

**Towards a New Architecture of Knowledge: Creating the Office of
Community-Based Research at the University of Victoria**

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Towards a New Architecture of Knowledge: The Creation of an Office of Community-Based Research at the University of Victoria¹

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Community-based research (CBR) offers higher education a distinctive form of engaged scholarship and a transformative approach to teaching and learning.

--Kerry Strand et al (2003)

Introduction

This chapter tells the story of the creation of a new structure at the University of Victoria, the first such university-wide office of its kind in Canada. The Office of Community-Based Research is but one response by the academic community to the broader understandings of the role of knowledge in our societies.

There is a wind of change sweeping our research communities. There is a pervasive energy for something that is described variously as knowledge mobilization, knowledge exchange, knowledge translation, and knowledge transfer or knowledge application. What most of these concepts are responding to is the notion that significant social, political and economic investments have been made in the creation and/or accumulation of knowledge based in or with universities. In this context, knowledge is understood as a state of understanding, feeling or awareness based on experience or study. Knowledge is the state of knowing. Universities are often seen by society as institutional repositories of knowledge. Scholars, students and faculty are all understood to be creating knowledge through their research activities. The accepted understanding is that the process of research creates knowledge. Scholars or researchers are regarded as the facilitators of these processes and thereby the creators of this knowledge. This kind of knowledge is put into peer-reviewed journals, professional reports, books, CDs, DVDs, podcasts, blogs and other internet-based products.

The various newer verbs associated with the concept of knowledge all have in common an aspiration that the formal research processes facilitated by university-based scholars will produce ideas, concepts, frameworks or even solutions which can be used in the improvement of the lives of people. Knowledge mobilization speaks of an active process of moving knowledge into the hands of those who can use the knowledge. Knowledge translation and transfer recognizes that academic research, in order to engage with community knowledge, needs to be deliberately or intentionally worked with so as to facilitate its use by non-academic groups. Knowledge exchange recognizes that there could be an exchange of

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knowledge between those who create knowledge in both formal academic and other settings. All of these contemporary terms for knowledge have been expressed 30 or 40 years ago by others using terms such as feminist research, participatory research, action research, decolonizing research, indigenous research and so forth. What is exciting about the current times, is that funding agencies and universities alike are recognizing that research is not complete without acknowledging its application, use, capacity for change, social transformation or some other forms of engagement.

For the purposes of this chapter, the definition of knowledge transfer that we are using is that articulated by the University of Melbourne in their 2006 Knowledge Transfer Taskforce Report.

“...Knowledge transfer develops intellectual capital through a two-way mutually beneficial interaction between the university and non-academic sectors with direct links to teaching and learning and research, and informed by social and global issues.” (p. 1)

Civic Engagement and Community-Based Research at the University of Victoria

The University of Victoria, we have discovered over the past few years, is the home of a very large group of researchers who share a passion for a new scholarship of engagement. Community-based research is the name that we have used for research that is engaged with the improvement of practice in the fields of health, education, law or other professional fields. It refers as well to activist research designed to link community and university resources in social and political change in our communities. It is a means by which some of us recognize that new knowledge for transforming our communities is being created each day in the situated knowledge and experiences of those people, movements and organizations working directly with the poor, with Aboriginal communities and other sectors as well as on issues such as health, food security or sustainability. By recognizing this community production and realm of knowledge, there comes a challenge and invitation for the academy to examine how they can affirm and collaborate with community to create new knowledge and tangible community benefits.

Among the already existing initiatives with a focus on civic engagement at the University of Victoria are the Co-op educational programme, Service Learning initiatives, the entire Division of Continuing Studies, various practica/internships in school, legal, health and social work settings, Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group internships, Aboriginal programming, and the Knowledge Mobilization pilot project in collaboration with York University. Civic engagement is prominent in the work of most of our research centres. For example, our Centre for Health Promotion works exclusively in a community-based research mode. The Centre for Youth and Society has pioneered civic engagement in projects with adolescent youth and Aboriginal youth. The Centre for Aging similarly works with a range of community partners in their outreach. Furthermore, aspects of the work of The Centre for Addictions Research BC, Earth and Ocean Sciences, Engineers without Borders, the LE,NONET Project, the Community Relations Office (and others) demonstrate our engagement with community.

What is Community-Based Research?

