FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Through our programs, services and community partnerships we inspire students and alumni to engage in learning opportunities to achieve academically, personally and professionally.
Welcome to Journey to Success, the 2012 Student Affairs Annual Report. Unlike other annual reports, this issue is dedicated to Dr. Phil Wood and his tenure as associate vice-president (AVP) of Student Affairs and dean of students. It is also more colourful, uplifting and more interesting than most annual reports.

Phil Wood joined Student Affairs in July 2002 and will leave this administrative post in June 2013.

In discussing how to go about addressing Phil’s contributions to Student Affairs and the McMaster community, three themes emerged: student experience, leadership and collaboration. This annual report celebrates some of Student Affairs’ (Phil’s) crowning achievements in the past decade. A special thank-you is extended to the Student Affairs staff and former McMaster employees who contributed ideas, articles and quotes about Phil and his contributions to McMaster. Thanks also to Phil’s wife Barb for providing additional information and special memories through photographs and to Gina Robinson and Eva Bodrozic for spearheading this tribute.

Journey to Success, Student Affairs 2012 Annual Report
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Students Affairs Mission
As partners in learning we provide our students with opportunities to discover, learn and grow.

Strategic Goals
To collaborate with our partners to create opportunities for our students to achieve their personal and career aspirations
1. To model a student centered, collaborative and integrated approach to learning
2. To create a memorable and enjoyable McMaster experience
3. To help students make meaning of their University experience
4. To achieve our mission and strategic goals within a sustainable financial and accountability framework for all of Student Affairs

How we operate
To us, development isn’t just about academics and a healthy social life; it’s also about the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of students. The units within Student Affairs work together to inspire the development of well-rounded students who achieve success at school, at work and in the community.

Each Student Affairs unit establishes programs and services which contribute to this over-arching goal. As Student Affairs professionals, we are “partners in learning.” Our work is guided by evidence-based practices and established learning outcomes and our approach is collaborative, seeking input from the McMaster community, student groups, partners and the greater Hamilton community.

“In Student Affairs we believe that leadership is a skill that you should acquire in university. You don’t usually learn it in a classroom—you learn it by doing.”
–Phil Wood
This quote describes my 11-year career in Student Affairs. I had just been appointed AVP in June 2002 when I was made aware of a significant issue in housing. It was the first year of the double cohort and the residence system was over-booked by more than 600 students. This was my first real introduction to Cathie Miller, our director of Housing and Conference Services (even though both of my sons had lived in residence). Working hard over the summer, Cathie and her team “solved” the problem by creating a new residence within the existing residence buildings. Our then registrar, George Granger, arranged for us to purchase bunk beds and furniture from Laurier and our “bunk and loft” program was invented. I say “solved” because our triples still exist 11 years later in spite of our opening two new residences: Mary Keyes (280 beds in 2003) and Les Prince (389 beds in 2006). The reason? McMaster’s full-time undergraduate student body has grown from 13,400 in 2002-03 to 19,000 in 2011-12, a 42 per cent increase.

One of the first visitors to my office in the summer of 2002 was our director of athletics, Thérèse Quigley. Thérèse showed me the McMaster University: Athletics and Recreation Master Plan program and concept that was prepared by Johnston Sport. The document contained a concept for a new Athletics and Recreation Centre that would cost approximately $35 million. Our first job was to find the money. By far, the biggest contributors to the project were the McMaster students. They approved a referendum in 2003 to contribute $20 million. This was after already contributing a similar amount to the building of the McMaster University Student Centre (MUSC). I will forever be grateful to those undergraduate students and their elders. In 2005, Ron Joyce (previous owner of Tim Hortons) donated $10 million towards the stadium portion of the project. The stadium opened (in the rain) in 2008 completing what had by then become a more than $50-million athletic complex, one of the finest in Canada. Jeff Giles joined us as director of athletics and recreation in 2009 and took our programs to a brand new level of excellence, culminating in the Marauders winning the Vanier Cup in 2011.

In 2009, Student Affairs was faced with significant budget challenges. We needed a new direction. After two retreats, a plan was hatched: the creation of the Student Success Centre (SSC). It was essentially a one-stop shop for careers, leadership opportunities and the student experience. The project was led by Danielle Stayzer, Adam Kuhn and Gina Robinson. Later, in 2010,
CSD director Desmond Pouyat left McMaster to become the dean of Student Affairs at the University of Toronto Scarborough. The impending retirement of Julie Fairservice, our director of campus health, and the success of our integrated mental health team led to the creation of the Student Wellness Centre (SWC) in 2011. Rosanne Kent took on the role of director of the SWC and is ably supported by associate directors Debbie Nifakis and Jan Young.

I am very proud of the creation of these two centres. In my view, we led the pack relative to other Canadian Institutions and over the past few years, representatives from several of them have visited us to see how we operate. Born out of financial exigency, they have become centres of excellence, joining our departments of Athletics and Recreation and Housing.

Another area that has seen great growth over the past 11 years is the Student Code of Conduct. What was seen initially as a somewhat punitive code administered by Judicial Affairs has become a more student-centred, restorative code administered by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. I am extremely pleased that senate has passed a new policy on voluntary/involuntary withdrawal. I also wanted to mention a very creative project led by Eva Bodrozic the McMaster University Safety, Security & Transit App (MUSST). The app is now available from the Apple app-store and Google Play and will be of great benefit to McMaster students, staff and faculty for many years to come.

