

# Community Research Unit Faculty of Arts University of Regina



Faculty of Arts interns Janaia Lang (L) and Grace Bella (R) with CRU Community Director Dr. Lynn Gidluck at International Womens' Day event. (Photo courtesy Tracy Knutson, STOPS to Violence).

## Annual Report 2019-2020



## Name change and renewed funding commitment

On July 1, 2020 the CRU will be known as the Community Engagement and Research Centre (CERC), a change that, according to outgoing Academic Director Dr. Michelle Stewart, more accurately reflects the unit's mandate and programming.

"This name change better reflects the wide range of programs and services offered by the CERC," she explains. "The CERC looks to build connections in a variety of ways – facilitating community-initiated research projects, for instance, as well as enhancing student engagement with community-based research through learning opportunities like the Arts Work Experience Internship Program."

Though the CRU was formally established as a faculty-based research centre in 2010, its origins date back to 2003, when the idea was first proposed to develop a unit within the Faculty of Arts that would serve as a bridge to connect the research needs of community organizations with the research interests and capacities of faculty members and students.

The last ten years have seen the CRU spearhead an impressive range of university/community partnerships, including: 48 collaborative research projects; relationships with 84 community partners, 66 University of Regina faculty/staff members, and 37 student researchers; and overseeing a total of \$92,977.81 in research grants. A recent operational review of the unit concluded with unanimous praise for the work of the CRU, emphasizing the tangible positive outcomes these partnerships have had on local organizations.

Dr. Richard Kleer, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, has seen the CRU flourish over the past several years and sees the renewal of its mandate and funding as an acknowledgement of the value of university/community collaboration.

"Over the last few years I have seen the Community Research Unit taken to new and better places," he says. "In particular, Community Director Dr. Lynn Gidluck and Academic Director Dr. Michelle Stewart, while operating on a shoe-string budget, have turned the soon to be re-named Community Engagement and Research Centre into an organization with a very promising future, well-positioned to continue growing in mandate, resourcing and profile."

Stewart, who is also a professor in the Department of Gender, Religion, and Critical Studies, has served as Academic Director/chair of the CRU board of directors since 2013. In July, Dr. Amber Fletcher, professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Studies, steps into this role, joining Community Director Dr. Lynn Gidluck and a seven-member board of directors.

Gidluck can't wait to see what the next ten years have in store for CERC. "Every day I am inspired by people whose common goal is to work together to improve the communities they live in and associate with," she says. "I sincerely thank the Faculty of Arts for taking a leadership role at the University of Regina in funding, promoting and facilitating community-campus engagement to lead to a more equitable and just society."

# Words of support

*"It should go without saying that community research and engagement projects are a valuable way to connect the campus to the wider Regina community - they provide students and faculty members with real world experience addressing important campus and community needs while also building relationships with community partners. As a publicly funded institution, the University of Regina has a responsibility to play in supporting our community, and the CRU is one important way to be working towards that."*

- Krystal Lewis, Executive Director, Regina Public Interest Research Group (RPIRG)

*"The Community Research Unit is invaluable to the work and practice based research, evaluation and capacity building/knowledge exchange within the community. Without the CRU there would be very little connection between Food Regina (and its partner organizations) and the University of Regina."*

- Tracy Sanden, Chair, Food Regina

*"Overall, I find the CRU's orientation, methods, principles, and modes of engagement impressive. I must note from the outset that the unit's activities and impacts are particularly striking in light of the unit's very small staff complement."*

-Dr. Elizabeth Jackson, Director, Community Engaged Scholarship Institute, University of Guelph (external peer reviewer).

*"The University of Regina has an extraordinary resource in the CRU/CERC."*

-Jim Blake, Co-chair, U-Links, Centre for Community-Based Research, CED Consultant, Haliburton County Development Corporation (external peer reviewer).

*"By the means of the CRU I have been in contact with business, philanthropy and local organizations, as well as researchers at the University of Regina and other universities in Canada. Thanks to the CRU work, I am currently working on projects looking at how local organizations contribute to reducing social inequalities in Regina and in Western Canada."*

- Dr. Oscar Zapata, Department of Economics

*"The Toolkit Workshops are a highly valued resource in the Regina community that fills a gap by facilitating affordable, accessible development opportunities for the community based sector."*

- Tracy Knutson, Executive Director, STOPS to Violence

# Words of Support

*“The CRU plays a vital role in Regina’s non-profit landscape. The organization provides a friendly, reliable link between non-profit and academic communities. The funding, in-kind support, and professional development opportunities it provides are invaluable to organizations like Heritage Community Association and people like me who work in this world.”*