The term “community-based research” that is in use at the University of Victoria encompasses a spectrum of research that actively engages community members or groups to various degrees, ranging from community participation to community initiation and control of research. From a *university perspective*, community-based research refers to a wide variety of practices and is supported by several academic traditions: Academic or scientific knowledge put at the service of community needs; Joint university and community partnerships in the identification of research problems and development of methods and applications; Research that is generated in community settings without formal academic links at all; Academic research under the full leadership and control of community or non-university groups; Joint research, which conceived as part of organizing, mobilizing or social advocacy or action.

For the purposes of the consultations undertaken prior to the creation of the Office of Community-Based research we used a modified version of a definition published by Kerry Strand and others in their 2003 article, “Principles of Best Practice for Community-Based Research”:

Community-based research (CBR) involves research done by community groups with or without the involvement of a university. In relation with the university CBR is a collaborative enterprise between academics and community members. CBR seeks to democratize knowledge creation by validating multiple sources of knowledge and promoting the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination. The goal of CBR is social action (broadly defined) for the purpose of achieving (directly or indirectly) social change and social justice. (P 5)

The CBR Tradition at the University of Victoria

A university-wide forum on community-based research in April of 2005 was the first formal step by the University of Victoria to explore the extent of community-based research as a model of academic practice at the University. The forum was in part stimulated by a Master’s project written in Public Administration by Janet Dunnett that documented many aspects of community-based research at UVic. The client for the report was the Community-University Connections (CUC) initiative of the POLIS Project on Ecological Governance led by Dr. Kelly Bannister. The supervisor of the MPA project was Dr. Rod Dobell, Principal Investigator in the SSHRC/CURA Layout Alliance for Research, Education and Training. The forum addressed the question of to what extent do University of Victoria scholars identify their work as falling within the broad understanding of community-based research

The CBR forum was a success as over 80 academics answered to the description of community-based research. The President of SSHRC at the time, Dr. Marc Renaud, in his closing remarks, threw out a challenge to the University of Victoria to take up a leadership position in this field as he felt that we were ideally suited to do so. There was strong support from the participants as well as from some 40-50 additional persons who could not attend the forum in person.

Canadian and International Initiatives in Community-Based Research

There are many other experiences which the University of Victoria has drawn on for inspiration including: Community-University Institute for Social Research (University of Saskatchewan); The Community Intervention Project (Universite de Quebec a Trois Rivieres); Trent Centre for Community-Based Education (Peterborough, Ontario); Centre for Urban Health Initiatives (University of Toronto); Community Building Resources (Edmonton, Alberta); Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Ottawa, Ontario); U-Links for Community-Based Research in Haliburton County (Haliburton, Ontario); Across Boundaries, School of Social Work, (York University)

On an international level there are a number of interesting initiatives to learn from: The International Science Shops (The Netherlands); Living Knowledge Network, (Bonn, Germany); Community-University Partnership Project (CUPP)(University of Brighton); Centre for Research, Education and Action (CREA), (University of Barcelona) New Directions, Community-Based Research Institute (New York); Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) (New Delhi); Centre for Popular Education and Participatory Research, University of California (Berkeley) Highlander Centre for Research and Education (Newmarket, Tennessee) University Community Partnerships, University of California (San Francisco) Community Campus Partnerships for Health (Seattle, Washington)

Mandate of the University of Victoria Task Force on Community-Based Research

In January, 2006, Dr. Martin Taylor, Vice-President, Research created the UVic Taskforce on Community-based research 2006 with a mandate for:

1. Exploring needs, interests and expectations with community partners;
2. Refining models and structures from elsewhere that might be applicable to UVic.
3. Making recommendations on the composition, structure and function of a CBR Steering Committee
4. Identifying prospective national and international networks and partners
5. Deepening our understanding of what is meant by community-based research
6. Identifying possible sources of funds to sustain the structure and its activities
7. Providing suggestions on how a CBR structure could interact with already existing research centres and projects, such as the Social Science Knowledge Mobilization pilot project that UVic has entered into with York University.
8. Identifying ideas and support for UVic hosting the next Community-University Expo (CUEXPO) in the Spring of 2008

Advisors to the Task Force

Dr. Lorna Williams, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Learning and Knowledge was been an advisor on Aboriginal community involvement. Peter Levesque of the University of Ottawa's Institute of Population Health and former Deputy Director in SSHRC has been an advisor on national and international networking and on external funding opportunities.

