



POSITION PROFILE

**Director of
Advancement, Faculty of
Engineering
McMaster University**

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PRESTON HUMAN CAPITAL GROUP

Position Overview



Organization:	McMaster University
Title:	Director of Advancement, Faculty of Engineering
Reports To:	Associate Vice President, Pan-University Advancement (Faculties & Units)
Key Internal Relationships:	Dean of Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Advancement Colleagues
Team:	Four (4)
Location:	McMaster University, 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario. Three days per week on site in Hamilton.
Compensation:	\$140,000 - \$160,000 plus fulsome benefits (details below)

Is This You?



You are a problem solver who enjoys working with exceptional academic leaders to achieve success. You would be described as the ultimate collaborator. Your engaging, sincere, inquisitive nature allows you to bring like-minded people together.

You are creative and like trying out ideas and you encourage your team to do the same. You enjoy working within an academic environment because of your exposure to some of the brightest minds. You are inquisitive and ask great questions of your academic partners – which gives them confidence in your commitment to enabling their success through philanthropy. You relish in data-driven pipeline development. You mobilize support through your infectious and focused enthusiasm and your responsiveness to others. People want to work with and for you because you follow through on your commitments, you operate with a high degree of integrity, and you reach goals. You enjoy all facets of fundraising and enjoy building networks of friends and supporters.

Ideally, you bring campaign experience and have worked collaboratively to bring a campaign to life. You would provide value and input to executive leadership around

campaign planning, priority setting and executing plans. You are an excellent communicator both written and verbal.

You are known for your ability to guide and lead with high emotional intelligence, and you would be motivated to work for a world-class organization with a respected brand, exceptional leadership team and diverse donor pool.

If this sounds like you, read on...

About McMaster University



Founded in 1887, McMaster University is a research-intensive public university. McMaster is dedicated to advancing human and societal health and well-being. McMaster is ranked in the world's Top 80 publicly funded universities by the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings.

With a total student population of more than 37,000, McMaster welcomes students from 120 countries as well as Canada. Home to more than 70 research centres and institutes, McMaster University is comprised of the six faculties of Business (DeGroote School of Business), Engineering, Health Science, Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences. McMaster's 30-acre main campus, located in the Westdale neighbourhood of Hamilton, Ontario, is comprised of 300 acres of scenic property at the western end of Lake Ontario, between Toronto and Niagara Falls. McMaster University also has three other regional campuses: Burlington, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Niagara.

Faculty of Engineering

McMaster Engineering is committed to the pursuit of excellence and plays a significant role in helping McMaster University earn its reputation as one of Canada's most innovative universities.

The Faculty is home to approximately 250+ full-time staff members, 216 faculty members, along with 8,387 undergraduate, 1,382 graduate students enrolled across 18 academic departments, schools and programs. The Faculty attracts approximately \$65 million in annual research funding in more than 20 research centres, institutes, and networks whose interdisciplinary pursuits cross departmental and Faculty boundaries. Outside the University, the Faculty collaborates regularly on research projects with partners in universities, government and more than 130 companies in Canada and abroad. Their faculty members are consistently awarded national and international recognition for pushing the boundaries of discovery and exploring novel, ground-breaking technologies. You can read their strategic plan for 2024-2029 [here](#).

Advancement at McMaster University

McMaster's vibrant student experience, world-class research, and community engagement are empowered by the support of thousands of alumni and donors who also believe strongly in McMaster. Together, McMaster's donors and alumni help make the university what it is today and help nurture the next generation of leaders in our world.

