



**UBC Community Engagement  
Community Conversations - Working with non-profit and volunteer sector partners  
Tuesday, October 4, 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).

**TOPIC-SPECIFIC FEEDBACK AND CONVERSATIONS**

- Groups have limited resources to put into community engagement - time, staff, money. There is often a desire to engage, but it can be hard to share resources
- We need to look at the whole picture when engaging with the community. There may be a call for an easy, quick solution but reality, it takes a lot of time to prepare, particularly if job training is needed. What can UBC provide to facilitate the resources required by the partner to start the project?
- Community Service Learning can be difficult to follow-up on, especially if it is not done locally. If there is no continuity in university participation, the programs will eventually end. Because UBC works with the academic year and partners often do not, there can be a gap between May and September
- The Reading Week program is another opportunity for staff, but it is a huge time commitment: 6 or 7 days away from work during reading week and 2-3 days in preparation for orientations and trading. It is suggested that this time should be time off from work, not vacation time
- A process for transitioning personal relationships needs to be developed as UBC Faculty members move on to other projects or retire and community partner contact move on to other positions or organizations or retire. Many of the partnerships are based on relationships developed between individuals. There needs to be encouragement for the relationship to be owned by many, not one.



- When making new offsite contacts we should ask organization if they have an existing relationship with the University. Many organizations are working with more than one unit/faculty/department and their UBC partners don't know about each other
- Need an accessible, searchable database of community engagement activity so that groups on campus can coordinate with one another
- Issues relating to trust arise from the issues of continuity
- There is no consistency of recognition and often when recognizing partners, their expectations are not taken into consideration. Recognition needs to be institutionally embedded, although not necessarily the same across the University. Sometimes all that is needed is a letter or certification of recognition, other partners invest much time and resources and should be recognized accordingly
- Suggested ways of recognizing partners: certificates, use of meeting rooms, professional development, letters of support for grants, access to the library, opportunities to network with others in the university and the community, expense reimbursement (travel, parking)
- There are budgetary issues with recognition - it is often hard to find the money
- Faculty members should participate in the CBR/CSL projects, even for one day, to understand what the student and the partner experience
- UBC needs to recognize and accommodate agency exhaustion. A partner may need to take a year off from a CBR/CSL project
- Professors don't know where to go for help with CSL - they have ideas for courses but they don't know how to implement them or what a CSL course entails
- Facilitating continuity may be easier if there is a mechanism to celebrate the hand off and recognition for the relationship building that has already been done