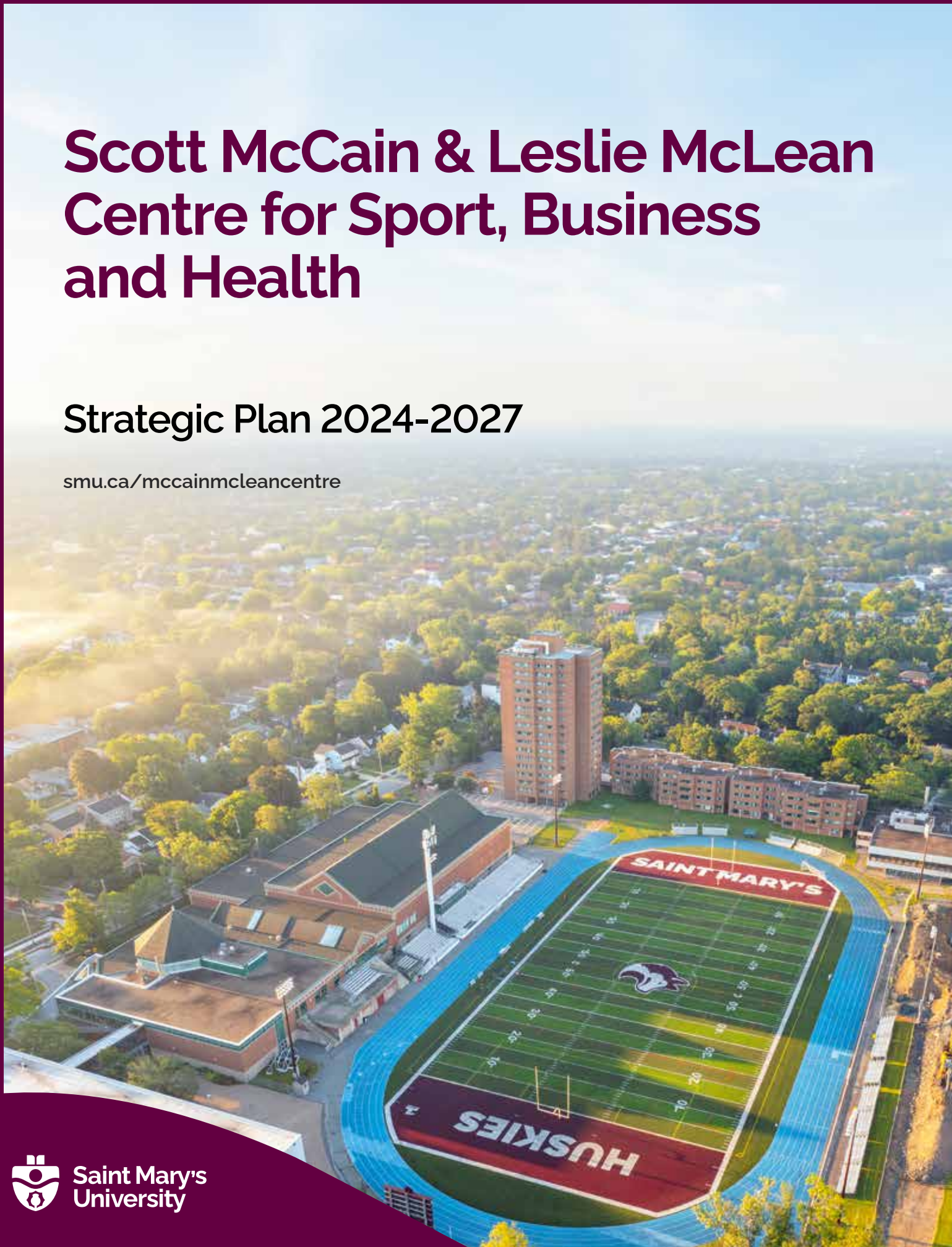


# Scott McCain & Leslie McLean Centre for Sport, Business and Health

## Strategic Plan 2024-2027

[smu.ca/mccainmcleancentre](http://smu.ca/mccainmcleancentre)



We acknowledge that the Scott McCain & Leslie McLean Centre for Sport, Business and Health at Saint Mary's University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq Nation, which is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, first signed with the British Crown in 1725.



