

## **THE SOCRATES PROJECT: PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES**

Although focused on the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the exceptional facilities available in Wilson Hall, the Socrates Project is intended to combine a range of complementary initiatives that engage the internal and external communities beyond those disciplines, support and promote interdisciplinary collaboration and partnership, raise the profile of the liberal arts, promote vibrant and robust high-quality academic discourse, and nurture critical thought, discernment, and carefully-reasoned judgment. The Project is imagined as a blend of new programming, initiatives, and outreach, with work already underway, and is intended to enable and support initiatives and events that wouldn't otherwise be possible, as well as develop and expand the impact and scope of existing programming and events.

### **Initial Funding Considerations**

The detailed vision and programming for the Project will be established by the Project Director in consultation with the Project Committee. Some preliminary considerations for funding include:

- Socrates Projects should wherever possible include a multi-disciplinary perspective, or the possibility for interdisciplinary engagement.
- Events promoted under the Socrates umbrella should include a critical/analytical component, e.g. opportunity for debate, discussion, masterclass, etc.
- The topics or themes being considered should be of broad societal importance, asking and answering “big” questions, or exploring issues of relevance to the broader community.
- Wherever possible projects should include elements of community outreach, and/or student engagement.
- For particular relevance to the performing arts, projects that are novel, eclectic, or which allow the opportunity to explore emerging fields, are encouraged.
- Projects that encompass a series of events or a longer-term initiative focused around a defined theme (rather than one-off events or initiatives) are preferred.
- Projects should fall within one or more of the key Project themes, summarized below.
- Although focused on the Liberal Arts, project proposals and suggestions are welcome and encouraged from all Faculties and areas of the University.

### **Key Elements of the Project**

- 1) **Spotlight on the Arts: Performance and Critique** – Highlighting and promoting McMaster's impressive performance facilities with a range of student productions, concerts, performances and exhibitions, as well as high-profile

- performances by leading Canadian artists, and involving new and ongoing community partnerships.
- 2) **Socratic Occasions: High-Quality Academic Discourse** – Bringing together academics from a range of disciplines to discuss and debate topics of critical importance to our society, and provide opportunities to model high-quality discourse and mentor students.
  - 3) **The World Within: Inter-Disciplinary Programs and Outreach** – Intended to raise awareness of different disciplines, perspectives and approaches, this element will focus on interdisciplinary programming opportunities, as well as less formal events and initiatives to support the development of cross-disciplinary collaboration.
  - 4) **The World Without: Local and Global Engagement** – Designed to showcase and support students in their efforts to use their skills to engage in public service, community engagement and global awareness-raising projects, and foster a broader understanding and appreciation of the world, and of the pressures placed on our planet by both natural processes and human practices.
  - 5) **Fashioning the Future: Leadership Development** – This element is intended to focus explicitly on the development of leadership skills, providing opportunities for students in the liberal arts to connect with leaders in the public service, industry and academia, develop their understanding of the possible paths open to them after graduation, and cultivate their leadership skills.