



**UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR**  
Carnegie Canadian Community Engagement Pilot

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Growing Together

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# Carnegie Canadian Community Engagement (CCCE) Pilot

## Observations from the CCCE Steering Committee Chair, Dr. Cheryl Collier

When I was first introduced to the Carnegie Community Engagement Canadian Pilot project in December 2018, I was intrigued by the potential for the University of Windsor to a) gain recognition for the wonderful community-focussed work it had been involved in and continued to promote in our local and global communities and b) to learn from our university peers on how to best operationalize this work in Windsor so that it grew and was further embedded into our research, teaching and service mission.

Little did I know what lay ahead – a real journey of discovery of a rich and pervasive commitment to the local and global community across all aspects of our institution and our community partners as well as a deep desire for further support for this work from our university and community colleagues alike. I soon realized that the task of embedding real tangible reciprocal community engagement was only partially achieved here at Windsor and there was much work to do to move this commitment to a deeper and more meaningful level.

I also learned that the Carnegie process wasn't so much about recognition as it was about learning and growth.

Over the next two plus years, I was heartened by the collective spirit, care, and commitment of my university and community colleagues on the Steering Committee as well as of those who participated in the wide variety of consultations we held to gain a fuller understanding of what we have done well, what we value about community engagement, and what we can do better. To everyone involved in this process, I offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks. We could not have done this without you.

I want to especially thank our Steering Committee 'workhorses' who kept us on task, put countless hours of thoughtful and professional effort into planning and executing the committee's work, and who made sure the project set us up for real improvements and important institutional support for community engagement for the coming years. I reserve special thanks for Kristin Schramer, Stephanie Lu, Rawand Mustafa, and Omran Abouhassan, and Bev Hamilton for their wonderful leadership on this project, as well as to the faculty, staff, community, and student support personnel in and around the Steering Committee itself.

We are now at a key but exciting juncture with regard to the future of community engagement both in Canada and more critically at the University of Windsor. I have every confidence that we will see continued learning and real growth with this work moving forward and thank the administrative leaders, including President Gordon, for their ongoing support and commitment to this mission.

I remain excited for the future of community engagement at our university and look forward to good things to come very soon.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Cheryl Collier  
Chair, CCCE Steering Committee

## Background

### What is the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement?

Carnegie Classifications have been a leading framework for describing and recognizing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education for decades. The elective Community Engagement Classification (CEC) involves collecting data to document and better understand important aspects of institutional mission, identity, commitments, and activities, and is intended to support a process for institutional learning and transformation, the outcome of which is an institution in which high-quality community engagement is deeply rooted and pervasive. The classification is not an award. It is an evidence-based documentation of institutional practice to be used in a process of self-assessment and quality improvement. Currently, only American universities are eligible to undertake this process: the University of Windsor took part in a Canadian pilot exploring its potential and value for the Canadian post-secondary sector.

### About the Canadian Pilot Cohort (CPC)

The Canadian Pilot Cohort (CPC) is a group of [sixteen Canadian post-secondary institutions](#) who agreed to undertake the Carnegie Classification self-study and reflect on its fit in Canadian community engagement contexts. From 2019–2021, the CPC has worked together as a learning community to evaluate the framework’s fit with the Canadian context, identify needed adjustments to the existing Classification if it were to be used in the Canadian context, and, recommend solutions and contribute to the development of a Canadian version of the Classification, if desirable.

### Project Brief

The University of Windsor committed to the Canadian Pilot Cohort (CPC) project, which began in January 2021, joining a cohort of Canadian academic institutions to complete the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. The classification assesses an institution’s processes for continuous improvement in the **core capacity of building mutually beneficial relationships with partners that are characterized by reciprocity, co-creation and power-sharing**. The primary activity of participating institutions was the collection of data and stories that illustrate each institution’s commitment to infrastructure that supports community engagement.



