

# A MESSAGE FROM Dr. Sarita Verma Dean, President and CEO, NOSM

At the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM), we are creating a culture of diversity, inclusion, respect, social accountability and wellness. We have recently launched a School-wide movement grounded in respect which we hope can ignite a positive cultural change that reaches beyond our individual organizations and into our communities.

The possibility of change, for our School and the profession, lies within each of us. It is in the language we use, the values we aspire to, the curriculum we create, the way we express ourselves, and the way we make decisions. It's not only who is at the table, but who feels safe to speak truthfully and see themselves reflected in the decisions being made at that table.

To truly prepare our learners to care for people in our communities, we must model being a compassionate and socially accountable members of our school. If we can embrace and learn from our differences—race, gender identities, abilities, backgrounds, beliefs, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and our infinite number of inherent and acquired traits—we can truly respect one another.

As a member of the NOSM community, you are a part of the School's mission to improve the health of Northern Ontarians by being socially accountable in our education and research programs and advocating for health equity.

As we work together to accomplish our mission, we hope the Code of Respect will provide guidance and helps us all to create the future we all deserve.



**Dr. Sarita Verma**  
NOSM Dean, President and CEO

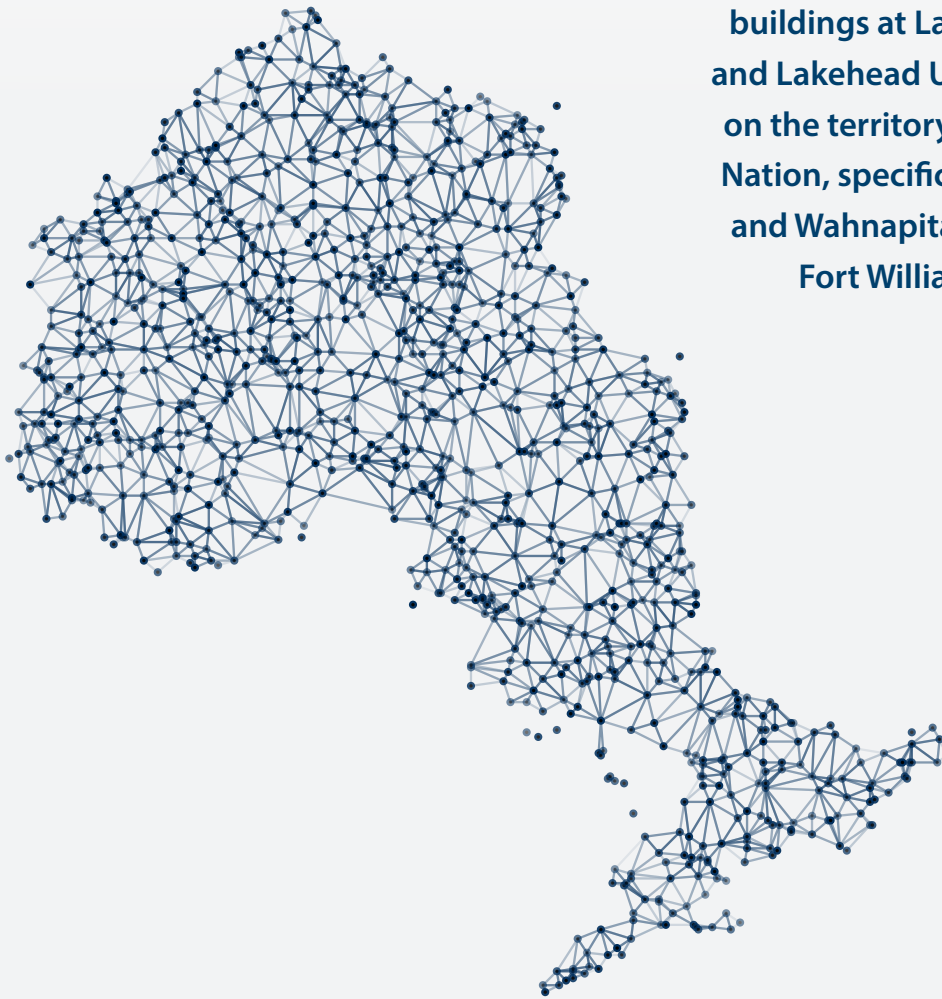
Learn more about the Respect the Difference™ movement at [culture.nosm.ca](https://culture.nosm.ca).

