



**UBC Community Engagement - Community Conversations  
Community Engagement and Private Sector Partners  
Thursday, September 15, 2011**

**OVERVIEW**

A Community Conversation is a public forum to address discrete elements of Community Engagement.

Where possible, Community Conversations will focus on applying the four over-arching, "What do you think" questions outlined in the Discussion Paper to a specific topic or area of study. Additional, topic-specific questions and issues will also be discussed.

Feedback from each of the six sessions will be considered in the creation of the Community Engagement Strategic Plan. Feedback from each session will be available at [www.communityengagement.ubc.ca](http://www.communityengagement.ubc.ca).

**"WHAT DO YOU THINK" QUESTIONS**

***How do we tell our stories of community engagement at UBC and why they are important?***

- Units, departments and faculties are good at telling stories of Community Engagement to their stakeholders and those within their specific "silos" but unless the stories belong to an identified priority, it is hard to have them broadly communicated across campus.
- Many groups feel there is a lot of community engagement happening, but no one knows about it.

***How do we recognize community engagement by faculty, staff, students and community partners?***

- In some disciplines, partners are recognized with a library card, but those cards are difficult to get. The process has to be repeated annually. This could be simplified.
- Certificates
- Letters of recognition/thanks
- Through informal methods of feedback, staff and faculty often hear that the University doesn't do enough for our partners. There is an opportunity to better recognize them in our published materials, or host an annual "thank you" dinner or reception.
- Many partners have asked for a sign for their front counter to indicate that they work with UBC and/or have UBC students training with them.

***How can the University support community partners participating in shared community engagement initiatives?***

- Simplify the process for obtaining a library card (where offered) and expand the offer of library cards to other partners, especially those in institutions in remote parts of the province.
- Provide guidelines for sectors that are not regulated by external bodies. UBC currently does a good job of enforcing regulations - where they exist.
- Many CSL programs are managed through individual relationships between faculty and staff and the community partner. A succession plan needs to be developed so those



connections are not lost when the faculty members retire or move on to other projects/institutions.

#### ***How do we measure community engagement?***

- Many groups have data (number of participants, etc) on their own projects, but there is currently no way to share this information with others.
- There is a feeling that many groups are collecting the same data for different purposes, duplicating effort and resources.
- It would be useful to have a central inventory and records about projects, what is being done, who is doing it, where it is happening, how it is being evaluated, etc.
- There should be ONE, accessible inventory for all campus users. The inventory should be robust and users should be able to extract and/or search by the required data (i.e a list of organizations where students are currently on placement, or number of students currently participating in a certain type of project)

#### **TOPIC-SPECIFIC FEEDBACK AND CONVERSATIONS**

##### ***What makes you nervous about working with private-sector partners?***

- Private sector partners often want to control the agenda. For example, they want to have a speaking role at conferences or control the environment in which their products are used. We, as agents of the university, don't want to be promoting corporate agendas. It is difficult to strike a balance between promoting a product and working with a company for research purposes.
- It is very different to work with partners on issues of being good corporate citizens than it is to work with partners on potentially controversial issues like drug trials.

##### ***Why would industry partners want to partner with the University?***

- Certain industries need to partner with the University in order to access research tools.
- Some industries, especially those associated with professional schools, work with the University out of a sense of responsibility to their profession and help train students (think clinical placements or articling opportunities for law students)
- Some groups work with the University to raise their own profile and strengthen their own reputation.

##### ***What expectations do industry partners have of the University and vice versa?***

- In many cases, faculties work with partners that are bound by rules determined by external review boards or regulatory bodies. Where faculties engage in these partnerships, it is expected that both parties will follow the set guidelines. Often, these rules are put in place for reasons related to safety and/or ethics.
- In many cases, researchers are required to make the results of their research public, regardless of the outcome.
- What would happen to the University's reputation if we partnered with a group/industry that is not subject to rigorous standards and a crisis occurred? (i.e. BP oil spill).

#### **OTHER ISSUES**

- In the cases of professional schools, it is absolutely necessary to partner with the private sector, whether it's to access materials or to secure industry/clinical placements for students.



- Many faculties and departments across campus are in the early stages of creating Community Service Learning (CSL) or Community-Based Scholarship (CBR) courses. They would find it helpful to have a guidelines or a set of best practices from groups with established CSL and CBR courses