

Community Engagement and Research Centre



Themes from McConnell Foundation community dialogue held June 4, 2021.

Annual Report 2021-2022



Dear Friends and Supporters of the Community Engagement and Research Centre:

As we pause to reflect on the past year, we look to the future, excited about new opportunities to work with other partners on campus to make good on our University's motto—"As one who serves."

We are thankful to the Faculty of Arts for continuing to support the work we do to foster a genuine and interconnected network of colleagues on and off campus, as we strive to build more equitable, sustainable, and thriving communities through community-campus engagement. Successful, mutually beneficial partnerships can only be built on trusting and respectful relationships. Such relationships take time to nurture. We do not take for granted the privilege of being able to do this work as a visible demonstration of the Faculty of Arts' commitment to building bridges between the University and the greater Regina community.

While we were disappointed that the University's fiscal situation resulted in the suspension of our community grant program in 2022, we are grateful for the flexibility to continually pursue new avenues to facilitate community-engaged research and learning. The suspension of the grant program does not prevent us from providing important support to community organizations. It means we have to be more creative and spend more time looking for other ways to help communities with their research needs. We are constantly seeking external funding to support our goals.

We were pleased to receive a grant from the Business + Higher Education Roundtable, which allowed us to respond the perennial need from community for program evaluation research. We were able to design a program that allowed twenty nonprofit organizations to be matched with Arts interns. The organizational partners were pleased with the opportunity to learn alongside students, and students gained tangible skills to put on their resumes and a network of community partners to help them in their quest to get jobs when they graduate.

We will continue to look for other funding sources and opportunities that allow students and community partners to learn together. We also look to the future, hoping to build on our successful partnership with Community Campus Engage Canada—a partnership that has put us in a competitive position for external funding that supports the work we do with and on behalf of community.

We invite you to join us in our continued work of collaborative and relationship-based community engagement.



Dr. Amber Fletcher
CERC Academic Director and Board Chair
Associate Professor, Sociology and Social Studies



Dr. Lynn Gidluck
CERC Community Director

CERC's Mandate

The Community Engagement and Research Centre (CERC), formerly known as the Community Research Unit, is a Type II Research Centre funded by the University of Regina's Faculty of Arts. There are three strategic focuses for the work of CERC: 1) Supporting rigorous community-engaged research that contributes to the wellbeing of communities; 2) Building capacity in our community; and 3) Facilitating and promoting experiential learning and engagement opportunities for students with community-based organizations.

Though CERC is funded by the Faculty of Arts, it serves the broader university community. We are proud that our Centre has become the de facto "help desk" or portal for individuals in the community and at the university who are interested in engaging with each other, sharing resources, and doing collaborative work. One of our goals is to help break down silos between faculties and departments at the university—to promote and connect community with the people and programs best positioned at the university to meet their needs.

Contact Information

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For more information about the Community Engagement and Research Centre, please visit:
<https://www.uregina.ca/arts/community-research/>

Arts students making a difference in the community

Yes, employers DO value Liberal Arts degrees.

This is one of the most concrete lessons that students learn when they participate in the Arts Work Experience Internship Program.

Community Partners in 2021-22

Canadian Mental Health Association
Carousel Players Theatre Company (Toronto)
City of Regina Heritage Branch
City Kidz Regina
Community Campus Engage Canada
EnviroCollective
Heritage Community Association
Lifelong Learning Centre
Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan
Phoenix Residential Society
Prairie Sky Integration Network
Rainbow Youth Centre
Regina Early Learning Centre
Regina Fire & Protective Services
Regina Regional Local Immigration Partnership
Regina Sexual Assault Centre
Regina Transition House
Sask Books
Sask Outdoors
Sask Polytechnic, Learning Services
Saskatchewan NDP – Leader of the Opposition
Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association
SEARCH Student Clinic
Sofia House
STOPS to Violence
U of R Library

“Many students that reach out to me have fear in their eyes. I often meet them near the end of their Arts degree and they are worried about finding a fulfilling job when they graduate,” said Lynn Gidluck, who oversees the Arts Work Experience Internship program for the Faculty of Arts. “They often have no idea what transferrable skills they can bring to a workplace or even the type of jobs their Arts degree is preparing them for.”

