

## COMMUNITY-CAMPUS COLLABORATION INITIATIVE

Scaling up Work-Integrated Learning for the Mutual Benefit of Students, PSE Institutions and Civil Society Organizations

Roundtable Discussion with His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston  
At the University of Victoria during Congress 2013  
June 4, 17:00-18:30

### SUMMARY NOTES

#### PARTICIPANTS:

##### HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

**DAVID JOHNSTON, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D.**, GOVERNOR GENERAL AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF CANADA

**Denise Amyot**, In-Coming President, Association of Canadian Community Colleges

**Robert Annan**, Vice President Research and Policy, Mitacs

**Ian Bird**, President and CEO, Community Foundations Canada

**Tim Brodhead (Moderator)**, Senior Fellow, Social Innovation Generation

**Paul Davidson**, President, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

**Chad Gaffield**, President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

**Robert Haché**, Vice President Research and Innovation, York University

**Budd L. Hall**, University of Victoria

**Linda Hughes**, CEO, United Way of Greater Victoria

**Edward T. Jackson**, Carleton Centre for Community Innovation

**Roberta L. Jamieson**, President and CEO, Indspire

**Marcel Lauzière**, President and CEO, Imagine Canada

**Antonia Maioni**, President, Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

**Jean-Marc Mangin**, Executive Director, Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

**Donna Morton**, Ashoka, Ogunte and Unreasonable Fellow

**Sauna Sylvester**, Executive Director, Simon Fraser University Public Square Project

**David Turpin**, President, University of Victoria

(See Annex 1 for biographies of participants)

#### BACKGROUND AND AIM

The Community-Campus Collaboration Initiative aims to enhance collaboration between post-secondary institutions and the communities in which they are based. This June 4, 2013 discussion is a continuation of an initiative begun in 2011 with the Governor General and continued at Congress 2012 and other fora (see Annex 2 for additional background). This session engaged additional stakeholders with the objective of sharing successful practices, identifying roadblocks and having practical discussions on how both communities and campuses can benefit from increased collaborations.



## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Participants engaged in a wide-ranging discussion addressing both aspirational goals and pragmatic actions. These notes are not minutes, or attributable comments, but rather an over-arching summary, and are organized according to three main themes that emerged from the discussion:

- Deepening connections
- Scaling up
- Motivation, rewards and obstacles

## DEEPENING CONNECTIONS

Developing trust and mutual understanding are required for successful long term relationships between post-secondary institutions and communities and they lead to better experiences for students on internships, better research opportunities for faculty, and better knowledge transfer and resourcing opportunities for community organizations. There is a need to change the narrative on campus-community collaborations to move to a model of engagement where all partners see a strategic imperative in collaboration.

Participants agreed that the best knowledge transfer occurs on two feet, in the form of students and graduates. Representatives of community organizations commented on the tremendous value of students, particularly as interns in bringing ideas, and as resources to often under-resourced community organizations.

However, there was also agreement that a four month internship from a single student is less than optimal for both community associations and post-secondary institutions, as it provides no continuity.

Ideally, enduring long-term relationships are developed between post-secondary institutions/ departments/ faculty and community groups. The most effective initiatives are those which forge long term partnerships, for example placing multiple students in internships with the same organization over many years, in return for a guarantee from the community organization that those internship places will be available.

As well as student internships other ways of deepening relationships between post-secondary institutions and community groups included engagement with post-secondary institutions as a major source of capital investment in many communities. Campus-community collaboration is most likely to occur when post-secondary institutions are viewed as being both “of” and “for” communities.

## SCALING UP

There was considerable discussion on issues of scale. For example, how can successful pilot projects be adopted on institution-wide, regional or national scales? Is scaling up the best approach or are there always unique circumstances which require unique solutions?

An example of a pilot project that has been successful and is being scaled up is the *Mulheres Mil* project (<https://www.rrc.ca/index.php?pid=6610>) through which Canadian colleges contributed to capacity building in Brazil’s north in order to provide 1000 disadvantaged women with the skills to access the



work force. There is now appetite to scale up to provide more women with access to the program. The success of this program has had unexpected benefits: the Brazilian President announced that 12,000 students in Brazil's *Science Without Borders* program will come to Canada (<http://www.aucc.ca/brazil/blog/>), the second highest number behind the United States.

