McMaster Program for Faculty Development (MacPFD)

Spark Podcast

Official Transcript

Episode Number: 23
Title of Episode: The Health Leadership Academy | Leadership Development
Producer: Nick Hoskin
Music by: Scott Holmes
Featured Guests: Dr. Michael Hartmann & Dr. Margo Mountjoy
Interviewer: Dr. Teresa Chan
Date of original release: August 4, 2021

Dr. Teresa Chan (00:02):
Welcome to the MacPFD Spark Podcast. This podcast is meant to inspire you to take the next step in your development journey as a faculty number, we're really excited to bring you all sorts of content, from inspiring you to teach or supervise differently, to leading and managing a team, to thinking about new creative ways or humanistic ways to actually do your work and finally to up your game in your scholarly practice. Are you excited yet? I certainly am. So sit back, listen, and enjoy this latest episode of the MacPFD Spark Podcast.

[music]

Speaker 2 (00:43):
Hello and welcome back to another episode of the MacPFD Spark Podcast. Today's episode will break from convention a little bit as the Spark Podcast is beginning to expand and work on some new offerings moving forward. Dr. Teresa Chan was not available today to host today's episode as she will be transitioning to her new role in leading the CPD office in the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University, though we hope to have her back in some future episodes. Today, both speakers come to us virtually from McMaster and are here to talk about some exciting new initiatives and experiences. To start off, we will be listening to Dr. Michael Hartmann discuss the Health Leadership Academy at the DeGroote School of Business here at McMaster. Next, we will be listening to Dr. Margo Mountjoy, discuss her experiences carving out a space to lead within the Waterloo regional campus. Please enjoy.

Dr. Teresa Chan (01:36):
Hello everyone, I'm here with Michael Hartmann, who is one of the profs, actually he's in the faculty health sciences now, but he's cross appointed as well to the DeGroote School of Business, so DSB, which is out there, you probably drive by it in Burlington, on the highway, when you're passing by, and he's someone who has been doing a lot of thinking around health leadership and is actually part of a program called the Health Leadership Academy. And so Michael, can you say hi to everyone?

Dr. Michael Hartmann (02:03):
Yeah, hi everybody. Greetings from the center of universe, Toronto.

Dr. Teresa Chan (02:08):
Alright. So tell us a little bit about what your adventures have been in healthcare. It sounds like you've been doing a lot of stuff in health leadership. You're the head of something called The Directors College, and that's for people who do board of directors work for different companies and such. And you're also a prominent member in the EMBA program that they have, is that correct?

Dr. Michael Hartmann (02:30):
Yeah, I'm co-director of our EMBA and Digital Transformation.

Dr. Teresa Chan (02:34):
Excellent. So Michael, tell us a little bit about what the Health Leadership Academy, or people called the HLA. What is HLA?

Dr. Michael Hartmann (02:41):
A little bit of additional background, so yes, you mentioned cross appointed to DeGroote Business School, by way of a couple of other business schools, including the Rotman School of Management for a number of years. And at Rotman I also served as the assistant dean running a lot of the executive engagement activities and with an interesting portfolio of health programs. So I'll make a connection to HLA. Fast-forward a number of years, 2016, the Health Leadership Academy was launched as an initiative across the two faculties, Health Sciences and Management, and it was essentially put together with three pillars in mind. At the top of the pillar was education, supported by research and engagement. Over those first few years, it was very much, again, a collaborative venture with a good colleague who many of you would know, Del Harnish. Del worked with me and with a number of others to say, "What's the space that's missing in terms of the leadership journey for health professionals?" And reflecting on my Rotman days, where we spent a lot of time focused at the senior ranks within health organizations, the executive, the C-Suite boards, where there was a gap or was really focused on those emerging leaders, those that were completing their university journey and then their first five to seven years out in the professional world.

Dr. Michael Hartmann (04:05):
So that's where we focused our energies on the education of emerging leaders supported by a research pillar and engagement pillar. Research to say, "Well, what does best practice look like in terms of pedagogy, in terms of content, how do we share it? In engagement, what events can we do? Workshop, seminar to share what we've learned with colleagues across McMaster." So HLA over those years has developed a number of programs, from the Emerging Health Leaders program, an intensive summer program, something called the Innovation By Design Program, which has brought design thinking broadly into McMaster with a health focus. And then our new Pathfinders program, which I'm happy to talk more about.