The Advancement leadership team provides overall strategic leadership and direction in the areas of fundraising; developing and building partnerships; and engaging with donors, alumni and stakeholders. The Advancement team also plays a critically important role in advancing the McMaster's strategy, in support of McMaster's ambitious vision, in partnership with the academic and administrative leaders across the University. The Advancement team has a centralized/decentralized structure, with strategies established and coordinated centrally, along with some programs and services (e.g. Annual Giving, Leadership Giving, Principal Giving, Corporate Giving, Estate Giving & Legacy Planning, Stewardship, overarching Alumni programs, Research & Prospect Analytics, and Gift Processing services), whereas other programs and services are delivered 'locally' through decentralized, dedicated Development and Alumni staff embedded within the Faculties and units. McMaster is currently in the planning phases for a comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Leadership

Lili Litwin, Vice President, University Advancement



Lili Litwin joined McMaster on June 1, 2023, as McMaster's new Vice-President, University Advancement.

As a leading Canadian advancement expert, Litwin has worked across the research, hospital, charitable and university sectors. In addition to serving as executive director of Advancement at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, she spent five years as president of the St. Michael's Foundation at St. Michael's Hospital and Providence Healthcare, Unity Health Toronto. In both roles, she led fundraising campaigns that surpassed their goals, developed strong and diverse advancement teams, and liaised with academic partners on governance and donor stewardship.

Lili graduated from York University with a B.Ed. Her earlier work experience includes time as Vice- President of Development at the Canadian Centre for Diversity and with ONEXONE, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children in health and education.

Ashley Downey, Associate Vice President, University Advancement (Faculties and Units)



Ashley joined McMaster in May 2024. As an experienced fundraising leader with 15+ years delivering impact within the philanthropic sector, Ashley brings a wealth of experience and strategic leadership to McMaster University Advancement team. Joining from her previous role as Associate Vice-President at St. Michael's Hospital Foundation, where she worked for 10 years, she has consistently delivered exceptional results, leading critical portfolios including principal and major gifts and planned giving at

St. Michael's.

Her career is marked by a series of successes in driving major fundraising campaigns and fostering collaborative relationships with donors, volunteers, and organizational leaders. Ashley's expertise extends beyond healthcare, having made significant contributions to fundraising efforts at the Royal Ontario Museum and with Peacock Philanthropic Council Inc.

Ashley holds a Bachelor of Social Science in Political Science and Women's Studies from the University of Ottawa and a Graduate Certificate from Humber College in Fundraising and Volunteer Management.

Dr. Heather Sheardown, Dean of Engineering



Dr. Heather Sheardown is [Dean](#) of the Faculty of Engineering and professor of chemical engineering at McMaster University.

Dr. Sheardown is also the scientific director of [C20/20](#), an incubator for biomedical technologies, and a [Canada Research Chair](#) in Ophthalmic Biomaterials and Drug Delivery.

An accomplished researcher, Dr. Sheardown runs a large and vibrant research group with more than 10 post-doctoral fellows and graduate students. Her leadership of C20/20, an incubator aimed at the commercialization of ophthalmic biotechnologies, has led to three separate spin-off companies. She is also a strong champion of student success.

Dr. Sheardown joined McMaster in 1998 and has since taken on successive roles at the institution including as a member of the University Planning Committee and chair of the Budget Committee. She has been involved with the CEAB through the development of curricula for programs and was previously a member of the Professional Engineers Ontario Academic Requirements Committee.

She obtained her PhD from the University of Toronto in 1995 and her BEng from McMaster University in 1989.

The Position



The Director of Advancement will play a key role in leading the fundraising strategy and execution on behalf of the Faculty of Engineering, in concert with University Advancement. This is an opportunity for a fundraiser to be part of shaping one of Canada's most ambitious engineering fundraising agendas during a pivotal campaign, driving institutional priorities and philanthropic impact.

The successful candidate will be an excellent relationship builder and will be intellectually curious about the subject matter. They will be a collegial colleague, who believes in collaboration and communication and demonstrates this through every interaction. They will oversee all major gift strategy for gifts greater than \$25,000 and will direct a team of four.