Sincerely,

*Dr. Sarita Verma*



The Northern Ontario School of Medicine respectfully acknowledges that the entirety of the School's wider campus of Northern Ontario is on the homelands of First Nations and Métis Peoples. The medical school buildings at Laurentian University and Lakehead University are located on the territory of the Anishinabek Nation, specifically Atikameksheng and Wahnapiatae First Nations and Fort William First Nation.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>VISION, MISSION AND VALUES</b>	<b>5</b>
VISION	5
MISSION	5
OUR VALUES	5
INNOVATION	5
SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY	6
COLLABORATION	6
INCLUSIVENESS	6
RESPECT	6
<b>WHY KINDNESS AT NOSM?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>STRIVING TOWARD COMPASSION BY ELIMINATING SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND RACISM</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CIVILITY AND RESPECT</b>	<b>8</b>
GUIDING POLICIES	8
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY AS A PRIORITY AT NOSM</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT FREE OF HARASSMENT/MISTREATMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY/ NON-JUDGEMENTAL CULTURE</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND COMPETENCE</b>	<b>9</b>
GUIDING POLICIES	10
<b>ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>ETHICAL DECISION MAKING</b>	<b>11</b>
GUIDING POLICIES	11

# VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

## VISION

Innovative Education and Research for a Healthier North.

## MISSION

To improve the health of Northern Ontarians by being socially accountable in our education and research programs and advocating for health equity.

### We will realize this by:

Embedding social accountability as a core value in graduates. NOSM will be a recognized leader in rural and Northern health knowledge and will influence and advocate for policy advances in health at all levels of government.

- Increasing research capacity and expertise in population-based health to improve advocacy and evidence-based policy in Northern Ontario. NOSM will have a positive research impact on Northern health, be known as the leader in Northern health research and increase grant and other research funding.
- Incorporating advanced technology into curriculum and day-to-day activities of the school. NOSM will be a leader in educational excellence through its curriculum renewal, competency-based training, adaptive technology, and will meet or exceed all accreditation standards.
- Being a strong active partner with communities in need to create a flourishing health workforce to serve the North.
- Securing sustainable financial and human resources to deliver on our vision of innovative education and research. We will be financially sustainable by ensuring access to resources and infrastructure to sustain and grow NOSM through efficiencies and a culture of advancement.
- Creating a sustainable working and learning environment. NOSM will have a commitment to diversity, wellness and respect for faculty, staff and learners.

## OUR VALUES

**INNOVATION.** The Northern Ontario School of Medicine encourages ingenuity, creativity, a culture of inquiry and discovery, and the importance of learning from others in every aspect of the School's education, research, social accountability, and corporate mandates. NOSM uses innovative approaches to ensure continuous improvement of our distributed model of education and research.

**SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY.** NOSM adheres to the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of the social accountability of medical schools as "the obligation to direct their education, research and service activities towards addressing the priority health concerns of the community, region and the nation that they have a mandate to serve. The priority health concerns are to be identified jointly by governments, health-care organizations, health professionals and the public." As part of its social accountability mandate, NOSM has the responsibility to engage stakeholders at all levels of its broad community.

**COLLABORATION.** NOSM pursues education and research goals in close partnership with its host universities. Collaboration and partnership are also important to NOSM with its teaching hospitals, community physicians, health professional clinical teachers, health system stakeholders, and communities it serves. NOSM values the insights, contributions, and support of its many partners that work to improve the health of the people and communities of Northern Ontario. NOSM recognizes that collaboration is both a process and outcome that engages different perspectives to better understand complex problems and leads to the development of integrative solutions that could not be accomplished by any single person or organization.

**INCLUSIVENESS.** NOSM fosters inclusiveness by supporting an environment that embraces differences in staff, faculty and learners and respectfully creates value from the differences of all members of the NOSM community, in order to leverage talent and foster both individual and organizational excellence.

**RESPECT.** NOSM's faculty, staff, and learners will learn and listen to one another respectfully and communicate openly. NOSM's staff, faculty, and learners treat others and their ideas in a manner that conveys respect as differences are discussed, fosters an open academic debate, and which respects academic freedom.

## WHY KINDNESS AT NOSM?

**Kindness is a manifestation of our values of collaboration, inclusiveness, respect and accountability.**

At NOSM, we talk about the social determinants of health being part of the curriculum for all programs. We endeavour to look beyond the geographic, linguistic, economic and social conditions and commit to further understand the root causes. NOSM commits to taking responsibility and looking for actionable ways to make a difference in our communities. We will lead with kindness and with a culture of respect.