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## Purpose and Expected Outcomes

The purpose of the Canadian Pilot Cohort is to determine the fit of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification for Canadian contexts and recommend adjustments, ultimately building towards a Canadian classification administered in Canada. Because it is a pilot, participating institutions will not retain actual certification. But a common outcome for any institution that completes the process is the emergence of sustainable infrastructure to support the development of partnerships and community-engaged teaching, research and creative activity, all of which contribute to transformational change.

## Carnegie Canadian Community Engagement Classification Research Team (UWindsor)



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## CCCE Process at UWindsor



## Initial Canadian Pilot Cohort (CPC) Convening

The initial convening of the sixteen members of the Canadian Pilot Cohort (CPC) took place from February 26-28<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Vancouver, BC. Ms. Bev Hamilton, Dr. Cheryl Collier, and Ms. Rosemary Zanutto attended the initial convening as representatives from the University of Windsor. This convening provided the first opportunity for the CPC members to meet and interact with representatives from the CEC.



## Convening of Steering Committee

A diverse group of community-engaged administrators, faculty, staff, and students from the University of Windsor, as well as members of our community partners, have generously served on the steering committee for this project. The steering committee advised on the direction of the CCCE research team's work, liaised with campus and community networks, and informed planning based on the information gleaned from this project. The Steering Committee first gathered on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and met fourteen times throughout the pilot from October 2019 to June 2021. A complete list of members of the Steering Committee can be found [here](#).

## Document Review

From October 2019 until December 2020, the CCCE Research team reviewed public-facing documents (e.g., reports from Experiential Learning, EPICentre, Centre for Teaching and Learning, etc.) and information included on the University of Windsor website for relevant information. A large portion of this information was primarily gathered, reviewed, and recorded by the team's undergraduate research assistants Ms. Rawand Mustafa and Mr. Omran Abouhassan.

## Consultations with Deans, Faculty Councils, and Departments

From November 2019 to March 2020, members of the CCCE Research Team met with Deans, Faculty Councils, and departments from across the University to make them aware of the pilot project and begin consultation with key stakeholders in the campus community.

## Partnership Appreciation and Consultation Breakfast

The University of Windsor started consulting with its community and industry partners at the Partnership Appreciation and Consultation Breakfast on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020.



This consultation focused on two areas of concern regarding community-university partnerships: impact and goals.

A total of 75 individuals attended the event, which included 39 representatives from community and industry partners, 27 administrators, faculty, and staff from the University of Windsor and 9 university students. Consultations with four

additional representatives from community, industry, and student partners who were unable to attend the event were conducted by email or Microsoft Teams. The meeting began with a brief presentation.

A full report on the findings from these consultations is available [here](#)



### Faculty and Staff Consultation

In Spring 2020, the University of Windsor's Carnegie Pilot Steering Committee launched a series of consultations to learn about campus-community engagement and support. These consultations included the University of Windsor's faculty and staff, who were invited to complete an electronic form or participate in an interview to discuss:

- their community-engaged work;
- how the University of Windsor has recognized and supported that work; and
- how the University of Windsor could more effectively support that work in the future.



Faculty and staff were asked to discuss these themes as they pertained to teaching, research, service, received funding, and professional development opportunities.

In total, 85 faculty and staff provided input on their community-engaged work.

- 58 (32 faculty, 26 staff) completed the electronic form from March 12th - May 26th, 2020.
- 27 (18 faculty, 9 staff) participated in interviews from March 16th - August 10th, 2020.

A full report on the findings from these consultations is available [here](#).



### Case Partner Consultation

In November 2019, the CCCE Research Team reached out to a small group of community and industry partners to serve as a non-exhaustive but representative sample of the partnerships at the University of Windsor. All case partners completed an online survey with one case partner also completing a remote consultation via M.S. Teams. The information collected as part of these consultations was used to provide descriptions of these partnerships included in the submission of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification Application (described in the next section) submitted as part of the pilot.