When I started in 2002, the AVP had responsibility for Titles bookstore and Hospitality Services. This responsibility was moved to the administration envelope in 2012 but for ten years I enjoyed working with Donna Shapiro (initially Bob Crawford) and Albert Ng. Both operations were hugely successful and were always highly valued and rated by students. Beginning in May 2013, Student Affairs will be the home of the Registrar and Admissions functions and will grow once again. Long-time director of Scholarships and Financial Aid, Elizabeth Seymour, will be returning to Student Affairs. Sounds like time for another retreat!

I celebrate all of these accomplishments with the fantastic team of professionals in Student Affairs but especially with Gina Robinson. Gina is now the assistant dean of Student Affairs (as well as director of the Student Success Centre) and played a significant leadership role in all of the projects delineated here. Throughout my 11 years, Tim Nolan has been by my side leading Student Accessibility Services. Tim has been tireless in his support of students with disabilities and the mission of Student Affairs.

“Writing is like driving a car at night in the fog. You can only see as far as the headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way.”

–E.L. Doctorow
“Phil was a great mentor and advocate for our students, our student services, and our athletics and recreation department. And, during his terms as AVP Student Affairs, Mac’s facilities and programs grew and improved to rank among the finest in the country. He was always a great resource and support to me as president and many a time we would drop in on one another to talk over some looming issue or opportunity.

Phil’s leadership was vital to the successful completion of the outstanding additions of the Student Centre, the David Braley Centre and the Ron Joyce Stadium. He took the lead, too, in responding quickly to the Brandon Hall residence fire and mitigating the impact on so many students. While these will always stand out in my mind as the most visible of his achievements, I am convinced that it was his persistent, determined daily efforts to improve the lives of our students and the quality of their McMaster experience which will be his abiding legacy.

I extend my deepest gratitude and warmest best wishes to Phil and all the staff who served with him in Student Affairs.”

Peter George, President Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Economics, McMaster University

“Phil’s leadership was vital to the successful completion of the outstanding additions of the Student Centre, David Braley Centre and the Ron Joyce Stadium.”

–Peter George
“Thanks Phil for all you have done for the department, the faculty and the University. As Chair of our department, your leadership was exceptional. Your dedication to teaching and helping students learn really struck a chord with me. You pioneered the 3G3 course and created it from scratch: all the modelling in the boiler house, hours spent preparing the notes and the background. Then, there was your heat transfer course with your famous beer cooling experiment. You had the students consider frozen water pipes, wind chill factor and ‘the case of the submerged corpse.’

For fluids it was, “Why is a golf ball dimpled?” You brought practical every day examples into the class so students would really see what the courses were all about and why they were so important.”

Diane and I wish you a wonderful retirement. We will certainly miss you at the University.

Don Woods, Professor Emeritus Chemical Engineering, McMaster University

Sadly, Don passed away just a few days after contributing to this tribute. Our condolences to his family.

Gathering of chemical engineers, 1991-1992
Bottom row seated: Dr. T. Hoffman, Dr. L.W. Shemilt, Dr. C. Crowe, Dr. P. Wood, Dr. M. Baird, Dr. I. Feuerstein
Top left: Dr. P. Taylor, Tom Sutton, Dr. K. Murphy, Dr. A. Hamielec, Dr. Wright, Dr. R. Pelton, Dr. J. Brash, Dr. T. Marlin, Dr. J. Vlachopoulos, Dr. A. Hrymak, Dr. D. Woods, Dr. M. Shoukri
"Dr. Phil, as he is known to students, is a champion and ardent supporter of the orientation production IRIS, his commitment to and support of students is legendary on campus."

— Michele Corbeil
This fall, the IRIS production will enter its 10th year of production. IRIS (Inspiration, Reflection, Integrity, and Success) is an orientation drama production that welcomes first-year students to McMaster and offers a glimpse of the transitional issues, challenges and opportunities that they may encounter during their first year.

“A champion and ardent supporter of IRIS, Dr. Phil Wood spent time each summer with the cast, stage manager and director to express his gratitude and appreciation for their commitment to IRIS and to first year students,” says Michele Corbeil, co-coordinator of first year transition. Phil also made guest appearances in the production from 2010 to 2012.

In October 2012, the Welcome Week production of IRIS took place in residence with a sequel on community living. Cathie Miller, director of housing and conference services, says the impetus for IRIS and the support for its continued evolution as an integral part of programming for all first-year students began during Phil’s role as AVP of Student Affairs and dean of students. “Phil is passionate about teaching and learning and identifying the optimum ways to connect with students and assist them with orientation and transition issues.”

“Dr. Phil, as he is known to students, is a champion and ardent supporter of the orientation production,” adds Corbeil. “His commitment to and support of students is legendary on campus.”

According to Miller, the IRIS production has resulted in a number of positive learning outcomes:

★ The residence audience watched performers act out communication challenges and access campus resources that helped them improve their communication with roommates and other members of their community.

★ The audience was comfortable interacting with the performers and many members took risks by talking about their residence experiences.

★ The actors and script writers learned about different situations and descriptors which enhanced their understanding of how the audience makes meaning of the situations and interactions depicted in the production, which will inform the script writing for IRIS 2013.

“Thank you Dr. Wood for challenging us to find innovative ways to inform and engage students and for your enthusiastic support of the programs we create and deliver as a result,” she says.

“Phil cares deeply about the students at McMaster University and about providing an excellent experience for all students. He leads based on his values of hard work, integrity and his belief in the potential in each student. He will definitely be missed.”