National and International Consultations

Planned and fortuitous discussions and informal conversations have been undertaken by all of the members of the Task Force as opportunities have arisen.

Discussions have taken place at the September Winnipeg CUExpo conference, through email exchanges at the national and international levels, at selected academic conferences including the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences at York University late May and early June 2006. Peter Levesque and Budd Hall have carried out the bulk of the national and international conversations.

Web-Based Survey

An email contact list of approximately 300 individuals was compiled based on the participant list for the 2005 CBR Forum plus an additional pool of contacts known to the CBR Task Force from the university, community, Aboriginal, local government and local business sectors. A web-based survey was developed using *Survey Monkey* (an inexpensive, widely used pay-for-use service) as a tool to systematically gather information on the needs, interests and expectations of potential “contributor” and “user” groups regarding the creation of a structure at UVic to support, facilitate and promote community-based research. The survey consisted of 10 items and took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Respondents were asked to provide basic information such as name, email, affiliation, and sector, reactions to proposed definitions of “community” and “community-based research”, shared experiences in community-university collaborations, reactions to proposed functions of a structure to support community-based research, and indications interest in being part of an interactive workshop on CBR or a follow-up meeting.

Workshops and Interviews

Approximately 50 members of the university, community, Aboriginal, local government and local business sectors participated in a half-day workshop on June 8th at UVic to discuss the survey questions in more depth within an interactive forum. A number of additional individuals or representatives of organizations who were unable to attend the CBR workshop requested an alternative opportunity to provide feedback on the CBR initiative and these were accommodated to the degree possible in the short time allotted for this phase of work. Individual interviews and small group meetings were held on campus, at participants’ homes or work locations and by telephone in May-June.

Aboriginal Community Consultations

Community-based research involving Aboriginal communities was given special consideration and contributions to furthering understanding on this type of work were sought through a number of ways including: (i) a small workshop on June 6th to bring together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal faculty, students and community members with expertise in Educational and health research involving Aboriginal communities. The workshop was organized under the guidance of Dr. Lorna Williams and with the in-kind assistance of Mary McQueen (Education); (ii) a breakout session on CBR involving Aboriginal communities that took place during the June 8th workshop; and (iii) individual and group interviews.

National Scholarly Consultations

On March 19th, 2006 Deans Hall and Keller organized a panel discussion entitled *Advancing Community Based Research in the Academy* at the “Western Deans of Arts and Sciences Conference”, Victoria, BC, March 17-19. Panelists were Lorna Williams, Maeve Lydon, Budd Hall and Peter Keller. On April 22nd, 2006 Deans Hall and Keller organized a special session entitled *Furthering Community Based Research* at the annual meeting of the Canadian Council for the Deans of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CCDAHSS), UBC, Vancouver. Speakers were the Dean of Social Sciences at UNBC, Prof. Jim Randall

as well as Budd Hall and Peter Keller.

Findings of the Task Force

Survey Results

The web-based survey proved a highly successful tool to gather feedback from the campus and non-campus communities on CBR. Of approximately 300 individuals who were sent an invitation to participate in the web-based Survey, 110 responded. The majority of respondents were affiliated with a college or university (73%) and many respondents indicated more than one affiliation. The remaining sectoral breakdown was: Non-profit organisation (30%), First Nations (6%), Funder (6%), Government (3%), Business (5%).

Interest in creating a voluntary CBR directory to facilitate communication and networking among university and community researchers and organizations was high, with over 80% indicating willingness to participate. Creation of this directory would be logically undertaken in collaboration with the Knowledge Mobilization Unit. Inclusive working understandings of “community” and “community-based research” proposed in the survey were widely agreed as sufficient by the vast majority of respondents (65-75%). A number of useful comments and considerations were also received, which will assist UVic in developing an integrated conceptual and theoretical foundation for strengthening and facilitating scholarly and applied CBR activities.

Ninety-four respondents shared their personal experiences with community-university research relationships, including a brief description of the project, what worked well and what did not. While the majority of respondents indicated an overall positive experience, some common challenges expressed were related to lack of acknowledgment in university reward criteria and by funders for the significant time, financial and energy investments in relationship building and in developing project outcomes that met community partner needs, lack of training for these necessary aspects of CBR, inflexibility in project financial management and in meeting timelines for deliverables, inadequate recognition of community contributions, loss of relationship and social capital investments in the “disengagement” phase (end of funding) phase leading to the need to start again in re-building research relationships.