## Carnegie Community Engagement Classification Application

On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, the Research Team submitted a copy of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification application as part of an institutional self-study for the pilot. The data collected primarily came from AY 2018-19. The completed application was the culmination of the information gleaned from consultations with stakeholders and the document review and was a collaborative effort between the research team and Steering Committee. The CEC representatives will provide a written response to the University of Windsor regarding CE practice based on this application.

### Site Visit

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, two representatives from the Carnegie Foundation, Dr. Matthew Johnson and Mr. Eugene Corbin, met with small groups of administrators, faculty, staff, and students from across the University via Microsoft (MS) Teams. Twenty-six members of the campus community participated in these discussions, including:

- Twenty-two administrators, faculty, and staff; and
- Four students (two undergraduate and two graduate students).

The purpose of the visit was to reflect on the pilot process, discuss CE's state at the institution, and learn from Carnegie's representatives. Sessions included: 1) leadership, 2) academic practice, 3) student experience, 4) external relations, 5) pilot challenges and insights, and 6) leadership and strategic planning. President Gordon was present for all sessions during the site visit.

## What We've Learned

Community-engaged work is deeply engrained in the University's ethos but remains organizationally decentralized. However, the concerns and priorities of varied stakeholders involved in community-engaged practice are consistent. These core findings provide a solid basis for future planning and for maximizing the impact of community-engaged practice.

## Findings from the Self Study

### Institutional Strengths

- **Deep and broad institutional connections** driven by strong institutional relationships and regional concerns;
- **High levels of community-based service learning** compared to national averages;
- **High level of partner and community interest and commitment** to existing and potential new partnership with the University;
- **Strong and widespread departmental and faculty level community engagement**, particularly in professional programs;
- Diverse **research-driven engagement with community partnership** across all faculties; and
- Evolving **consensus from multiple stakeholders about priorities for further development**, and about the immense potential of this strategy to advance institutional and regional priorities.



### Areas for Institutional Improvement

- Clarifying **the value proposition for expanding CE practice** in relation to the University's and the region's strategic priorities;
- Incentivizing, supporting and promoting **community involvement in curriculum development, research programs, and knowledge mobilization**;
- Establishing **partnership engagement and coordination** through facilitative, rather than directive, centralized supports;
- Systematically **recognizing CE work** and establishing mechanisms for recognizing community-engaged practice in **recruitment**;
- Developing **centralized data systems** to support institutional partnership and partner feedback, in order to **assess progress and identify areas for development** and investment;
- Supporting staff and faculty **professional activity** and development in CE practice, including collaboration



and partnership skills; community-partnered and -driven learning, and engagement with national networks of community-engaged practice

- Establishing **more systematic mechanisms for facilitating partnership** and partnership agreements;
- Systematically **engaging with external organizations** (e.g., Talloires Network, McConnell Foundation, Ashoka) and the Canadian C.F. framework pilot network to build CE capacity and funding; and
- Creating **clear developmental pathways for co-curricular engagement**



### Key Takeaways from March 9<sup>th</sup> Site Visit

- True CE is **reciprocal, transformative, and leads to a true co-creation of knowledge**.
- CE benefits from the creation of a **precise, rigorous, and shared definition of CE** across the institution and **incorporation into the institution's strategic plans**.
- Strong integration of the **components of CE (Teaching and Learning, Scholarship, Professional Management of Partnerships, and Student Engagement)** helps support CE practice.
- Students may experience **barriers (e.g., time, financial, or academic constraints)** to participating in CE work when offered as a co-curricular activity. Such barriers can be reduced by the following practices: 1) **Shifting CE experiences to curricular activities**; and 2) **creating financial supports** (i.e., paid fellowships, as opposed to salaries).
- CE thrives in institutions that have **central hub (i.e., an office or liaison)** dedicated to CE that can promote a shared definition of CE, manage relationships, and act as a glue.
- CE can **strengthen Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)** efforts.
- CPC members have expressed **similar challenges and insights** from this pilot.