Dr. Teresa Chan (04:48):
So, it sounds like what you're trying to do is foster the feeder into where other schools and other programs are focusing at the top. I think you've come to realize, just as I often have, is that people look up to the top, but they don't start at the bottom. And I think what you're saying is that people might need that kick-start in their career. And I think I've had conversations with you and the other leaders in the HLA Program, and I do truly believe that a lot of the time, sometimes it's not even someone new, but someone that didn't realize that they had leadership potential until later in their career. So, emerging leader to me can mean you're 10 years in and you've just been a career researcher and you need to rejig your career and head back into something new that, let's say you're

the last one to step back on the line when they're looking for a new leader for a program or something like that, and all of a sudden you realize that, "Hey, you're the new director of something," you're like, "I didn't see myself being here yet, or at all, ever." And it might be in those situations where the HLA would be a great resource to figure out how to connect with that leadership side of yourself.

Dr. Teresa Chan (05:54):
Because I think a lot of people come into it, actually having a lot of imposter syndrome, because it's easy to think, "Well, leaders are something that they're often starting earlier," like the people that I've definitely taught in your Emerging Leaders program, and some of them are fresh out of undergrad, and they're like hell bent on changing the world, and that's fantastic. But you can imagine you're 40-something starting with your first leadership gig, how sitting next to one of those folks might make you a little bit, I don't know, I wouldn't call it imposter syndrome, but maybe feeling just like you're out of place, right? And so, talk to me a little bit about that. How do you see leadership in terms of the skill building and things like that? When should it happen? Can it happen at all times?

Dr. Michael Hartmann (06:36):
I mean, leadership, it's one of those terms; there's probably a thousand definitions. I've been with a couple of different academic appointments, a Professor of Organizational Behavior, so I kind of stick by the phrase "Culture eats strategy for breakfast if you let it," really, so it's those "soft" skills, that tend not to be as stressed or as focused on, outside of the business school arena, maybe. And even in business schools, it's sometimes not taught to the extent it should be taught. So, how do you engage? How do you motivate? How do you manage change? How do you really ensure that the right set of behaviors are supported within a team, within an organization, and how do you kind of help to make sure that the barriers that get in your way, you can sort of nudge past, you can overcome, particularly in organizations that have done it the same way for a long time? So, when we focus on leadership, you have to have your domain expertise, your knowledge, and you have to have your skills that you hone within your university studies, within your professional practice. But then, it's thinking about, if you're really going to make a positive impact, how do you sort of bring others around you? And so, those are the types of competencies we look at; a lot of those softer management skills.

Dr. Teresa Chan (07:57):
Yeah, it seems like a soft, but they sound really hard to me.

Dr. Michael Hartmann (08:00):
Yeah. Just because they're soft doesn't mean that they're easy.

Dr. Teresa Chan (08:02):
I think they're soft, as in they're hard to like, it's like a cloud; it's hard to actually capture them. It's not something hard like a ball, where you can catch it; it's not as defined. I think that's why we call them soft, but they're not soft at all, because they're actually quite difficult to acquire as skills, and I think that's not even where the softness evades us, right? Soft makes it sound like they're so approachable. And I think it's good, because for a lot of people, they have that imposter syndrome around their leadership, so maybe we do need to say, "Hey, these are soft skills, but then, you still have to play hardball with them." [laughter]

Dr. Michael Hartmann (08:35):
Yeah, yeah, and you asked me about, can they be developed, 'cause they certainly can be. The muscles can be exercised, no matter where you are in terms of your development. They're easy to exercise when you actually have challenges or opportunities that force you to really try and do things in a different way or introduce new ways of doing things, yeah.

Dr. Teresa Chan (08:55):
Yeah, for sure, I agree with you. That's kind of why we're trying to push towards kind of a new way of doing faculty development where it's all about the doing, because we know that in doing stuff, you'll... I mean, COVID's been the ultimate example of the doing stuff, right? People were like, "I don't wanna do a webinar," then that's all you could do, and guess what? Now everybody's developed these digital competencies that they couldn't do before, because they were scared of trying. And so, I think that there's some really interesting spaces here to be carved out. How do we create labs where people can learn more? How do we bring some of that apprenticeship back into other parts of what we do? In health professions, apprenticeship is nothing new, right? In nursing, in OT, PT, SLP, midwifery, PA, MP, and MD schools, all of the learners have a practical component, right? Teachers' college has a practical component. Most of your EMBA students and the e-health students on campus, they have a practical component, and that's because the doing is important. As important as the knowing how, right?