–Adam Kuhn
EXPERIENCE—Connecting with students

■ “It was over ten years ago today. On July 1, 2002, Phil assumed the role of AVP Student Affairs and dean of students. I have the honour of having worked with Phil for ten years, a decade I would describe as being dedicated to student life.”

As an administrator, Phil has demonstrated his belief that academic excellence and a quality student experience are not mutually exclusive. From Phil, I learned that every experience is an opportunity to learn and that Student Affairs professionals should see students as partners in learning.

This perspective has resulted in numerous learning possibilities for students and for staff who worked with Phil. We realized that learning takes place not only in the classroom but in residence, in the athletic centre, in university clubs and through daily activities in the community.

Today there are a number of initiatives, programs and spaces dedicated to student life that support the concept that learning does take place “outside the classroom.” Our accomplishments in student health, accessibility services and student success are a testament to Phil’s vision on how to improve student life.

“Through Phil, I learned that every experience is an opportunity to learn.”

A sincere thank you from all of us, Marcos Costa, Manager, International Student Services and MacAbroad

■ “Over the past 10 years, Phil has been a constant source of support for our residence life system. From his presence at countless events, his words of welcome and the celebration he shares each year with student staff, he ensures we all feel supported and appreciated for our commitment to students. Phil’s confidence in staff’s ability to assist students in making a successful transition to university life is genuine. As Phil would say, ‘I have your back’—he always has and we thank him for that.”

Cathie Miller, Director, Housing and Conference Services

■ “Our departments ‘leave no doubt’ theme has been about letting people know what’s important to us and what we stand for. In many ways, this theme also applies to Phil’s entire term as dean of students because there was never any doubt that his Number 1 priority was always the health and welfare of each and every McMaster student.

Phil has worked tirelessly with passion and enthusiasm to improve the overall student experience to the level it is at today; one of the best in this country. It is safe to say that Phil’s compassionate, understanding approach has made a huge difference for many people here at McMaster.

While Phil may be stepping down as dean of students, those of us in Athletics and Recreation take some solace in knowing that we continue to see him support his Marauders...it’s in his blood.”

Thanks for everything, your friends in A&R.

Jeffrey Giles
Director, Athletics and Recreation
Heidi Muller, manager of the office of student conduct and community standards, says an increase in mental health issues at the University in the last few years has impacted potential violations of the Student Code of Conduct (SCC). As a result, she says Phil Wood initiated a review of the SCC and how the University handles students’ behaviour.

“Phil has extended his understanding of the importance of health and mental health issues to students to include the Student Code and what we do when health issues influence a student’s behaviour,” she says.

“In older versions of the code, it was clear that a student had to be processed according to the code regardless of any health circumstances. As a result of incidents with a few students, it became clear that this was not fair treatment.”

Muller says Phil has encouraged a review of the SCC to ensure that when students have a medical concern that is contributing to their behaviour, the University is treating them fairly. Over the past year, Phil has gathered information on the issue from other academic institutions in the province and proposed changes to the code were recently approved by the Senate.

“This is an especially important project,” says Muller. “It emphasizes student’s rights when they are not well and takes into account that a balance of support and accountability is needed while promoting a safe community on campus.”

Heidi Muller, manager, student conduct & community standards
“Model and encourage value-based behaviour.”

—Phil Wood
“It has been both an exciting and challenging time in Student Affairs over the past decade,” says Gina Robinson, director of the Student Success Centre and assistant dean of Student Affairs. “Fiscal challenges, increasing demand for services, large capital investments, restructuring and service re-alignment brought us both trials and triumphs.”

Robinson says Student Affairs has been well served under the leadership of Phil Wood. “Often I heard him say that he had the best job on campus and I felt that I was lucky to have the second best job working alongside him.”

Robinson began working in Student Affairs in 1999 as the director of student services, responsible for the budget and financial affairs. Phil joined Student Affairs in 2002. “You may wonder how an engineer and an accountant could join forces to improve services related to health and wellness, for example,” says Robinson. “But it worked.”

She says she learned a lot about the Student Affairs profession and the world of teaching, learning and student life from Phil. “Dealing with students’ issues has not always been easy but it was never a task that Phil shied away from. He was always ready to ‘really’ listen to students and he was a great advocate for representing their best interests. I think this is what has impressed me most.”

Robinson says it has been great to work for someone who believed in what they did and was passionate about it. “Phil put students first and that meant providing them with quality services and experiences that were never compromised by budgetary constraints. Re-thinking situations, supporting independent entrepreneurial initiatives, self-direction and collaboration are aspects of his leadership style and they became part of Student Affairs practice.”

Robinson says she is thankful for her growth and development and the opportunity to enhance her leadership skills. “Thank you for your guidance and support through all of these years. I know for you this is just the beginning of a new exciting chapter in your life.”

See you when I see you!
Gina Robinson, Director, Student Success Centre and Assistant Dean, Student Affairs

“My thoughts and memories are many…

Phil is a champion for students—always working on their behalf to ensure the University remained student centred.

He is a critical member of the crisis management team; during the residence fire a few years ago he was always on hand to address the challenges.

Phil has also been a great dinner mate. Between him and Fred Hall, social events were always lively and animated. His practical jokes and sense of humour raised the spirit of all.”

Karen Belaire, Chief Operating Officer, Ontario Institute for Cancer Research
“Strive to be at the cutting edge of your profession.”

–Phil Wood
“I remember my time working at McMaster with Phil with much fondness. His passion and empathy for students was unmistakable. Student success and learning reconsidered were passions for him. No wonder McMaster now has a Student Success Centre.