The school's new strategic plan challenges discrimination, confronts racism, and addresses inequity. NOSM's voices can be used to actively address disparities and inequities and to challenge racism. Kindness and respect will triumph over racism and hatred. Kindness and respect will bring in authenticity, transparency, warmth, trust and empowerment.

No one is perfect, but by leading through kindness and respect, we can create value as a medical school and an institution that establishes a clear understanding of who we are and what we expect from our learners, staff and faculty. Not simply random acts of kindness, but intentional leadership, with good intention and to do the best by our stakeholders and all partners.

Kindness is expressed in compassion, generosity, courtesy, graciousness, hospitality, patience, understanding, heart, tact, and thoughtfulness. The opposite of kindness is animosity, indifference, selfishness, and thoughtlessness.

Consider what kindness and respect mean to you.

## STRIVING TOWARD COMPASSION BY ELIMINATING SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND RACISM

*"To understand someone different from us, we have to change ourselves."*<sup>1</sup>

Compassion at NOSM is measured through a social justice lens. We believe in equity and creating an environment free of discrimination. We embrace the challenge of identifying and working to eliminate systemic racism, unearned privilege and hidden curriculum. NOSM acknowledges that expressing compassion will require many of us to experience the discomfort of inner change as we develop radical empathy. Equity will only happen if there is a flattening of hierarchy, a true sharing in power. This will not be an easy journey, but it is a journey we commit to pursuing.

The NOSM Board of Directors has made a formal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion by unanimously approving guiding principles for the School that specifically state the following:

- all current and future learners, faculty and staff should have an equitable opportunity to connect, belong, grow, contribute, advance their careers and most importantly, feel comfortable and confident being their authentic selves in an inclusive environment;
- racism, systemic racism and discrimination are not acceptable at NOSM and the Board expresses its solidarity, grounded in a shared sense of humanity and social justice; and,
- the NOSM Board of Directors recognizes its role and duty to stand against, to question, to intervene, to correct complicities and to not be tolerant of the institutionalization of racism, discrimination and colonialism at NOSM, and to advocate for the same with all of NOSM's partners.

<sup>1</sup> Lanzoni, Susan. (2019, February 22). Why empathy is the key to dismantling white racism. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/02/22/why-empathy-is-key-dismantling-white-racism/>



# CIVILITY AND RESPECT

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine is committed to fostering a healthy and safe learning and working environment that prioritizes wellbeing. The possibility of wellness is embedded in the culture of the School; in our policies and customs, in the decisions we make—who is at the table, but who feels safe to speak truthfully and see themselves reflected in the decisions being made at that table.

The Respect the Difference™ movement was developed by NOSM to promote to a culture of kindness and respect in the learning and work environment.

We hope that together, we can ignite a positive cultural change that is grounded in respect and reaches beyond the NOSM community. We all have the potential to be changemakers, and we have the mutual responsibility to take action toward a culture of respect, civility, kindness, professional collegiality, and compassion.

If we can embrace and learn from our differences—race, gender, abilities, backgrounds, beliefs, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and our infinite number of inherent and acquired traits—this is the future we can create.

It starts here at NOSM. It starts with you.

## GUIDING POLICIES:

- **Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy**
- **Complaint Procedure Process Map**
- **OPSEU Local 677: Unit 1 Collective Agreement and Unit 2 Collective Agreement**
- **Harassment Concern Form**
- **Mediation Guide**
- **Responding to Student Concerns of Mistreatment**

# HEALTH AND SAFETY AS A PRIORITY AT NOSM

Providing a safe working environment for those who work, study, or visit within NOSM's facilities at all campus locations and affiliated teaching sites is an organizational priority. All members of the NOSM community share the joint responsibility to foster and maintain NOSM as a safe place to work and learn. This means taking reasonable precautions and actions to prevent accidents, occupational illnesses, and injuries in the workplace, as well as complying with health and safety legislation.

NOSM's commitment to a health and safety extends to fostering a psychologically safe work and learning environment. This means promoting and engaging in respectful behaviour as well as by preventing and discouraging inappropriate behaviour within the NOSM community, in an effort to create an environment of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity of all persons.

It is a requirement of every individual on NOSM premises to practice health and safety in every function and activity.



# LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT FREE OF HARASSMENT/MISTREATMENT

NOSM is committed to excellence in teaching, learning, and research and to the maintenance of a learning and work environment, which promotes the understanding and respect for dignity of all persons who are part of the NOSM community. We strive to create an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and reprisal while protecting academic freedom, including the rights of freedom of expression, inquiry and research.

The goal is to create a climate of understanding and mutual respect where each person feels part of the NOSM community and can contribute fully to the development of NOSM. The School does not tolerate discrimination and/or harassment, which includes any behaviours related to intimidation, bullying or other offensive conduct. It is the expectation that all community members contribute to the development and maintenance of such an environment by promoting and engaging in respectful behaviour and by preventing and discouraging inappropriate behaviour within the NOSM community.

In seeking to prevent discrimination, harassment and reprisal, NOSM is guided by the *Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy*, the Human Rights Code, the OHSA, and the Canadian Standard on Psychological Health & Safety as well as by other legislation, policies, and collective agreements.

## CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY/NON-JUDGEMENTAL CULTURE

At NOSM, we strive for an environment of collaborative continuous learning. We believe that problems are opportunities to learn and consider alternative theories. NOSM is focused on expanding and improving the delivery of health professions education.

We teach our staff, faculty, and learners that cross-functional cooperation and taking initiative is the path to development of cutting-edge curricula and creating outstanding experiences for our learners. NOSM's learners, faculty, and staff are focused on improving the future of NOSM by taking initiative, learning from mistakes, and trusting that their peers are supportive and focused on personal and professional growth.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND COMPETENCE

At NOSM, we view academic integrity as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. It is from these values that principles of behavior can enable our NOSM academic community to translate ideals into action. The academic community of integrity at NOSM establishes clear standards, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interactions of learners, faculty, clinicians, administrators, and staff.

**HONESTY:** An academic community of integrity advances the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.

**TRUST:** An academic community of integrity fosters a climate of mutual trust, encourages the free exchange of ideas, and enables all to reach their highest potential.

**FAIRNESS:** An academic community of integrity establishes clear standards, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interactions of students, faculty, and administrators.

**RESPECT:** An academic community of integrity recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honors and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** An academic community of integrity upholds personal accountability and depends upon action in the face of wrongdoing.

#### RELATED POLICIES:

**Graduate Studies Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure**

## ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Climate change has been called the biggest health threat of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The recent **UNICEF-World Health Organization-Lancet** report ranked Canada 170<sup>th</sup> out of 180 nations in terms of sustainability, making us one of the wealthy countries that “threaten every child’s future through climate change.”

Climate change is having a profound impact in Northern Ontario. Challenges with unsafe water, **deteriorating ice road access, food insecurity, wildfires**, spring flooding and evacuations are worsening and increasing in frequency. The direct impact on community health is very real, so is the need to prepare NOSM learners who study, learn and practice across the North for these realities.

NOSM’s Climate Change and Health Taskforce recommends that the School views all parts of its new strategic plan through a climate change lens.

Our learners, alumni, and faculty are at the front lines treating many of the illnesses and injuries that are directly linked to climate change. NOSM has a duty to our communities to do better and to advocate and encourage the health sector to do better. We are prepared to push for change.

Municipalities and Northern communities are mobilizing and rallying against climate change and joining forces. More than 460 jurisdictions in Canada have declared climate emergencies, including Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Kenora, and the leaders of Grand Council Treaty 3.

NOSM is supportive of these movements and we are mobilizing in our role as an academic medical education community. Planning relevant and realistic organizational changes through the lens of climate change is really about shifting our whole mindset to do things differently.

# ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

Ethical decision making can be understood as doing what is right. NOSM recognizes that ethical decisions are essential for fostering trust and organizational development. NOSM is committed to making ethical decisions in the learning and work environment and the communities it serves.

## EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- Being honest.
- Doing no harm to others.
- Declining to put individual interests above others, for instance: learners, residents, other staff, faculty, and communities.
- Ensuring equity for all stakeholders.

When making ethical decisions, staff at NOSM establish the relevant facts, define the ethical issues presented, consider potential consequences, explore options, and make decisions that are in the best interest of those involved. These decisions are guided by NOSM's policies and procedures which aim to protect ethical principles such as respect, confidentiality, responsibility and honesty.

## GUIDING POLICIES:

- **UME Code of Student Conduct**
- **Responding to Student Concerns of Mistreatment Procedure**
- **Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Harassment Policy and Procedure**