Gidluck says one of the most gratifying parts of her job with the Community Engagement and Research Centre is giving students the opportunity to dream big with their internships and expose them to the almost limitless directions their degree can take them.

“The reason we have had such great success with the internship program is the upfront time taken to get to know students and find the perfect placement for them. Some students have a firmer idea of the type of job or sector they would like to work in, but most don’t,” said Gidluck. “Sometimes it takes some real probing to figure out the kinds of issues

that keep students up at night or spark their passion. After I figure this out I end up meeting a lot of really interesting people in my quest to find the perfect placements. As an Arts graduate myself, and someone who has hired hundreds of students over the years, it is not hard for me to sell people on the kinds of skills and types of work an intern can do for them.”

“Employers are not just looking for narrow, technical skills. They are looking for a broader set of skills and capacities, including the ability to solve problems and adapt to change, and skills like communication, leadership, and teamwork. Students that participate in the Arts internship program renew my faith in the future. Our graduates are ready to take on the biggest challenges our society presents us,” Gidluck concluded.

Here are some of the things last year's interns had to say about their experiences.

Gaining confidence

"I always had the desire to work for an organization like this but I never had the confidence to apply myself because I did not think I was able to do it. After this internship, I no longer feel scared to take on new challenges. I learned I am capable of doing great things. Thanks to this internship I am finally starting to feel motivated and confident once again." (Economics student, spring/summer 2021).

Self-awareness of strengths and limitations

"I now have a better idea of the type of work that suits me." (Sociology student, Spring/Summer 2021)

Civic Responsibility

"The internship helped show me that I love to make positive differences in the world." (Political Science student, Spring/Summer 2021)

Communication skills

"I was initially scared to talk on the phone or in person but looking at the importance of my tasks, I became brave." (International Studies student, Fall 2021).

"There were several times in which I needed guidance, and I think this internship experience really taught me how to ask for help." (Psychology student, Winter 2022).

Understanding of the Non-Profit World

"One of my goals was to learn the inner workings of a nonprofit organization. Even though my placement was virtual, I still got to see the behind the scenes of how the organization works." (Econ student, Spring/Summer 2021).

Insight into the "Real World"

"My internship experience provided insight into the practical reality of policy design not encapsulated in the idealistic framework explored in my formal public policy class." (Political Science student, Fall 2021).

Ready for the Workplace

"I feel much more prepared to graduate and begin my career journey now that I have had this experience." (International Studies student, Winter 2022).

Advocacy campaigns
Anti-racism education
Community consultations
Cross-jurisdictional analysis
Environmental scanning
Event planning
Literature reviews
Government relations
Grant writing
Media Relations
Policy development
Political campaigns
Program planning & evaluation
Public awareness efforts
Research
Social media campaigns
Survey design
Writing

12 different programs in Arts
26 organizations
39 Arts students in 2021-22
70 students between Winter 2019
and Spring/Summer 2021
10 Research Internships with
professors

Faculty of Arts students contribute to national community-engaged learning project

“I am passionate about the community-engaged learning project because I want the University of Regina to become more involved with our community and I want the involvement to be done well. I do not want community-engaged learning to be superficial and I do not want members of our community to feel othered by faculty, students, or the university environment.”

(Caitlyn Winand, Psychology student, spring/summer 2021).

Caitlyn Winand is one of five Arts interns who worked with Amber Fletcher and Lynn Gidluck, and Magda Goemans from Community Campus Engage Canada, on a research project to develop recommendations for a campus-wide program to incorporate community-engaged learning into the classroom (CEL – also known as community service-learning).

The project involved a case study of existing CEL practices at the University of Regina and data collection about CEL practices at other Canadian universities. The methods included a literature review related to CEL history and suggested practices, an environmental scan of CEL activities at institutions across Canada, interviews with U of R instructors who are active in CEL, a survey of U of R students, and interviews with CEL practitioners from across the country.

