the oldest extant maces date from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and belong to the University of Saint Andrews and the University of Glasgow. At a time when only the white male elite attended



university, convocation ceremonies were gatherings of the upper-class, and maces had the practical purpose of guarding against attacks, as well as a ceremonial use.

In today's academic settings, a mace is said to represent the independent authority of the university. In a North American context, they are primarily used at convocation ceremonies.

Bradly acknowledges the object's colonial history and notes how the meaning is different for him, "This is a recognition of people's honour. It is their honour that helps guide them and what they're doing," he says. "It's an empowering tool rather than a controlling one. This is not a war club. It's letting people know that they are to be honoured. We honour you because you are a healer."

Dr. Joseph LeBlanc, Associate Dean, Equity and Inclusion, liaised with the Elders and Knowledge Keepers about the use of the piece. "We wanted this piece to depart from the colonial role that maces have played at universities," he says. "Nsidwaamjigan

represents the spirit and intent of this institution. When we talk about anti-racism and anti-oppression, we need to arm our graduates with tools for those battles."

Approximately 20 Elders and Knowledge Keepers received Nsidwaamjigan to its home at NOSM University during a pipe ceremony. After smudging, the Elders and Knowledge Keepers sat with Nsidwaamjigan and discussed what it means to them.

Although Nsidwaamjigan includes a carving of an eagle head, the Elders and Knowledge Keepers note that it is not an eagle staff, which is a distinct ceremonial object with an important role in some Indigenous ceremonies. The feathers on Nsidwaamjigan are from turkeys and grouse, both important and healthy food relations.

Dr. Verma is very enthusiastic about the piece. "Being a new university, we had a terrific opportunity to do something different, and we took it," she says. "What's more, I'm thrilled with the result. I think Nsidwaamjigan is a beautiful contemplation on what NOSM University is all about."



## The figure of a being

At the center of the roots sits our story from the beginning of everything and that is where we see our future. Completely in balance and ready to fulfill the promises we give in the beginning.

On the opposite side are the fundamental petroglyphs of family and our guiding spirit.

Our inner power that constantly brings us gifts to face the world and journey forth as family in harmonious celebration.

The tree is the tree of life and the center of our understanding that all forms of life and visions of sacredness are equal and important, because we are all family.

From here we are open to our spiritual journey and understanding of Traditional Knowledge.

### Artist statement

The base has four directional roots.

Each one is equal parts in importance and necessary in balance and growth.

**Spiritual:** Commitment remembering the sacredness of all life and honouring the beauty in all things around us.

- The first breath of life, the promise never to forsake the beauty of this great mystery and always strive upward to make the future generations dance in harmony (like the leaves in the morning sun).

**Mental:** Commitment to dispel misconceptions and bring forth harmony by striving to the highest standards of integrity.

- This agreement with ourselves is to honour each aspect of our growth with love and compassion.

**Physical:** Commitment to keep our bodies and hearts clear and in harmony with natural balance. We are also born into this sacred life as humane healers that assist in bringing forth balance to many that suffer.

- Commitment to ease the suffering of others is the highest calling of humanity because it brings honour to your future generations.

**Emotional:** Commitment to experiencing the beauty of life and bringing back the original experience of wonder from before any trauma, be it very small or large.

- Knowledge and great depth of feeling is essential in traditional understanding.



## Working with the Dream Team

### Valuing our People

The work at NOSM University would be nowhere without the people—its lifeblood. Here is our latest senior recruit and her role.



### NOSM University's Provost and Vice President Academic

It's been a busy first six months for Dr. Céline Larivière, NOSM University's Provost and Vice President Academic. Dr. Larivière leads the

conceptualization, development, implementation, and continuous quality improvement (CQI) of academic programs and related services.

Her role emerged from the organization's new status as an independent university, and much of her first six months involved establishing the groundwork to meet some of the requirements of the NOSM University Act. To this end, Dr. Larivière was tasked by the President to work with the University Secretary Gina Kennedy and interim Senate Speaker Dr. David MacLean, to establish NOSM University's inaugural Senate. And to develop an Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP)—a framework for quality assurance and CQI that is a requirement of publicly-assisted universities in Ontario.

"The IQAP is important because it keeps the institution accountable to learners and to the greater public and shows that we are committed to continuous improvement of our academic

programs,” Dr. Larivière explains. “The IQAP highlights program areas of strength, but more importantly it identifies opportunities for improvement. Recommendations from expert reviewers emerging from the IQAP help us focus our efforts and target our resources towards specific initiatives to fill the gaps and strengthen our academic programming. The IQAP in conjunction with other accreditation processes are the cornerstone of a reputable academic program.”