Dr. Teresa Chan (09:58):
And so, I think that that's gonna be the really cool gap to close, I think, going forward, when we're thinking about how we help raise a generation of people who are actualized as leaders, is that we have to step back and let them lead some times, because they can't just know what they have to do. And so, how do we carve that out for our junior colleagues? If you're a mid-career faculty member, how do you create that assistant associate position that can help work with you? How do you create that co-director role to apprentice people in, and give them the chance to run meetings, and get debriefing and, ideally, even some coaching around it, right? I think that's huge. Any thoughts on some of that stuff?

Dr. Michael Hartmann (10:42):
Yeah, I'm trying to think, again, the management guru that kind of coined the whole knowing-doing gap terminology, but I do believe, in terms of even in an academic institution, we're very good at the knowing side. We research, we study, we go deep into a discipline, but as a large institution, sometimes, we're not always great in the doing, in the execution, and there's lots of things that get in the way of the doing. So, the soft skills are not the easy skills. But if you think about what are the outcomes that you're trying to achieve as an organization, as a team, as a group, then you think about, "Well, what are the behaviors that we really need to build and engender within our group?", and then take another level below that and say, "Well, what are the enablers? What are the blockers for us to do that?", and they tend to be things like, "Well, what are your hard and soft incentives in the organization?" So, to find and say, "These are the behaviors we wanna kind of develop."

Dr. Michael Hartmann (11:38):
But if the incentives work against that, and they say, "Well, it's not about collaborating outside of my profession or my team or my discipline," you don't get rewarded for that. If you think about just the protocols that I've used, and they don't allow for trying and experimenting and doing new things, or failure, or taking some risks is obviously not well-embraced. If you think about the signals that leaders send, and you look at and say, "Okay, I'm trying to do A, but yet, everybody in the

organization is doing B." So, there's some signals here that says, "No, these aren't the behaviors that are valued valuable." So, knowing-doing gaps, knowing what the outcomes are is great, but then you have to think about, "Well, what's blocking us from actually executing?"

Dr. Teresa Chan (12:26):
And for the record, I looked it up. The knowing-doing gap book is by Jeffrey Pfeffer and...

Dr. Michael Hartmann (12:30):
Yeah, Jeff Pfeffer, it's at Stanford, yeah, yeah.

Dr. Teresa Chan (12:32):
Yeah. Robert Sutton? Robert I. Sutton, yeah.

Dr. Michael Hartmann (12:35):
Yeah. Yeah, I should know his name. I shouldn't say Jeff, Professor Pfeffer, we've talked a few times, and he's probably... Yeah, he may make an appearance one day down the road at the EMBA program.

Dr. Teresa Chan (12:49):
Yeah, that would be great. Yeah. And so tell me little bit more about the EMBA program, what's that all about? The digital transformation. That sounds exciting to me. I think we've all lived through a big digital transformation lately, but tell me a little bit more about that. What is that all about?

Dr. Michael Hartmann (13:04):
Well, if you think of the Health Leadership Academy focused on emerging health leaders. And to your point, the emerging health leader does... It's not age-specific, but the program structure starts with this course called Innovation by Design, which introduces students. So third, fourth year undergrads, graduate students, PhD students to the ideas around leadership agility, so how do you spot support and scale some new ideas and overcome barriers? The Emerging Leaders Program is intended for those that are thinking about entering, entering the profession, and entering the workspace. So it's supplemented with some additional practical management courses and some more leadership courses. Pathfinders, a program we just launched, is for those who are out in the workspace and now need to get some support for coaching and mentoring. EMBA is those that are kind of a little more senior in the organization with 7-10 years professional experience. And it's an accelerated MBA, but with a focus on digital. So how can you support your organization in embracing new technologies and mitigating the negative impact of new tech innovation? So we're in our fifth year. About 20% of the class come from the a Health Science background. And then the Directors College is a separate program. That's directed at board directors and including Healthcare boards as well. So that's sort of the journey.