The Faculty has a very strong history of advancement and fundraising success that the incoming Director will build upon and will support the ambition of a \$10M annual fundraising target, outside of the campaign. The ideal candidate will have experience cultivating, soliciting and stewarding individual, foundation and corporate donors, and will bring solid understanding of the Canadian philanthropic environment, legislation, and available charitable vehicles.

Key Accountabilities



Priority Setting & Faculty Collaboration

- Foster a culture of collaboration, integration, and service to support the University's core research and academic missions.
- Demonstrate a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and indigeneity through leadership, encouraging inclusive behavior and practices.
- Lead the Faculty of Engineering, Advancement team in implementing fundraising plans, pipeline development, stewardship plans and initiatives, and strategies to increase revenue.
- Develop, monitor, evaluate, and measure the Faculty of Engineering's strategic plans to ensure clear priorities and adequate resources align with University Advancement's goals.

- Collaborate with senior Faculty leadership and the Associate Vice President, Pan-University Advancement (Faculties & Units) to create advancement plans that align with academic priorities, building a compelling vision and case for support for major and principal gifts.
- Build and lead a high-performance team dedicated to achieving the Faculty's short- and long-term goals.
- Partner with University Advancement's senior leaders to set goals and objectives, including annual professional development plans for continuous improvement and change readiness.
- Engage with and support volunteer leadership within the Faculty of Engineering.

Advancement Leadership

- Commit to achieving University Advancement's annual fundraising goals, including the Faculty of Engineering's revenue targets.
- Develop and implement plans with clear short- and long-term priorities for university revenue-generating campaigns within the Faculty of Engineering.
- Provide expertise and guidance related to advancement as part of the Faculty of Engineering senior administration/operational leaders group as required.
- Manage the Faculty's Advancement budget allocation, ensuring resources are prioritized to meet university objectives and outcomes.
- Partner with the Associate Vice President, Pan-University Advancement (Faculties & Units) to enhance the University's major and principal giving program, developing and implementing strategies to increase new revenue specific to the Faculty.
- Lead campaign strategies for the Faculty, including designing, implementing, and managing development activities.
- Develop and maintain in-depth knowledge of the Faculty's approved research and teaching activities, needs, and priorities, matching them with potential supporters' interests.
- Collaborate with University Advancement to support major gift announcements, events, stewardship requirements and related activities.
- Represent the Faculty of Engineering and University at relevant community and University events, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Work closely with University Advancement to support annual financial goals and University Advancement's mission and strategic goals.
- Promote a culture of philanthropy within the Faculty of Engineering.

Team Leadership

- Oversee human resources activities for direct reports, including recruiting, onboarding, goal setting, performance management, development, and engagement initiatives.

- Motivate and mentor a team of development professionals; and be a collegial and collaborative colleague, offering leadership and support to colleagues across University Advancement, faculties and units.
- Attend University Advancement meetings to update on individual and team activities and stay informed on development activities.
- Work with University Advancement to plan and execute McMaster's next comprehensive Fundraising Campaign. Play the lead role in executing campaign strategies for the Faculty of Engineering by designing, implementing, and managing development activities related to the campaign.

Relationship Development

- Support University Advancement's senior leaders in engaging the President, Vice Presidents, senior University leadership, and volunteers in cultivating and soliciting principal gift supporters, ensuring appropriate briefings and follow-up actions.
- Collaborate with McMaster's Vice-Presidents, Deans, University Advancement and volunteer leaders in the Faculty of Engineering to identify and qualify new major gift supporters and develop engagement strategies.
- Liaise with the Vice-President of University Advancement, academic leadership, and advancement leaders on fundraising initiatives, including joint solicitation strategies and shared gifts.
- Identify, cultivate, and solicit support from a portfolio of prospects, donors and alumni, collaborating with senior academic leaders, senior Advancement leadership, and key volunteers to increase engagement and financial investment.

Administrative

- Ensure compliance with fundraising and revenue generation policies and procedures.
- Responsible for the allocation of advancement budget within the Faculty of Engineering and accountable to ensure resources are allocated and prioritized to meet University objectives and short and long-term outcomes.
- Timely update and report activities on the donor database (Ellucian Advance Web).