# CONTENTS

- A Message from the Director ..... 4
- A Message from Scott and Leslie ..... 5
- About the Scott McCain & Leslie McLean Centre for Sport, Business and Health ..... 6
- Strategic Planning Framework ..... 8
- Vision and Mission .....10
- Core Values .....10
- Goals ..... 12
- Priority Area 1: Sport Education ..... 16
- Priority Area 2: Women in Sport Business ..... 17
- Priority Area 3: Athlete Wellbeing ..... 18

## A MESSAGE from THE DIRECTOR



**I am pleased to share the strategic plan that will guide the Scott McCain & Leslie McLean Centre for Sport, Business and Health for the coming three years (2024-2027).** Along with our new Research Plan this document builds from our strong history and illuminates a vibrant pathway into the future, including a new vision, mission, and core values.

As the incoming director of the McCain McLean Centre, I would like to thank the nearly 50 people who supported the strategic planning process. On a personal note, I want to extend my gratitude to Scott and Leslie as well Dr. Colin Howell, Dr. Adam Sarty, Scott Gray, Greg Knight, Dr. Jonathon Edwards, Dr. Charlene Weaving, Quinn MacDonald, and Julie Naugler. All have played critical roles in the development of the McCain McLean Centre as it currently stands.

I close by offering a well-deserved nod of recognition to Dr. Cheryl MacDonald, my predecessor (and former student!) for the amazing work she did in setting the stage for what we're about to do over the next few years. Thanks to her, the Scott McCain & Leslie McLean Centre for Sport, Business and Health is in a position to distinguish itself among Atlantic Canadian organizations that seek to engage in socially responsible, data-driven, and collaborative activities that will lend themselves well to the advancement of sport through the lenses of business and health in a rapidly changing world. May this Strategic Plan reflect how we will carry out that vision and mission.

*Dr. Augie Westhaver*



## A MESSAGE from SCOTT AND LESLIE



“ Sport brings us together, unites us and enriches our lives and our communities. ”

**We are pleased to join with Saint Mary's University in this transformative endeavour.**

It is widely recognized that sport plays an integral role in health. By partnering with Saint Mary's University, we can make a direct contribution to the lives of young people involved in sport by furthering their career goals and, in turn, watch them advance health and wellness in communities across Atlantic Canada and beyond.

*Scott McCain & Leslie McLean*

## About the SCOTT MCCAIN & LESLIE MCLEAN CENTRE FOR SPORT, BUSINESS AND HEALTH

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The Scott McCain & Leslie McCain Centre for Sport, Business and Health at Saint Mary's University Centre was originally established as a Senate-approved research centre in May 2010 under the direction of Dr. Colin Howell. The McCain McLean Centre has a history of hosting conferences and speaker series, welcoming visiting scholars and research associates, organizing community events, contributing to educational development on campus,

and providing development opportunities for Saint Mary's University varsity athletes. In 2023, it received a \$3-million gift from Scott McCain and Leslie McLean to expand its current capacity to include curriculum development in sport business into its mandate.

The centre has had an active visiting researcher program, including post-doctoral fellows and other academics active in sport and health research.



(L-R): Julie Naugler BA'20, President Summerby-Murray, Scott McCain, Leslie McLean, Dr. Cheryl MacDonald BA'10, Dr. Colin Howell.

Over the years it has hosted scholars from all over North America, Great Britain, Europe, and Russia.

The centre has also been active in community-oriented research initiatives at the local, national and international levels, including work with various sporting bodies such as Sport Nova Scotia, and a number of sport heritage agencies including Canada's Sport Hall of Fame. Centre research projects have addressed a range of concerns and some have been funded by the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada. Topics have included sporting borderlands to work on mental resiliency, student-athlete wellbeing, and gender and sexuality in sport.