Dr. Teresa Chan (14:37):
That's great. So you have a little bit of every layer, and it sounds like there's people that are transitioning that could use the Pathfinders program, those who are just getting started, the EHL, the Emerging Health Leaders program would be the game. And then along the way, I think that you might wanna take the plunge and invest in yourself, have that higher order to really develop what probably is more than just the program, you're probably also looking at a professional network and folks that you might not otherwise know. And so having people that are across a bunch of different disciplines is probably really could be quite useful.

Dr. Michael Hartmann (15:10):
Yeah, it's that community that you're kind of linked to, embedded in, and you find there's an issue, a challenge, a problem, and to be able to have peers that you can contact from across the country who are maybe experiencing similar challenges, it's very helpful.

Dr. Teresa Chan (15:24):
Alright, well, it sounds like you're building a bit of a health leadership ecosystem around here. What are your final thoughts? A take-home message for people who are interested in being Leaders in the Health sector?

Dr. Michael Hartmann (15:35):
Mainly just a couple of thoughts. So one, again, back to your knowing-doing gap piece, and to think about what are the objectives that you, your team, your organization is trying to accomplish. Again, think about the behaviors that align and support those objectives, but then really dig deeper and think about, what are the things that are getting the way? What are the blockers? Or what do you have to accelerate, do more of? So it's like the iceberg analogy, what gets you is all that stuff under the water, and part of it is structural, it's legacy, and it's all of those things that you really have to tackle if you're gonna make some sustainable change. The second is, there is at McMaster has an amazing ecosystem of programs, partnerships in Health Sciences. So Reach out and connect with the academy, with others, with me. Happy to always share. And the third is, I kinda joke with some of my faculty colleagues, a case study used to be out of date if it was five years old. Now In this environment, it's trying to think about how do you really look for lessons learned, for new opportunity, because in times of challenge there are always interesting, both opportunities and of course, mitigating serious risk, so in some ways it's a test and pilot and try something new. I think we've got a lot of individuals that are doing some really cool things, and so if we can combine our efforts, all the better.

Dr. Teresa Chan (17:09):
That will would be really exciting, meeting new people in a different field are always really important because I think you see things with fresh eyes, when you come in from a different discipline. And things that we take for granted as being the way that things are always done, "always done." You just need to look down the hall to a different discipline and they'll be like, "No, that's not how we do it." And you might find inspiration, so I think that close collaborative spaces that you're creating alongside John Kelton and some of the other leaders in the group and creating that [0:17:40.4] ____ ground to combine forces with engineering, with the business school, with our health sciences faculty. I think that's gonna be really powerful when we can find ways to connect people.

Dr. Michael Hartmann (17:51):
Yeah. Yeah, you probably, I mean, you know the quote called, "The future is already here, it's just not evenly distributed." And it's just that notion, that to your point, if you get out, you look outside of your domain, outside of your bubble sometimes, you'll find lots of interesting, interesting opportunities to innovate. And sometimes it's the mashing up of different perspectives, different disciplines, different backgrounds, that will generate some really interesting insights.

Dr. Teresa Chan (18:19):
Perfect. Well, thank you so much for your time and we'll bring you back another time to talk a little bit more probably on other topics in health leadership. And for those of you who are interested,

what I would say is you can check out Michael's work online. He's run a series of things called the, HLI Collaboratoriums, which are pretty amazing. We've posted some of them around in collections within our website, MacPFD.ca, but definitely there's lots of tidbits out there if you're interested in getting more of a taste as to what the health leadership landscape looks like. Definitely check out the HLA collaboratorium from his work.

Dr. Michael Hartmann (18:55):
Thank you very much.

Dr. Teresa Chan (18:58):
Wow, that was a really awesome first segment of the MacPFD Spark podcast, and now on to our second segment.

[music]

Dr. Teresa Chan (19:11):
Hello everyone. This is Teresa Chan. I am here with a new person, again. I have the pleasure of introducing Dr. Margo Mountjoy. And she is the Regional Dean of our Waterloo Regional Campus. Margo, can you say, Hi?

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (19:25):
Hello, Teresa. And thank you for having me along today.

Dr. Teresa Chan (19:28):
Alright. So, Margo is here because... Well, she's just a great forward thinker. She is someone who is innovative at heart, and is always looking for a new take on things. And I thought that, because one of our pillars is creativity, and humanism, and you're just a creative soul. So I thought I'd bring you in to have a chat about some of the cool things you're doing at Waterloo Regional Campus and the things that we should be looking out for, as you're carving an agenda in the future for the Waterloo Regional Campus.