- Shayna Stock, Executive Director, Heritage Community Association

*“Regina Fire & Protective Services, and the residents of the City of Regina are in debt to the work of the University of Regina’s Community Research Unit. The coordination, advocacy and leadership provided by the CRU is responsible for advances in effective Public Education programming.”*

- Layne Jackson, Fire Chief

*“We were fortunate in the Fall 2019 semester to have an Arts intern placed with us. This allowed us to provide an opportunity for a 2SLGBTQ+ student, a demographic that often experiences barriers in developing their research skills. Thanks to the work of staff at the CRU, and because of the way the program is structured and the efforts that are taken to ensure students are placed with the right organizations, the program is highly beneficial for community agencies like ours.”*

-Jacq Brasseur, Executive Director, UR Pride

*Over the past five years, the CRU within the Faculty of Arts at the University of Regina seems to have had success in creating an academic culture conducive to community engagement, experiential learning and, particularly, community-based research. This is an accomplishment that deserves celebrating, and I am personally delighted to see that it is a Faculty of Arts that is showing leadership on what many of us regard as core elements of a contemporary university education.*

-Dr. David Peacock, Director, Community Service Learning, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta (external peer reviewer)

*“Supported research is very important to community based organizations like ours and is not something that is part of our day to day operations. Our daily work primarily focuses on program and service delivery for vulnerable Indigenous people in the community. Because of the community partnership that was identified, encouraged and supported by the CRU we have now engaged in the research with new partners to complete this very important research that will help broaden the understanding of homelessness in its many forms.”*

- Ann Perry, Executive Director, Circle Project

# Incorporating experiential learning and community service into the classroom

One of the goals in the University of Regina's 2020-25 strategic plan is to increase experiential learning. If you are a faculty member or instructor who wants to enhance student success through partnerships with the community and integrating service learning into your classroom, look no further. The Community Engagement and Research Centre (formerly known as the Community Research Unit), is the place to turn to. You do not have to be from the Faculty of Arts to access the services of the CERC.

"We get calls all the time from community organizations asking us if we can assist them with their research or programming needs. Often their needs lend themselves very well to projects students could complete as assignments, either individually or in teams," said Community Director Dr. Lynn Gidluck.

Gidluck said if professors are open to the idea they should reach out to her. "I would be happy to introduce you to the right community partners and to brainstorm potential class assignments with you."

Gidluck pointed to two recent examples where she connected community partners with U of R instructors. During the winter semester Dr. Amber Fletcher's Social Studies 307 (Qualitative Methods) students participated in a project in partnership with SOFIA House, a second-stage women's shelter in Regina. Students conducted a literature review and telephone interviews with staff from women's shelters across the country.

"The purpose of the project was to identify best practices and current challenges in data collection at women's shelters," said Fletcher. "The results will inform the data collection efforts at SOFIA House to help the shelter evaluate its programs and demonstrate success."

Engineering students fortunate to enroll in Dr. Tim Maciag's Winter 2020 ENSE 471-User Interface Programming-People-Centered Design class also had a chance to do a class assignment that addresses a "real world" problem. Candace Giblett, a public education officer with Regina Fire & Protective Services reached out to Gidluck to see if she knew anyone at the university that could help design a new 9-1-1- teaching tool to help firefighters show elementary school children what to do if they have a fire in their homes.

Maciag said that his students really rose to the challenge. "Many of their designs are beyond what we originally hoped or expected."

Giblett agreed, "We are so grateful to Dr. Maciag and his students for taking this assignment so seriously. They can feel good that their work solves a real problem for their community. Their work will literally save lives. How many students can say that?"

# Arts Internship Program

During the 2019-20 academic year, fifteen students participated in the revived Arts Work Experience Internship Program. Students were matched with organizations that fit their career aspirations. A diverse range of community organizations that included Briarpatch Magazine, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan and the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, benefited from having energetic Arts students work for eight hours per week during a 13-week semester. Students earned three credit hours towards their degree but more importantly gained practical experience and references to include on their resumes. Some even got jobs

because of the experience! Many of the students referred to the placements as “life changing”.

English student Kayla Webber did a placement with the Saskatchewan Writers Guild. When asked about her experience she had this to say:

“This program has given me an opportunity that I never could have dreamed of, honestly. If you had told me a year ago that I would be sitting in a desk chair at the Saskatchewan Writers Guild, I would have told you that you are crazy. Thanks to the AWEI program, I gained valuable real-world experience which I would not have gained otherwise.”



