

APRIL 2025 – MARCH 2026

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PROVOST (ACADEMIC AFFAIRS)

FAMILY RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT



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BACKGROUND

Family Resources serves the University of Manitoba community of faculty members, support staff, and students as they navigate through the challenges of balancing work and study life with family care responsibilities.

Family Resources was established in October 2022 and is part of the Office of the Provost & Vice-President (Academic), reporting to the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs). The Family Resource Coordinator is the point of contact at the University for most family care-related matters.

OVERVIEW

Family Resources assists clients on a variety of family care matters. Additional programming and supports were implemented for the UM community, with the goal to provide relief and aid in reducing some barriers and challenges to achieving academic and professional success.

For the period of April 2025 until end of March 2026, Family Resources activities remained consistent, focusing on the following themes: client support, program delivery, piloting initiatives, resource development, committee work, and outreach.

Client support remains a core activity, supporting the diverse needs of the UM community regarding child care, new faculty relocation, retirement and older adult care, general family well-being, and institutional navigation. This year, significant effort was dedicated towards piloting new initiatives and programs, resource development, and increasing administrative responsibilities.



[image from: UM intranet page]

MOMENTUM MENTORSHIP PROGRAM: EARLY CAREER FOUNDATIONS PROGRAM SUPPORT & COORDINATION

Developed by **Dr. Tracey Peter**, Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs), the [MOMENTUM Mentorship program](#) is a new initiative under the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs) designed to support early-career faculty at the University of Manitoba as they build their academic careers.

According to Dr. Peter, the aim is to structure the program around “a series of mentorship streams, MomentUM offers faculty the opportunity to engage with targeted support in areas such as research, governance, career advancement, and institutional navigation.”

The Family Resources Coordinator serves as the Program Coordinator for this initiative. The **Early Career Foundations Stream** experienced a strong start since its inaugural launch in January 2026.

Faculty members can sign up to join the program at any time during the academic year. They are placed into cohorts based on the month they enrolled. The Program Coordinator

sends an initial email as confirmation of their enrollment and then another communication is sent once a match has been determined.

Cross-faculty pairings were common and helped to address limited mentor or mentee availability within some faculties, schools, or colleges, while also creating opportunities for broader institutional connections.

Activities that the mentorship pairs or groups are involved in can include, but are not limited to, institutional navigation, goal-setting, networking, teaching guidance, research planning, and community building. Resources were developed to serve as guides for the mentors and mentees and are housed on the [MOMENTUM Mentorship intranet page](#).

The first check-in is at the 3-month mark. Mentees have the option to rotate mentors (or switch streams in the future) at the 6-month mark, if desired. At the 12-month mark, participants receive a feedback survey (MS Forms) via email.

Faculties, schools, and colleges are encouraged to continue promoting the **Early Career Foundations Stream** to their early career and late-career/retired faculty members.



[Photo credit: University of Manitoba]

EMERITI AND SENIOR SCHOLARS ENGAGED IN NAVIGATING CONTINUED EXCELLENCE (ESSENCE)

In May of 2025, Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs) was awarded funding through the 2025-26 Strategic Initiatives Support Fund to explore ways to increase engagement between the University and the Emeriti/Senior Scholars group.

Teaming up with the original members from the [Professors Emeriti and Senior Scholars Survey Project](#), Family Resources supported **Dr. Tracey Peter**, Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs), **Dr. Michelle Porter**, Director of Centre on Aging, a leader in the global age-friendly university movement, co-lead of the North American Region for the Age-friendly University Global Network, and a member of the Age Inclusivity in Higher Education Working Group of the Gerontological Society of America along with **Dr. William Kops**, Professor Emeriti, executive member of the Age-friendly University, and executive member of the University of Manitoba Retirees Association (UMRA). Two student research assistants were hired to assist with the planning and implementation of the ESSENCE

Project. The working group set out to accomplish the goals and objectives outlined on the Strategic Initiatives Support Fund (SISF) 2025-26 proposal.