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (20:00):
Well, thank you very much, Teresa. It's a pleasure to be here and you're right, there's lots of rich things going on in the Waterloo Regional Campus. Some very exciting initiatives, and it's such a pleasure for me personally, because I am someone who likes to think outside of the box, I'm someone who likes to say, Well, why not? I do not default to No, I default to, Umm, That's interesting, Let's explore that one. I also am very fortunate to be surrounded by incredibly gifted individuals in the campus, there's a lot of people, and really the value in the campus is the people, that have such great ideas, that are hard workers, innovative thinkers. And for me, it's a pleasure just to say, Yes, let's do that. And then watch people, empower people really. And our tagline is, "Engage, equip and empower." And that's how I like to approach things in the Waterloo Regional Campus. How can we engage our partners in the campus? How can we equip our learners and our faculty with the tools that they need to succeed and thrive and grow? And then how do we empower them to have the ability to go out and do the things that they do so well?

Dr. Teresa Chan (21:07):
That is so inspirational. That's amazing. And so how did you even come to those three words? They resonate with me for sure. I feel like everyone can probably get behind those, but did you consult your stakeholders, how did you come around that?

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (21:22):
So that was a faculty process. And that was the process that we did with our learners. So we had undergrad learners, we had post-grad learners, and we had faculty all at the table saying, Okay, what, as a campus, as part of McMaster, under the umbrella of the faculty of Health Sciences, with a mission and vision statement, What do we as a campus, what do we stand for? And what can we do in the field of healthcare and medical education? What can we do out as a small, regional campus, in a big sort of Health Sciences facility, how are we gonna make our mark? And what do we mean and what can we do? And that's really where we came up with it. And through this think tank, with learners. And it was Dr. Mike Lee-Poy, who led this particular part and Dr. Lee-Poy, that's what the group all came up with. And I love it. 'Cause really, those are the three steps. You engage somebody in the conversation, and that's maybe what we're having today, is the conversation. And then equip them with the skills. And then empower them to fly with them and see where they land. And that's just so much fun, in my role as a leader, and what I see my role as a leader is doing that, with the people that are there. With the skills that they have, I just help them to say, Yes. And say, I can do that. And believe in yourselves.

Dr. Teresa Chan (22:33):
Yeah, I'm getting goosebumps right now. [laughter] Honestly. Literally, you can probably see it. And the idea is that... I do think that those are the things that most leaders should aspire to do. And I think that, hopefully, MacPFD can help your folks in Waterloo, also in Niagara, Mac-CARE and then, main campus, be exploring how we can help you equip yourself more. So I think that that part of our job is to help as well, with this mission that you have, and to support you and your campus and everyone else in equipping themselves. And so, hopefully our website and all of our digital offerings, now that we're trying to make sure we can get into people's pockets, and into their earbuds, and be available to them just in time rather than having them come to us. I think that orientation, hopefully fits in the agenda that you have set forth for your campus, and hopefully we can help you equip everyone with those things that they need, right when they need them.

Dr. Teresa Chan (23:21):
So, hopefully, the rest of the people listening can tune in and check out our, macpfd.ca, to see what resources are out there. We have this podcast, obviously, you're listening to it. But there's also a video archive, there's a new email campaign we're gonna have where you get blasted, it's called MacPFD Blast. And so, you get an email blast every two weeks with some... It's just a snippet of a couple of things that you can learn for that week or two. And hopefully these are all different ways that you can get your faculty development and really engage in what we're trying to do. So hopefully that is helpful, towards the Waterloo Regional Campus as well.

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (23:53):
Yeah, I'm sure it will be. And there's no doubt that our visions align, that we see things. That we need to be different, faculty development and engaging, our faculty has historically being, Well, we'll put on a session, you come and sit in a room, and listen to our session in a didactic lecture. And that certainly served its function for many, many, many years. And certainly I grew up in that atmosphere, as a learner. But We know that faculty members today are not what they were years

ago. Our faculty are busier, they have other constraints on their lives. We have, even though Digital Health has improved many of our delivery, and quality of our delivery, we do know from the data that burnout number one, if you ask physicians, What it is, it's their electronic medical records. [chuckle] So there are other constraints on physician's times, and to be able to reach our faculty in many creative and new ways, is what you're doing, Teresa. And certainly with Regional Campus we have an added barrier in the regional campus, and that's geography and drive. And to take the drive, it is a one-hour drive, to downtown Hamilton. I have done it many times to the David Braley Centre, and to MDCL building. I know it's one hour from downtown Kitchener.

