

## McMaster's Significant Cancer Discovery

## Seen and Heard...



### What the hack? Students gather for problem solving session

### Big Ideas, Better Cities: How Research can help build healthy communities



### Al Jazeera airs documentary on Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine



Welcome to the January 2016 edition of *McMaster Highlights: Hamilton Edition*, the monthly e-newsletter keeping you up to date on what's happening at McMaster.

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### McMaster helps launch Hamilton's new Anti-Racism Resource Centre

McMaster is partnering with the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion to help address racism and to provide support, information and referrals to persons impacted by racism and race-related oppression.

The new Anti-Racism Resource Centre will be located at 267 King Street East and will include confidential intake space, meeting rooms, a community meeting hall and a resource library. The Centre will include one staff person, employed by McMaster, who will offer telephone and in-person support, information about options for reporting and referral to legal and social services. The Anti-Racism Coordinator will also offer a range of volunteer placements for McMaster students and community members in order to provide timely and effective responses to racism in Hamilton.

"This collaborative partnership is really meant to bridge the gap that has been identified by community members for support and information around issues of race, racism and racialization in Hamilton," says Mile Komlen, Director of McMaster's Office of Human Rights and Equity Services.

Organizers of the Anti-Racism Resource Centre will pilot the program for three years and will rely on the expertise and scholarship of faculty members in McMaster's School of Social Work to evaluate its success.

Hamilton city councilors have approved an annual \$100,000 contribution to the centre, with McMaster and the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion covering the rest of the budget in cash and in-kind help.

For more information, click [here](#).

### New Dean and Vice-President, Faculty of Health Sciences will start July 1, 2016

Following an international search, the next dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences has been confirmed. Paul OByrne, currently chair of McMaster's Department of Medicine, will assume the role on July 1, 2016.

"The Selection Committee has made an outstanding decision," said McMaster President Patrick Deane. "Paul has proven in countless ways his commitment to the University and its joint research and education mission. He has a unique ability to lead and inspire others to reach their full potential, and he has earned his place as one of the University's most senior and accomplished researchers"

After training as a doctor at University College, Dublin, O'Byrne joined the Faculty of Health Sciences as a resident in 1977. He assumed a wide array of research and administrative roles becoming a tenured professor in 1994. Since 2002, he has chaired the Faculty's largest Department which has doubled in size under his guidance. He serves as the executive director of the Firestone Institute for Respiratory Health based at St. Joseph's Healthcare and leads the AllerGen NCE Clinical Investigator Collaborative. He is named Fellow at several international Colleges of Physicians, was selected to the Royal Society of Canada in 2010 and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences in 2015 and named a Distinguished University Professor that same year.

"The Faculty of Health Sciences is unique in the world," said O'Byrne. "It is very successful, very collegial and extraordinarily collaborative in advancing science, patient care and education. I'm honoured to have the opportunity to ensure that success has every opportunity to continue. I couldn't dream of a better job."

O'Byrne takes over from John Kelton on July 1, 2016 who has led the Faculty for the past 15 years. During his tenure the Faculty has significantly enhanced its national and international reputation for excellence. The Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine is consistently ranked as one of the top three health programs in Canada, and in the top 50 in the world.

For more information, click [here](#).

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### **McMaster students partner with IWC to help Syrian Refugee Families in Hamilton**

The McMaster Students Union (MSU) has entered into a partnership with the Immigrants Working Centre (IWC). The partnership was formed to engage students looking to volunteer with a new program aimed to help Syrian refugee families settle into Hamilton.

On December 8, 2015, MSU President Ehima Osazuwa and IWC Director Ines Rios signed a memorandum of understanding, highlighting the shared goals of the 20 for 20 initiative for both organizations.

"This has been driven by the interests of students," said Osazuwa, who credits students' initiative in helping the project move forward. "Playing an active role in the Hamilton community is a core component of the MSU, and helping out in any way we can is important because it's the right thing to do."

The MSU is focusing its efforts on student outreach within the McMaster campus to encourage more students to volunteer with the organization, and to raise awareness of the needs of incoming refugees. The program so far has 25 dedicated student volunteers from across campus that are volunteering their time. Additionally, the student group is aiming to recruit a pool of 200 freelance McMaster student volunteers. This program will benefit from student volunteers who can help in all manners of helping newcomers settle in the city, as well as take on practical tasks to support community sponsors, co-sponsors and refugee families through the complex sponsorship process pre-arrival.

"We are pleased to see Hamilton's young people mobilizing to support this movement in whatever way they can. Many Hamiltonians who may not be able to sponsor a refugee still want to contribute in some way, and every little bit is important" said Ines Rios, IWC Director. "This partnership with the MSU strengthens 20 for 20 and shows that McMaster students are ready to welcome and support our newest Hamiltonians".

For more information about the 20 for 20 program, click [here](#).

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### **Three-Minute Thesis Competition: Graduate students share research story with Hamilton community**

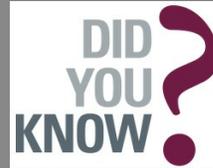
McMaster graduate students will be telling the Hamilton community what they're up to, in the labs,

libraries and out in the field during the fourth annual McMaster Three-Minute Thesis Competition. Also known as the 3MT, this competition will take place on Thursday, February 18, at the David Braley Health Sciences Centre in downtown Hamilton.

The 3MT is an opportunity for graduate students to share their research story - and how that research impacts the lives of others - within the McMaster and broader Hamilton communities.

McMaster's top finalists will be awarded the Dean's Award of Excellence Award in Communicating Research, as well as a cash prize, ranging from \$1000 for first place, to \$250 for fifth place. Additionally, McMaster's winner will represent the University on April 14, at the Ontario provincial final in Waterloo.

For more information, click [here](#).



### McMaster Researchers reveal predictive staircase to leukemia

- McMaster researchers have taken a big leap in identifying the early stages of a deadly cancer and predicting how it will develop in individuals.
- "We've found that the transition from healthy to cancerous blood stem cells happens in clear, compartmentalized steps. We've identified two steps in that staircase" said Mick Bhatia, principal investigator of the study and director of the [McMaster Stem Cell and Cancer Research Institute](#).
- In the paper, published by the scientific journal *Cancer Cell*, researchers detail how they have been able to fingerprint myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS), a state for blood cells that turns into acute myeloid leukemia (AML) cancer in approximately 30% of patients.
- AML is the most common type of leukemia in adults, and about 1,300 Canadians are expected to develop the disease each year. The McMaster study demonstrates that early and accurate prediction of this aggressive cancer is possible.
- The research team found when they deleted one version of the important GSK-3 gene, the other version of the gene became active but remained non-cancerous. However, when the second version of the gene was also deleted, AML cancer began.
- The research was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute.
- For more information, click [here](#).

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