A new [Emeriti and Senior Scholars internet page](#) was developed under the ‘Retirees’ homepage. The page includes process pathways to obtain the Emeritus/Emerita title and Senior Scholar designation, suggested ways to stay engaged with the University, a section on the MomentUM Mentorship Program, and a sign-up form to subscribed to an e-bulletin called ‘Continuing the Conversation’. During the SISF project term, a limited-time offer of Microsoft 365 A3 licenses, complimentary parking passes, and sessions/workshops were offered to encourage more frequent on-campus visits.

Sessions offered through ESSENCE:

- University of Manitoba Retirees Association: Information Session
- Unpacking Microsoft M365 A1 vs A3 Licenses: Understanding Key Differences in Education Licensing
- Using AI for Your Academic Work as an Emerit or Senior Scholar
- Publishing Pathways with UM Libraries, UM Press, and Copyright Office
- Nourish to Flourish: Eating Well as We Age

A post-high school film, animation, game development, and design launchpad program from Sisler High School called [CREATE](#) was hired to produce a set of 13 minute-long videos featuring some of UM’s top Emeriti to post on the new Emeriti and Senior Scholar page, spotlighting the work and contributions of our esteemed retired scholars.

The thirteen (13) Emeriti who will be interviewed (in alphabetical order by last name):

1. Dr. Catherine Cook, Vice-President (Indigenous) Emerita
2. Dr. Juliette (Archie) Cooper, Professor Emeritus, RFHS, College of Rehabilitation Sciences
3. Dr. Robert Currie, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Agricultural & Food Sciences
4. Dr. Joan Durrant, Professor Emerita, RFHS, College of Community & Global Health
5. Dr. Charlotte Enns, Professor Emerita, Faculty of Education
6. Dr. Ian Ferguson, Professor Emeritus, Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth, & Resources
7. Dr. Gordon Giesbrecht, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Kinesiology & Recreation Management
8. Dr. Helene Perreault, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Science, Chemistry

9. Dr. Grant Pierce, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, RFHS, Max Rady College of Medicine
10. Dr. David Rush, Professor Emeritus, RFHS, Max Rady College of Medicine
11. Dr. Lotfollah (Lot) Shafai, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Price Faculty of Engineering
12. Dr. Paul Thomas, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Arts
13. Dr. Michael West, Professor Emeritus, RFHS, Max Rady College of Medicine

An intranet page, [Supporting Professor Emeriti and Senior Scholars](#), offers resources for faculties and units. There is opportunity for a more evolved iteration of this resource page through future consultations with key stakeholders.

The **Intergenerational Research Planning Grant** is a one-time grant with the aim to bring together early career researchers and retired academics (Emeriti and Senior Scholars), fostering a spirit of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and mentorship with the goal to explore future research projects.

Proposals were submitted end of October 2025 and the adjudication committee has awarded 5 proposals with an amount of **\$4,500 per pair**.

The five (5) pairs awarded with the Intergenerational Research Planning Grant:

1. Dr. Sean Booth, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences
Dr. Teresa de Kievit, Professor Emerita, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences
2. Dr. Michelle Jonathan, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Work
Dr. Tuula Heinonen, Professor Emerita, Faculty of Social Work
3. Dr. Hamid Mansoor, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Science
Dr. Jayanne English, Senior Scholar, Faculty of Science
4. Dr. Jiating Li, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Agricultural & Food Sciences
Dr. Ying Chen, Professor Emerita, Faculty of Agricultural & Food Sciences
5. Dr. Monica Batac, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Work
Dr. Sid Frankel, Senior Scholar, Faculty of Social Work

Applications were assessed based on the following criteria:

- ✓ Quality and originality of the proposed research idea(s)
- ✓ The collaborative nature of the project, and how the proposed activities will benefit the applicants, during the time of the funding and in the future
- ✓ The feasibility of the planning activities being completed

- ✓ The likelihood of future grant applications resulting from the project
- ✓ Future mentorship possibilities
- ✓ Research records of the applicants

Example activities include:

- Holding consultations related to designing a possible research project
- Conducting literature reviews
- Developing research questions

Examples eligible expenses:

- Pay for research assistants
- Costs associated with hosting consultations (e.g., travel to consultation site)
- Technical and administrative services

A condition of the funding involves submitting a final report on activities and amounts spent to the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs) by April 2026.