Mental health became a concern on campuses during the early years of Phil’s tenure and this, along with my extensive mental health background, were likely reasons he hired me in 2003 to be the director of the Centre for Student Development (CSD).

Phil and I agreed on how to approach these issues and with the help of a great team at CSD and Campus Health a student-at-risk committee was formed and the orange folder initiative was created. The orange folders provided direction to staff and faculty on how to manage and refer students in difficulty. In particular, the folders facilitated a better understanding of students experiencing mental health challenges.

On a lighter, more personal note, Phil loved music; in particular, soul music. We shared stories and some music over the years. Phil took an interest in my son D’ari’s musical journey, often inquiring as to his progress and later that of his partner Mel.

Campus-wide education and outreach followed the implementation of the orange folders. We have all come a long way since then, but we were early leaders in what has become a best practice and Phil’s interest in mental health has continued.

I will always remember Phil as a compassionate person who was interested in the individual and willing to convey this - for example, the support he gave when my mother died during my McMaster days.

Enjoy retirement Phil. A decade as a Student Affairs Dean and AVP is a long time.

Perhaps, it is even several lifetimes long. You have made your mark.”

All the best,
(Des), Desmond Pouyat,
Dean of Student Affairs
University of Toronto (Scarborough)
“As partners in learning, the goal of the mental health team is to help our students be successful students”

—Rosanne Kent
STUDENT WELLNESS—A mental health advocate who recognized need to combine services

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, each year one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem or illness. At McMaster, the demand for mental health services has increased steadily since 2004 precipitating the creation of a mental health team and the unification of services provided by Campus Health and the Centre for Student Development (CSD) under the Student Wellness Centre.

“Combining mental health and counselling services has resulted in more streamlined services and significantly improved mental health care for students,” says Rosanne Kent, director of the Student Wellness Centre. “Phil Wood is a mental health advocate who recognized the need to provide health and counselling services under one roof.”

Wood says there are many students at university today who would not have been accepted years ago. “We have more students with mental health issues who would never have been in university before, students who are bi-polar or who have schizophrenia.”

Wood says Student Affairs has done a lot of work and shared resources to gain a clearer picture of students’ perspectives, challenges and capabilities. “It’s an integral part of ensuring they learn and grow,” he adds.

The Student Wellness Centre plays a key role in improving students’ experience during their time at McMaster, says Kent. “The Centre is committed to working with students to improve their mental and physical well-being through knowledge, counselling and medical attention. We’re here to support students and ensure that we continue to be a student-centered University.”

Studies indicate that students are more likely to suffer from psychological stress than the rest of the population and in 2006 more than 3,500 McMaster students visited Campus Health because of a mental health concern. Wood believes students are generally less prepared for university than they were ten years ago. He says multi-tasking and students desire to do many things is likely one reason why some students are distracted, stressed and less engaged in learning.

In January 2008, the clinical mental health team was formed and a full-time mental health nurse was hired to support and improve existing mental health services. That year, the mental health team psychiatrist saw 188 patients in the first three months. Since the Student Wellness Centre opened in September 2011, staff received 6,946 counselling and psychiatry visits.

“The need for mental health care for students is great as demonstrated by both the volume and severity of student concerns,” says Kent. “Phil understands that health and mental-health related issues affect student success and he has supported the evolution of health services in spirit and with funding.”

Services provided at the Student Wellness Centre include individual and group therapy, workshops on mental health awareness and suicide prevention, medical services, an on-site psychiatrist as well as educational resources on healthy living and stress management.

“We are excited to provide better care for McMaster students who require assistance with mental health issues,” says Kent. “As partners in learning, the goal of the mental health team is to help our students be successful students.”
“Throughout the Student Success Leader program (beginning with the Peer Health Education program), Phil Wood has been a tremendous supporter of our volunteer student leaders in wellness education, contributing to their recognition throughout the years. This year, Phil continued to be a strong advocate of mental health and mental illness awareness through the Stomp Out Sigma campaign for Mental Health Awareness Week, supporting the week-long program through funding and speaking at our rally.

Thank you Phil for your continued support of wellness education—your commitment to the importance of prevention, education and awareness through the Student Wellness Centre has been greatly appreciated!”

Pearl Mendonça, Melissa Fernandes, Kathryn Patterson, wellness education, Student Wellness Centre

Mental health—the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face.

Enhancements, efficiencies improve student experience

In Housing and Conference Services on-going technological enhancements have resulted in efficiencies and an improved student experience. None of these improvements would have been possible without Phil’s support, says Cathie Miller, director of housing and conference services.

Students now:

- receive timely e-cards and electronic newsletters instead of paper mailings and notices
- complete residence registration and residence deposits on-line rather than having to mail in forms and cheques
- complete work orders online from the comfort of their room 24/7—instead of having to go to the nearest service centre to fill out forms
- register at move in with an iPad instead of a paper registration card
- register their guests online with a web-based system that provides real-time information in place of paper lists

“Phil’s understanding of the importance of timely and engaging communication and processes and how they impact the student experience has always been evident. His encouragement and support of change has been our guiding principle.”

“Dr. Wood has a genuine interest in students. Dropping by Union Market regularly to get coffee is just one example that makes him a quick friend to any McMaster student.”
“Great leaders and great teams step up when times are tough.”

–Phil Wood
He has seen chickens scrambling across the JHE lobby, attended twenty-nine out of thirty Welcome Week concerts and has his own soul-rock and basketball radio show on CFMU. In his three decades at McMaster, Dr. Phil Wood has seen it all.