History student Matt Thompson thought he might be interested in a career as an archivist. Now thanks to the arts internship program, he KNOWS this is the career for him. During the fall 2019 and winter 2020 semesters Matt worked with the University of Regina Archives. He said this was his “dream job experience” and that the internship gave him confidence and direction in choosing a career path. University Archivist Mark Vajcner is helping Matt prepare an application for the University of Manitoba’s Archival Studies MA program.



# Projects Funded in 2019-20

## The Value of Arts and Culture for Community Cohesion

*Purpose:* The purpose of the project is to document the value of the arts and artists in Saskatchewan communities from the perspective of all residents—not just artists themselves. Building on insights from a quantitative survey, the researchers will complete a series of in-depth, community-based case studies on how arts/artists are viewed within their communities, the roles of the arts/artists, the contributions they make, and both the barriers and opportunities they experience. The data will fulfill the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance's (SAA) overarching goal of connecting, supporting, and advocating for the arts across Saskatchewan. They hope that the research process itself will contribute to increased connection within and between communities and artists.

*Expected Outcomes:* The researchers hope to see increased awareness of the social, cultural, economic, and educational value of the arts in Saskatchewan and beyond; increased interconnection between artists, arts groups and organizations, and their communities; increased inclusion of rural, Northern, Indigenous, newcomer, and LGBTQ2+ people in the broader Saskatchewan arts community, along with increased recognition of their contributions; increased ability for the SAA to support and include these communities in its work, and reliable data to inform inclusive arts advocacy and cultural policy.

*Partners:* Marnie Gladwell and Dr. Barbara Meneley from the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance and Dr. Amber Fletcher, Sociology and Social Studies.

## “Macipiciw: Restoration of Indigenous Men's Roles and Responsibilities”

*Purpose:* CRU funding is helping All Nations Hope with Phase 2 of a study conducted in 2019. That study explored the traditional activity of moving around on traditional lands to harvest foods, a global Indigenous cultural practice that teaches many things like patience, preparedness, physical fitness, providing for others, survival, conservation, and so on. A group of Indigenous men were brought together to hunt a moose. The research questions they explored were: 1) How do the men experience engaging with the land and one another?; 2) How can land-based cultural practices, like hunting, influence physical fitness?; 3) How does their relationship to themselves and/or spirit change; what will they do differently to encourage wellness in their lives after their experience?

CRU funding allows the men to come together to reflect on and explore their relationships to their health and wellbeing, and integrate Nehiyaw (Cree) teachings of boys' and men's roles and responsibilities. They want to develop tools to mobilize this knowledge in a creative way to share with members of their communities.

*Expected Outcome:* The team hopes to create a story from the transcripts that were gathered from the group sharing circle and the one-on-one interviews. The transcripts will then be placed into a Traditional Indigenous narrative as a story that captures the research activities. The men participating and the research team of All Nations Hope Network (ANHN) will then make any edits to the story as the final product of the research.

*Partners:* Kelley Bird-Naytowhow, All Nations Hope and Dr. Jim Daschuk, Kinesiology and Health Studies.



## **Accessing Healthy Food in Regina 2020**

*Purpose:* This project will update the Accessing Healthy Food in Regina Report that was well-received by the community when it was released in 2012. The food climate in Regina has changed dramatically since this report was written. Researchers also have a greater ability to overlay maps, making the data richer. In addition to updating this report, researchers will expand maps to overlay with food bank usage by neighbourhood and potentially transportation routes to identify locations of high need that are not being serviced, identifying the challenges of people living in these areas to access food.

*Expected Outcome:* In the past, this report gained a lot of positive attention. The City of Regina used its information to create their asset maps in their community profiles. It was also a good tool to sparking conversations around food accessibility. A visual tool will be helpful to advocate for improved food resources within neighbourhoods of high food bank usage that currently have no food access. The project partners hope to raise awareness that poverty and food insecurity occur in most neighbourhoods in Regina. The research will provide good local data for their planning needs.

*Partners:* REACH Regina members, Laura Murray, Regina Food Bank and Tracy Sanden, Saskatchewan Health Authority and Dr. Julia Siemer, Geography and Environmental Studies.

## **Play at Home: Exploring Play Possibilities During the COVID-19 Crisis**

*Purpose:* The Regina Early Learning Centre (ELC) is one of many organizations in Regina that had to abruptly change the way they delivered their services because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ELC is a child and family development centre which works primarily with low income families to foster the healthy development of children from prenatal to five years of age.

*Expected Outcomes:* Thanks to this funding and a partnership with Project Play YQR, the ELC has been able to explore creative ways to use social media and “crowd sourcing” from the community to continue to support families while they are more isolated in their home environments.