Overall, the ESSENCE Project accomplished what it originally outlined as goals on the strategic funding proposal. Some initiatives will remain such as the internet and intranet pages, mentorship, the e-bulletin, Family Resources as a point of contact, and, potentially, future sessions or workshops.

Suggestions made by Emeriti and Senior Scholars throughout the duration of the project:

- To consider providing M365 A3 license upgrades automatically to active Senior Scholars engaged in academic work (nil-appointments)
- To consider complimentary parking passes as a permanent offering to active Emeriti and Senior Scholars (engaged in unpaid work on campus)
- To include hybrid options when considering to offer future sessions (some no longer live in the city or province)

A wrap-up event will be held later in the summer or in the upcoming fall term to culminate the ending of the ESSENCE project. A final report will be submitted at the conclusion of the project, outlining all expenditures, activities, and outcomes.

CLIENT SUPPORT & RESOURCE NAVIGATION

Client interactions have increased considerably during this reporting period, averaging 58 inquiries per month. The busiest month was September, representing 17% (n=123) of the total inquiries received (n=703) and the least busy months were June at 2.5% (n=18) and July at 2% (n=17). This data includes the support provided to the **ESSENCE Project** and the **MomentUM Mentorship Program: Early Career Foundations stream**.

The top three (3) types representing nearly 80% of interactions were regarding:

1. ESSENCE Project (n=273)
2. Child care-related support (n=221)
3. MomentUM Mentorship Program (n=66)

Emeriti & Senior Scholars Engaged in Navigating Continued Excellence (ESSENCE) Project

There are approximately 380 Emeriti and Senior Scholars listed with an active status at the University of Manitoba. In addition to the offerings developed through the **ESSENCE Project**, the Family Resource Coordinator was designated as the main point of contact for all general inquiries.

The inquiries were related to:

- Session registrations (n=87)
- Parking pass requests (n=70)
- Event registrations (n=56)
- Intergenerational Research Planning Grant (n=12)
- Microsoft 365: A3 licenses upgrades (n=5)
- Other questions related to the project (n=43)

Child Care

Child care-related support continues to rank high as one of the most popular type of inquiries, accounting for 31% (n=221) of the total number.

The inquiries were related to:

- UM Babysitter Directory (n=81)
- Childcare system navigation (n=68)
- Childcare Program Search and Waitlist Assistance (n=40)
- Family health & well-being related to child care (n=12)
- Event Childminding Program (n=10)

MomentUM Mentorship Program: Early Career Foundations

At the start, a total of 62 academics enrolled in the program; 34 signed up as mentees and 28 as mentors. Of those still enrolled, Assistant Professors represent 90% (n=26) of mentees.

- 32 mentees are currently participating
- 24 mentors are currently participating
- 6 mentors have more than 1 participant that they are mentoring
- 4 mentors are in leadership positions as Department Head or Associate Dean
- 7 who have enrolled are retired faculty with a Senior Scholar designation or Emeritus/Emerita title
- 1 mentee withdrew early from the program
- 1 mentee is currently waitlisted

Participation is currently strongest in the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, followed by the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Science, and Faculty of Agricultural & Food Sciences, while several faculties, schools, and colleges are not yet represented.

Feedback from mentees suggests that mentor matches are generally meaningful and supportive, with participants valuing guidance on career development, research planning, tenure and promotion, networking, and institutional navigation.