Dr. Wood celebrated his 30-year teaching anniversary on Jan. 2 this year, having arrived at McMaster in 1983. On Jan. 6, the SRA passed a motion to give Dr. Wood honorary MSU membership.

John McGowan, General Manager of the MSU, stated how rare a distinction this is; Dr. Wood one of only 16 honorary members of the students union since 1965.

Dr. Wood, who is revered in McMaster's Engineering department, came from a teaching post at Michigan State University to join McMaster's Chemical Engineering Department.

At the start of his career as a professor, Dr. Wood maintained a fine balance to ensure he was both a strong teacher and researcher. Along the way he was mentored by noteworthy professors, such as Don Woods, and went onto mentor generations of students, administrators and faculty members.

Dr. Wood first interacted with students teaching in Chemical Engineering, then later as Associate Dean of Engineering and in his current role as Associate Vice-President of Student Affairs.

Upon receiving a 3M Teaching Fellowship Award, Dr. Wood remarked that the key to his success was continuously “turning the crank,” churning out research while ensuring student success in the classroom.

Across the board, students and staff have whole-heartedly agreed: Phil Wood genuinely cares about students and the McMaster experience.

Elizabeth Edwards, Director of BioZone and Professor in Chemical Engineering at University of Toronto, recalled how effectively Dr. Wood engaged students in class.

“I’ll still be the number-one fan out at the games and on campus.”
–Phil Wood
“Get involved... engage your mind, your spirit and your body in all that McMaster has to offer...”

–Phil Wood

“He once came into a class with a bucket of water and a power drill. The class burst into laughter as he proceeded to drill holes in the bucket and the water peed out the side in different arcs, which effectively showed the function of pressure. I co-taught with Dr. Wood when I first started and I am so grateful to have learned from him.”

Anecdotes from Dr. Wood’s colleagues and students are ripe with examples of his hardworking spirit, his indelible commitment to student success and his creative methods of engagement.

Don Woods, Professor Emeritus at McMaster, recounted how Dr. Wood used beer-cooling experiments in a heat-transfer course and looked at why golf balls are dimpled in a fluid mechanics course.

Former MSU President Vishal Tiwari (2009-10) jokingly recounted the easygoing nature of his relationship with Dr. Wood. “We had this saying, that ‘We’re Rolling with Big Wood,’ he said.”

“Dr. Wood has a genuine interest in students. Dropping by Union Market regularly to get coffee is just one example of a small consistent gesture that makes him a quick friend to any McMaster student.”

When The Silhouette sat down with Dr. Wood, it was clear he, too, would miss the student-centred nature of his job.

While his career took off in the Faculty of Engineering, he quickly assumed more leadership roles at the departmental and administrative level. But his memories of these positions and the campus as a whole reflect a deeper evolution he has witnessed.

Wood proudly noted how in the last several years he has witnessed the growth of school spirit, partly due to the Vanier Cup win, and partly as a result of several years of individuals building the “Think Maroon” campaign.

As his term concludes on June 30, there are many things students may remember about him. Perhaps it will be hearing his voice over the airwaves on his radio show, “Soul in the Hole,” or his contributing music reviews for the Sil’s ANDY section.

“I’ll miss being somebody that students want to engage with,” he said. “I’ll still be the number-one fan out at the games and on campus... but I’ll miss having a chance to make a difference.”
Phil Wood clicks refresh on his Twitter feed for a second time; his maroon necktie and University pin reflecting in the monitor.

"I'm really more of a lurker," says Wood, swinging around on a plush armchair and crossing his arms. "I like to keep an eye on what's happening around campus." He's grinning.

Throughout his remarkable 30-year career at McMaster, connecting with students has never been a challenge, or even a job. It's a passion, plain and simple. It's what pushes Wood to work evenings and weekends, ride the team bus for away games, host weekly radio segments at CFMU and write music reviews for The Silhouette. It's also what earned him a 3M National Teaching Fellowship back in 1993.

Last month, the longtime professor, dean of students and AVP student affairs was hailed for his years of dedication with honorary membership in the McMaster Students Union - only the 16th time such an award has been given since the mid-1960s.

What's the secret to his success? Keep it simple, and never speak down to your class.

“When I deal with students, it's not from up here, it's more from here,” says Wood, gesturing from his forehead to his chest. “If I had to describe what I do well, it's explaining things - finding examples in the real world that a student might be familiar with, and helping them understand while motivating them.”

Born in 1949 in Brantford, Ont., Wood was the oldest child of six raised in a working-class postwar household. His two main passions as a young man were sports and music - especially the new breeds of soul, do-wop and blues music exploding out of the United States and England. “I was in Grade 9 when the Beatles hit, so the timing was perfect,” he recalls. “In the mid-'60s, soul music really hit big in Brantford, and all through Southern Ontario … the dances of the day were the boogaloo and the shing-a-ling, so we all learned those and had ‘soul lines.’ I was usually at the head of it.”

But when it came to academics, he simply wasn’t interested. Not at first, anyway.

It wasn’t until years later – after completing an engineering degree at the University of Waterloo and a PhD at the prestigious California Institute of Technology – that his love of teaching and learning finally clicked.

As a young professor at Michigan State University during the late 1970s, Wood learned that engaging with students can be a lot of fun, but it also involves a great deal of discipline - especially for young, social professors.

“You wouldn’t flunk your friend, would you? Well, yeah, you would,” he explains with a chuckle. “I had to put a little distance between us. Now that I’m older, it’s not that hard. But when you’re 28 it’s much more difficult.”