Support for creating a structure to facilitate CBR (also linked with knowledge mobilization activities) was very strong, albeit with some concerns about potential to increase bureaucracy. The idea of a combination of centralized and decentralized functions, a goal to facilitate communication, funding opportunities and reporting requirements, and the combination of virtual/physical/personal presence were all enthusiastically received.

Experiences and concerns with existing UVic policies on human research ethics, intellectual property ownership and faculty merit criteria were shared by 62 respondents, clearly indicating that these policies will require careful review in light of any initiative undertaken to enhance CBR activities.

Workshop Results

Over 50 people from on and off-campus participated in a half-day workshop on CBR on June 8th. The goals of the workshop were to provide an interactive forum to discuss the survey questions and UVic’s broader initiative on CBR. The workshop was a huge success from the perspective of both the organizers and participants.

In addition to interactive cross-sectoral discussions on who is “community” and what is “community-based research”, the workshop included a discussion of priorities, assets, gaps and potentials within six thematic breakout sessions on the following

subtopics:

- Community-University Collaboration: Partnerships and best practices
- Linking Local to Global CBR: Networks and networking
- Knowledge Mobilization: Exploring services and opportunities at UVic
- Enabling and Disabling Spaces: CBR involving Aboriginal Communities
- CBR Rights and Responsibilities: Research ethics and intellectual property policies
- Supporting Students in Community-based Research and Learning

The predominant crosscutting theme that emerged from the breakout sessions was the need for creating an “enabling space” for respectful and fruitful research collaboration. Linked are needs for institutional acknowledge and support (and reward) for building and maintenance of the “relationship” component of research, training and resources for individuals in skills beyond research methodologies (such as cultural competency, increasing cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural communication, mediation, and protocols development).

Maintaining CBR legacies and lessons

Without institutional support, a legacy of contacts, on-going projects, and social capital developed through collaborative research (e.g., CURAs) continually disappears since there is nothing to carry it on once the external funding has ended. As one former CURA leader Dr. Rod Dobell notes, “To improve dissemination of results from university research, we need to be talking about forging an understanding of how to engage in research relationships, not just forging ahead with projects.” There is no academic culture to connect with community (academic community is worldwide, not local). In recruitment of faculty at UVic, we are starting to realize that we need to connect faculty with local community or we don’t retain them. The same can be said for research relationships underlying CBR. Martin Segger notes, “We need a culture beyond the institution to stay involved”.

CBR, knowledge transfer, mobilization and exchange

What are the payoffs to justify supporting a structure that facilitates CBR and knowledge mobilization? As Joan Wharf-Higgins points out when we promote health and well being, the payoffs are long term. There is a different ‘capture’ of benefits compared with the standard medical model. It is the same with community-based research. The benefits are long term – warm and fuzzy perhaps, but rightly so – the indicators are less about transaction costs, more about democratic production of knowledge, more about engaged and contributing citizens, increased benefits of research to civil society. It is the *ultimate* investment in the future of society – and we may not even see the benefits that we contribute to during our own professional lives.

Functions of combined CBR and knowledge mobilization office

As a source of “accumulated wisdom and experience” the institutional memory provided by such an office would be very helpful at the onset of a community-university partnership (e.g., initiating faculty unfamiliar with CBR and community realities) and, more important, following the end of the project, to ensure that the legacy of the work remains accessible. Such an office would be a repository for and facilitator of ‘rules of conduct’ around the community need to see topics originate in the community and to employ structures within the community.

Other potential functions could include:

- Maintenance of references/bibliographies as pooled resources.
- Inventories, scans, contact lists
- Making connections between projects
- Flipping outcomes to impress funders and make meaning for communities
- Contribute to making research visible, and stimulating research groups to pursue visibility (e.g., book of essays across related projects)
- Create synthesis across different projects that would build Vic's visibility in interdisciplinary research, health, etc. A continuing series. Not extra work but seeing to it that the same data or outcomes have multiple forms and audiences.
- Drawing lessons from portfolio activity as a whole instead of "silo by silo"
- This office could be "drawing lessons" instead of "losing lessons" to negate continually "reinventing the wheel" for new projects.
- Provision of continuity (and even bridge funding) when projects end but commitment to relationship with community doesn't
- Identify criteria for merit appraisal etc; one role for the office would be to support deliberation in the university on reform of criteria for reappointment, promotion, tenure
- Contribute to research guidelines revisions, research policies, etc.