Within the university, the centre has been especially committed to involving students in our activities, from taking on experiential learning and SMUWorks students to the development of a Here for Peers student mentoring program, the Healthy Teams project and the Student Athlete Mental Health Initiative. It also contributes to campus events such as Indigenous Sport Week.

### Additional work

- ▶ **Conferences and symposia:** The Hockey Conference (2012, 2021); Annual meeting of the North American Society for Sport History (2013); Transnational Lacrosse Conference (2014); Goaltending Symposium (2021); The Queen of Basketball Panel (2022); Standing Bear Indigenous Physical Activity & Leadership Symposium (2023); Sports Studies Outside the Classroom (2024)
- ▶ **Speaker series and other talks:** Hockey Speaker Series (2019, 2020, 2023-24); Sports Writing (2019, 2023); Athlete Mental Health (2022), Trans Inclusion in Sport (2024)
- ▶ **Research fields:** sporting borderlands; development of professional sport; athlete safety and wellbeing; sport history; athlete mental resilience



# STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

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**The strategic planning process took place between October 2023 and April 2024.**

It involved collecting information from a range of sources and inviting input from key stakeholders, including students, athletes, scholars, university staff, activists, and industry professionals. The planning process included a consultation process, a competitive analysis, the creation of a provisional advisory group, and a presentation of the refined plan.

First, executive management reached an agreement with Scott McCain and Leslie McLean for their vision of the centre's future. Next, a director was hired to assist with the development of the centre mandate in consultation with other centre directors. Marketing and operations staff were then hired, and a strategic planning consultant was brought on board. From there, activities included a consultation process, a competitive analysis, the creation of a provisional advisory group, and a presentation of the refined plan.

## Consultation Process

- ▶ **Focus group meetings:** invited scholars from on and off campus, students, athletes, university administrators and staff, alumni, activists, and industry professionals for in-person discussions about the mission, vision, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the new Scott McCain & Leslie McLean Centre for Sport, Business and Health

- ▶ **Online survey:** offered to anyone who was unavailable to meet in person
- ▶ **Interviews:** collected in-depth information from key individuals involved in the sport sector

## Competitive Analysis

- ▶ Identified other centres and institutes globally and domestically that have comparable visions, missions, and core values
- ▶ Examined their structures and initiatives with a view to how the centre could uniquely, creatively, and competitively establish itself within the existing landscape

## Provisional Advisory Group

- ▶ Based on the consultation process and competitive analysis, a draft of the strategic plan was created and presented to a group of twelve advisors with specific skills related to sport, business, and health from educational and industry perspectives
- ▶ Conducted individual meetings with all twelve members to obtain their feedback on the draft, which included the centre's new mission, vision, core values, and goals. Members also offered advice and ideas for centre research and community engagement initiatives





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## VISION AND MISSION

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The Scott McCain & Leslie McCain Centre for Sport, Business and Health at Saint Mary's University strives to be a leader among Atlantic Canadian organizations that use social responsibility as a driver for the practical and intellectual advancement of sport.

Our mission is to produce, enhance, and deliver research and community outreach initiatives with an emphasis on socially responsible approaches to sport in the fields of business and health.

## CORE VALUES

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### **Social Responsibility**

The Scott McCain & Leslie McCain Centre for Sport, Business and Health strives to engage in activities that will positively impact society by prioritizing social justice, human rights, ethics, equity, inclusion, accessibility, sustainable development goals, social determinants of health, and collective wellbeing—particularly for equity-denied individuals and groups (*see Appendix A*).

### **Intellectual Pursuits**

We endeavour to foster a dynamic and enterprising research and community engagement environment that challenges the status quo through the innovative pursuit of knowledge and intellectual growth. This involves the prioritization of learning, exploration, adaptability, creativity, and critical thinking. This also includes the dissemination of knowledge and information that results from such pursuits.

### **Collaborative Leadership**

The centre seeks to be an organization with vision that empowers people and groups to join it at the forefront of the practical and intellectual advancement of sport.

