Brescia University College Research Mandate

Brescia University College is a student-centred community that educates women to think critically and to participate actively in society. We prepare our graduates to lead with wisdom, justice and compassion in a changing world. It is our vision for Brescia to be the university college of choice for women seeking an inclusive community of learning that combines academic and research excellence with opportunity for service and leadership. As Brescia develops its strategic plans for the next 20 years, we remain committed to the academic practices and values that have made us strong, and to the legacy of the Ursuline Order that has shaped Brescia since 1919.

Brescia is an affiliated college of the University of Western Ontario and consists of an independent community of scholars dedicated to high-quality academic offerings and research initiatives. As Canada’s only women’s university college, our priority is to expand our academic strength and to attract faculty who are driven to furthering research excellence across all academic disciplines. We encourage students to seek out learning opportunities and to develop strong portfolios of academic work and individual research. Student learning and development is greatly strengthened by the experience of conducting research, whether as part of their required coursework or as a member of a faculty-led research team.

Brescia College’s academic and degree programs include: a pre-university Preliminary Year program; Bachelor’s degrees in Arts and Humanities, Social Science, Management and Organizational Studies, Family Studies, Health Sciences and Kinesiology; Bachelor’s and Master’s of Science degrees in Foods and Nutrition with Specializations in Nutrition and Dietetics and Food Science and Technology. We currently have a total of 26 full-time faculty members across our Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities Divisions, representing roughly 70% of full-time faculty at Brescia. Many of our full-time faculty across all academic disciplines are actively involved in research programs funded by Tri-Council Agency grants and other sources of external funding.

Faculty research is fundamental to the quality of academic offerings at Brescia. Our faculty currently hold, or have held in the past, grants funded by the Tri-Council Agencies including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR). In addition to Tri-Council Agency opportunities, our faculty have received grant support internally, through
our Brescia Research Award, and externally from organizations such as the Canada Council for the Arts, the Lawson Foundation, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, and the Canadian Diabetes Association. Applying for both external and internal funding on a consistent basis, is an essential part of the academic research expectation of both new and established faculty and we fully support these endeavours through the provision of guidance, grant management, and dedicated space as required. As research chairs have become a vital component of university environments, we will make every effort to attract faculty who are able to compete for research chairs sponsored by the Tri-Council Agencies and other funding sponsors. Research chairs are of critical importance for building research in Canada and present Brescia faculty with opportunities to pursue scholarly goals and develop innovative research programs.

As part of the Brescia’s Strategic Plan, 2010-2015, we have identified “innovation in research” as one of our overarching strategic objectives. We have made an ongoing commitment to this important objective by enhancing our research culture and providing faculty with the supports they need for developing and strengthening their research programs. We recognize that research activities conducted by faculty and students will ultimately reinforce Brescia’s academic reputation and promote faculty and student involvement in the life of the College. With our strategic and on-going research objectives we have made a commitment to:

- Encourage faculty to develop individual multi-year plans for research and scholarly activity;
- Provide comprehensive support for faculty applying for external and internal research funding;
- Increase our annual Tri-Council Agency grant applications by a minimum of 25%;
- Develop academic exchanges, partnerships, and external research collaborations;
- Explore the establishment of a PhD degree program in Food and Nutritional Sciences;
- Create a Centre of Innovation in Food and Nutritional Sciences; and
- Establish one or more Senior Research Fellowships in Food and Nutritional Sciences.

Brescia’s vision for the future resides in its ability to build on existing research success, to continue to encourage and support our faculty to develop areas of research excellence, and to provide outstanding academic programs and research opportunities for our student community.