## Next steps for community engagement at the University of Windsor

### In the short term:

A number of pressing concerns were identified that we feel we can begin to address now. These include:

- Creating an online portal with an associated liaison
- Constructing online resources focused on ways to connect with the institution, publicly available
- Maintaining efforts in the Office of Experiential Learning to expand, extend, and stabilize placements in this period of economic uncertainty, including aggressive efforts to access federal funding for placements
- Continuing to provide research and innovation support to our community to address new and diverse challenges being presented through the current COVID-19.



### In the long term:

In the future, there are a number of strategic priorities that the University of Windsor can set to aid in the development of CE across the institution. These include:

- Developing a precise, rigorous, and shared definition of CE
- Forming a dedicated centre
- Integrating CE into Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) efforts
- Incorporating CE more extensively in the University's strategic plan
- Creating more systematic tracking and monitoring
- Working to remove barriers to student participation in CE and continuing to provide deeply engaging CE experiences.



## Next steps for the Canadian Pilot Cohort (CPC)

### Carnegie Canadian Community Engagement Classification Pilot Closing Convening

Members of the research team attended the pilot's closing convening in May/June 2021. On May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, the CPC members had the opportunity to reflect on the pilot experience together



and discussion whether to develop a Canadian version of Carnegie's Community Engagement classification. On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, all twelve participating institutions in the CPC voted in support of the development of a Canadian classification. On June 14<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, the CPC met to determine the approach for moving forward with the development of this new classification.

### Creation of Canadian Framework of Community Engagement

Since the closing convening, CPC members have continued to meet regularly and work toward the development of Canadian framework for community engagement. This work is being led by four distinct working groups: 1) Framework, 2) Governance, 3) Consultation and 4) Community of Practice. Each working group will create a set of recommendations to be reviewed by the Carnegie Foundation surrounding the components included in the framework, the application and decision-making process, and where the classification is housed within Canada. The University is currently represented in the Framework Working Group, by Ms. Kristin Schramer, and Community of Practice Working group, by Dr. Veronika Mogyorody. As a moderately sized comprehensive University in Canada, the University of Windsor's voice continues to be a vital part of this process.

## A Note from President Gordon on the Future of CE at UWindsor

Firstly, I want to thank everyone – the team leaders, steering committee, and the many members of our campus and larger communities – who were involved in the gathering and analysis of information over the course of this project. This has been an invaluable exercise in terms of learning about and from our community about the partnerships and relationships they have developed across the region, about the intensive work – much of it unsung – that is involved, and the incredible impact this work has at our institution and in the community. I am extremely proud of the work contributions our students, staff, and faculty make to this community, and of the exceptional partners who work shoulder to shoulder with us. This report captured over 350 such initiatives: we know there are many more out there.

Community-engaged work is one of the most important aspects of our contribution as a university. One of the things we – and all of the institutions involved in this national pilot-- have learned from this process is that despite its importance to all of us, and its ubiquitous, impactful, and deeply valued nature, it is often unsung and unevenly supported. We need to develop a more coherent and explicit collective vision of the principles and values that underpin our community engagement, and of what we are trying to achieve through this work. And, we need to build better infrastructure to develop, support, coordinate, and recognize that work.