Aboriginal Community Responses

Preliminary efforts were made to understand the special and additional considerations in CBR involving Aboriginal communities. The following four types of responses are from a variety of campus and community people with ties to both the university and Aboriginal communities. Points that were emphasized included: the importance of a balanced and enduring relationship between Aboriginal communities and the University; respect for and knowledge of protocols and Indigenous ways of knowing and learning; creating a facilitating structure that is holistic and encompasses all faculties of the University; undertaking research that benefits the community as well as the university; and the importance of developing an "enabling space" for building communication, understanding and trust between parties.

The contributions summarized below should be seen as a starting point – an "initial conversation" – to stimulate further discussion and processes that need to be put into place to adequately understand and address issues and opportunities in CBR involving Aboriginal communities.

The need was discussed for direct involvement of Aboriginal people as partners with expertise to contribute rather than subjects of research to be exploited. Key is the question of who benefits. Researchers need greater sensitivity and knowledge about Aboriginal communities before they can participate in meaningful, respectful and mutually beneficial ways. In particular, researchers need to develop cultural competency about Aboriginal worldviews and cultural protocols to minimize misunderstandings.

A number of historical injustices to Aboriginal people and the extractive role that research has played in the past need to be recognized in order to understand Aboriginal peoples' hesitation, fear or mistrust about being involved in research. Even the physical environment of the university can be intimidating and therefore a barrier to CBR with

Aboriginal communities. A neutralized, safe “ethical space” where people can come together to learn about how to work together is needed, particularly to learn ways of being and methods of respecting Aboriginal ways of knowing in an academic setting. The creation of this space is part of a much larger need to transform the ways and structures of universities.

Additional points included developing shared principles for engagement; understanding partnership between Aboriginal communities and the University on several levels (academic, spiritual and communal); the importance of knowing cultural protocols and information about working with a particular Aboriginal community in order to carry out research in a respectful manner (which requires enough time, funding and capacity to spend time in the community prior to starting research); understanding of Aboriginal worldviews and cultural values; acknowledgement and understanding of the destruction that past research has done leading to reluctance to participation, in order to see how research can be done respectfully in Aboriginal communities.

Participants said the university must cease to be a separate entity and become a part of the surrounding community. Universities are typically constructed as placeless institutions that build over others, and in order to have any kind of relationship with a community, they must acknowledge the place where they are and then their cultural identity will change in a way that allows them to connect to communities. Aboriginal knowledge must be respected and given equal weight in an academic setting. Ways of knowing by Aboriginal people have been disregarded in the academic world as superstitious, primitive and unfounded; if it is seen as inferior by the researcher, then there can be no meaningful exchange. It's important to respect and accept alternate methods of knowledge creation and types of information aside from what is typically considered “valid” or of value in a university setting.

Elder Marie Cooper of the Tsartlip First Nations, a member of several University of Victoria Aboriginal Advisory Committees shared her thoughts about the proposed new structure:

If you mention research to people here, they will run away. We have been researched to death. Students come in here without any awareness of protocol, without an awareness of spiritual or cultural values. Graduate students come and go but we don't even see the final product. We have no clue as to where they are going with this information. Working together means building mutual respect and trust. We are not there yet as we are still healing. We still have to heal from the effects of some research. This needs to be understood by the university (Marie Cooper, interview, 16 June 2006).

Implementation of the Report: Creation of the Office of Community-Based Research

The report was submitted to the Vice-President, Research on July 29, 2006. The Senior Administration took it up over the course of the summer months in 2006. By September a decision had been taken to move forward with the recommendation to create an “Office” of community-based research. The choice of the term office to describe the

structure signified that the OCBR would not be another research centre, nor would it be a programme (a term more associated with an academic set of activities). On November 1, 2006, President David Turpin held a community breakfast for 40 leaders of community groups in Victoria and announced the intention of creating an Office of Community-Based Research. He announced that it would be Co-Chaired by the Vice-President, Research Dr. Martin Taylor and by Maureen Duncan, CEO of the United Way of Greater Victoria. The response from the community groups was fulsome.