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (25:04):
And so that geography, at the end of a full clinic, or end of a shift in the merge, or in the ICU or in the operating room, they're just not gonna do it. They're gonna go home and say, Oh, I hope there's some food [chuckle] on the table and then can I get the kids to bed. So being able to deliver the faculty development in innovative ways. And just engaging, equipping, empower, our faculty through other means such as this is, is great. So thank you, Teresa, for the leadership that you're taking in this area.

Dr. Teresa Chan (25:29):
Well, I mean, this podcast is definitely not about me. I was just giving a plug to the McMaster Faculty development. All the things we've got. But, you kinda touched on a real interest of yours, I think that you've kinda highlighted the idea of Digital Health. And I think Waterloo Regional Campus obviously is, in Waterloo, a world hub for innovation and technology. Can you talk to me a little bit about how you're integrating other partners like the University of Waterloo, like other tech firms that are in the zone around where you are, how are you interfacing with some of these other entities? Because I've been to Waterloo Regional Campus, and guess what? Google is like literally across the street from you. So I foresee that you're in a position to leverage some things that maybe even the other campuses can't get access to. Can you speak to a little bit about that?

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (26:15):
You're absolutely right, Teresa. Waterloo is the tech capital of North America. Well, okay, so I think so good. Perhaps Silicon Valley would argue that they are, but when you certainly come to Canada, Waterloo is where it's at. And outside one of my windows is Google, I've been over, it's quite a phenomenal facility, outside my other window is Communitech, and Communitech is another of the tech capitals that is a collision center where people come and startups are there, and a lot of the focus is really on the health technology. We have in one of our Regional campus a digital health lead, that's one of our faculty members, it's Dr. Mohamed Alarakhia and Dr. Alarakhia runs the eHealth Centre of Excellence, and the focus of that institution is working with electronic medical records, as well as the delivery of virtual care and data management where health tech can really help deliver improved quality of care for our community. And how can we get our learners involved in that and our faculty members, and that's really been my focus, isn't so much on what the types of things they're doing, but how can McMaster as an institution help this.

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (27:27):
And I think there's many ways, and one of them is engaging our learners both at the undergrad and postgrad level, even at the basic level, equipping them with the skills that they're gonna need, so that when they're clinicians, they know how to use the technology to improve their quality of care. So that's equipping them with a skill, and I think that's a really cool start, but to me that's only a start. I think there's so much more opportunity than just making sure that our learners that graduate

are competent. The next level, and this is where I think it's really exciting. The next level is where can we then influence and improve the outcomes of the tech companies, and this is where we're exploring right now, and I'm having so much fun with it. Where can we as faculty inform what's needed? So a lot of tech companies go, I got this great idea. I think I wanna create X, but really, we might not need X, because what our patient community needs are is Y, not X. They need Y.

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (28:28):
So our faculty are the ones that can say to the tech companies, I have this problem, I need something to fix that problem, or to solve that problem. So our faculty who work with patients on a daily basis can say, This is the kind of thing we need. Can you create something to help this patient problem or improve this patient outcome? So that's one aspect. The other aspect is, say a tech company comes up with something and they need someone to inform that. What's the prototype? Can you test it out for us? And so our faculty are there right next door, say to the one of our institutions either our community health centers or through our hospitals, we can say, Okay, we'll trial that for a while, set it up as a proper quality improvement or a research project, trial it and say, Yeah, this works, but you need to change this and this, or this doesn't work. Go back to the drawing board. So having our faculty there can inform in both directions, having our learners there is even more exciting, because our learners are wired differently and they think outside the box a little more and are more embracing of the technology, and I think that's very exciting for them to get involved.

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (29:38):
So through our research lead, we are looking at how we can best engage with the digital health initiatives in the community, and how can we harness that and move it forward as something that both learners and faculty should get involved in and really will put McMaster on the map as being a leader in health technology and digital healthcare.