The Carnegie Foundation emphasized the importance of clarity of vision and principles to enhancing community engagement in Canadian universities, reiterating their own working definition and purpose:

- Community engagement is the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial creation and exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.
- The purpose of community engagement is the partnership (of knowledge and resources) between colleges and universities and the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

These are useful and research-informed definitions and visions of practice that have been based on work at hundreds of institutions, and they can help to shape our practice. As we move forward to crystallize our own strategic vision and mechanisms for this critical element of our mandate and identify, they can provide a starting point for discussion, prioritization, and support. Ultimately, however, our vision cannot simply be adopted from elsewhere: it must be shaped by our context, history, values, and concerns. The Carnegie pilot has provided us with considerable clarity around the mechanisms through which Community Engagement flourishes and is mostly likely to become transformative both for our institution and for our communities: it is up to us to determine how those lessons might most effectively be applied here. A key step in this process will be:

- **Development of Strategic Planning related to Community Engagement in coordination with the overall institutional strategic planning process launched in Fall 2021.** Some important areas of focus for this effort, which will involve consultation with the campus and broader community, will include:
  - the consultative development of an institutional vision and principles of community engagement.
  - exploration of planning alignment with industrial and community partners as well as with regional government priorities and concerns.
  - planning across areas of institutional priority such as teaching and learning; student experience; research; employee development; Indigenization; and equity, diversity and inclusion.
  - Subsequent implementation planning, which will also include the establishment of benchmarks for the assessment of progress.

In thanking the many members of our community who made significant contributions to the Carnegie Framework self-assessment, I should also note the degree to which this process was made more challenging because it was “side of desk” for everyone involved, and carried out through one of the most demanding periods of rapid adjustment to new circumstances the University has ever experienced. Both this experience and the vast majority of the feedback from stakeholders point to the need for more dedicated resources to move this mandate forward.

**This will begin through the appointment of a position reporting through the Provost’s Office, but working in collaboration with a number of key partner-oriented units on campus, to support and further develop community-engaged practice on campus** with these key initial priorities:

- Development and support of leadership and partnership in community-engaged practice
- Oversight and further development of a **joint partnership and community engagement virtual outreach and access hub**, in conjunction with a number of partnership-oriented offices on campus.
- Development of a **cross-functional faculty and staff network and a community advisory** for information exchange, collaboration, and ongoing campus-input on institutional community engagement strategy. These may also meet together periodically.
- **Professional development programming** for staff and faculty in CE practice, including collaboration and partnership skills; community-partnered and -driven learning, and engagement with national networks of community-engaged practice.
- **Collaboration with the Office of the Vice-President, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and others on campus to integrate these efforts with key priorities in EDI** on campus and in the community. Similar efforts will be undertaken with the new senior leadership role in Indigenization once that role is in place, but ongoing consultation with the **Aboriginal Educational Council** will also be undertaken.
- **Collaboration with the offices of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation and the Associate Vice-President, External**
- Advocacy and support for faculties and departments across campus **to enhance recognition and reward mechanisms related to community-engaged practice**, as well as simple and streamlined mechanisms through which departments can assess the quality and impact of their work with partners.

- Establishment of **regular opportunities for partner input and consultation.**
- **Advocacy and engagement in efforts to raise funds** for bursaries and other financial resources to support student participation in community-engaged practice.

Resource allocations to support these efforts will be a focus in future strategic budget planning as the role and strategic planning evolve.

Community engagement will never be an activity that can be overseen or supervised through a hierarchical structure: it will always be characterized by autonomous vision, personal relationships, discipline- and context-specific partnerships, and organic development. The goal of the community hub will be to create and support infrastructure, expertise, tools, and connections that will enable community-engaged practice to thrive, to reduce the need for each individual leader to begin at ground zero as they begin to envision new possibilities, and to provide existing and prospective partners with an easily accessible point of contact for their inquiries and for engagement in dialogue.

It is extremely important that while this new role will provide support and coordination for community-engaged programming and initiatives, it would be both impossible and undesirable to try to enclose community-engaged practice or support for community-engaged practice, within one office: the role will provide expertise and a CE-lens that will operate in collaboration with the important leadership already operating through numerous offices on campus in order to enhance impact, mutual visibility, and responsiveness across the institution. As these efforts evolve, and through the process of implementing the University's Strategic Plan, community engagement will become an increasingly important shared priority of the Executive Leadership Team, as well. I look forward to the journey.