Between November, 2006 and January 2007, two advisory committees were created: A Steering Committee which is locally based composed of half senior academic leaders and half community leaders and an External Advisory Committee composed of national and international CBR leaders designed to help position the OCBR within national and international networks and opportunities. The founding Steering Committee members included: Martin Taylor, VP Research (Co-Chair) Maureen Duncan (Co-Chair), Ted Riecken, Dean of Education, Mary Ellen Purkis, Dean of Human and Social Development, Peter Keller, Dean of Social Sciences, Profs Lorna Williams, Bonnie Leadbeater, Elaine Gallagher, Rosemary Ommer, Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi, Nella Nelson, Chris Downing, Detlef Beck, Jody Patterson, Linda Geggie, and Lynn Stevenson (Vancouver Island Health Authority). The External Advisory Committee is composed of Rajesh Tandon of the Society for Participatory Research in India as Chair with Edward Jackson (Carleton University), John Gaventa (University of Sussex), Peter Levesque (Ottawa), Marjorie Mayo (Goldsmith's College, London), Jim Crowther (Edinburgh University), Randy Stoeker (University of Wisconsin) and Rupert Downing (Canadian CED Network) as members.

The Office opens

January 1, 2007 marked the official opening of the OCBR. Initial office spaces were provided by the Division of Continuing Studies. Budd L. Hall was appointed the University of Victoria administration as the founding Director. He had five years experience as a Dean of Education and a lengthy engagement in community-based research going back to the 1970s. He was given a three year mandate. The search for an Associate Director with a background in the Victoria community was filled by Maeve Lydon. Maeve had worked with a wide range of social justice organizations in Victoria, Canada and abroad and had in addition considerable experience in collaborative research partnerships with the University of Victoria. Joaquin Trapero, the UVic Knowledge Mobilisation Specialist was added to the team to bring community-based research and knowledge mobilization closer together. An administrative and programme developer with experience in community and Aboriginal administration was added to round out the initial team.

Using the principles of transformational learning and asset-based development the OCBR has therefore endeavored not to duplicate any existing initiatives and instead to connect and support new synergies and possibilities. Most of the staff and Steering Committee focus is being devoted to focus on UVIC and the local Capital Region relationships and synergies, especially in the first year of operations. National and international work is seen as helping build the CBR movement, scholarly recognition and support and community impact.

Mission

The Office of Community-Based Research at UVic (OCBR-UVic) is a community–university partnership which supports community engagement and research to create

vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities. It officially opened in January 2007 and is supported through the UVic Office of the Vice-President of Research. A Steering Committee and External Advisory Committee guide the OCBR.

What do we do?

The OCBR-UVic exists to facilitate collaborative community-university research and partnerships that enhance the quality of life and the economic, environmental and social well being of communities. OCBR-UVic will create and support:

*New opportunities for collaborative research initiatives and projects on issues that arise from and matter to our communities

* Multi-sectoral partnerships between civil society, non-profit community organizations, First Nations, funding agencies, government, business and the university

* Strong evidence-based recommendations for public policies, programs and practices to meet community needs

* Innovative national and global networks to support community-based research and community-university engagement

* Seminars, colloquia, talks, workshops and courses

Supporting CBR within the University

At the University and academic level, OCBR has undertaken a number of initiatives to address academic issues related to CBR. This includes institutional and academic support for CBR, addressing research ethics, and creating a strong network within and between universities in Canada and globally to support CBR scholarship and practice as cornerstones of knowledge mobilization and exchange. Examples of early initiatives are:

On-going conversations with Deans and Research Centre Directors

- Collaborative opportunities with the Teaching and Learning Centre, Cooperative Education Office, and the Division of Continuing Studies
- Establishing a Working Group/Discussion on implications for merit review, tenure and promotion
- Cooperation with the Office of Research Services on a review of University of Victoria policies on research ethics
- Planning a seminar series on Community-Based Research with Aboriginal Communities with those groups in the University working on these issues.
- Initial plans for skill-building CBR workshops and courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels with the Division of Continuing and Studies and respective Faculties
- Creation of an OCBR web site with links to other UVic CBR resources, activities and links

Building Collaborative Research Relationships with the Community

To fulfill the role as facilitator and broker, the OCBR is making the road by walking it. The OCBR is evolving the systems and procedures out of the requests for collaboration that have come its way. Among the early initiatives are:

- Plans for an on-line CBR Directory to connect people and projects.