It was during those years abroad that his love of collegiate sports
Wood got up close and personal with the likes of Bill Walton and Magic Johnson during their blossoming college careers, and had season tickets behind the bench when Michigan State won the NCAA basketball championship in 1979 – fueled by the outstanding play of future NBA greats Johnson, Greg Kelser and Jay Vincent.

In 1983, Wood was hired as an engineering professor at McMaster, and continued to support student athletes both on and off the field. One major difference with the Marauders (and a huge selling point for Wood) was the University’s focus on developing well-rounded “student athletes,” and not simply one or the other.

“It’s very separate (in the United States). They have their athletic programs, and they by and large don’t let these athletes take chemical engineering, which is what I was teaching,” says Wood. “I got here, and a student in my class was also a big star on the basketball team, Peter Ross.”

His longtime commitment to recruiting and cultivating student athletes hasn’t gone unnoticed. When the Marauders football team won the Vanier Cup in 2011, Wood received a championship ring along with each player and coach. It’s an honour he still gets choked up about, even with a lifetime of memories behind him. “Here’s the advice I give to young professors,” says Wood, glancing around an office piled high with awards, photographs and Marauders memorabilia. “If you can, learn everybody’s name. They remember it, and they always appreciate it.”

Brandon Hall pilot program
result of partnership in learning

Cathie Miller, director of housing and conference services, says Phil lives by the motto, “partners in learning.”

Housing and Conference Services wanted to create a residence environment for students interested in living a healthy lifestyle. They envisioned a community where staff members would benefit from a wide variety of experiential learning activities related to personal well-being including diet/nutrition workshops, meditation/yoga classes, intramural athletics, running clinics and study/life balance, etc.

This vision became a reality with support from the Student Life Enhancement Fund, created under Phil’s direction. In collaboration with the McMaster Students Union (MSU) and help from Dr. Steven Bray from the Kinesiology Department and Dr. Matthew Kwan from Family Medicine, a pilot program was developed for students on the second and third floor of Brandon Hall.

The curriculum focused on providing guided opportunities for students to learn and develop skills in:

- Self-awareness
- Problem solving and teamwork
- Self regulation
- Goal setting and attainment
- Community development
- Leadership and engagement
- Wellness knowledge
- Mental wellbeing and psychological coaching
“Phil has been a keen learner and exceptional leader in the service, development, and learning dimensions of student affairs, but what I’m sure he will cherish most is the trusting and supportive relationship he has earned with students.”

–David McMurray

“His help has been instrumental in setting a new standard for excellence in student athlete academic success, personal development, and athletic performance.”

–David McMurray

Hundreds of athletic events cheering on his beloved Marauders. I will miss our friendly routine of wearing the opposing team jersey, competitive of course, but mostly in recognition of excellence in student athlete academic success, personal development, and athletic performance.

To a real competitor, scholar, caregiver and trusted friend, Phil congratulations on an extraordinary career, you have established new benchmarks across the profession for others to follow! And, take care of that wonky knee. I’m looking forward to our continued friendship and future opportunities to share your good company.”

All the best,
David McMurray,
Vice President, Student Affairs
Wilfrid Laurier University

Photos: Left, Phil with David M Cmurray
1, 4, 5: Early Days: Phil and his wife Barb.
2 & 8: “Sports are in his blood.” 3: Grandkids Charlie & Emily. 6, 10, 11: Supportive father to Eric & Andrew. 7: Celebrating 125 years - from left: Councillor Brian M Chattie, President Patrick Dean, Phil Wood, David W Wilkinson and Karen M Chiquette. 9: OUSA Dinner - back row from left: Dr. Phil Wood, AVP Student Affairs; Dr. David W Wilkinson, Provost; Roger Couldrey, VP Administration. Front Row: Mrs. David Brock and M r. David Brock (Excellence in teaching award winner); Gina Robinson, Assistant Dean Student Affairs; Peter Smith, AVP Academic; Melissa Pool, University Registrar
Q & A with ‘Dr.Phil’—Student Affairs news interview with Deborah Everest-Hill, editor

■ What kind of child were you?
■ I am from a family of six children. I was the oldest. I grew up in Brantford, Ontario in a war-time house. In my neighbourhood within four houses there were 24 boys. The speaker of provincial parliament (Dave Levak) grew up right across the street from me. As children, we would play every sport in a vacant lot behind our house. I grew up going to church. I was active in the church and with cubs and scouts. I was a good boy; I wasn’t mischievous. Believe it or not, I ended up going to a special school for under-achievers. They identified kids with high IQs who were not achieving and I was one of them.

■ Growing up, did you have any sense of being destined for academia?
■ No I didn’t. As a kid, you don’t have a clue about course options.

■ In high school, thanks to my under-achieving ways, I became a very good billiards player. I was talkative and my marks were never very high. When Grade 13 came along, I was advised to consider engineering because my marks were strong in math. It wasn’t until I was at the University of Waterloo that I really started to do well in school. I was probably the last person of the roughly 730 students admitted in 1968 and when I got my report card at the end of the year, I was 27th in the class.

■ Why were you interested in engineering?
■ I was good at math. In my first year, I got 100 per cent in calculus. I did every odd question in the textbook. You don’t learn by reading a book, you learn by figuring out problems. I knew I had to get a good education and the main reason I went to Waterloo was because I could go to school for four months and then do co-op for four months.

■ What do you like about being a professor/teacher?
■ When I meet former students and they remember me and say I made a difference, it gives me great satisfaction. I have also noticed that when I greet a student by name, they light up. That makes me feel like I made a difference in their experience here at Mac. It is also very satisfying when students are able to solve problems. When I teach them, and they learn, we learn together. At the end of the year when they write beautiful answers, I feel that I made a difference.

