

21 September 2020

Philip Gingras
Interim Executive Director
Brock LINC
Brock University
1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way
St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1

Dear Mr. Gingras,

I hope this note finds you well in these complicated times. I am writing in the hope that you will be able to accept an invitation to join the Advisory Board for a major new venture launching at Brock: the Brock-Niagara Validation, Prototyping, and Manufacturing Institute, or VPMI. In 2019 Brock University was awarded significant federal funding through FedDev Ontario to establish the VPMI, and in May 2020 the University Senate formally approved the creation of the institute.

A few words about the VPMI itself: The Institute aims to support the competitiveness and sustainability of Ontario's strong and growing regional bioproducts, bioscience, agri-food, and advanced chemical manufacturing sectors. It does this by integrating the technical expertise and innovative research at Brock University with "upstream" scientific equipment partners and "downstream" Southern Ontario businesses. It is rooted in a state-of-the-art technology adoption centre at Brock, in the heart of Niagara's bioproducts and chemical manufacturing clusters. Through this facility and affiliated personnel, industry partners gain access to technological solutions and highly skilled talent. The aim is to support the development and implementation of innovation into the production practices and processes of partner companies.

As a focal point for network research, the VPMI enables businesses in its target sectors from across Southern Ontario and Canada to work in a test-bed for instrument manufacturers and their field specialists, facilitated by the scientific and innovative expertise of Brock University researchers, Brock-affiliated scientists at other postsecondary institutions, and provincial and federal research centres and not-for-profit research institutions.

Businesses will have access to cutting-edge instrumentation, fabrication facilities, and expertise housed at Brock to address their urgent needs for chemical/material characterization and testing, process monitoring, quality assurance, and safety/environmental surveillance. This facility will also service engineering solutions for initiating and accelerating analytical research, innovations, intellectual property, and technologies that are customized to meet the business and industrial needs in Southern Ontario.

Brock researchers and partner businesses will have the opportunity to use the facility to commercialize and scale up new ideas to increase their competitiveness and grow and expand their businesses. Instrument manufacturers will be able to provide access to their state-of-the-art instrumentation and work with businesses to develop solutions geared to addressing specific industrial needs. This will also facilitate the encouragement of first and early buyers of new products developed within the clusters.

As part of its governance structure, the Institute has an Advisory Council to be composed of industry and government representatives and University personnel who have knowledge and interest in the commercialization of intellectual property and tackling industry-relevant scientific challenges. The input of the Advisory Council will aid the Member Researchers in developing research plans and in forging new collaborations, allowing the Institute to continually evolve to meet the needs of industry.

As Director of the VPMI, and on behalf of the Vice-President Research, I am pleased to extend an invitation for you to join the Advisory Council for a 3-year term. Your background and expertise would be an invaluable asset in furthering the mission of the Institute. I realize that the demands on your time are already great, and it is not my intention that your involvement with the Advisory Council should be a significant burden on your time; members of the Advisory Council are asked to meet formally as a group once per year, and to communicate by email or tele/videoconference only as mutually convenient. During these meetings we would ask for your insights in planning research projects and guidance in advancing the objectives of the Institute. The goal is to populate the Advisory Council with individuals from diverse backgrounds that can offer the Member Researchers a broader perspective on their work and on the challenges facing various industries.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to consider this request. If possible, could you please provide me with your decision by September 30, 2020. I look forward to hearing from you; please feel free to contact me (pzelisko@brocku.ca) if you would like further details about the VPMI and Advisory Council before deciding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Zelisko', written in a cursive style.

Paul M. Zelisko, PhD
Director, Brock-Niagara VPMI