Winand, as well as Political Science student Brody Olafson, Psychology student Tessa Rehaluk, and Sociology students Daylene Sliz and Maria Shakhawat, all participated in an Arts Work Experience Internship. In addition, 82 students from Fletcher’s research methodology courses held during the Winter 2021 semester played a major role in data collection for the project.

“I was honoured to be selected for the internship,” said Sliz. “During the course of this internship my learning about literature reviews and CEL continued to evolve; my analytical skills improved; as well I continued to build confidence communicating over Zoom. This experience has been nothing short of positive.”

Olafson played a major role in operationalizing the student survey. He refined the questions, entered them into Qualtrics, created posters using Canva, developed a marketing and distribution strategy, and helped analyze the results. “Participating in this internship was an incredibly great experience. My expectations were high because I wanted to do important work, I wanted to make new friends, and I wanted to gain a great deal of knowledge. In all these regards the Community Engaged Learning project surpassed my expectations, and I cannot recommend the Arts Work Experience Internship enough to future students.”

Rehaluk's main role was to analyze community engaged learning programs at other Canadian universities. "This internship helped open my eyes to opportunities that I never knew existed. I absolutely loved my research methods courses in the winter, which led me to this internship, and now my views on school, the university, and research have all completely changed. This internship has opened my eyes to a career field that I never knew I wanted to be a part of."

Shakhawat edited transcripts, helped with the literature review, and uploaded resources to Zotero. "As an undergraduate student, one of the best decisions I have ever made was participating in the Arts Internship Program." Shakhawat said that by participating in the internship she learned a lot about herself and was able to implement changes in her daily life that have helped her focus, manage her time, and work at a fast pace. "Prior to starting my internship, I didn't have many skills for research; however, when I was working as an intern, I learned a lot, and now I enjoy doing research."

As for Fletcher, she is more enthused about community engaged teaching than ever before:

"Not only has this project allowed me to develop and experiment with new pedagogical strategies and engage my students in new ways, but I have also learned a great deal about the principles and theories of community-engaged learning," said Fletcher. She added: "I found the engagement with students to be extremely positive and respectful. I think it was very helpful for students to work with the community partner during class, to have face-to-face (through virtual means) collaboration on tangible outputs. This makes the project—and the people involved—more 'real' to students. This interaction seems to increase the seriousness with which students approach their class assignments."

Goemans noted, "It was a pleasure to work with the students in Dr. Fletcher's classes. They showed a clear interest in the project in general, and in creating research instruments that would effectively capture CEL experiences and strategies among faculty, students, and others at the University of Regina. The students asked great questions and offered fruitful suggestions, and I found it very energizing to work with them".

The research team hopes to release their report in early 2023.

The project aligns with the University of Regina's strong focus on experiential and service learning. "We are delighted with the leadership President Keshen has been taking in the area of experiential education," said Gidluck. "We hope our research will contribute to his efforts to institutionalize community-engaged learning at the University of Regina and look forward to doing everything we can to support the team at the new Centre for Experiential and Service Learning."

Community-Campus Engagement a Priority for New President

Dr. Jeff Keshen hadn't even started his new job yet when he agreed to host a virtual roundtable with senior leaders in our community led by the McConnell Foundation—a private Canadian foundation committed to addressing critical societal challenges. Keshen was en route to Regina from Corner Brook, Newfoundland with his family, to assume the role of President and Vice-Chancellor for the University of Regina, a position he assumed July 1, 2021.

CERC Community Director Lynn Gidluck serves on the management committee for Community Campus Engage Canada (CCE Canada), an organization that is a beneficiary of funding from the McConnell Foundation. When she learned that no institutions in Saskatchewan had made the McConnell list for the pan-Canadian dialogue series between University Presidents and senior community leaders that they were leading, she convinced them to extend an invitation to the University of Regina.

The meeting in June provided an opportunity for outgoing Interim President Thomas Chase to introduce Keshen to the community and hear ideas about how the university and the broader community can work together to “Build Back Better” from COVID-19.

“I appreciated the opportunity to meet a number of members of the wider community I am now privileged to live and work in and to hear some of their aspirations, challenges, and expectations for working with the University,” said Keshen. “This roundtable provided a great introduction to some of the community needs and how our university can broaden partnerships and reciprocate trust, respect, and concern for community ... and live up to our motto – ‘As one who serves.’”