*Partners:* Monica Totton, Regina Early Learning Centre Inc., Whitney Blaisdell, Project Play YQR and Dr. Marc Spooner, Faculty of Education.

## **Renewable Regina: How Diverse Communities Benefit?**

*Purpose:* The purpose of this grant is to help mobilize the findings of a research project that explored with various Regina-based non-profits and labour groups how Regina City Council’s Renewable Regina motion may affect them and how City investments could benefit their organizations and the people they support. The report demonstrates the need to use an equity lens when considering municipal climate policies like the Renewable Regina motion. Through the focus groups for this research project the researchers identified numerous common themes and policy ideas that could ensure that the most vulnerable groups in our city can benefit from the Renewable Regina motion.

*Expected Outcomes:* This grant will allow the researchers to develop advocacy material that participating organizations

*Partners:* Dr. Simon Enoch, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (Saskatchewan Office), Shanon Zachidniak, the Enviro Collective and Dr. Emily Eaton, Geography and Environmental Studies.



## Rest Assured: Changes to the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program and the impact on beneficiaries

*Purpose:* With this grant the Disability Income Support Coalition will communicate the findings of a research project on the impact of the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program.

*Expected Outcomes:* DISC is hoping that their efforts to mount an advocacy campaign will have the effect of convincing the provincial government to implement positive changes in policy that will impact the lives of people with disabilities in our province.

*Partners:* Alaina Harrison, Inclusion Saskatchewan, Rebecca Rackow and Dave Nelson, Canadian Mental Health Association and Dr. Randy Johner.

### Special thanks to Dr. Michelle Stewart

Few researchers match Dr. Michelle Stewart's passion when it comes to community-based research. Michelle served as Academic Director/Chair of Board of the CRU from July 2013 to July 2020. Faculty members that serve in this role do not receive course releases for the work they do with the CRU. They perform this work as community service. The Dean's office, staff and board of the CRU sincerely thank Michelle for her service over the years.

Michelle is pictured here with some of the members of the community team that is working with her to develop person-centred and proactive supports to help achieve better justice outcomes for Indigenous individuals in the justice system with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The work that Michelle and her team are doing is directly improving the lives of people with this misunderstood cognitive disability.



## Community-directed professional development workshops

Hundreds of people working for small to medium sized nonprofit organizations in Regina and surrounding communities have come to rely on our Toolkit Workshops to learn new skills. Since January 2019 these free half-day workshops have taken place off-campus to make it easier for community to attend. We would like to thank the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation for their generous sponsorship, which helps us to pay community facilitators a modest honorarium.

Thanks to partnerships with the Regina Public Library (Albert Branch) and the Regina United Way we are now able to hold these workshops at the m̄amaw̄yatit̄an centre or the United Way office. Both of these partners assist with promotion and marketing of the sessions, help with audio visual needs and room set up, and offer free parking and refreshments to attendees.

Many thanks to Community Advisory Committee members Alaina Harrison (Inclusion Saskatchewan), Christina Attard (Nonprofit management consultant and fundraising professional), Dana Folkersen (REACH), Karen Jaster-Laforge (JSGS), Tracy Knutson (STOPS to Violence), Karen Henders (South Saskatchewan Community Foundation), Laura Murray (Regina Food Bank) and Rochelle Berenyi (Carmichael Outreach). Their insight into community needs and “leads” on great facilitators ensures that the sessions we offer are relevant to people working in the nonprofit sector. During the 2019-20 academic year, we hosted six workshops. Two of our sessions had to be canceled due to Covid-19 physical distancing restrictions.



*Shari Hildred, PMP, Principal with Valmore Consulting, facilitated a sessions on the Fundamentals of project management.*



*Robin Mowat (l) and Meghan Seidle (r), who work for the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, hosted a session on the Duty to Accommodate, with tips and strategies to build inclusive workplaces.*



*Wayne Helquist, owner of Future Quest Consulting, led a session on ways to make meetings more effective and productive.*

Realize. **Learning** your way.

Be a strong community leader.