Looking towards the future, Dr. Larivière will spearhead the University’s academic plan. This big-picture plan will be linked to NOSM University’s next strategic plan. It will identify key institutional academic priorities and related actions and strategies to achieve these priorities. The academic plan also sets out the timeframe to achieve those key goals —usually within a five-year window.

“The academic plan will serve as the framework or blueprint that will guide our decision making around academic program expansion,” Dr. Larivière says. “Once the key academic priorities are established, we will have the parameters to begin visioning how NOSM University can continue to be a leader in medical education and how it can better position itself to meet its special mission around health professions education. Input from stakeholders is an important part of creating the academic plan, and those consultations will begin later this year.”

Alongside this work, Dr. Larivière will oversee major developments to NOSM University’s degree and non-degree programs. These include the **gradual expansion of MD and PGME programs** and plans to add **more residency programs**. She will also oversee the accreditation and quality assurance processes for the NODIP program, the MD program, as well as the Master of Medical Studies.

Across all programs, NOSM University aims to innovate health professions education. “To remain at the leading edge of medical and health professions education, NOSM University will integrate new technologies and ensure that current topics related

to AI, planetary health, and other emerging issues that impact our communities intersect and are reflected with our programs,” says Dr. Larivière.

Dr. Larivière identifies meeting and collaborating with NOSM University leaders at both campuses as one of the high points of her work thus far. She has attended events including Northern Constellations, the International Congress on Academic Medicine (ICAM), and, of course, NOSM University’s inaugural convocation. Accompanying Dr. Verma during the President’s Tour and engaging with leaders, health professionals, NOSM University alumni, and learners in several Northern Ontario communities during stakeholder gatherings was also a notable high point.

These conversations are critical to being socially accountable to Northern Ontario communities, Dr. Larivière says. “As part of delivering on the University’s mandate, community engagement is critically important. By listening and learning from our community partners, we are better positioned to understand the regional challenges and the opportunities leading to better strategic decision-making around academic program expansion and overall, more fruitful collaborations.”

### **Inaugural Senate marks new era for NOSM University**

To ensure a seamless transition from the Northern Ontario School of Medicine to NOSM University, **Canada’s first medical university**, the inaugural Senate was established on March 31, 2023. This is a critical step in meeting the regulations and by-laws set forward by the NOSM University Act.

The Senate is NOSM University’s academic decision-making body, and it is responsible for academic program changes, academic schedules, policies that affect students, and confirming the list of upcoming graduates.

## UNIVERSITY

The membership is comprised of accomplished individuals from various fields who each bring their expertise, experience, and passion to the table. Among the members are medical practitioners, educators, researchers, and representatives from other institutions, all of whom share a common commitment to improving health care in Northern Ontario. **Senate membership** includes 83 ex-officio and elected members.

Prior to becoming an independent university, NOSM's academics were primarily led by the Academic Council and Joint Senate Committee in reflection of the dual-accreditation agreements with Lakehead University and Laurentian University. The independent NOSM University Senate maintains the vision of Innovative education and research for a healthier North and Academic Council's **academic principles**; the key change is that Senate has sole responsibility over the quality and accreditation of its programs.

"Having the inaugural NOSM University Senate in place is a major milestone to becoming an independent University," said Senate Speaker Dr. David MacLean. "This effective governance structure will set the stage for NOSM University's future academics."

There are currently four vacancies in the Human Sciences Division and one vacancy in the Human Sciences Student category. If you are interested in filling one of these seats, please reach out to [governance@nosm.ca](mailto:governance@nosm.ca).

## Seeing Northern Ontario and engaging with community





**A tour de force**

The President’s tour of Northern Ontario communities—a critical part of consultations for developing NOSM University’s 2025-2030 Strategic Plan—is currently underway.

In July 2023, Dr. Verma travelled to Atikokan, Fort Frances, Kenora, Dryden, Sioux Lookout, and Sault Ste. Marie to meet with stakeholders including NOSM University learners, alumni, and preceptors, as well as other health-care professionals, hospital administration, and municipal and First Nations leaders.

Though her plans to visit Wawa changed due to a highway closure, Dr. Verma was able to engage by videoconference with community leaders from Wawa, White River, Hornepayne, Dubreuilville, and Chapleau. The last leg of the trip took her to Sault Ste. Marie, Garden River First Nation and Batchewana First Nation.

Dr. Verma was joined by other members of NOSM University leadership, including Dr. Céline Larivière, Provost and Vice President, Academic; Jacalyn Cop-Rasmussen, Manager of Academic Health Sciences Network; and, Dr. Peter Istvan, Phase Two Director.

“Our group was given a warm welcome everywhere we visited,” says Dr. Verma. “The meetings had a strong sense of collegiality and collaboration, and the conversations were productive. We always take feedback to heart—it helps hold us accountable to Northern communities and improves learners’ experiences. The communities want to see us be successful. They are working passionately to address regional health inequities, and they know that our success will help them towards this goal.”