Donna Ziegler, Executive Director of the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation was one of the people invited to the roundtable. She was joined by representatives from the Regina and Catholic School Boards, the City of Regina, business and labour organizations, Indigenous leaders, as well as the President of the University of Regina's student union and others like herself from the voluntary sector.

“We were pleased to be invited to this roundtable and to see over the past year that President Keshen meant it when he promised that this would be the first of many opportunities for conversations about how to work together to respond to what often seem like insurmountable challenges,” said Ziegler. “Our post-secondary institutions can and should play an important role in coming up with solutions to community problems and the work of President Keshen, the Community Engagement and Research Centre and others at the University of Regina demonstrates that this is not just rhetoric.”

Still encouraging, supporting, and facilitating community-based research despite funding cuts

Community-based research is a model of engaged scholarship in which faculty, students, and community members work together on research to address pressing societal questions. Thanks to the emphasis from national funders for partnership-based research and knowledge mobilization, community-based research is slowly moving from the margins (albeit still too slowly for our liking).

We learned mid-year that our community grant and knowledge mobilization funding would be suspended for 2022-23. However, we have not slowed down in our efforts to encourage, support, and facilitate community-based research. It just means we have to get more creative and spend more time looking for other ways to get projects off the ground. We remain optimistic that the funding will be renewed after the need for austerity measures has passed.

CERC has a steady stream of ideas from community partners for research projects that have the potential for faculty members to develop into successful grant applications. Many of these ideas would also make great theses, dissertations, or post-doctoral projects. All this to say: we encourage you to reach out to us if you have an interest in working with community. We take our “matchmaking” role seriously, taking pleasure when we can make connections between community and campus partners that lead to mutually beneficial research projects. We also welcome the opportunity to make presentations (on and off campus) about best practices in community-based research, partnership development, and knowledge mobilization. We are always keen to work with anyone who wants to use their time and talents to make change in the communities they live in and identify with.



Community- Engaged Learning and Community- Campus Engagement Projects

Research with kēhtē-ayak (Cree for “Old Ones”)

CERC is proud to support this innovative research project with elders and youth. This vision for this community-driven project arose from requests from kēhtē-ayak (old ones) to assist them in mobilizing Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK) for the well-being of Regina’s Indigenous community. Through their work together, Bev Cardinal from the māmawēyatitân centre and Emily Grafton, Politics and International Studies, are investigating ways to increase access to traditional plants for urban Indigenous peoples that cannot access rural spaces or traditional lands to harvest medicines. They are looking at how increasing access to medicinal plants can foster cultural practices and Indigenous traditional knowledges and how strengthening the access to and exercise of cultural rights can benefit urban Indigenous communities in the North Central community in Regina. Their research uses decolonial and Indigenous-centred research practices to foster Indigenous knowledge exchanges through growing traditional native plants of cedar, sage, sweetgrass, and tobacco and other native plants and shrubs to disrupt the colonial green space at māmawēyatitân centre. This space will be used for intergenerational and traditional teachings. The plants will be harvested for ceremonial purposes and shared with community members.

Landfill Recycling Project

When long-time community developer and former city councilor Rob Deglau goes on a holiday one of the first places he visits is the community landfill. He knows firsthand that many communities are doing a much better job than Regina is at preventing recyclable goods from ending up in landfills. As co-chair of the EnviroCollective, Rob was pleased to receive a grant from CERC to hire a researcher to do a more systematic review of options that Regina can consider in its efforts to meet its waste reduction goals. EnviroCollective will share he report with Regina City Council to facilitate further conversations about partnerships and social ventures to make use recyclable goods. Nima Karimi, who has a PhD in Environmental System Engineering (and who rivals Rob in his passion for studying landfills), was hired to lead the project. Brett Dolter (Economics) and City Councilor Shanon Zachidniak are provide their advice and support to help further conversations throughout the community to see action and change result from the research findings.