However, concerns were raised about scaling up pilot programs without thorough evaluation, including by community partners. For example, it needs to be recognized that some projects in partnership with aboriginal communities have not worked well for the aboriginal partner organization.

Where scaling up is appropriate, it requires capacity. Increasingly, post-secondary institutions are developing resources to enable community-campus collaborations, for example by having a designated individual or unit. However, the same resources rarely exist in potential community partners, they don't have an individual responsible for campus partnerships, and may not be able to assign one given stretched resources. These types of challenges can make it difficult to scale from one successful project to a wider array of partnerships.

Key to scaling up partnerships can be third party intermediaries who can work with both post-secondary institutions and with community partners in order to make connections and facilitate partnerships. An example is Mitacs which has been facilitating partnerships between industry and universities through their *Accelerate* program (<http://www.mitacs.ca/accelerate>) which links students with industry partners. In 2011/12 almost 1300 research internships occurred at more than 580 companies. The Mitacs model is built to be scalable, it has procedures in place which would work for internships in not-for-profit organizations, but that is currently prohibited by the funding agreement with Industry Canada. There was strong agreement around the table that it would be of benefit to campus-community collaboration if Mitacs funded internships in not-for-profit organizations, and there was support for efforts to highlight the potential of Mitacs in this area.

There are also opportunities for post-secondary institutions to work together to further collaborations with the community. An example was given of Vancouver where six post-secondary education organizations work together in engaging the community. There may also be particular opportunities for community colleges and universities to work together to partner with community organizations. Colleges often have considerable links with the community and are in a good position to forge partnerships and universities have cutting-edge knowledge to bring to the table.

## MOTIVATIONS AND REWARDS

Successful campus-community collaborations are those in which all partners benefit. In order to engage in collaborations the potential rewards must outweigh the potential costs.

For faculty the opportunities of collaborations are great and include access to real world situations in which to conduct research, and the opportunity to learn from engaging with the community. However, reward systems (such as recognition by tenure and promotion committees) do not fully recognize collaboration with the community, and many participants felt that the weakness of reward structures was preventing faculty, particularly at the early stage of their careers, from pursuing collaborations.

There was agreement that the old way of thinking of community engagement as "service" must change, and researchers should get credit for engagement and learning from the community.



The costs to faculty are generally in the form of time. Time spent on forging community partnerships is time away from publishing or other more traditional academic activities. However, this assumption was challenged by the suggestion that engagement with the community and scholarly excellence go hand in hand and that there is some evidence that the top scholars are those who engage in the community. More evidence is needed to see the effect of engaging with communities on career success as an academic.

For students, opportunities to collaborate with the community often come in the form of internships or other work placements. These have rewards in the form of real-world work experience, building networks, and sometimes contributing to scholarly research projects. The costs to students are few and mainly related to time.

Essential to involvement of students and faculty in campus-community collaborations is the participation of administration at all levels – leadership matters. It was pointed out that everyone needs to be involved – it is not enough, for example, to have the university president supportive, if the dean or department head will act as a barrier. Participants felt that in order to have support of the administration, engagement must be locally relevant, but internationally significant.

The opportunities for community organizations from campus-community collaboration usually come in the form of knowledge transfer, and resourcing – a student intern can be a valuable resource and can gain skills to make them a valuable recruit as a graduate. However, there is a risk that a student can require a lot of supervision. This risk can be mitigated by forming long-term relationships, as previously described.

The most successful campus-community collaborations are likely to be those that deal with what most concerns communities and community organizations, such as poverty, finance and governance. The post-secondary sector can learn from the private sector which has a number of successful partnerships with community-based organizations.

## CONCLUSIONS

This roundtable discussion brought a diverse group of stakeholders together. Despite the different mandates of participants' organizations there was agreement on an aspirational goal of 150 nation-building projects in campus-community collaboration by Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2017. A shorter-term objective agreed to was to increase the number of student internships in not-for-profit organizations, with support for Mitacs as an organization with the infrastructure already in place to facilitate that on a national scale.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Biographies of Participants

Annex 2: Background notes provided to participants