■ What don’t you like about teaching? How has it changed over the years?
■ One thing that is a concern is the increase in numbers and class size over the years. When I started teaching, classes had about 35 students and now in my own department, which is a small department, there are over 100. There is also a greater disparity in the abilities and interests of students and that can be difficult. The loss of inter-personal relationships is also a big loss. Your Number 1 goal is to make a difference but how can you do that when you don’t know a student’s name?
Some teachers/professors do the bare minimum. What enabled you to be a good teacher, respected by students and peers?

This is a complicated question. When you start as a professor, you basically have three jobs: research, teaching and service. Service can mean being on committees, contributing to department life. When you are evaluated, you are evaluated on what we call a 40-40-20 basis. Forty per cent of your time is spent on research, 40 on teaching and 20 on service. However, if you only spend 40 per cent of your time on research, you will never get tenure.

The three words of advice I give to young teachers is preparation, preparation and preparation. I prepared like you wouldn't believe. When I started, my wife was expecting our first child and I was spending many nights in my office working until 2 or 3 a.m. preparing lectures for the next day and it paid off in the end.

You have to love teaching and you have to love students. If you see yourself as a researcher who has to teach, I can almost guarantee you won't be successful.

Was the transition to management/administration challenging? If yes, how so?

In 1988, the failure rate in first-year engineering was 40 per cent. Then dean Heidebrecht asked me if I would be the first director of engineering. What we needed was someone as the head of first-year engineering; somebody the students could go to for support; someone who could design tutorial programs to help our students be successful and who could go to the faculty of science, for example, and say, “You’re killing our students.” Students were in engineering but their courses were being taught by the faculty of science so we would send them 400 in first year and get back only 240 for the second year. That was not good. I did that for two years. At the end of it, our failure rate dropped to 20 per cent.

In 1998, I became the associate dean of engineering. You asked if the transition was hard. Yes it was. I tried and was successful at maintaining my research program and taught a full course load. I knew every student in chemical engineering in first year. Actually, I taught every one of them. I did that for six years. You have to put in the hours and have a good assistant.

What did you research?

I researched fluid mechanics. I studied mixing—anything from air, to water, to oil, to plastic. Anything you can imagine in a fluid state. I ran international meetings and wrote 70 papers. Basically when you make chemicals, you have to mix them. That’s what I did my thesis on—solving those equations...

Do you prefer teaching or management?

I really love teaching. When I was in engineering, I was able to do everything I liked. I have had six grad students go on to become professors themselves. I take great pride in that. That’s a combination of my teaching and their learning, their research, my research, and my administrative ability. To me, that’s the ultimate as a professor, to have students who want to be professors themselves and acknowledge your contribution.

Is there still a teaching component to your job?

It’s more mentoring than teaching.
When I came to Student Affairs in 2002, I didn’t teach. I did research with grad students for about five years but over the years, I have continued to be involved with many members of student government. I don’t teach them but do they learn from me? I hope so. I am involved with staff but do I teach them? No. But do they learn from me? I think so. I have always tried not to sound like a professor who is putting on airs. I try to be natural and work with students as partners. If you ask people what I am like, I hope they say I’m down to earth.

What stands out from your time at McMaster in terms of change or growth that has occurred?

I am so proud that many things that have happened were initiated in Student Affairs. I couldn’t list them all but when I first came to Student Affairs, the athletic director, Thérèse Quigley, dropped plans for an athletic centre and stadium on my desk. That was her vision and I take pride in being able to help her realize that vision. It wasn’t just her. It was all of us; we all played a role in that. We have grown so much.

Recently, in the Globe and Mail we were named the Number 1 atmosphere of big universities in Canada. I am extremely proud of that because I think we, particularly athletics, but all of us are responsible for that. It’s not because we have a great Chemical Engineering Department. We do but it’s because kids want to go here. We have a huge reputation nationally.

I am also extremely proud of the creation of the Student Success Centre and the Student Wellness Centre. Queens University issued a report recently recommending that student health and counselling be combined, something we worked hard to do. So, we have been on the cutting edge of some of these things and one thing we have learned is that if you want to engage people, you have to involve them in the process.

■ How do you handle a difficult colleague or student? Are there tips or tricks you can share?

Honestly there is no trick. There are people who would say I avoid things like that. I try to be reasoned. Here is something totally off the wall: I have preached four complete sermons. One is about wisdom and about trying to make decisions based on your own values. So, in terms of handling people, my upbringing helps me. I am not quick to judge. I also try to see the good in people and try to get them to see how their actions are impacting others… I don’t want to say something I will regret.

■ What are you concerned about regarding the future of post-secondary education?

Well, concerns are these: I am very concerned about a new government. Let’s say there’s a new government, a PC government, they are going to come down hard on universities just as the liberal government today is coming down hard on teachers. We’re next; that concerns me. The government is right. They are trying to get value for money. Every year they invest more and more money into higher education and they have a good question: “Are we getting value for money?”

So, the previous minister and even the head of HEQCO are talking about differentiating universities. So a concern would be okay where do we fall at McMaster? Because we think we are one thing and I can’t believe the government would think something different. I would be more concerned
if I was at Brock, for example, where they might be classified as a “undergraduate education only” university while they would want to be more comprehensive.