Health and Self: Understanding barriers to accessing community programming and supports by rural and remote girls aged 8-14 in Saskatchewan

In August 2020, nearly six months into the COVID-19 pandemic, Sask Girls United founder, University of Regina student Isabella Grajczyk found herself wondering what she could do to bring Saskatchewan girls together in a time of isolation. Reflecting on the opportunities she felt were missing from her own childhood, she felt a leadership forum with a focus on female empowerment would fill a gap. She recruited four like-minded women to become co-founders of Sask Girls United. Since then, the organization has grown to a team of eight, and has hosted virtual programming to over 700 girls and gender-diverse youth aged 8-14. The focus is on leadership skills, confidence, mental health, empowerment, and many other useful life skills. The CERC advisory board was happy to provide funding for Isabella and her colleague Zahin Rahman to work with Elizabeth Cooper, Kinesiology and Health Studies, to do research that will help them develop a strategy to offer programming that meets the needs of youth living in rural and northern communities who are often ignored or forgotten when it comes to youth programming.

Living Expenses in Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation Community

Jana Sasakamoose is a proud member of the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation (located northwest of Prince Albert). She is also a graduate student at the University of Regina. Responding to concerns brought to her attention from members of her community, she is leading a community-based research project to investigate what are perceived to be unfairly high utility payments on reserve. Jana and the community are excited to have the opportunity to work with Arzu Sardarli, First Nations University of Canada and Andrei Volodin, Statistics, University of Regina, to study the ratio of food and utility expenses over the household income in their community. The research team views this project as the first step in building relationships between Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation and the University of Regina to improve housing strategies and generate energy management strategies.

Settler Colonialism in Canada: Perspectives, Comparisons, Cases

Canada is a long-established settler colonial nation state; and yet very few Canadians understand what this means historically or for present-day reconciliatory and decolonial efforts. As part of our efforts to contribute to reconciliation, CERC was pleased to support (through direct and in-kind support) a SSHRC Connections project led Emily Grafton and Jérôme Melançon. The project is addressing a knowledge gap in Canadian post-secondary curricula by creating teaching resources on settler colonialism in Canada. Outreach activities including public talks, virtual workshops, a graduate student symposium, and a hybrid in-person/virtual conference for graduate students, scholars, and the public, aim to develop strategies to dismantle the insidious, difficult to detect oppression related to settler colonialism.

National Partnerships that help CERC further our work



Community-Campus Engagement happens when communities and post-secondary institutions address critical community issues through collaborative research, learning, and creative projects. If you haven't already, now's the time to sign up for a free membership in CCE Canada. If you would like to connect with participants in community-campus research, learning, and creative partnerships, CCE Canada is the perfect ways to do this. [Sign up here today.](#)



Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Network

The Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Network (PhiLab) is a national research network working to advance the interests of the philanthropic sector. The project began as a three-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Development project. After a first funding period from 2013-2107, funding was continued through a six-year Partnership Grant (2018-2024). Together with Iryna Khovrenkov of the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School, CERC Community Director Lynn Gidluck co-leads PhiLab's western hub. There is still another 18 months of funding available. It is quite easy to access \$20,000 to work on a project that falls within the [grant criteria](#). Reach out to Lynn Gidluck if you have an idea.