- Plans for an UVic and Regional CBR Map to navigate and represent the assets and features of the institution and the community.
- A conversation series for researchers and others working in Victoria and Saanich area community settings on community-initiated CBR activities
- Support of the student led Common Energy Climate Change Project which aims to transform UVic into a carbon neutral university (the Business School has already committed to a 5 year timeline make it happen!);
- Cooperation with the Department of Environmental Studies on building CBR into an approach to Field Studies;
- Providing facilitation support for the regional activities associated with the Kairos national inter-church advocacy group on anti-poverty/social inclusion issues with a focus on involving people most affected by poverty;
- Conversations with the United Way and other local government and agencies on how best to provide UVic research and partnership/multi-sector solutions for the pressing issues of inadequate housing and increased homelessness in Victoria.
- Coordinating research relationships between the City of Victoria, neighborhood groups and the university to assist with planning and neighborhood design and development projects
- Developing new workshops and programs with the Division of Continuing Studies in areas such as food security, green business, climate change and other topical or skill-building areas that the community identifies.

National and International Networking

- The OCBR is the secretariat for CUexpo2008, the national Community-University Exposition first held in 2003 in Saskatoon and scheduled to be held in Victoria May 4-7, 2008. CUexpo2008 will be hosted by a group of community organizations and University Faculties and Offices as well as several national and international networks.
- The OCBR created a national CBR working group to explore the best way to move forward on a Canadian network. An initial meeting was held in Toronto in April of 2007 with about 60 persons from six different Provinces and many national networks to begin explorations. Meetings in Ottawa and Montreal took place in June of 2007 to further explore possibilities. A key question is whether to move forward with a network with supports community-based research on its own or a network which supports community-engagement (CBR, Community service learning and continuing studies) as a whole.
- Two preliminary conversations on the best ways to support CBR from an international perspective were held. One in The Netherlands in September 2006 and the second one in India in February 2007.
- A web-based survey on CBR “networks” was initiated by the OCBR with plans to share the results at meetings in Barcelona in July, 2007 and Paris in early September, 2007
- The OCBR has been collaborating closely with the Campus-Community Partnerships for Health Network based in the United States, the University of Wisconsin Participatory Action Research project and the Living Knowledge Network of Science Shops, Participatory Research in Asia on the best ways to use global networks to support local work.

- Initiatives to support strengthening CBR networks in both Senegal (Lamine Kane) and Uganda (Paulo Wangoola) are underway as well
- The OCBR was a major collaborator in the International Living Knowledge Network Conference in Paris in September of 2007 where a further consultation on global networking was held.

Knowledge mobilization/transfer and the Office of Community-Based Research

In February 2006, the University of Victoria established a Knowledge Mobilization Unit under the Office of Research Services as a strategic and systematic approach to connect university research in Social Sciences and Humanities with decision-makers and community organizations across Canada. Knowledge Mobilization (KM) was defined as the active two-way exchange of information and knowledge between researchers (knowledge creators) and their diverse research audiences (knowledge users) resulting in the increased impact of social science and humanities research on decision-making: public policy, social programs, best practices.

Therefore, the mission of the KM Unit was both to:

create opportunity for researchers in the social sciences and humanities to have a greater impact on public policy, professional practice and social programming, and

Be a vehicle for decision-makers to become actively engaged in every step of the research cycle, ensuring research is better able to impact policy, programming and practice. This function has been merged with the Office of Community-Based Research and personnel and issues related to knowledge mobilization and transfer are taken up by a “knowledge transfer specialist” who works as a knowledge broker between the knowledge resources of both the University and the community.

The OCBR want to build a new community of innovation and hope between the community and university to address the pressing issues of our day and creating vibrant alternatives. It is a living experiment reliant primarily on positive community-university relationships and dialogue. There are no magic formulas; OCBR is relying on the powers of curiosity, scholarship, compassion and innovation. OCBR is in effect a marriage broker between the community and university and a catalyst for CBR innovation. Our aim is nothing less than transforming our university through contributing to transforming our community.

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