Dr. Teresa Chan (29:58):
Oh, that's so exciting. Again, goosebumps. One of the things I was wondering though is, what if someone... I know there's been enterprising people at Niagara Regional Campus, Mac-CARE region, and even at Main Campus that are interested in this kind of stuff. Could they reach out to some of your leads and if this is sparking interest in people and engaging them. Would you be welcoming of our nursing colleagues or we have colleagues maybe also being able to compose some of these things maybe digitally, the same way that we're linking all the campuses in other ways?

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (30:26):
Absolutely, there's no question. I mean, these things for the most part, aren't solid tangible objects per se. Ideas are something that can be created and can be communicated digitally, and as we are right now, and as of course, interacting with the other allied health professionals is really important. One of the recent project, we just completed at the Waterloo Regional campus was a collaboration between the School of Pharmacy and the School of Medicine and E-health learning around professionalism. So that kind of collaboration interprofessionally is something that we've already done and we are doing.

Dr. Teresa Chan (31:02):
Because it's not even the McMaster Faculty of Pharmacy, 'cause we don't have one, it's actually at Waterloo, right? So you're reaching across to a different institution, and that's really powerful. I think that we do have to think about how we can join forces more, 'cause there's so many people doing siloed work. How many times have I done effective workshop that Toronto probably needs as

well, and I think that's been really, really cool during the pandemic is that we've made a lot of our webinar content, the workshops that we have digitally delivered, we've actually opened it up to the world. We don't tell people they can't come just 'cause they're not from Mac, and part of that came from a practical region of we couldn't tell if it was just one of our faculty members with the Gmail account or someone from Moose Jaw tuning in, and it's been quite amazing because I think that what happens is now you have the space where our faculty are getting to interact with some world leaders, some really diverse people from all over the world, and it's just wonderful to bring that kind of international feel to some of our local events. And so I do think that there's a lot of room for us to do more of that collaboration space as leaders to create those spaces for people.

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (32:05):
Absolutely, Teresa. I couldn't agree more with that point. And indeed, the program that we just completed with the School of Pharmacy is with University of Waterloo because the School of Pharmacy is in Waterloo. McMaster, our campus itself is on the University of Waterloo land and right next door is the School of Pharmacy. Another example of this collaboration is one of our faculties working with the engineering department in the University of Waterloo looking at developing technology innovations for individuals living with dementia and the fourth year project for the entire year with these teams was to develop something in technology that would assist the living and quality of life of someone with dementia. So that's a really interesting... And two or three of these projects have gone on to prototype, so that's pretty exciting. And that's, again, one of our faculty members working with innovation, with technology in the University of Waterloo so that, again, cross-university collaborations engineering with medicine and working across McMaster with the University of Waterloo. So just another example of trying to think outside the box beyond the silos that we normally function and work in and trying to do something that will improve patient outcomes. And I think this faculty member has told me had a lot of fun working with these students and creating these projects.

Dr. Teresa Chan (33:21):
That's really very cool and I'm so excited to hear such innovative stuff. You'll have to point me in the direction of some of your superstar faculty members who are doing such innovative work and we can interview them for the podcast or maybe have them on a workshop of some of the work that they're doing.

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (33:37):
Well, happy to. We've got also a very interesting project and this is two very cool women, Dr. Sophiya Benjamin, she's a geri psychiatrist, and Dr. Joanne Ho, she's a geriatrician, and together these two women have developed a program called GeriMedRisk which is now a line item in the Ministry of Health budget and it's run out across Canada where physicians across Ontario can call in and get an e-consult with these women. These women depending on what the type of problem is with poly-pharmacy and there's the pharmacist or two on-site and they do consults for patients and it's on complex medication. Kind of like a poison control for seniors. So about poly-pharmacy in our seniors population, which is a huge problem and causes hospitalizations, of course. So that kind of innovative thinking when you think, "Okay, here's an idea, but how can we implement it so that it can have access and reach people across the country, sorry, across Ontario, I should say, and how can we bring together different IPEs?" So interprofessionals, so we have the pharmacists, we have the geriatrician, and we have the psychiatrist all working together doing e-consults across the province. GeriMedRisk it's called. So that's two of our faculty members.

Dr. Teresa Chan (34:53):
That is so cool. I really, really like the idea that you're carving out a space for people to just think about innovative ideas and get the support from your campus and from other peers to make the things happen, and I love the idea of how we can create that ecosystem around McMaster because I think that kind of innovative thinking is how we're going to make an impact in the end. It's great to do a lot of the research and really discover the problems, but I think we also need to be part of the solution sometimes too. So having a connection and a through line between research all the way into the bedside implementation I think is really awesome.