The Ideal Candidate



- Proven track record in securing and closing \$1M+ and complex donations and partnerships.
- Successful experience in major giving fundraising, preferably in post-secondary or complex organizations.

- Committed to equity, diversity, inclusion, and indigeneity, applying this lens to fundraising leadership, strategy, and tactics.
- Experience leading and managing high-performing, donor-centered development professionals.
- Expertise in attracting and maintaining donor and supporter relationships.
- Donor-centered, goal-oriented, with a reputation for integrity and transparency.
- Comfortable and credible working with senior academic leaders, donors, and volunteers.
- Competent in understanding Canadian tax legislation and the philanthropic landscape.
- Able to work at high strategic levels within the Faculty of Engineering, gaining and maintaining trust, and translating strategy into action.
- Experienced in staffing, supporting, and partnering with senior leaders on fundraising visits.
- Superior skills in critical analysis, judgment, decision-making, and relationship-building.
- Visionary with strategic thinking and a creative, entrepreneurial mindset.
- High initiative, tact, and diplomacy.
- Effective in a complex organization valuing collaboration, individuality, and creativity.
- Quickly develops a deep understanding of a research-intensive university's mission.
- Superior communication and interpersonal skills; skilled in writing proposals and development materials.
- Strong administrative skills in human resources, volunteer, and budget management, with financial acumen and comfort with data analytics.
- Proficient with computers and relational donor databases (Advance).

Working at McMaster University



At McMaster, you will find a community of talented individuals who are inspired by the University's Mission and the sense of purpose this mission brings. It is through these talented individuals, their creativity and drive for results that McMaster University has earned its reputation as being Canada's "most innovative" University.

Leaders in The Senior Administrative Leader Group are vital contributors to McMaster's renowned culture of creativity, innovation and excellence. They demonstrate the value they place on their leaders with a highly competitive total rewards package featuring compensation, well-being, growth and inclusion provisions.

McMaster University strives to embody the values of integrity, quality, inclusiveness and teamwork, and has a strong commitment to employment equity. Building an inclusive community with a shared purpose is something that McMaster University prioritizes. They believe it is important for their workforce to reflect the diversity of their students and community. The diversity of their workforce is at the core of their innovation and creativity and is a key area that strengthens their research capabilities and teaching excellence.

Compensation & Benefits

To learn more about the total rewards available to the successful candidate, please access McMaster's [interactive guide](#) with a summary of the compensation, benefits, retirement income, work life, development and career opportunities, and performance and recognition provisions offered at McMaster. To further explore the extensive total rewards program, detailed information can be accessed through the links throughout the guide. The hiring range for this position is \$140,000 - \$160,000 plus a performance pay bonus eligibility of up to 10% of base salary, along with an excellent [benefits package](#).

Application Instructions



The University seeks qualified candidates who share their commitment to equity and inclusion, who will contribute to the diversification of ideas and perspectives, and especially welcomes applications from indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) peoples, members of racialized communities, persons with disabilities, women, and persons who identify as 2SLGBTQ+.

Preston Human Capital Group has been retained to conduct this search on behalf of McMaster University. If you would like to apply, please send your CV and cover letter to **Lindsay Preston (lindsay@phcap.ca) by February 20, 2026, at 5pm ET.** Accommodation is available on request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process. If you require any accommodation, please notify Lindsay Preston.

McMaster University is located on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and Mississauga Nations and within the lands protected by the “Dish With One Spoon” wampum agreement. The diversity of their workforce is at the core of their innovation and creativity and strengthens their research and teaching excellence. In keeping with its Statement on Building an Inclusive Community with a Shared Purpose, McMaster University strives to embody the values of respect, collaboration and diversity and has a strong commitment to employment equity. We thank you in advance for your interest. Only qualified candidates will be contacted.