Other types of inquiries received were general questions about Family Resources or the University of Manitoba 6% (n=46), retirement readiness & older adult care resource navigation 5% (n=32), newsletter subscriptions 4% (n=27), relocation support 3% (n=24), and project collaborations/requests 3% (n=19).

The top 10 faculties and units who have interacted the most with or have sought assistance from Family Resources (in order of most to least):

1. Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
2. Faculty of Arts
3. Faculty of Science
4. Price Faculty of Engineering
5. Faculty of Agricultural & Food Sciences
6. Faculty of Social Work

7. I.H. Asper School of Business
8. Faculty of Education
9. Human Resources
10. Student Affairs

The distribution of inquiries (by position at the University):

➤ Emeriti and Senior Scholars (n=232)	33%
➤ Faculty members (n=117)	17%
➤ Support staff (n=151)	21%
➤ Students (n=107)	15%
➤ Other (senior administrators, other academics, public, etc.) (n=96)	14%

COMMON ACTIONS

Client support remains a core function of Family Resources. This involves an individualized, multi-step approach and requires coordination across various systems and university units. The categories remain unchanged—childcare navigation and waitlist support, newcomer relocation guidance, family well-being and caregiving inquiries, and general institutional navigation and referrals—with the addition of early career scholars and retirement work-lifecycle support.

PROGRAM & SERVICE DELIVERY

The core Family Resources programming and services remain with the addition of sessions:

- Childcare Program Search and Waitlist Assistance service
- UM Babysitter Directory
- Event Childminding Program
- Parents and caregivers of children with disability connect group
- Childcare 101 Information Sessions
- Retirement Readiness Peer Network Sessions

Childcare Program Search and Waitlist Assistance

Searching for childcare spaces can sometimes be a stressful, laborious task for parents and guardians. More than half, over 60% of licensed childcare programs in Winnipeg and the greater area do not have digital waitlists available online. Reaching out and monitoring them can be time-consuming for families. In response to this issue, the Family Resources Coordinator assists families with childcare search and waitlist entries. Updates on the Manitoba Child Care Search online tool are also regularly monitored and families who sign up are provided with monthly updates. This service is available to the UM community of faculty members, support staff, students, and other academics.

For the reporting period of April 2025 until end of March 2026, 26% of all child care-related inquiries (n=51) were from UM faculty members, support staff, students, and other academics who have submitted a completed **Childcare Program Search and Waitlist Assistance request forms**.

➤ Faculty members (n=12)	23%
➤ Support staff (n=22)	43%
➤ Students (n=10)	20%
➤ Post-docs (n=7)	14%

UM Babysitter Directory

The UM Babysitter Directory is a convenient tool for connecting families with student babysitters. This initiative allows students to gain casual employment and work experience while helping their fellow University community members. Access to the directory is provided to parents and caregivers via a link to a Teams channel. Users are asked to complete a disclaimer form first before receiving the link. Families are

considered the employer and are responsible for vetting and verifying the students' training, certifications, and work references. Resource guides for parents/caregivers and sitters were developed to support the whole process.

Resource guides: <https://umanitoba.ca/family-resources>

For the reporting period of April 2025 until end of March 2026:

- 50 requests for access were received
- 64% (n=32) requests are from student email accounts
- 34% (n=17) requests are from employee/faculty member email accounts
- 2% (n=1) request was from an affiliate unit

To date, the private Teams channel where the UM Babysitter Directory is housed has over 200 members and there are almost 50 students listed as babysitters.