We are in a position to lead by example and achieve common goals through the integration of diverse viewpoints, the leveraging of collective expertise, and by engaging in mutual support. This includes bridging the relationship between athletics and academics and will require us to take initiative, to be adaptable, self-reflexive and accountable, and to create an inclusive environment within and outside of the centre.





# GOALS

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All activities in and through the Scott McCain & Leslie McLean Centre for Sport, Business and Health must be undertaken in such a way that is informed by initiatives and documents including, but not limited to:

- ▶ *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Girls and Women final report;*
- ▶ *the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;*
- ▶ *the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action;*
- ▶ *the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Women and Gender Equality Canada, and;*
- ▶ *the Scarborough Charter on anti-Black racism and Black inclusion.*

## Sustainable Operations

- ▶ Establish ongoing sustainable, financially responsible operations to ensure the longevity of the centre
- ▶ Hire long-term positions in operations, marketing, and project management in 2024
- ▶ Conduct annual Senate reviews and a self-study with the aim of developing policies and procedures to guide the centre starting in 2024
- ▶ Establish an advisory board by 2025 to counsel and support throughout the duration of the strategic plan
- ▶ Consistently seek opportunities for revenue generation
- ▶ Maintain the centre's physical space, update its furniture, and add inclusive decor to make it more welcoming
- ▶ Establish a plan for research supervision and dissemination if not included in the Director's position

## Research

- ▶ Develop a research plan that aligns with the centre mission and vision and university research plan in 2024
- ▶ Host brainstorming sessions to discuss a kaleidoscope of potential issues that research can explore further
- ▶ Contribute to research result dissemination by organizing and supporting conferences, symposia, speaker series, and other talks
- ▶ Seek out and provide research funding that will build and expand on the foundational gift from donors Scott McCain and Leslie McLean
- ▶ Promote an inclusive climate of research excellence that effectively supports, values and celebrates the achievements of researchers associated with the centre
- ▶ Create postdoctoral (or other fellowship) positions and hire student research assistants

- ▶ Expand existing research in the area of women in sport business: lack of women in business ownership, sport operations, and leadership positions; development of professional women's sport

- ▶ Expand existing research area in athlete wellbeing: mental health and mental performance; athlete safety and maltreatment; athlete support and development; athlete transitions



## Student and Community Engagement

- ▶ Develop and implement marketing and enrolment management strategies in 2024
- ▶ Maintain a strong social media and website presence
- ▶ Regularly offer support to and invite participation in centre initiatives from units such as Student Affairs and Services, Recruitment, Academic Faculties, and Athletics
- ▶ Develop a system for hosting visiting scholars and community collaborators by 2025
- ▶ Disseminate research results and other educational material by organizing and supporting conferences, symposia, speaker series, leading edited collections or special editions of journals, workshops or classes, and other educational resources
- ▶ Working with Advancement, engage potential donors to philanthropic opportunities that align with the centre and its mission and vision
- ▶ Provide opportunities for the public to participate in centre initiatives virtually and in person
- ▶ Facilitate connections between individuals and groups in search of resources or assistance
- ▶ Consult on and support educational development in sport studies on campus (and examine the possibility of graduate programming)
- ▶ Develop ongoing programming for university athlete support and development that includes peer mentorship, transitional support, and possibly youth involvement
- ▶ Support and consult on experiential learning related to sport studies, including providing opportunities to students within the centre
- ▶ Develop mentorship and leadership programming to support underrepresented student-athletes
- ▶ Highlight student and athlete success





# PRIORITIES



## Priority Area 1: SPORT EDUCATION

**Sport education is a mainly pedagogical priority area that aims to enhance interdisciplinary learning about sport on and off campus.**

The main objective of actions and initiatives undertaken within this area will be to educate, disseminate information, or mobilize knowledge in a way that positively serves students, athletes, working professionals, or any person or group seeking a better understanding of socially responsible approaches to sport in the fields of business and health.