So, there are big financial concerns. How is the government going to direct us? There’s likely going to be a new government. Already we worry about our funding. Specifically though, as university resources dry up, you become more focused on your central mission. So if our central mission is research, then good luck in Student Affairs. If you are at the University of Guelph or Laurier where you say your mission is “the student experience,” then good luck if you’re a researcher. You will be pigeon-holed and the resources are going to be squeezed. We will get less money. They are talking about freezing tuition. They are talking about freezing our grants. Our revenue will be flat and our expenses will continue to rise.

Are students prepared for university?
■ No they are not as well prepared. While I have been a teacher a long time, I haven’t been in the classroom for a long time. Both my sons, however, went to Mac so I have seen the world through their eyes. I don’t want to call them “distractions” but students are on their cell phones, texting each other all the time and they’re on Twitter. They are less focused; they have dispersed interests. There is less reading of original works. I would say there is less rigour.

For example, I am on Twitter and I fall into some traps of not using full sentences so now when I get a letter from a student asking for some accommodation and it is in Twitter-ease I think who do you think you’re talking to? This is not the proper way to write a letter. I think this issue filters into lots of things...

There are students coming out of high school with 80 per cent and they can’t answer questions. They’re worldly in their own world but not on a world scale such as what is happening in Egypt. Students are just as smart, of course, but they are focusing their energy on different things. There is not the preparation I had when I started.

Is there a goal or initiative you would like to have achieved at McMaster that you were unable to fulfill?
■ When I came to Student Affairs, I talked about two solitudes. As an academic I didn’t know very much about what Student Affairs did. My goal was to bring the two together. So, now I have been in Student Affairs almost 11 years and I still have not been successful in getting academic departments and faculties to realize that learning occurs outside the classroom and in Student Affairs we are part of that learning. They don’t get what we do and they don’t appreciate it. I am not the only person who has failed by the way, it’s a common lament.

What is the best advice you can give university students today?
■ Oh boy! I would suggest they be well rounded. Do as well as you can on your school work. You have to maintain good grades. A degree is the ticket to starting your career. Also get engaged, get involved and network. The more people you know, someone might recommend you for a job. You will do better; too, by the way, they are related.

What will the next chapter of your life be about?
■ I think my very next chapter will be planning for the next chapter. I am taking a leave of absence and I am going to do some work in engineering and some work with HEQCO and see where I can add value.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Phil Wood began teaching in the Engineering Department at McMaster University</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Named Associate Vice-President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students</td>
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<td>13,400 full-time undergraduate students at McMaster in 2002-2003</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Student Affairs Ancillary fees for 2003-2004 were $306</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Bridges Café opens, wins award for vegetarian cuisine</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Les Prince Residence opens</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hosted CACUSS Conference and received President’s Award of Excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David Braley Athletic Centre and Sports Medicine Clinic open</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Brandon Fire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ron Joyce Stadium opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Student Success Centre created and staff receives President’s Award of Excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Student Wellness Centre opens</td>
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<td></td>
<td>McMaster Marauders win Vanier Cup, November 26, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>21,025 undergraduate students this year (2012/13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Student Affairs Ancillary fees for 2012-2013 were $540</td>
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<td>Creation of Mindfulness Centre in Ivor Wynne and Lounge in MUSC planned for Fall 2013</td>
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<td>“Focus on the future, take responsibility and seek learning, expand reflection to team, watch tempers, know when to speak, maintain control.”</td>
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<td>–Phil Wood</td>
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BY THE NUMBERS—Student Affairs Operating Budget (2012-2013)

- **Revenue** ($21.7 Million)
  - Student Fees 44%
  - Other income 34%
  - SA Operating Allocation 18%
  - Ministry Funding 4%

- **Object of Expenditure** ($21.7 Million)
  - Salaries and Benefits 58%
  - Operating Expenditures 23%
  - Maintenance, Utilities, Occupancy 10%
  - Debt Payment 9%

- **Area Expenditures** ($21.7 Million)
  - Athletics and Recreation 61%
  - Health and Wellness 14%
  - Student Success Centre 11%
  - Administration 6%
  - Student Accessibility Services 6%
  - International Student Services 2%

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<th>Profile</th>
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<td>Reserve Position</td>
<td>$7</td>
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<td>Mortgage Debt</td>
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<td>Staffing FTEs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staffing PT FTEs</td>
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<td>Student Employment</td>
<td>600</td>
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<td>Student Volunteers</td>
<td>300</td>
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BY THE NUMBERS—Student Affairs Ancillary Units (2012-2013)

Profile | Million
---|---
Reserve Position | $4
Mortgage Debt | $37.2
Residence Buildings | 12
(Number of Beds, 3,619)

Staffing FTE | 107
Staffing PT FTE | 171
Student Positions | 435

Revenue ($65.4 Million)
- Residency Fees 33%
- Other Sales 28%
- Textbook Sales 16%
- Meal Plans 14%
- Computer Sales 8%
- Conference Revenue 1%

Object of Expenditures ($65.4 Million)
- Cost of Sales 37%
- Salaries & Benefits 29%
- Maintenance, Utilities, and Occupancy Cost 14%
- Other Expenses 9%
- Debt Charges 6%
- University Operating Budget 5%

Area Expenditures ($65.4 Million)
- Housing & Conferences 35%
- Bookstore 34%
- Hospitality 31%
As partners in learning, we provide our students with opportunities to discover, learn and grow. Units within the Student Affairs umbrella include Athletics & Recreation, Housing & Conference Services, International Student Services, Off-Campus Resource Centre, Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, Student Accessibility Services, Student Success Centre, and the Student Wellness Centre.