Babysitter profiles:

- All major areas of the city are well-represented (northwest, northeast, central, southwest, southeast, and some greater Winnipeg areas)
- More than half of students listed have stated availability during the day, in addition to evenings and weekends
- Nearly 35% of students have all 3 certifications: First Aid and CPR, Criminal Record Check (clean), and Child Abuse Registry Check (clean)
- Nearly 10% of students have indicated that they are certified as Child Care Assistants
- Nearly 80% of students have indicated having previous work experience with children and youth
- Nearly 75% of students have indicated having previous experience working with children or youth with disabilities
- Nearly 50% of students have indicated being able to speak another language

Event Childminding Program

The Event Childminding Program enables faculties or units who are hosting an event at the Fort Garry campus to offer childcare for event participants. The International Centre booked the Event Childminding Program for their Fall Term Student Orientation in August and Winter Term Student Orientation in January.

Parents and Caregivers of Children with Disability

Family Resources provides coordination support for the Parents and Caregivers of Children with Disability connect group, led by Dr. Christine Stewart, Professor, Women's & Gender Studies, Faculty of Arts and Arlana Vadnais, Associate Director, Student Wellness Centre. This group meets once a month in the Student Wellness Centre and offers a supportive, inclusive space for the parents or caregivers to connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. There is opportunity to broaden the scope to include other types of family demographics to encourage attendance from the wider UM community.

Childcare 101 Information Session

Sessions are available for booking for UM parents and caregiver groups. The session discusses the childcare system in Manitoba as well as programs and services available through Family Resources. There is a plan to promote this more frequently moving forward.

Retirement Readiness Peer Network Sessions

Hosted by Family Resources, HR-Employee Wellness, and the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences Family Centre, sessions are offered twice per year every April and November. The aim of this program is to support employees and faculty members who are nearing the prospect of retirement and have questions or concerns about the impact of this significant life transition.

INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

The [Centre of Aging](#) invited Family Resources to hold an information booth at their Age-friendly University Showcase, which coincides with their annual Spring Research Symposium in May, a free Spring Research Symposium, which “promotes dialogue between university researchers and the community-at-large”.

Family Resources assisted UM Physical Plant with [Campus Beautification Day](#) by planning and providing children’s programming for a nearby elementary school. This event takes place annually at the end of May. Planning usually takes at least a few months of preparation and involves implementing various activities for the young students on the day of the event. This year, Family Resources was joined by a Family-friendly University Committee member and the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences Family Centre Coordinator who assisted with facilitating the programming. Children planted flowers in a designated space on campus grounds and later planted their own seeds to take home.

In June, Family Resources, Faculty Relations, and HR Immigration developed a **support plan for Foreign Nationals**. A referral process document was drafted and submitted to the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs) and Human Resources. This month, Family Resources was also invited by the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences Family Centre to co-present at their New Faculty Orientation.

During the summer months of July and August, work was underway for the **Emeriti and Senior Scholars Engaged in Navigating Continued Excellence (ESSENCE) Project**. This involved developing a framework for initiatives and processes that will be offered through the strategic funding project, as well as planning for the creation of new [internet](#) and [intranet](#) pages supporting this group.

On the last week of August, Family Resources was invited to hold an information booth at the Fort Garry campus [New Faculty Orientation](#) hosted by the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs).

Work continued with the ESSENCE Project in September and October. A student research assistant was hired to conduct environmental scans of other U15 members—looking at supports and resources available for Emeriti and Senior Scholars in other higher education institutions and drafting suggestions for potential initiatives. Initiatives such as the sessions, complimentary parking passes, and Microsoft 365 A3 license upgrades were

made available and promoted through the new Emeriti and Senior Scholars e-bulletin, 'Continuing the Conversation'. Meetings with the CREATE Program about the Emeriti video project began. Another student research assistant was hired in November to assist.

The [Take Our Kids to Work Day](#) event occurs annually during the first week of November and the UM community are encouraged to register their children who are in grade 9 to participate. Family Resources assists HR with planning, which involves meeting with the working group members, identifying potential presenters and reaching out to gauge their level of interest in participating. It may also involve visiting potential spaces for facilitating sessions.

Family Resources was invited to participate in the **Navigating Complex Student Cases as an Academic Leader** event, hosted by the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs) in November, as one of the University resource representatives. This event involves participants working in groups to navigate a series of case studies—reflecting complex real-life situations. Participants review the cases, identify the UM resources, and engage with the resources involved in that specific consultation.