### **Supporting educational development related to sport studies at Saint Mary's:**

- ▶ Work with an educational developer and faculty leads to create programming in sports business and to expand programming in health, wellness and sport in society
- ▶ Provide financial support for relevant library resources
- ▶ Advocate for the inclusion of key voices in educational development such as leading scholars in the field, students, and Black and Indigenous leaders
- ▶ Facilitate connections and opportunities for experiential learning

### **Creating educational resources:**

- ▶ Create informative fact sheets, infographics, and other shareable content
- ▶ Examine the possibility of creating a certification in sport equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility
- ▶ Create educational resources needed to support the strategic plan's other priority areas
- ▶ Provide funding for other research and projects that result in the creation of educational resources
- ▶ Examine the possibility of monetizing resources in order to support sustainable revenue generation

### **Disseminating information in ways that bridge academics and athletics:**

- ▶ Host conferences, symposia, speaker series, guest lectures, and workshops with or for a combination of scholars and industry professionals
- ▶ Lead an edited collection of chapters written by scholars, athletes, activists, and other practitioners
- ▶ Create visibility through the university Research Expo and by highlighting student and athlete success
- ▶ Examine the possibility of creating temporary displays as part of the centre environment



## Priority Area 2: WOMEN IN SPORT BUSINESS

**Women in sport business as a priority area is aimed at examining the barriers that prevent women from participating in sport-related business and increasing their ability and opportunities to do so.**

Women are carving out significant roles across various sectors, from management and marketing to media and entrepreneurship. Women's professional sport also continues to develop in North America. Despite these advances, there continues to be a lack of women in sport operations and ownership positions. The main objective of actions within this area is to produce research and community engagement initiatives that will support gender equality, promote the representation of women at all levels of sport, and empower others to follow suit.

### **Recommended research areas:**

- ▶ Lack of women in coaching, scouting, general management, team ownership, and analytics, especially at top levels of sport
- ▶ Development of women's professional sports and parasports
- ▶ The experiences of women of colour, queer and trans women, women with disabilities, mothers

### **Establish sources of support:**

- ▶ Seek funding for research and community initiatives that build on the transformational gift from Scott and Leslie, and that secures long-term funding and diverse revenue sources
- ▶ Seek out current scholars and hire postdoctoral scholars or other fellows, and research assistants
- ▶ Seek out possible community partners with similar goals

### **Plan for community engagement:**

- ▶ Organize a speaker series on women in sport business
- ▶ Examine the possibility of a mentorship program for women in sport operations that provides them with access to training, networking, and experiential learning
- ▶ Examine the possibility of a case competition that would challenge participants to develop solutions for increasing women's participation and comfort in sport business
- ▶ Create funding opportunities and other supports for scholars or community organizations doing work that aligns with this priority area





## Priority Area 3: ATHLETE WELLBEING

**Athlete wellbeing is a broad priority area that aims to examine and support the holistic factors influencing athletes' overall health and performance.**

This includes the intellectual, emotional, physical, and cultural or spiritual aspects of their lives. The main objective of actions within this area is to produce research and community engagement that enhances athletes' quality of life throughout every stage of their sport participation.

### **Establish possible areas of inquiry:**

- ▶ Athlete mental health and mental performance
- ▶ University athlete support and development programming athlete safety and abuse, mental discomfort vs. maltreatment, social determinants of health and athlete wellbeing
- ▶ Wellbeing of athletes who identify as Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+, para-athletes, having intellectual disabilities, geographical newcomers, economically disadvantaged

### **Establish potential sources of support:**

- ▶ Seek funding for research and community initiatives that build on the transformational gift from Scott and Leslie, and that secures long-term funding and diverse revenue sources
- ▶ Seek out current scholars, hire postdoctoral scholars or other fellows, research assistants
- ▶ Seek out possible community partners with similar goals

### **Establish a plan for community engagement:**

- ▶ Lead the creation of an edited collection on athlete safety and wellbeing
- ▶ Examine the possibility of a mentorship program for Black varsity athletes that attends to their personal and cultural development as well as their leadership and business skills
- ▶ Create or identify resources for athletes such as life skills workshops, holistic development, and wellness/mindfulness journals
- ▶ Host a conference or symposium on varsity athlete wellbeing



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