# Toolkit Workshop Series

## Toolkit Workshops offered in 2019-20

<b>The Research is Done. Now What?</b>	Michelle Stewart	Sept. 23, 2019	This session focused on the critical role of dissemination and outreach as it relates to research findings.
<b>Human Rights and the Duty to Accommodate: Tips and Strategies to Build an Inclusive Workplace</b>	Meghan Seidle and Robin Mowat	Nov. 4, 2019	Experts from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission provided an overview of human rights, explored the issue of “reasonable accommodation”, and discussed ways to create an inclusive work environment.
<b>Conducting Effective Meetings</b>	Wayne Hellquist	Nov. 19, 2019	This session focused on how to make meetings more effective and productive and provided suggestions on how to more actively engage participants in the discussions and outcomes leading to greater success and feeling of ownership.
<b>How to Survive (and thrive) in your Nonprofit Job</b>	Tracy Knutson	Dec. 16, 2019	Stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue are all too common with very real negative health implications. This workshop helped community leaders learn how to activate a culture of well-being in the non-profit workplace.
<b>Project Management Fundamentals</b>	Shari Hildred	Feb. 26, 2020	This workshop focused on the fundamental “building blocks” of project management and how they help projects and strategic initiatives stay on track.
<b>Weekly Webinar series “Coping during troubling times.”</b>	Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Shari Hildred	April 29-May 21, 2020	This four week series replaced in-person workshops that were planned in March and April but had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Short webinar presentations were followed by virtual coffee sessions” that offered informal and safe, collaborative spaces for people to connect and exchange ideas with others who were experiencing similar challenges.

## Community Based Research & Knowledge Mobilization Grants

Year	Project Title	Main Community Partner(s)	Amount Awarded	Project Dates
2019-20	Accessing Healthy Food in Regina	Food Regina	\$4,000.00	Jan. 14, 2020-present
	“Macipiciw: Restoration of Indigenous men's roles and responsibilities”	All Nations Hope	\$4,220.00	Jan. 17, 2020 - present
	The Value of Arts and Culture for Community Cohesion	Saskatchewan Arts Alliance	\$5,000.00	Jan. 29, 2020 - present
	Play at Home: Exploring Play Possibilities During the COVID-19 Crisis	Project Play YQR and Regina Early Learning Centre	\$5,000.00	May 1, 2020-present
	Development of Modern Technology and Programming for Interactive Firesafety Lessons with Elementary School Children	Regina Fire & Protective Services	\$2,966.73	May 1, 2020 - present
	Renewable Regina: How Can Diverse Communities Benefit?	Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative	\$800.00	Spring/summer 2020
	Report outlining findings from research on the impact of the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability Project (SAID).	Disability Income Support Coalition	\$2,000.00	Spring/summer 2020
2018-19	Uncovering Hidden Homelessness in Regina	Circle Project	\$3,500	April 1, 2019-present
	Evaluating Mental Health Realities for 2SLGBTQIAP+ People in Regina	UR Pride	\$3,500	April 1, 2019-present
	Strengthening Family Reunification	YWCA Regina	\$3,500	April 8, 2019-present

The staff and board of the CRU would like to sincerely thank the Dean of Arts for increasing our budget for community grants in 2019 from \$12,000 to \$24,000. Deadlines for grant applications are November 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>. We provide support for non-profit research or action projects that benefit a community of people or the common good. If you have a research idea (it doesn't have to be fully worked out), schedule a meeting with Lynn Gidluck ([lynn.gidluck@uregina.ca](mailto:lynn.gidluck@uregina.ca) or text her at (306) 533-5634.

# About Us

The Community Research Unit is guided by a Board of Directors with eleven members: four community members, three faculty members and one graduate student from the Faculty of Arts, the CRU Academic Director, and two ex-officio members: the Associate Dean of Arts (Research & Graduate Studies) and the CRU Community Director.

## Board of Directors 2019–2020

<b>Lynn Gidluck</b>	Community Director, CRU
<b>Michelle Stewart*</b>	Academic Director, CRU
<b>Katherine Arbuthnott</b>	Faculty member, Department of Psychology, Campion College, U of R
<b>Lisa Brownstone</b>	Community representative, Canada FASD Research Network
<b>Emily Eaton</b>	Faculty member, Department of Geography, U of R
<b>Alaina Harrison</b>	Community representative, Inclusion Saskatchewan
<b>Troni Grande</b>	Interim Associate Dean of Arts (Research and Graduate Studies), U of R
<b>Margaret Kisikaw Piyesis</b>	Community representative, All Nations Hope Network
<b>Jamie Wallace*</b>	Graduate student, Department of Psychology, Campion College, U of R
<b>Allyson Stevenson*</b>	Faculty member, Department of Politics and International Studies, U of R
<b>Dale West*</b>	Community representative, Regina Open Door Society

\*We would like to sincerely thank outgoing members of the board: Troni Grande, Allyson Stevenson, Michelle Stewart, Jamie Wallace and Dale West.

For more information about our programs and services, contact Lynn Gidluck at [lynn.gidluck@uregina.ca](mailto:lynn.gidluck@uregina.ca).