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (35:29):
And so I have one other person I will tell you about just briefly, is Dr. Shane Neilson, and he's a doctor MDGP [0:35:33.6] ____ practice. He's also a PhD in English humanities. He's doing a lot of work in the area of health humanities and that is really exciting 'cause some of our learners are very engaged and some of our faculty members as well, in wanting to explore expressions through poetry and through writing and depicting health and health outcomes in these genres and it's very exciting. And that's another idea, just an example of thinking outside the box 'cause health and science is usually very science and this humanities is art. And so marrying the two of the humanities and the art if for no other reason than physician wellness also and more importantly for improving patient outcomes. In fact, Dr. Neilson runs a very interesting elective with student learners where they can be in the clinic, apply the humanities, and then write either poetry or short stories or stories about their experience as a caregiver and their patient experiences. That kind of outside of the box thinking is something that we embrace and encourage at the Waterloo Regional Campus.

Dr. Teresa Chan (36:35):
So it sounds like if anyone's interested in incorporating humanities into the healthcare delivery, Shane might be someone that we can reach out to as a local expert in that way, so amazing. I have tried to connect with him, but he's a very busy individual that has so much going on that he is definitely a resource that we can cherish, but I do think that there are opportunities for us to definitely link up to see if we can add to the fabric of things. We actually have a whole pillar in MacPFD that's focused on humanism and creativity. And so we do have leaders like Shane, hopefully, who can be adding their insights into how we do things, but also we have very talented neuro medicine specialist, Dr. Sue Rasharda. She's a part-time faculty at Oakville and so she has been doing some really amazing Narrative Medicine workshops for peers and we also have some other stuff that we'll be planning around that whole theme of creativity and humanism. So stay tuned for some of the stuff we have. And hopefully if Shane has a moment or two, we'd love to invite him over to tell us about his adventures in helping bring humanism and the arts really into medical education and health professions education, so I think that'll be really awesome. He's definitely on the list to interview. [chuckle]

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (37:49):
Right. I'll encourage him. I'm sure he will be happy to chat with Teresa. He's got great stories and of course his writing is fascinating and it's all around health and his experience with healthcare delivery and his patients' lives and concerns, and I think we can all relate to that very well and I find the read for myself personally quite fascinating and interesting and I'm sure you would as well.

Dr. Teresa Chan (38:13):
Yes, definitely. Check out Dr. Neilson's work if you haven't heard of him before. Well, thank you so much for taking the time to chat with me today. It's been mind-blowing, to be honest. You're doing

such great, wonderful things and I am so excited to see Waterloo Regional Campus really making a mark in this way. Dr. Bell is doing similarly great things and Dr. Backer as well in the other regional campuses that we have and just exciting to see all these women in leadership just really rocking it. And so thank you so much for being a role model to all the young women out there who are learners right now or maybe they're junior faculty. I think that seeing that it's possible to take the reins and be someone like yourselves, I think goes a long way to role model what people see in the future, so thank you very much for that. And if you have any final words of wisdom that you want to drop to the audience that we're speaking to?

Dr. Margo Mountjoy (39:04):
How about I leave you with three of them, engage, equip and empower, which is really what we're doing at in Waterloo Regional Campus. And if we can do that with our learners and with each other as fellow faculty, I think we'll have a good day at work.

Dr. Teresa Chan (0:39:17.6):
Amazing. I love it. Thank you so much. And this has been an amazing chat and we'll have to bring you back again for another discussion another time.

[music]

Dr. Teresa Chan (39:28):
Thank you so much for tuning into the MacPFD Spark Podcast. Just so you know, this podcast has been brought to you by the McMaster Faculty of Health Sciences and specifically the Office of Continuing Professional Development and the program for Faculty Development. If you're interested in finding out more about what we can offer for faculty development, check out our website at www.macpfd.ca. That's www.M-A-C-P-F-D.ca. Many of our events are actually web events that are free. Finally, I'd like to thank our sound engineer, Mr. Nick Hoskin, who has been an amazing asset to our team. Thanks so much, Nick, for all that you do. And also thank you to Scott Holmes for supplying us the music that you've been listening to. Alright, so until next time, this is MacPFD Spark signing off.