Professional Development for Community: 2021-22 Toolkit Workshops

<p>Human Resource Fundamentals for the Nonprofit Sector</p> <p>Managing a Workforce during a Pandemic</p> <p>Recruitment and Retention Foundations for Nonprofit Organizations</p> <p>Performance Management and Employee and Labour Relations Fundamentals for Nonprofit Organizations</p>	<p>This series was designed for people who do not have formal training or deep experience in HR management.</p> <p>Milly Sywanky, HR professional with the Government of SK's Public Service Commission</p> <p>Milly Sywanky</p> <p>Milly Sywanky</p>	<p>Fall 2021</p> <p>October 27, 2021</p> <p>November 17, 2021</p> <p>December 8, 2021</p>
<p>Communications and Marketing Skills for the Nonprofit Sector</p> <p>Social Media – Tips and tricks to grow your social following.</p> <p>Community Mobilization and Advocacy in an Online Environment</p> <p>How to Harness the Power of Google for Your Community Organization</p>	<p>Dani Anderson, Director of Accounts at Harvard Media</p> <p>Jason Mercredi, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan</p> <p>Barb McGrath, Get Found Digital Marketing</p>	<p>Winter 2022</p> <p>March 8, 2022</p> <p>March 29, 2022</p> <p>April 12, 2022</p>
<p>Essential Management Skills for Nonprofits</p> <p>Nonprofit Governance: 101 for Grassroots Organizations ... and More!</p> <p>Fundamentals of Finance: Best Practices for Grassroots Groups</p> <p>Effective Recruitment and Retention: Attracting (and keeping) Staff and Volunteer Talent</p>	<p>Shari Hildred, Valmore Consulting</p>	<p>May 17, 2022</p> <p>May 24, 2022</p> <p>June 1, 2022</p>

Community-Based Research & Knowledge Mobilization Grants

2021-2022

Project Title	Main Community Partner(s)	Amount Awarded	Funding period
<i>Research with kēhtē-ayak (Cree for “Old Ones”)</i>	Bev Cardinal, the māmawēyatitân centre and Emily Grafton, PAIS, U of R	\$5,000.00	Nov. 2021
<i>Non-Profit Youth Leadership Network 2022 Youth Engagement Report*</i>	Emily Lints, NPYLN, Marc Jerry and Colleen Strauch, Luther College	\$5,000.00	Nov. 2021
<i>Settler Colonialism in Canada: Perspectives, Comparisons, Cases</i>	Emily Grafton, Jérôme Melançon and David MacDonald	\$1,000.00	Jan. 2021
<i>Landfill Recycling Project</i>	Rob Deglau, EnviroCollective, Shanon Zachidniak, City Councilor and Brett Dolter, Economics, U of R	\$4,520.00	April 2022
<i>Health and Self: Understanding barriers to accessing community programming and supports by rural and remote girls aged 8-13 in Saskatchewan</i>	Zahin Rahman and Isabella Grajczyk, Sask Girls United and Elizabeth Cooper, Kinesiology & Health Studies	\$5,000.00	April 2022
<i>Living Expenses in Ahtakakoop Cree Nation Community</i>	Jana Sasakamoose, Ahtakakoop Cree Nation; Arzu Sardarli, Physics and Mathematics, FNUC and Andrei Volodin, Statistics, U of R	\$3,480.00	June 2022

*Due to capacity issues, this organization was unable to move forward with the project and did not receive the funding.

Our Team

2021-2022

Lynn Gidluck	Community Director (ex officio) Staff
Amber Fletcher	Academic Director/Board Chair Faculty member, Department of Sociology and Social Studies
Troni Grande	Associate Dean of Arts (Research and Graduate Studies) (ex officio)
Heather Cote-Soop	Graduate student representative
Chasity Delorme	Community representative
Kendra Giles	Community representative, Phoenix Residential Society
Cindy Hanson	Faculty member, Department of Sociology & Social Studies
Alaina Harrison	Community representative, Inclusion Saskatchewan
Tom McIntosh	Faculty member, Department of Politics and International Studies
Aria Ramdeo	Community representative, Heritage Community Association
Sarah Sangster	Faculty member, Department of Psychology

The Community Engagement and Research Centre is served by one full-time staff person (the Community Director) and is guided by a Community Advisory Board that reports through the Associate Dean (RG) to the Dean of Arts. The CERC Academic Director chairs the board which consists of three members from the community, three professors or instructors from the Faculty of Arts, and one University of Regina student. The Associate Dean of Arts (Research & Graduate Studies) serves as ex-officio member of the board, as does the CERC Community Director.

*We would like to sincerely thank outgoing members of the board, Alaina Harrison and Troni Grande. A warm welcome to our new members: Robin East, Barrier Free Saskatchewan; Glenn Sutter, Royal Saskatchewan Museum; Emily Grafton, Politics and International Studies. We are also thankful for the continuity that comes from having board member and long-time supporter of the CERC, Tom McIntosh, move into the ex officio representative from the Dean's office.