Family Resources continues to co-lead the Family-friendly University committee alongside Dr. Brandy Usick, Executive Director, Student Engagement & Success. Funded by the Strategic Initiatives Support Fund, Student Engagement & Success embarked on a project to transform a room on the 5th floor of the UMSU University Centre into a lactation and breastfeeding/child feeding-friendly space. In the first quarter of the year, Family Resources was invited to assist with planning of the room arrangement, furniture, equipment, and materials required to make the space conducive for its intended use. Guidelines outlined by the World Health Organization (WHO), La Leche League Canada, and the province of Manitoba were used as reference aids during the development process. The new **Child Feeding Room** was completed in the fall of 2025.

Donor Relations is supporting the Faculty of Science with crowdfunding for a lactation pod in their building on the Fort Garry campus and reached out to Family Resources in December to assist with promoting the campaign.

To support UM Food Bank for students, Family Resources in a joint effort with a couple of members from the Fort Garry Administrative Building's social committee, hosted a **Wrap for a Cause** campaign offering free gift-wrapping services for the UM community during

the holiday season in December. Participants were encouraged to bring a non-perishable item in exchange for the service.

Hosted by HR – Employee Wellness, Family Resources assists with implementing activities for [Bell Let's Talk Day](#), a week-long campaign in January to promote mental health and well-being for support staff.

The Family Resource Coordinator continues to attend the **Indigenous Connect** meetings that occur monthly during the academic year. Family Resources is also a member of the **Rady Faculty of Health Sciences Family Centre Working Group**.

Family Resources no longer hosts open-office hours at 319-66 Chancellors Circle and instead encourages faculties and units to book Family Resources to hold a **pop-up office** in their building.

As of March 31, 2026, the **Family Resources newsletter** has 170 subscribers. Faculties and units who have news that are family-related are encouraged to share them with Family Resources to promote on the newsletter or Instagram account. The Instagram account has over 145 followers.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Family Resources continues to be a high-demand point of contact for the UM community. During the reporting period, the office received 703 inquiries, averaging 58 inquiries per month, with September representing the highest volume of activity.
- ❖ The ESSENCE Project, Child care, and MomentUM Mentorship Program emerged as the leading areas of support. These inquiries accounted for 80% of all client interactions, reflecting strong interest in continued academic engagement and child care-related resources.
- ❖ It is evident that child care remains a significant and ongoing need across the University community. Child care-related inquiries represented 31% of total inquiries, with students, support staff, faculty members, and post-docs seeking assistance with childcare searches, waitlists, babysitting supports, and event childminding.
- ❖ Program and service delivery expanded practical supports for families and caregivers. The Childcare Program Search and Waitlist Assistance service, UM Babysitter Directory, Event Childminding Program, Parents & Caregivers of Children with Disability, and Childcare 101 session helped reduce barriers for parents and caregivers balancing work, study, and family responsibilities.
- ❖ The ESSENCE project met its original strategic objectives and created a foundation for sustained engagement through new public-facing and intranet webpages, targeted sessions, an e-bulletin, M365 A3 license upgrades, complimentary parking supports, video storytelling, and research collaboration funding.
- ❖ Intergenerational mentorship and research collaboration gained momentum. The Intergenerational Research Planning Grant awarded five faculty/Emeriti or Senior Scholar pairs, while the MomentUM Mentorship Program enrolled more than 60 academics in its inaugural Early Career Foundations Stream.
- ❖ Family Resources strengthened its institutional role through cross-unit collaboration. The office contributed to initiatives such as the Child Feeding Room, Parents and Caregivers of Children with Disability connect group, new faculty orientation, Take Our Kids to Work Day, Retirement Readiness sessions, Bell Let's Talk Day, and Indigenous Connect meetings.



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