The next phase of the tour is scheduled to take place in September 2023, when Dr. Verma will spend time in North Bay, Timmins, Kapuskasing, Hearst and Temiskaming Shores.

Learn more in Dr. Verma’s blog, **Northern Routes**.



## Awards and Recognition (April 25 – September 15, 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.

- **Chelsie Baizana**, medical student, received the CIBC Indigenous Learner Leadership Award for 2023.
- **Mr. John Beaucage**, a Member of NOSM University's Board of Governors and a citizen of Wasauksing First Nation, received the Order of Canada for his exemplary leadership and commitment to advancing the well-being and prosperity of Indigenous communities in Canada.
- **Dr. Matthew Bertrand**, resident, recently received an award from Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO) for a poster presentation titled Point of Care Ultrasound Use by Registered Nurses in Palliative Care at the 2023 HPCO annual conference.
- **Dr. Eve Boissonneault**, resident, received the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) Family Medicine Resident Award for Scholarly Achievement which recognizes the best scholarly work of family medicine residents across the country.
- **Dr. Erin Cameron**, Assistant Professor, received the AMS Fellowship in Compassion and Artificial Intelligence.
- **Malcolm Davidson** received the Top Oral Presentation - Undergraduate Student for "Exploring the Development of a Canadian Frostbite Care Network in Canada: A Qualitative Approach" at NOSM University's Northern Health Research Conference (NHRC).
- **Dr. Sebastian Diebel**, resident, received the CFPC Family Medicine Resident Award for Scholarly Achievement which recognizes the best scholarly work of family medicine residents across the country.
- **Kristiina Frechette**, medical student, is awarded the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) Medical Student Scholarship which recognizes a top medical student in Canada who has demonstrated an interest in or commitment to a career in family medicine during their undergraduate medical education.
- **Jenna Gilchrist** received the Top Oral Presentation - Graduate Student for "Influence of Sex Hormones Estrogen and Androgen on Catecholamine Biosynthesis" at NOSM University's NHRC.
- **Danika Lavoie**, medical student, recently received an award from HPCO for a poster presentation titled Point of Care Ultrasound Use by Registered Nurses in Palliative Care at the 2023 HPCO annual conference.
- **Dr. Mercy Kingsley-Emeruwa**, resident, recently received an award from HPCO for a poster presentation titled Point of Care Ultrasound Use by Registered Nurses in Palliative Care at the 2023 HPCO annual conference.
- **Alexandra Klem** was the recipient of the 2023 Dr. Roger Strasser NHRC Student Travel Award for NOSM University's NHRC.

- **Dr. Oksana Motalo**, alumna, was awarded an Outstanding Resident Award from Queen's University for demonstrating exceptional dedication to the wellbeing of patients and peers, and passion for medical education and the profession.
- **Taylor Murie**, medical student, received the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame (CMHF) Award for 2023.
- **Dr. Diana Noseworthy**, Assistant Professor, was recently honoured with the John Bradley Young Educator Award by the Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society (CAS) for excellence and effectiveness in education in anesthesia.
- **Dr. Robert Ohle**, Assistant Professor, was honoured with the Paul Hannam Memorial Award for Emerging Leadership in Emergency Medicine by the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians (CAEP) at their annual meeting in Toronto.
- **Dr. Chidubem Okechukwu**, resident, recently received an award from HPCO for a poster presentation titled Point of Care Ultrasound Use by Registered Nurses in Palliative Care at the 2023 HPCO annual conference.
- **Dr. Madison Peterson-Kowal**, NOSM University resident, was awarded the inaugural Medical Resident Leadership Award from the Indigenous Physician Association of Canada (IPAC).
- **Dr. Chad Prevost**, resident, received the CFPC Family Medicine Resident Award for Scholarly Achievement, which recognizes the best scholarly work of family medicine residents across the country.
- **Dr. Christine Pun**, Associate Professor, recently received an award from HPCO for a poster presentation titled Point of Care Ultrasound Use by Registered Nurses in Palliative Care at the 2023 HPCO annual conference.
- **Dr. Mauriane Reade**, Associate Professor, was named Canadian Women in Medicine's (CWIM) Woman of the Week on July 4.
- **Taryn Thompson** received the Top Poster Presentation - Undergraduate Student for "Multiple exercise bouts increase GLUT4 expression in cardiac tissue following DOX treatment" at NOSM University's NHRC.
- **Jillian Zitars** received the Top Poster Presentation - Graduate Student for "Suitability of the Mobile Crisis Intervention Team Model for Northern Context: A Preliminary Analysis" at NOSM University's NHRC.

If you would like to include an award recipient in our next report, please email [communications@nosm.ca](mailto:communications@nosm.ca).

